

## Reading 3

### Skills:

- Details
- Vocabulary in context

**Getting started:** How much do you spend watching Netflix per week?

NETFLIX



Netflix is an American entertainment company specializing in online on-demand streaming video. From an initial business model that included DVD sales and rental by mail, Netflix **turned into** a major entertainment company that people access everywhere in the world and produces and releases its own movies.

Founded in Scotts Valley, California, in 1997, Netflix began its current subscription model in 1999. Now the company has over 117 million subscribers in 190 countries. Most of the platform's available TV shows, movies, performances, and documentaries are licensed from distribution partners. Nevertheless, in 2011, Netflix began planning its original content, investing in its own original series like

*Orange Is the New Black* and political drama *House of Cards*, as well as acquiring the rights to shows like *Lilyhammer* and the fourth season of *Arrested Development*. In 2017, Netflix made an aggressive move into producing feature films, aiming to release 80 in 2018 (more than all of the Hollywood studios' annual films combined).

Unlike traditional broadcasters, Netflix's goal isn't to appeal to as broad an audience as possible but rather to focus on **niches** and effectively give every slice of the population a show or movie they can't live without. Though Netflix is widely considered to be the platform that is winning the streaming-video wars, it has not rested on its laurels when it comes to improving the service. In December 2016, it rolled out a major user interface upgrade, replacing static poster images with custom-created videos that automatically play when you scroll over a title card. The redesign, which required a combination of creativity and data science insights, encourages Netflix's subscribers to discover what to watch **rather than** tediously browse its catalog and wonder if something is worth sampling.

The company also **unleashed** a download-and-go feature that allows users to watch shows offline, and its business has expanded into 130 new countries. This effort was followed up by a push to improve Netflix's mobile experience, which is important as the company expands into foreign territories where people prefer to watch video on their phones. In 2017, Netflix enabled faster menu scrolling on mobile devices, and changed the way content is encoded so that more static video scenes require fewer bits. This allows users to stream content more efficiently when using a phone, when internet quality can be **spotty**. These upgrades were companywide efforts that took years, demonstrating Netflix's commitment to standing out from competitors such as Amazon for more than just content.

\*Adapted from <https://www.fastcompany.com/company/netflix>

**Answer the following questions:**

1. The phrase **turned into** in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
  - a. span
  - b. move
  - c. became
  - d. happened

2. When did Netflix start operating, offering the kind of service they have nowadays?
  - a. 1997
  - b. 1999
  - c. 2011
  - d. 2017
3. In paragraph 2, what does the author mean when he/she talks about licensed content?
  - a. Netflix must pay a license to create their own content.
  - b. These are audiovisual products made by other studios.
  - c. This is content that is produced in foreign countries.
  - d. It refers to movies and series people have to pay for.
4. In paragraph 3, what does the author refer to when he/she uses the word niches?
  - a. A group
  - b. A place
  - c. A role
  - d. A job
5. In paragraph 3, what is stated about a change Netflix had in 2016?
  - a. They provided a sample of the catalog they'd offer in 2017.
  - b. They added an upgrade version people must pay for.
  - c. They completely changed the design of their platform.
  - d. They added a preview feature for the content in their catalog.
6. The phrase **rather than** in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to
  - a. prefer
  - b. very
  - c. sooner than
  - d. Instead of
7. The word **unleashed** in paragraph 4 is closest in meaning to
  - a. lose control
  - b. wanted badly
  - c. released
  - d. changed
8. The word **spotty** in paragraph 4 is closest in meaning to
  - a. have a lot of dots
  - b. not that fast
  - c. intermittent
  - d. correct

**What do you think?**

What is your favorite series at this moment?