



REALITY TELEVISION

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American Idol judge
Simon Cowell



Survivor TV show
winner Brian Heidik



Survivor executive
producer Mark Burnett



Kevin Reilly, head of
the FX cable network

D) ANTICIPATING

A) Have a look at the 4 photos below. Find the names of these shows (these shows are very popular in the USA)



(TV SHOW A)



(TV SHOW B)



(TV SHOW C)



(TV SHOW D)

B) Now, match a description with the correct show:

Description 1: This show tracks the dating adventures of a single man and woman

Description 2: A program featuring contestants who are trying to survive on a hostile island.

Description 3: A program which searches for talented singers, awarding the best with a recording contract.

Description 4: The series features a man who has supposedly inherited \$50 million. The women he dates do not know that he is in fact a construction worker with a modest income.

II) READING COMPREHENSION

>> TEXT:

Americans Captivated by 'Reality Television'

Americans have been captivated by a new kind of entertainment called "reality television." More than two dozen reality shows are on the air so far, and more are in the works.

Each week, ordinary people appear in unusual situations, trying to win \$1 million, going out on a date with a stranger, or displaying their abilities in on-air talent shows.

"OK, thank you, Chip. Your audition was very, very corny."

American Idol's Simon Cowell, a London-based music producer, tells VOA the program searches for talented singers, awarding the best with a recording contract. A judge on the program, Mr. Cowell produces a similar show in Britain called Pop Idol, and says he's never shy about bursting anyone's bubble. In fact, he's brutally honest. "I've been doing auditions for 25 years, and the nature of auditions are to tell the truth. And unfortunately, most people who turn up are dreadful," he says. "And I tell them."

The reality series Survivor watches ordinary people as they struggle to survive under harsh conditions. Last season, contestants were left on a tropical island in Thailand. Winner Brian Heidik says the show was about sleep deprivation, lack of food – and patience.

Contestants face challenges from nature and from their fellow contestants, who winnow their numbers by voting people one by one off the island. The winner, in this case Mr. Heidik, receives \$1 million. A car salesman with a gift for persuasion, he says he started with a strategy to outwit other contestants. "I'm going to control your mind, I'm going to manipulate your emotions, but I'm going to have a good time doing it," he says. "See, most people forget why they're out there. I kind of stuck to a plan. I reaffirmed to myself every day way I was there :the money, the money, the money, the money."

Executive producer Mark Burnett says Survivor has a loyal following of 20 million viewers because the series, in his opinion, is just as engaging as a movie. "It's a vicarious travel experience, compelling characters, and good story telling. It's not stunt TV," he says.

Survivor will soon enter its sixth season with contestants left to fend for themselves in the Brazilian Amazon.

Mike Fleiss produces several reality series, including The Bachelor and The Bachelorette, which track the dating adventures of a single man and woman. "These shows are all pretty tightly edited because you shoot round the clock, in the case of the Bachelor show, for seven weeks," he says. "So we end up with 700 hours of tape, and we only make seven hours of it. So we're boiling it down pretty thoroughly."

Some, like the series Joe Millionaire, have been criticized as ethically questionable. The series features a man who has supposedly inherited \$50 million. The women he dates do not know that he is in fact a construction worker with a modest income.

"The most talked–about show of the year, 'Joe Millionaire.' And it all starts right now."

The series was shot in advance of airing, so producers were able to keep the truth from the women until production was finished.

>> QUESTIONS:

1. "Reality Shows" have all failed. Nobody watches them.

- a) TRUE**
- b) FALSE**

2. Who is Chip?

- a) A TV producer**
- b) A singer**
- c) A millionaire**

3. Simon Cowell thinks that most of the people going to his auditions are very good singers.

- a) TRUE**
- b) FALSE**

4. Mr. Cowell never says to his contestants that they are bad.

- a) TRUE**
- b) FALSE**

5. Where did the last "Survivor" take place?

- a) In Japan**
- b) In Australia**
- c) In Thailand**

6. Who is Mr. Heidik?

- a) The winner of Survivor**
- b) The winner of Pop Idol**
- c) The winner of Joe Millionaire**

7. What is his favourite motto?

- a) "love, love, love, love"**
- b) "the money, the money, the money, the money."**
- c) "honesty, honesty, honesty, honesty"**

8. Executive Producer Mark Bunnett compares his show to...

- a) a stunt**
- b) a cartoon**
- c) a movie**

9. How long was the show "The Bachelor and the Bachelorette" broadcast on TV?

- a) 7 hours**
- b) 700 hours**
- c) 7 weeks**

10. "Joe Millionaire" features a man...

- a) ... who is a millionaire**
- b) ... who is on a hostile island**
- c) ... who pretends to be a millionaire**

III) ORAL COMPREHENSION

Here is the script of the tape. Fill in the gaps with the missing words:

addictive, applications, Candidate, comedies, criticism, far, nuts, popular, puzzled, television, viewers

Television executive Kevin Reilly is _____ as to why these programs are so _____. "Damned if I know," he says.

Mr. Reilly, the head of the FX cable network, says the shows are _____ once viewers start watching them. In fact, he's an addict himself and says reality television is a change from the tradition of scripted dramas and _____. "These are fresh, they're spontaneous, they're cultural events that everyone seems that they're just tapping into together," he says.

Mr. Reilly's FX network has its own reality show in the works. Called American _____, it will feature ordinary people who want to run for U.S. president. Scheduled to air in 2004, potential candidates are already sending in _____. "I don't know if they're qualified to be president, but these are people with something to say and actual credentials to back it up, and I'm sure a lot of _____, too," says Mr. Reilly.

Producers say reality _____ runs the danger of getting stale as one show copies another, or of repelling _____ as programmers create ever-more outrageous situations. One notorious episode of the series Fear Factor drew industry _____ for asking contestants to eat horse rectum. But TV executives say that, at least for now, viewers can't get their fill of the new reality shows and more new ones are likely.

"Just when you think 'Fear Factor' has gone too _____, they go further!"

IV) GRAMMAR: The possessive

Examples:

- American Idol's Simon Cowell
- he's never shy about bursting anyone's bubble.
- Mr. Reilly's FX network

> Main use

'Belonging to' or 'ownership' is one of the relationships it expresses :

John owns a car → It is John's car.

Form

To form the possessive, add 's ('apostrophe –s') to the noun.

> Exceptions to the rule!

a) If the noun is plural, or already ends in –s, just add: ' (an apostrophe).

The room of the girls = The girls' room.

b) For names ending in –s:

In speaking we add the sound /^ə z/ to the name, but in writing it is possible to use either 's or just '. The 's form is more common. e.g. Thomas's book,

c) Shops, restaurants, churches and colleges etc.

the grocer's

You don't need to add: shop

> Exercise: Build a sentence. Have a look at the sample sentence below:

Example: (factory/Mr Wilson) is in the suburbs. -> Mr Wilson's factory is in the suburbs.

1. (car / my parents) is a Rover. ->

2. (house / my uncle) is in the country. ->

3. (room / the children) is blue. ->

V) VOCABULARY Find the correct definitions.

A) a stranger	1) A test of the suitability of a performer
B) an audition	2) A man who has never been married
C) shy	3) Exceptionally bad or displeasing
D) dreadful	4) Said or done without having been planned or written in advance
E) a contestant	5) To obtain from someone after their death
F) a bachelor	6) Someone you don't know
G) to inherit	7) Lacking self-confidence
H) to feature	8) A person who participates in competitions
I) spontaneous	9) To show

VD ANSWERS

> **Anticipation:** **A) American Idol** (A program which searches for talented singers, awarding the best with a recording contract.) – **B) Joe Millionaire** (The series features a man who has supposedly inherited \$50 million. The women he dates do not know that he is in fact a construction worker with a modest income.) – **C) The Bachelor** (This show tracks the dating adventures of a single man and woman) – **D) Survivor** (A program featuring contestants who are trying to survive on a hostile island.)

> **Reading Comprehension:** 1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (a) 7. (b) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (c)

> **Oral Comprehension:** Television executive Kevin Reilly is puzzled as to why these programs are so popular. "Damned if I know," he says.

Mr. Reilly, the head of the FX cable network, says the shows are addictive once viewers start watching them. In fact, he's an addict himself and says reality television is a change from the tradition of scripted dramas and comedies. "These are fresh, they're spontaneous, they're cultural events that everyone seems that they're just tapping into together," he says.

Mr. Reilly's FX network has its own reality show in the works. Called American Candidate, it will feature ordinary people who want to run for U.S. president. Scheduled to air in 2004, potential candidates are already sending in applications. "I don't know if they're qualified to be president, but these are people with something to say and actual credentials to back it up, and I'm sure a lot of nuts, too," says Mr. Reilly.

Producers say reality television runs the danger of getting stale as one show copies another, or of repelling viewers as programmers create ever-more outrageous situations. One notorious episode of the series Fear Factor drew industry criticism for asking contestants to eat horse rectum. But TV executives say that, at least for now, viewers can't get their fill of the new reality shows and more new ones are likely.

"Just when you think 'Fear Factor' has gone too far, they go further!"

> **Grammar:** *My parents' car is a Rover. My uncle's house is in the country. The children's room is blue.*

> **Vocabulary:** A6 – B1 – C7 – D3 – E8 – F2 – G5 – H9 – I4