

READING

Read the article about television viewing habits. Five sentences have been removed. Choose from the sentences A–G the one which fits each gap (1–5). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Couch potatoes

The rise of the internet was predicted to kill off television.

0 **G** Television there is actually going from strength to strength.

According to a report on modern TV viewing habits, one third of people in the UK admit to watching 50% more TV than five years ago. **1** Saturday-night favourites such as *X Factor*, for example, attract 17 million viewers each week. *Strictly Come Dancing* and *Doctor Who* regularly have audiences of more than 12 million each.

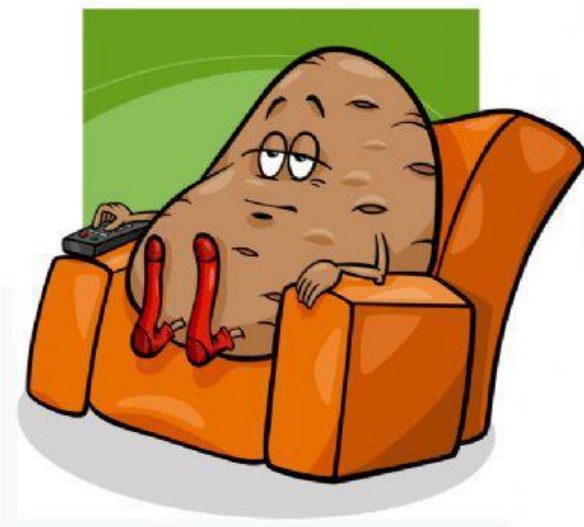
Although TV viewing was once seen as an anti-social activity, many people now say it helps them to develop their relationships and make them more sociable. **2** As well as that, nearly half of the people who took part in the survey said that TV shows have helped them to make new friends. And each week, hundreds of thousands of *X Factor* and *Strictly Come Dancing* fans post their comments on the results on social media sites.

The report by Dr Brian Young of the University of Exeter suggests that modern TV viewing habits are not creating a generation of 'couch potatoes', that is, lazy people. Far from it, in fact. Instead, TV is encouraging viewers to take up hobbies and visit new places. **3** And 85% say travel

programmes have encouraged them to book a holiday to somewhere they haven't been before.

Entertainment and travel are not the only areas to benefit, however. Around 80% of people taking part in the survey said they now cook more and increasingly entertain friends at home. **4** Programmes such as *Come Dine with Me* also allow viewers the chance to see how home entertaining should, or in many cases should not, be done.

The survey also found that parents are no longer as strict about how much TV their children can watch. **5** However, although the amount of time may have increased, parents are still careful to recognize the 9 p.m. watershed – the time after which TV channels show programmes more suitable for adults. According to Dr Young, the television, once considered to be an electronic box in the corner of the room, is no longer a piece of furniture that the family gathers around a few times a year. Now, thanks to the digital age and greater channel choice, it is increasingly changing lives. Television in the 21st century is about improving friendships and encouraging people to have new adventures. And there's nothing bad about that.



- A The report says that women are in charge of the remote control in more than half of houses.
- B Four in five people, it seems, have developed some new interests because of a TV show.
- C Several key programmes are responsible for this increase.
- D This is thanks to the help offered by the many TV chefs who seem to live on our TV screens these days.
- E Young people, on average, are allowed between one and three hours a day in front of the TV.
- F Almost 40% of those interviewed said they spend several hours each week talking about their favourite programmes.
- G However, that doesn't seem to be the case in the UK.