

READING

Binge-watching

Binge-watching has become a popular way of consuming television and movie content, with streaming services making it easier than ever to marathon entire seasons or movie franchises in a single sitting. With the growing number of original series and the convenience of on-demand viewing, binge-watching has transformed how we watch television and has become a ubiquitous part of popular culture.

This week, we wanted to provide a unique look into the different experiences and perspectives on binge-watching within families. So, we talked to various members of the Evans family to discuss their habits and attitudes towards this trend.

13-year-old Amelia admits to being a huge binge-watcher. She says, 'For me, it's an important part of fitting in. My friend Denise isn't allowed to watch loads of television at home, and that makes joining in conversations really hard'. So now, Denise comes to the Evans house to binge-watch. Amelia admits that she doesn't do much besides watching films and series. Once keen on ballet, she gave that up years ago and hasn't picked up anything else since. However, Amelia knows that her grades at school are crucial in determining her ability to continue her TV-viewing habits.

Her mother, Karen, realises that Amelia is getting into a bad habit, but hasn't done anything about it. 'If I stopped her, then I would have to cut down on the amount that I watch to set a good example, and to be honest, I don't want to,' she says. 'After a hard day doing work and chores, who doesn't love chilling out for a few hours with some episodes of a good drama? Besides, it's not like I could do anything else instead, like join an evening class. I rarely get a chance to sit down before eight o'clock'.

Kyle, aged 17, usually has a video playing in his room. 'I wouldn't call myself a binge-watcher, though,' he says. 'I'm not one of those people who watch all the latest series as soon as they are released. For me, it's just background noise while I'm getting on with my hobbies. I just let it play whatever comes up next. I've seen all sorts of interesting stuff that I'd never choose for myself. I once saw a guy teaching how to cut up different fish. That was really cool.'

Father, Rob, sees it in financial terms. 'The monthly fee for streaming services is quite expensive, but in terms of the amount of entertainment we get, it's good value. And the more you watch, the cheaper it gets. It's much less than going out to the cinema, and everyone can watch whatever they like. Plus, even though movies or series are often bad, you can just switch to something else. Some of my friends have stopped paying for streaming services recently, saying they're too expensive. That's their loss'.

Rob's mother, Gill, is less enthusiastic, despite once enjoying watching back-to-back episodes of her favourite classic drama while bedridden due to illness. 'I remember having to wait a whole week for the next episode of that series to come out,' she says. 'And months for the next series. You got the excitement of wondering what was going to happen next. Nowadays, you get everything as soon as you want it, not like old-fashioned TV, and I think you lose something as a result'.

Meanwhile, Karen's brother Kevin is interested in the intelligent design of streaming platforms. 'They make recommendations based on what you've enjoyed, and often the recommendations are right up your street, so I guess that encourages binge-watching. Some people say that this limits what you watch. I'm not sure I agree, though. As a sci-fi fan, live-streaming services have introduced me to some great foreign and low-budget movies and series that I wouldn't have known about. I'm sure that up-and-coming filmmakers worldwide are benefiting from that promotion.'

1. Which of the following has resulted from Amelia's binge-watching habit?
 - A. She has poor conversation skills.
 - B. She does not have any hobbies.
 - C. She has problems fitting in.
 - D. She has improved her grades at school.

2. What is Karen's attitude to watching series on television?
 - A. She'll try to watch less television, to set a good example.
 - B. She watches television before eight.
 - C. She watches a lot of television as a way to relax.
 - D. She plans to do an evening class to reduce television time.

3. What does Kyle enjoy watching?
 - A. Series, although not the most recent ones.
 - B. Instructional videos related to his hobbies and interests.
 - C. Videos that he didn't pick himself.
 - D. Programs that his friends have recommended.

4. What does Rob think about streaming services?
 - A. They are well worth the money if you are a binge-watcher.
 - B. They aren't as enjoyable as going out to the cinema.
 - C. They aren't worth it because the movies and series are often bad.
 - D. He may stop paying for them soon because they are too expensive.

5. Gill thinks that binge-watching...
 - A. is good entertainment for people with long-term illnesses.
 - B. is better, as you don't have to wait to find out what happens.
 - C. results in people wasting a lot of their time.
 - D. prevents people from enjoying a sense of expectation.

6. Kevin feels that live streaming platforms...
 - A. only recommend videos that they is trying to promote.
 - B. prevent people from watching a wide range of videos.
 - C. are helping people new to the film industry to get attention.
 - D. aren't very good at recommending things to watch.