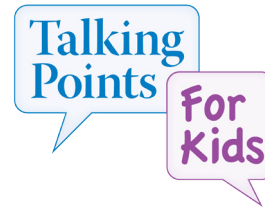


Cover photo:

©2009 by Jeroen Kransen. Some rights reserved <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/deed.en>



Television Time

Written by: Andrew Funk

©2013 Elfrieda H. Hiebert. Some rights reserved.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Photos used in this work are licensed as noted for each photo.

“Talking Points for Kids” is a trademark of TextProject.

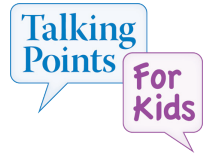
July 2013 Edition



Table of Contents

Television Time	2
What Science Says about Television Viewing.	3
Educational Television	4
Kid's Spotlight	5
Letter From a Principal to Parents.	6
What People in Other Countries Say About Television Time.	7
What Do You Think?	8

Television Time



Few people will ever climb Mount Everest, the highest point on Earth. But you know something about what climbers do to get ready for the climb and what they experience during it. How do you know this? You might have read an article in a magazine about an Everest climb. You might also have seen a program about Everest on television.

Even though you may never climb Mount Everest, or track lions in Africa, television can help you can see what it takes to do these things. Television can give you information on many topics. It can also tell you stories that make you laugh or relax.

However, there is another side to watching television. Some people spend so much time watching TV that they don't do much else. They don't talk with others or exercise. Also, certain kinds of shows can make people frightened of the world around them.

In this book, you're going to read about different ideas people have about watching television. You'll probably see that watching television is not all good or all bad. After you read this book, write and talk about your ideas with your classmates. What do you think is the best answer to the questions? How much time should children spend watching television?

What Science Says about Television Viewing

Scientists wanted to find out what happens when students watch television, so they asked them how they spent their time after school.

First, scientists wanted to know how much TV kids watch. To find out, they asked kids aged 8 to 18 how much television they watched every day. The chart shows what they found.

Hours of television children 8-18 watch per day	percentage
No Television	6%
Less than 1 hour	18%
1—2 hours	31%
3 or more hours	29%
Parents don't keep track	16%

Scientists also wanted to know if watching TV helps kids. They found that children can learn about letters, numbers, and how to play well with others. Educational TV, movies, and cartoons in classrooms also help students learn about things like animals or life in another country.

They found, though, that TV viewing can harm kids, too. They studied brain patterns of people after they watched TV. They found that certain scenes and sounds can make the brain active. This activity can last long after the program is over. Some scientists believe that this brain activity can make it hard for kids to sleep.

Violence on television can affect kids, too. Some kids see violence and act like the characters on the shows. They want to pretend that they are like the people on TV and fight with other children. They think they are having fun, but some children don't know that it is all pretend and get hurt doing things they see on TV. Still other kids become afraid of the world around them because of the violence they see on television.



Another thing scientists found was that kids who watched four or more hours of television every day were likely to weigh more than kids who watched less. That's because when you watch television, you don't move very much and you snack more. Moving helps your body burn the food you eat.

It seems, then, that scientists have not found many helpful things that TV does for kids. Is all TV viewing harmful or is there some way to make it good for kids? The answer may be in the amount of TV and the kind of programs kids watch.

Educational Television

Some people think that children, especially very young ones, should never watch television. They believe that simply sitting and watching television stops children from playing and talking with others. These are things kids need to do often, so there were not many shows for young children.

In the 1960s, people started creating educational programs that could help kids learn. *Sesame Street* is one kind of educational program. The people who make *Sesame Street* believe that television can teach kids about letters and numbers, and also about how to live with others. They hope that watching television like *Sesame Street* can help kids to succeed in school and can help make the world a better place.

Some educational TV programs teach students about other cultures and languages. Programs like *Dora the Explorer* use both the English and Spanish language. Programs like *Maya and Miguel* show Latino culture. Children who watch shows like *Maya and Miguel* learn that their community has many different kinds of people, some with their own culture and language.

Not every kid can travel or go to museums. Educational programs can help take kids around the world and to museums and help them learn about Earth. Shows like *Planet Earth* teach students about nature and interesting things that happen on Earth. There are also lots of interesting but dangerous things in nature. An educational program on sharks or volcanoes allows students to learn without getting hurt.

There are also educational programs that show students how things were in the past. Programs that take place in ancient Egypt show students how people lived then. Students can always read a book about ancient Egypt. But seeing how people dressed and how people talked to

each other helps students better understand what it was like to live in ancient Egypt.

Educational programs are special in that they try to teach people by showing it on television. Books about volcanos can teach the reader facts about volcanos. But educational programs can help bring volcanoes to life by showing how powerful and dangerous they are when they erupt.



Kid's Spotlight

Derek Anderson is in fourth grade. Both he and his dog like to run around and say hello to friends. But first, Derek does his homework so he has time to do other things.

Like many kids, Derek likes to watch cartoons and play sports. His parents make sure he finishes his homework before he watches TV. They also check what he watches. "They don't let me watch everything I want, but they do let me watch some cartoons and nature shows."

Sometimes Derek wants to know more about something he learned on a nature show. After watching one nature program, Derek did his science project on sharks. The nature program was about how sharks migrate in the ocean. Derek's science project mapped the migration of the Great White Shark. Derek thinks he might want to study why sharks migrate when he grows up.

Derek also plays soccer. He practices several times a week and has games on the weekend. Derek has made many friends playing soccer. Many of his soccer friends do not go to his school, so the only time he sees his soccer friends is during games or practices.

Derek has chores to do around the house, too, like feeding the dog and taking out the garbage. But he also spends time with his family. They like to play games and go hiking together.

"I do like watching cartoons and nature programs on TV," said Derek, "but there are so many other things I like to do, too. Hiking and playing with my friends in the park is how I like to spend my time."



Letter From a Principal to Parents

Dear Mr. Anthony,

I'm writing in response to the flyer I recently received. I don't agree there should be a school wide "No TV Week."

My son Michael loves school this year. He's learned so much. He has worked hard and can now read chapter books on his own. I know he probably wouldn't be doing so well in school if he was allowed to watch television day and night.

However, I don't like the idea of a "No TV Week." I know that the goal of "No TV Week" is for families to find other things to do besides watching television. But I feel the ban is also saying that no television is best, and I just don't feel that is true.

Michael does his homework after dinner while I wash the dishes. When he finishes, he needs time to relax. I'm teaching him to make good choices about how he spends his free time. Some nights he chooses to play with his younger brother or read. Other nights he just wants to watch his favorite TV programs. I let him decide.

I have a baby who needs a bath after dinner, too. I also need some time when I know Michael is settled and happy so I can relax. This is time that both my son and I need every day or we can both be rather cranky.

I think "No TV Week" is a good idea to help kids who watch a lot of TV, but Michael is not one of those kids. I also don't think it's fair to take away a parent's, or a kid's, choices. Free time should mean a person is free to choose what he or she wants to do.

Sincerely,
Anne Wilson



What People in Other Countries Say About Television Time

People in many countries are talking how much television children should watch. There are some people who don't believe kids should watch television at all. Others want to limit how much time children spend in front of any kind of screen. That includes TVs, movies, games, phones, and computers.

A group of doctors in Canada thinks that children under 2 should spend little time in front of any screen. They say that "less is best." Instead, they think children learn best by playing, having hobbies, and making up their own games.

The group also hopes parents in Canada will teach children how to use their screen time wisely. They think parents should watch programs with their children. Parents may be surprised to learn that a program their children are watching shows that it's okay to hit others and be bullies.

In England, a group of doctors has said that children under the age of 3 should watch no television at all. They think that children's brains develop best when they talk and play with other people.

Some people in England are also saying that children should ask their parents before they can use any kind of screen. They say that teens in England spend about six hours a day looking at screens at home, and that that's too much. They also worry about on-line chat sites, where kids can be bullied.

Many people in Canada and England, and in the United States, think that kids under 18 should spend no more than two hours a day watching any screen. They want kids to be doing things, not watching others doing things. They think that TV time is a waste of time.



What Do You Think?

How much TV do you watch every day? What are your favorite programs? Why do you like them?

If you didn't watch TV, what would you do with your time?

Do you think some programs are better for kids than others? What makes a program good for kids? What makes a program bad for kids?

Do you think that kids should use all screens (like movies, games, phones, and computers) less? Why or why not?

What Rules Would You Set About Kids Watching TV?

Should kids be able to watch what they want?	Should parents decide what kids should watch?
What kinds of programs should kids be allowed to watch?	Should different ages of kids watch different kinds of shows?