

REALITY AND TALENT SHOWS

Reality shows are television programmes that present unscripted¹ dramatic or humorous situations, document actual events, and usually feature² ordinary people instead of professional actors, sometimes in a situation where a prize is awarded³.

Reality shows often use a host to run the show or a narrator to tell the story or set the stage of events that are about to unfold⁴.

The first reality show that was broadcast in the United Kingdom was in 1964. The show, named *Seven Up* traced the lives of seven ordinary people who were first interviewed when they were seven years old. They were then interviewed regularly in the years that were multiples of seven, that is, at age 14, 21, 28 and so on. The show recorded responses of the candidates on the show over a certain period of time to understand their development and growth in terms of maturity.

In 1997, the Swedish reality show *The Survivor* introduced the idea of competition and elimination which has continued to be a much-followed **format**.



The genre became extremely popular around 2000 with the success of such television series as *Big Brother*.

A **talent show** is an event where participants perform their talents in the fields of acting, singing, dancing, playing an instrument, and other activities, generally for a reward or prize.

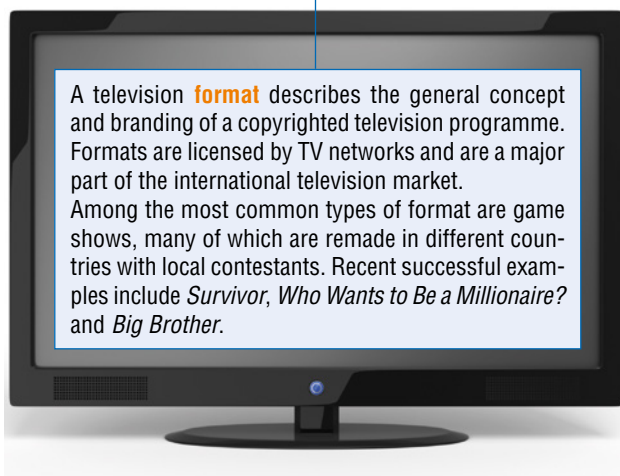
These shows, which involve a traditional **talent search**, follow the reality-competition conventions of removing one or more contestants during each episode and allowing the public to vote on who is removed. These programmes portray the stories of **very ordinary people** who are given the chance to show a nation just what they can do.

In recent times, talent shows such as *Pop Idol*, *Got Talent* and *The X Factor* series, have become a very popular genre of reality television. They also offer successful competitors an open door into the music industry, providing them with the opportunity to start a commercially successful career. The *Idol* series also requires the contestants to live together during the run of the show, though their daily life is never shown onscreen. There is also a good deal of interaction shown between contestants and judges. Television companies and radio stations worldwide have recognised that talent shows and reality shows **attract viewers** and **make money**.



GLOSSARY

- 1 not based on a script
- 2 show, present
- 3 given as for merit
- 4 develop



READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is a talent show?
- 2 What kind of people generally take part in a talent show?
- 3 What are some of the most popular talent shows?
- 4 What opportunities do talent shows offer to successful competitors?

VOCABULARY

● Explain in your own words the meaning of the following terms.

- 1 Talents
- 2 Prize
- 3 Ordinary
- 4 Competitors
- 5 Interaction
- 6 Worldwide

WRITING

- Do a survey in your class or in your school about the TV viewing habits of your peers. Ask these questions:
 - How much TV do you watch every day?
 - What is your favourite TV programme?
- Write some report notes and then draw a graph to show the results.

SPEAKING

- Do you watch reality shows? If so, which ones, and why do you find them so interesting?

ACTIVITIES

