B2 Reading: Series Reviews and Podcasts

Teacher Del, OSL Sant Vicent

Task 1. Read the four reviews carefully. For questions 1–10, choose from the series (A–D). Series may be chosen more than once.

A. *Stranger Things*

Stranger Things has become a global phenomenon thanks to its blend of 1980s nostalgia, supernatural suspense, and strong character development. Set in Hawkins, Indiana, the series follows a group of friends as they investigate mysterious events after a boy goes missing, uncovering a secret government experiment and a frightening alternate dimension known as the Upside Down. The show's mix of horror, science fiction, and heartfelt friendships keeps viewers hooked, while its storytelling often explores themes of trust, sacrifice, and courage under pressure. With each season raising the stakes and expanding the world, *Stranger Things* continues to be a gripping and emotionally satisfying experience.

B. *Black Mirror*

Black Mirror is a British anthology series that examines the darker side of modern society and our relationship with technology. Each episode stands alone with a unique story, but all explore how innovations like social media, surveillance, virtual reality, or artificial intelligence can have unsettling — even dystopian — consequences. The show's speculative cases are often startlingly plausible, prompting viewers to question where current trends might lead us in the future. With its bleak tone and thought-provoking scenarios, *Black Mirror* has become one of the most discussed TV series of the last decade, challenging audiences to reflect on human behaviour and technological dependency.

C. *Squid Game*

Squid Game is a South Korean thriller that quickly became one of the most talked-about TV dramas worldwide. In the series, financially desperate individuals are invited to compete in a series of children's games for a massive cash prize — but losing comes with deadly consequences. Beyond the brutal competition and suspenseful plot twists, the show offers sharp commentary on economic inequality and the pressures faced by people pushed to extremes. Its stark portrayal of human desperation and the moral choices characters make under pressure makes *Squid Game* a gripping and thought-provoking watch.

D. *The leftovers*

The Leftovers begins three years after a mysterious event called the "Sudden Departure," in which 2 % of the world's population inexplicably disappears. The series explores how those left behind struggle to cope with grief, loss, and the absence of meaning in their lives. Set primarily in a small American town, the show follows diverse characters as they navigate trauma, social breakdown, and faith — or its loss — in a world that seems irrevocably changed. With its psychological depth and philosophical undertones, *The Leftovers* creates a haunting and emotionally intense narrative that lingers long after watching.

Which series...

1. **doesn't set up a continuous plot?**
2. **mixes supernatural suspense with heartfelt friendships?**
3. **portrays situations that are highly believable?**
4. **keeps viewers on the edge of the seat thanks to its unexpected twist?**
5. **combines suspense and nostalgia to create a gripping emotional experience?**
6. **is set in a small community where unusual disappearances affect everyone?**
7. **turns something innocent and playful into horrifying lethal scenarios?**
8. **depicts deeper nuances of human life that won't fade away easily?**
9. **highlights the potential consequences of overreliance on modern technology?**
10. **exploits extreme situations to explore social inequality?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Task 2. Read the text carefully.
If a gap has a verb in brackets, write the correct form of the verb.
For all other gaps, write ONE OR TWO words that best complete the sentence (preposition, linker, collocation, phrasal verb or set phrase).

The Popularity of Podcasts

Podcasts have rapidly become one of the most popular forms of entertainment and information in recent years. People can listen to thousands of shows on topics ranging **1.** _____ true crime and history **2.** _____ science, lifestyle, and personal development.

One reason for their success is convenience. Podcasts can **3.** _____ (***play***) during commuting, exercising, or doing household chores, **4.** _____ allows listeners to make the **5.** _____ of their time. They also create a sense of intimacy, **6.** _____ hosts often speak directly to their audience in a friendly, conversational style. This connection can make listeners **7.** _____ (***feel***) engaged and motivated to return regularly.

8. _____ their popularity, not all podcasts are reliable sources of information. Some content is poorly researched or biased, so listeners **9.** _____ _____ evaluate the credibility of hosts and their sources carefully. Additionally, **10.** _____ podcasts are entertaining, overconsumption can reduce time spent on other important activities.

Podcasts continue to grow in influence, particularly **11.** _____ younger audiences. They offer opportunities for learning, entertainment, and self-improvement in a flexible and accessible way. On the whole, this medium represents an innovative and modern approach to education and leisure, and it is likely that **12.** _____ reach and significance will keep **13.** _____ (***expand***).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____ _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS