

EPISODE 1: TV SHOWS AND MOVIES

C: So, we're talking about TV shows.

A: Sure

C: First things first. What is the difference between **chapters** and **episodes**?

A: Well, I think for both of us, the word chapters when used for TV shows raises our blood pressure, a whole bunch, because...

C: A good answer to start with, yes.

A: In most versions of English, TV shows have episodes, books have chapters.

C: Exactly.

A: There may be some exceptions because of poetic licence, out there. But, if you're not a native speaker, in English it is an episode for a TV show, chapter for a book.

C: TV shows, TV series, they have episodes and series, books have chapters.

A: Although if I remember correctly, Star Wars starts with Episode IV, right? The first Star Wars movie, you know, chronologically speaking, I think was Episode IV: A New Hope.

C: 1977.

A: The first movie that my parents ever took me to see!

C: A good year to be born.
(It was the perfect year!)

C: First question: all-time favourite TV series?

A: Favourite TV series. Usually, I would say Always Sunny in Philadelphia, but I feel like recently I've been talking a lot about that show. So...what about you? Give me a second to think about it.

C: I've got to go with The Sopranos. Always. Not Los Serrano, The Sopranos.



A: Dark and funny.

C: It's the script, yeah. The characters. For me, The Sopranos, for the scriptwriting, for the characters, and I do have a little story about this. Because back in the day, I was doing an episode in class of The Sopranos, now it's about 20 years old this TV show. So, I had the DVDs, I was preparing my class, on a post-it. The episode was about the son, AJ, who is having an existentialist crisis.

A: Sorry can I interrupt? You say *existentialist*? Cause in Chicago we would say 'existential' crisis. Just wondering.

C: The son is having an *existential* crisis. And he is asked to speak to his uncle, to his granny, to various people, you know, to try to...He is about to, I think it's Confirmation, to go to the Confirmation. So, I'm preparing this on a post-it and writing down meticulously, you know, 'minute 13:04, speaks to the uncle. Minute 24:14'

A: As a responsible teacher should so.

C: The preparation is there. Worksheets have been handed out to the students. We are in the Filologia building. Large screen. Good volume.

A: Great sound that Filologia has in these cavernous rooms from the 16th century.

C: You can turn the lights down, dim the lights, almost a cinematic experience. I have this all ready, I'm getting to the final scene. Now, I'm pretty certain I've written 48:04, so I put it to that minute 48:04. And- in these TV shows there are often various story lines, various plots going on at the same time. And I pause this, and I say 'ok, can everyone get ready, and in this scene can you tell me how AJ resolves his conflict with his existential crisis'.

A: Ok.

C: Press play. And there is a...yeah, a young lady and a young man who are, well, romantically involved in this moment.

A: They were giving each other roses and chocolate?

C: Well, there were...noises. So, at this point, I panicked, trying to press pause desperately and terribly embarrassed by the situation. And I do remember that when I eventually found the pause button, cause you never can in these situations, I looked up,



the class was staring at me. I'm thinking 'well, that's it, I've lost my job', and one student, Monica, just said: 'ah, so it's the same in English'.

A: I assume she was referring to the noises people were making.

C: Exactly.

A: Ok. Which is great because we all know all the onomatopoeic things are great, you know, the noises that animals make when you learn them in a different language is hilarious. I love 'achú'.

C: Right.

A: You know, they're sneezing or coughing. The way that these are represented in different languages is always funny when you see it.

C: And next question. The kids nowadays they seem to be watching Stranger Things. Seems very popular with teenagers and young people. But my question here is: an alternative to Stranger Things? If somebody just said 'oh, I love Stranger Things' what would you say? Like 'well if you loved that, you should watch...'?

A: First of all, let me just say, and what I always tell my class is this, because everybody or in every class at least one person wears a Stranger Things T-shirt at some point during the semester of the year: that I went to High School and used to hang out with Brett Gelman who is one of the actors in that show, and in a million other shows. He plays the American scientist who speaks Russian in the latest season, which I think you haven't seen. He goes to Russia with them and he's a huge character, and it's really funny because 'Brett Gelman! Brett Gelman!' Pretty funny. So, your question is: if they...somebody likes Stranger Things, what would you recommend to them. TV show.

C: TV series, TV show.

A: Ok. Yeah, sorry, in the US we say TV show more than...TV series exists but for us, TV show can be anything on TV. I think here, and correct me if I'm wrong, but in British English 'show' is more like, you know, you have a presenter and a host, like a late-night TV show.

C: Right.

A: And I think people here make the distinction between show and series often. But at least for me, in Chicago English, or suburban Chicago English, we say TV show or TV



series kind of interchangeably. So, show or TV series I would recommend...I guess I would say The Wonder Years, which is a show that I think both of us grew up watching.

C: Oh, classic.

A: Because I think the appeal for a lot of people, or at least the appeal for me of Stranger Things is the friendship between the kids. You know, and that's, and The Wonder Years is kind of similar. And The Wonder Years was nostalgic in the first moment that it came out because it took place in the 70s and it was made in the 80s and now here we are in the, you know, 2020s and so we have the nostalgia of looking back on something that wasn't nostalgic for us and despite that it was nostalgic in the moment that it came out. So, I think those emotions are quite nice.

C: People relate to that.

A: Exactly. What would you recommend?

C: For me I would take the kinda darker side of Stranger Things. The monsters and the creepy side, and I'd go for David Lynch, Twin Peaks which when that came out, wow. It was the TV show that on the first episode, after the first episode, I was hooked.

A: Yeah, this was mid 90s?

C: This was early 90s, I think 1991. And the idea, the premise of the show is 'who killed Laura Palmer?', the murder mystery. But of course, David Lynch is never gonna make it that simple. And when you watch Twin Peaks it's got that element of...I think David Lynch did this on purpose, he wanted to make like a Mexican soap opera mixed with kinda something dark, and mysterious and eerie.

A: Who doesn't?

C: And he had, there's a great story about this. He was worried about the second season, that the company wouldn't give him the second season,

A: He didn't know if he was gonna get picked up or not.

C: Exactly, so he thought one way to guarantee this, in the last episode, I'll just have a **cliff-hanger** with every character. So, he wrote ...

A: Cover all your bases.



UB talkin' to me?

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C: Cover all your bases. And he wanted a 'what's gonna happen? What's gonna happen to this character? What's gonna happen next?'. So, each and every character has a **cliff-hanger** and that's how he got a second season.

A: That's funny. I know, from David Lynch we watched half of the movie Inland Empire, I mean, among other David Lynch things, and it was too disturbing. I had no idea what it was about. It was weird and creepy and I kinda loved it but I've never gone back to see the second two hours of it. Have you seen the movie?

C: I've watched all of David Lynch's movies, I'm a big fan.

A: Ok, I just remember the people dressed up as rabbits in that weird house and it was just disturbing in a way that you don't know why because there was nothing that disturbing happening but the way that he uses the music combined with just the lighting creates an atmosphere that, I mean...

C: I think with David Lynch you got to let yourself go into his universe. I remember going to see Mullholand Drive with a friend of mine, Jesús.

A: Which is pretty normal for David Lynch, kind of accessible...

C: Yeah, my memory is coming out of the cinema, my mate Jesús, I'd never seen him as angry in my life going 'this makes no sense. This movie has no start, it has no finish. This is not a movie, how dare he make me pay?'

A: I want my money back!

C: Exactly.

A: There's an episode of The Simpsons where uh...what's the bully's name...well, you know the bully in The Simpsons, right? Him and Bart are kinda **frenemies**. Great word, by the way, right? 'Friend' plus 'enemy'? They're **frenemies**. Not Bart, but well, sometimes they're hanging out and they're sometimes fighting. So, they're walking out of a movie theatre and on the (marquee?) on the movie it says 'Naked Lunch' and the bully, he says 'I can think of two things wrong with that title', because obviously Naked Lunch by William S. Burroughs has nothing to do with being naked or lunch. It's just complete insanity, so...

C: Comedy! A comedy that you could watch, rewatch, rewatch. Is there anything that comes to mind?



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A: Again, normally I would say Always Sunny In Philadelphia, but for the sake of argument I would say South Park holds up pretty well. I never get tired of seeing little kids use bad words. There's something about **four-letter words**, another great expression in English. We say swear words or bad words or **four-letter words**.

C: Exactly, yeah.

A: In fact, this past weekend, at a hotel in Tossa de Mar. And of course, you know you have the star rating of hotels. But the thing is when it's a four-star hotel, we didn't stay in this hotel, but there is a four-stars superior hotel, which is four stars and then an S. Which your English brain just interprets as a bad word in plural. You know? It's like the 'something' hotel, star, star, star, S. Yeah, for me, I think South Park because it's real timely, it's great to bring you back to the year that it was made cause they always address modern issues because the way they make the show is that half the episodes or half the storylines are planned ahead of time and half of them they do the week before. So, they can address any urgent or pressing issue at that time. And again, little kids saying the F word and this it's always funny.

Vocabulary bank

Chapters = sections of a book

Episodes = a TV series has several episodes

Cliff-hanger = a dramatic ending making a viewer anxious to know what happens next

Frenemies = a friend, but also an enemy!

Four-letter words = rude or offensive words that usually have four letters!



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