

# Too much TV bad for education

BY MOYA IRVINE

TEENAGERS who watch too much television are less successful at school, according to a 20-year study of nearly 700 children. Those who watched a lot of TV had more problems at school and were less likely to go on to higher education, researchers found.

5 Dr Jeffrey Johnson of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York led the research team, which studied young people's educational performance and TV habits at the ages of 13, 16, 22 and 33. The young people came from a range of social backgrounds and the team took their learning abilities at the start of the study into account.

10 The researchers found that the number of hours spent watching TV had a big effect on children's education. Twenty-two per cent of children who watched more than three hours of television a day - that included time spent playing Computer or video games - at the age of 14 did not go on to higher education. Only 7 per cent of those who watched less than an hour a day did not go to College or university.

15 For children who had learning problems to begin with, there was also a big difference: 45 per cent of those who watched a lot of TV did not go on to higher education, compared with 29 per cent of those who watched less than an hour a day.

The teenage years are very important for the development of thinking skills, and Dr Johnson says that children who spend too much of their free time watching television are not developing those skills. Watching TV is easy and does not require much concentration, unlike activities such as reading, and listening to the teacher during lessons.

20 Children who watch too much TV may "develop problems such as class-room boredom, 'hating school' and difficulty doing homework", Dr Johnson said. This, he suggests, may be partly because they have got used to the "highly stimulating material on the TV or video screen".

25 Dr Johnson said parents should limit their children's TV time. They should watch only "about one to two hours per day and they should be watching quality programming", he told journalists. Leonard Jason, a psychology researcher at De Paul University in Chicago who has studied children and the media for many years, took up the problem of "quality programming". He said that while there were good programmes on TV that were suitable for children, they were not the programmes kids watch. So to make sure their children are not harmed by TV, he says parents should see that they have television-free days or weeks.

30 Television is a problem that is not going to go away, says Jason. In fact it will become a bigger problem as it moves into Computers and iPods. "TV will be in all parts of our kids' environment, at home, the supermarket, walking down the street with friends. It will be hard for them to separate reality from fantasy," he said.

35 Statistics show that teenagers in the UK and the US already watch far more television than the researchers think is good for them. In American homes, a TV is on 7 hours and 40 minutes a day. The average 11 to 15-year-old in the UK spends seven and a half hours in front of the TV, video or Computer screen every day.

## A Reading Comrehension (16)

### I. Short Answer Questions

(6)

Answer the following questions by giving the information directly form the text.

According to a study, ...

1. ... if kids watch too much TV, how will it affect their education negatively? (2)

* problems at school
* they are less likely to go on to higer education

2. Apart from TV time, which two factors did the scientists also pay attention to? (2)

* social background
* learning abilities

3. For which other activities do the kids need to concentrate more than when watching TV? (2)

* reading
* listening to the teacher during lessons

### II. Multiple Choice

(6)

1. The numbers 13, 16, 22, 33 stand for...

A	... how old the scientists are, when they make the study.
B	... how old the test persons are when they are questioned.
C	... how many years the test took sometimes.
D	... how old the kids are when they have their own TV.

2. How high is the chance of going to college for normal kids if they watch no more than 60 minutes TV a day?

A	22%
B	7%
C	93%
D	Not in the text

3. According to Dr Johnson, from which problems will many kids suffer in school if they watch too much TV?

A	They feel bored and have a strong dislike of school.
B	Others hate them in school and they don't like homework.
C	They find it hard to do their homework and fall asleep in class.
D	

4. What is the problem with quality TV for children?

A	It doesn't really exist.
B	It's only for little kids, not teenagers.
C	There is not enough of it.
D	Children like other programmes better.

5. Why will TV become an even bigger problem in the future?

A	It is more interesting than even PCs and MP3-players.
B	Kids will have more and more screens to watch TV at.
C	You can buy a TV set in almost every shop in every street.
D	Reality TV and fantasy shows will mix up more and more.

6. How much TV do kids in Great Britain watch, according to scientists?

A	So much that it is definitively bad for them.
B	Too much - almost 8 hours every day.
C	More than the people who did the research.
D	More than seven hours and then some more on the PC.

### III. Mediation

(4)

1. Welchen Grund nennt Dr Johnson für die schulischen Probleme bei Kindern mit relativ hohem TV-Konsum? (2)

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2. Welche Ratschläge gibt Dr Johnson den Eltern, um solchen Problemen vorzubeugen? (2)

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### B. Grammar (11)

#### I. Tenses

Complete the following excerpt from Wikipedia by putting the verbs in the most fitting form (8)

**William Bradley "Brad" Pitt** (born December 18, 1963) \_\_\_\_\_ (be) an American actor and film producer. Pitt \_\_\_\_\_ (receive) four Academy Award nominations and five Golden Globe Award nominations, winning one Golden Globe.

40 Pitt first \_\_\_\_\_ (gain) recognition as a cowboy hitchhiker in the road movie *Thelma & Louise* (1991). His first leading roles in big-budget productions \_\_\_\_\_ (come) with *A River Runs Through It* (1992), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), and *Legends of the Fall* (1994). In 1995, he \_\_\_\_\_ (give) critically acclaimed performances in the crime thriller *Seven* and the science fiction film *12 Monkeys*, the latter earning him a Golden Globe Award for Best

Supporting Actor and an Academy Award nomination. Four years later, Pitt \_\_\_\_\_  
45 (star) in the cult hit *Fight Club* and after that in the major international hit *Ocean's Eleven* (2001)  
and its sequels. His greatest commercial successes \_\_\_\_\_ (be) *Troy* (2004) and *Mr. &*  
*Mrs. Smith* (2005). Pitt \_\_\_\_\_ (receive) his second and third Academy Award  
nominations for his leading performances in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008) and  
*Moneyball* (2011). In addition, Pitt today \_\_\_\_\_ (own) a production company, Plan B  
50 Entertainment, whose productions \_\_\_\_\_ (include) *The Departed* (2006), which  
\_\_\_\_\_ (win) the Academy Award for Best Picture.

Following a high-profile relationship with actress Gwyneth Paltrow, Pitt \_\_\_\_\_ (be,  
marry) to actress Jennifer Aniston for five years. Pitt now \_\_\_\_\_ (live) with actress  
Angelina Jolie in a relationship that \_\_\_\_\_ (attract) wide publicity.<sup>[3]</sup> He and Jolie  
55 \_\_\_\_\_ (have) six children—Maddox, Pax, Zahara, Shiloh, Knox, and Vivienne. Since  
beginning his relationship with Jolie, he \_\_\_\_\_ (become) increasingly involved in social  
issues both in the United States and internationally.

## II. Comparisons (3)

### C. Descriptive Writing

Describe the following cartoon. Write about 120 words.



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Dr Jeffrey Johnson of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York led the research team, which studied young people's educational performance and TV habits at the ages of 13, 16, 22 and 33. The young people came from a range of social backgrounds and the team took their learning abilities at the start of the study into account.

The researchers found that the number of hours spent watching TV had a big effect on children's education. Twenty-two per cent of children who watched more than three hours of television a day - that included time spent playing Computer or video games - at the age of 14 did not go on to higher education. Only 7 per cent of those who watched less than an hour a day did not go to College or university.

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The teenage years are very important for the development of thinking skills, and Dr Johnson says that children who spend too much of their free time watching television are not developing those skills. Watching TV is easy and does not require much concentration, unlike activities such as reading, and listening to the teacher during lessons.

Children who watch too much TV may "develop problems such as class-room boredom, 'hating school' and difficulty doing homework", Dr Johnson said. This, he suggests, may be partly because they have got used to the "highly stimulating material on the TV or video screen".

Dr Johnson said parents should limit their children's TV time. They should watch only "about one to two hours per day and they should be watching quality programming", he told journalists. Leonard Jason, a psychology researcher at De Paul University in Chicago who has studied children and the media for many years, took up the problem of "quality programming". He said that while there were good programmes on TV that were suitable for children, they were not the programmes kids watch. So to make sure their children are not harmed by TV, he says parents should see that they have television-free days or weeks.

Television is a problem that is not going to go away, says Jason. In fact it will become a bigger problem as it moves into Computers and iPods. "TV will be in all parts of our kids' environment, at home, the supermarket, walking down the street with friends. It will be hard for them to separate reality from fantasy," he said.

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### III. Mediation (4)

1. Welchen Grund nennt Dr Johnson für die schulischen Probleme bei Kindern mit relativ hohem TV-Konsum? (2)

Sie haben sich daran gewöhnt (1) an das stark stimulierenden Reize (1) (nur 0,5 für „Material“) am Bildschirm
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2. Welche Ratschläge gibt Dr Johnson den Eltern, um solchen Problemen vorzubeugen? (2)

* TV-Zeit begrenzen auf 1-2 Stunden am Tag
* Sie sollen qualitativ hochwertige Programme ansehen.

**William Bradley "Brad" Pitt** (born December 18, 1963) is an American actor and film producer. Pitt has received four [Academy Award](#) nominations and five [Golden Globe Award](#) nominations, winning one Golden Globe. He has been described as one of the world's most attractive men, a label for which he has received substantial media attention.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

Pitt first gained recognition as a cowboy hitchhiker in the road movie [Thelma & Louise](#) (1991). His first leading roles in big-budget productions came with [A River Runs Through It](#) (1992), [Interview with the Vampire](#) (1994), and [Legends of the Fall](#) (1994). In 1995, he gave critically acclaimed performances in the crime thriller [Seven](#) and the science fiction film [12 Monkeys](#), the latter earning him a [Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor](#) and an Academy Award nomination. Four years later, Pitt starred in the cult hit [Fight Club](#). He then starred in the major international hit [Ocean's Eleven](#) (2001) and its sequels, [Ocean's Twelve](#) (2004) and [Ocean's Thirteen](#) (2007). His greatest commercial successes have been [Troy](#) (2004) and [Mr. & Mrs. Smith](#) (2005). Pitt received his second and third Academy Award nominations for his leading performances in [The Curious Case of Benjamin Button](#) (2008) and [Moneyball](#) (2011). In addition, Pitt owns a production

company, [Plan B Entertainment](#), whose productions include [The Departed](#) (2006), which won the [Academy Award for Best Picture](#), and *Moneyball*, which garnered a Best Picture nomination.

- 70 Following a high-profile relationship with actress [Gwyneth Paltrow](#), Pitt was married to actress [Jennifer Aniston](#) for five years. Pitt lives with actress [Angelina Jolie](#) in a [relationship](#) that has attracted wide publicity.<sup>[3]</sup> He and Jolie have six children—Maddox, Pax, Zahara, Shiloh, Knox, and Vivienne. Since beginning his relationship with Jolie, he has become increasingly involved in social issues both in the United States and internationally.