

1. Soap operas

This week's lesson takes a look at TV soap operas.

Level

Upper intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of popular TV soap operas in your students' country (presuming there is at least one). Why do the students think these shows are popular? Do any students particularly like or dislike a certain soap, and if so, why? Are there any recurrent themes in the popular soaps? Do the students think these shows have any impact on society, and if so, how?
2. Give your students between five and ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Note that a few of the words that might be new are not in the glossary because they form part of Exercise 1.
3. Give each student a copy of Worksheet B, then divide the class into pairs and ask students to work together. In Exercise 1 they have to find the words to match the definitions and in Exercise 2 they must answer the true/false/doesn't say questions.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C and ask them to work together to complete the crossword. (With regard to the three words that will read vertically if the horizontal words are filled in correctly, you might want to explain that 'The Queen Vic' is short for 'The Queen Victoria', which refers to the woman who was the British queen from 1819 to 1901. She is still the longest-reigning monarch in British history and the longest-reigning female monarch anywhere in the world.)
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1 (definitions)

1. slot 2. melodramatic 3. origin 4. fictional 5. gritty 6. gesture
7. domestic 8. consist of 9. housewife 10. storyline

Exercise 2 (true/false/doesn't say)

1. F 2. D 3. T 4. D 5. T 6. T 7. D 8. T

Exercise 3 (crossword)

1. adopted 2. theme 3. episode 4. square 5. glamorous 6. audience
7. dealt 8. on 9. viewers 10. daytime 11. products

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *The Queen Vic* will read from top to bottom.

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/>

The official *Eastenders* page on the BBC website. Accessible to upper-intermediate level.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jul/20/boris-johnson-eastenders>

A recent article (July 2009) from *The Guardian* on the real-life mayor of London, Boris Johnson, having agreed to appear in an episode of *Eastenders*. Challenging for upper-intermediate level.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/brazils-soaps-wash-away-the-mother-tongue-of-portugal-1260153.html>

An article from *The Independent* (1997) on the cultural influence of Brazilian TV soap operas in Portugal. Challenging for upper-intermediate level.