

Read the text and complete the gaps with the correct form of the verb.

'The F.R.I.E.N.D.S effect' & the English Language

Are you one of those people who 1) _____ that 2) _____ television to chill out rots your brain? Or do you defend that watching TV can 3) _____ beneficial effects that most people 4) _____ even aware of? Before you blabber an answer, take a minute or two 5) _____ back and find out more.

Although watching TV is a common pastime, it 6) _____ a very popular language learning tool among English language learners. In 2019, *Friends*, the popular TV show from the 90s, turned 25 years old. The series, which still remains popular with old and young alike, has been a time-honored English teacher outside the classroom.

"The Friends Effect," as it is known, is when non-native speakers learn American English by watching the all-time popular sitcom.

"God bless Friends" is a common phrase among fans as it has helped them 7) _____ to grips with the English language and ace a test or two. Matt Ainiwaer, a native Chinese fan of the show said, "I was so in love with my favourite character American accents that I just tried 8) _____ their distinct way of speaking until I sounded as cool as they do." RM, the leader of BTS, the famous Korean boy band, confessed he picked English up because his mother forced him to watch episodes of *Friends* with her. He 9) _____ by watching the show with Korean subtitles, and then moved on to watching it with English subtitles.

When all is said and done, why 10) _____ *Friends* such a great language teacher? Well, fans explain that it's easy conversation, where you can actually understand pretty much every word you hear. According to Melissa Baese-Berk, director of the Second Language Acquisition and Teaching program at the University of Oregon, there are three must 11) _____ tips for 12) _____ a language from a TV show: firstly, the program should be engaging. Then, it should have subtitles, and finally, it should have repetitive storylines, like *Friends* 13) _____. So, the next time your parents tell you 14) _____ a bit of English, tell them that it's time to watch another episode (or three) of *Friends*.

Word box:

¹blabber: talk foolishly or excessively

⁷get to grips with: begin to understand something in an effective way

¹ace: get very good marks

