

Name: .....

Date:.....

# My TV terror



Where is the off switch  
when you need it?

Tune in to a TV writing project.

Name: .....

Date:.....

To begin:

1. Do you think you watch a lot of TV or not very much?
2. Roughly, how much TV do you watch a day?
3. How much TV do you watch during the course of a year? (Quick maths challenge: can you work it out?)
4. What programmes do you never miss? What do you really enjoy watching?
5. What programmes can't you stand?
6. Do you have a TV in your bedroom?
7. Does your family have more than one TV?
8. Do you mostly watch TV with your family, with friends or on your own?
9. Could you live without TV? Could you go without it for a week, a month or even a year?
10. Have you ever been banned from watching TV?

Discussing or writing about these ideas will help you with your writing project.



Name: .....

Date:.....

This is a writing project based on the scenario of one person (you) innocently watching TV and then realising that some rather unusual things are starting to happen...

Good writers have to try things out and write in different ways in order to grab their readers. Try to experiment and try out new things in your writing.

Below are a few things that you try out in order to target the higher levels.

- Make your writing imaginative and interesting—think of different ways of telling the story.
- Show that you have thought about your audience and that you want to entertain your reader.
- Make sure that your vocabulary is imaginative—use a thesaurus or think about different synonyms you can use to improve your writing.
- Keep checking that your writing is divided up into paragraphs and well organised.

Think carefully about the ideas that you include and the way that you plan your writing. Good luck!



My personal challenge will be...

I want to show that I have thought about this in my writing and will keep focused on ensuring that I try to meet this challenge.

Signed: .....

## The problem with a little bit of Wingardium Leviosa...

On Saturday, I was *finally* left in peace at home on my own. So I did what anyone would do... raided the kitchen for snacks, went into the lounge, picked up the telly remote and flopped onto the sofa. I flicked through the channels not caring what was on—the main thing was that there weren't going to be any annoying interruptions from my family!

I was lucky enough to catch the beginning of one of the *Harry Potter* films. I'd seen this one before at the cinema but that was ages ago. Enjoying the peace and quiet, I just sat back and let the film draw me in.

It got up to the point where Harry and his classmates were learning the spell: 'Wingardium Leviosa' and trying to make a feather float. As Ron was trying to do the spell and failing, I just happened to say the same words aloud: 'Wingardium Leviosa'. At the same time, I started to wave my arms about. You won't believe what happened next!

The TV drifted up from the lounge floor and hung in mid air.

Yes, it was actually floating!

I blinked and blinked again. And when I saw that the TV was still floating I blinked some more. I rubbed my eyes and shook my head but it was *still* floating. Was the spell responsible? If so, how could it possibly work? I mean just saying 'Wingardium Leviosa' out loud and waving your arms around shouldn't work in the real world.

It was unbelievable. But then the TV began to bob up and down, up and down and my head was spinning round and round.

What on earth would Mum say when she got back and found the TV floating about the place? I thought to myself, 'I'll just explain what happened. She'll believe me I'm sure.' (Who was I kidding? There was no way she'd believe me. I wouldn't even believe me.) Nervously, trying out how it sounded, I said aloud: "I only said 'Wingardium Leviosa' Mum, and that's all..." I waved my arms to demonstrate what I'd done and that's when it all got much much worse...



Your writing task is to describe the scene in the front room as it unfolds and show the reader just how problematic a little bit of 'Wingardium Leviosa' can be!

So...

- What on earth has happened? Can you explain it?
- How could this be?
- What might happen next?
- You might try to pull the TV back onto the floor or even run upstairs to get a *Harry Potter* book and look up the reverse spell.

Ideas to think about:

- Can you fix the problem before Mum gets back?
- Would she ever believe you even if you told her the truth?
- Do you text or phone a friend for help? Do they believe you?
- How desperately do you try to sort it?

**Remember your personal writing challenge!**

- A **good** piece of writing will try to entertain the reader and make the events interesting to read about.
- A **great** piece of writing will be lively, entertaining and use descriptions that help the reader imagine what it would be like if it was them who had a problem with a little bit of 'Wingardium Leviosa!'



Don't worry if you're not a Harry Potter fan or haven't seen any of the films—you could still imagine what would happen if you said some magical words and they suddenly came true!

**Telly addict?**

Have you ever heard of the name *square eyes*, *telly addict*, *couch potato* or *goggle eyes*? They are all slang words for someone who is a telly addict, someone who can't ever miss any TV and who won't ever use the off switch on the TV!

Read this letter:

Dear Agony Pete,

I am very worried as I really think that I am addicted to watching TV. I don't care what's on and will just watch anything. My best mate calls me Mr Couch Potato and Mum is always saying that I watch too much TV. I do admit that I eat a lot while watching TV but I'm not really worried about that even if mum is.

I do my homework and eat my dinner in front of the TV every night. At the weekend I really enjoy staying in and watching stuff on the different channels.

I also have a TV in my room and I put it on as soon as I get up, I watch it while I get ready for school and I have to admit that I have been late lots of times because I get so involved in watching the TV that I forget the time and so I am on late report. When Mum and Dad find out I know they will ground me or even worse take my TV away which I couldn't cope with. What should I do?

Taylor, 13

**Write an advice letter to Taylor.**

- œ Can a 13 year old be a telly addict?
- œ Should he be worried about his health or his eyesight?
- œ Is it really OK to sit in front of the TV whenever you can?
- œ What advice would you give him?

**Can you write a symptoms list for a Telly addict?**

- This could be a serious definition or a funny definition.
- Think about their eyes, hands, body and brain.
- What happens to you when you sit and watch TV all the time?
- What should a doctor or a parent look for when they are doing a diagnosis?

## Design the ultimate remote control

If you could have a super, premiere, deluxe remote control, what features might it have?

Of course you need all the buttons that you would expect in order to change channels and to turn the TV volume up or down, but what extra buttons could you add and how would they work?



For example you might want:

- An auto-pizza order button.
- A freeze TV or freeze real time button.
- A mute button that doesn't just work on the TV!
- An auto find button that sends out a bleep to help you find it.
- A button to...
- A switch that...

Other ideas to think about:

- How modern is your remote? Does it need batteries or is it solar powered?
- What size is it?
- Does it only work for one owner?

**Your challenge is to be as inventive and imaginative as you can. There are no limits to what you might choose to design and include.**

### Tasks

1. Draw and label your own ultimate remote.
2. Write a user guide on how to work the remote and all the features that it has.

**'What's the question again?'**

It was the day after the floating TV incident and I'd just got home from school.

After getting a plate of toast to keep me going, I went into the front room. My brother was watching TV and I thought 'Well, it's sure to be safe enough now.' I mean, yesterday's strange events happened when I was on my own. I figured that having my brother around, annoying as he was, might just save me from any peculiar adventures of the television kind.

He was watching a quiz show on TV and when I walked into the room, he said, "No you're not turning over. Get lost, I was here first." He said it before I had a chance to sit down. Typical. Anyway, I ignored him, of course.

Now, when my brother watches a quiz show he always shouts out the answer and if he doesn't know it, he waits until the contestant answers and then says, "Yes, I was going to say that." He's so big headed he really thinks that if he was on a quiz show he'd be the winner and walk away with bags of money.

Eventually, after trying to steal some of my toast, he got up to get some food. As he walked out, he yelled, "Don't change the channel, I'm watching that." But I just couldn't help myself. I picked up the remote and was about to turn over when the remote started glowing and shaking in my hand. I tried to drop it and shake it free but it was glued in place. I looked down to see that my hand had gone all shimmery and pale.

The remote got hotter and hotter. I was about to shout for help when there was a whoosh and a swirl of sound and light.

I scrunched my eyes shut. This couldn't be happening.

Silence. I opened my eyes to see I was no longer in our front room! I was in a TV studio. Everyone was looking at me, waiting for something. Slowly, it dawned on me, it was my turn to answer a question...





**Your writing task is to describe that afternoon and your quiz show adventure.**

**Some ideas:**

- You could write this in any way you choose: as a story, a diary entry or an email to a friend.
- If you want to experiment with this task, an alternative idea might be to do this as a script of a phone call or conversation with a friend in which you describe the events and their reaction. Think carefully about the layout of a script before you begin this.
- Consider what details you need to include and what would make it interesting to read and enjoy.

**Take a moment to think about the following scenarios...**

- You might desperately try to explain that you're in the wrong place and that it's all an accident. Do people believe you?
- You might be delighted at the chance to show off and to be on TV but isn't it a bit strange to have been sucked into the TV like that?
- Which TV show do you end up on?
- What is the presenter like?
- How does it feel to be in the spotlight and put under pressure?
- What are the questions like? Do you manage to answer them or do you keep getting things wrong?
- You might imagine and describe your brother watching at home totally amazed or utterly shocked to see you on TV!
- Do you win or lose?
- How do you get home? And what happens then...?

**Proofread your work when you have finished in order to pick up any errors.**

**No TV?**

Today this letter was sent home to parents. Read it and think about your views.

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you to ask for your support in a matter that I sincerely believe will make a real difference to the achievement of all students in school.

You might have read in the press recently about various studies concluding that excessive TV viewing has a detrimental effect on young people's health, mental wellbeing and ability to achieve in school.

TV viewing is also linked to the rise in obesity in young people and concerns about future health problems. There is also the crucial issue of social skills and students being unable to interact well with others because they are so reliant on television.

Some of you might question these views and might wonder why I am writing to you about this issue. Before I go on, I must emphasise that I am writing from a sense of genuine concern at the negative impact that television has on our young people and I wish to suggest a positive solution.

I am requesting that all parents limit weekday TV viewing to **half an hour or less**, (ideally banning television watching altogether, although I know that this might be difficult to enforce). At the weekend I would suggest a **maximum of two hours** but not in a block that lasts longer than an hour. This would of course include programmes and films at the cinema, on DVD or video.

There might be parents who feel that these measures are intrusive and dictatorial. However, I would ask you to support the school and take into account the fact that I genuinely believe that this measure will have beneficial effects on your child's long term success and health.

I understand that many students will resent this and that there may well be resistance to this policy but I have no doubt that some will accept these proposals and feel the benefits in their home and school lives. Letters will be sent home to all students and there will be assemblies on this subject. The school council have been consulted and although there was some hostility from a small number of students, the majority showed overwhelming support for the proposal.

I would be happy to hear from any parents, both those supporting or opposing my proposal. I am, of course, confident that the benefits behind my proposal will outweigh all possible negatives.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Mum totally disagrees with the Headteacher's letter. Although she does agree that too much TV can be damaging, she also thinks that kids need a chance to relax after school and escape from the various pressures and stresses they have. Mum also says she would hate to miss all her favourite TV shows and that it wouldn't be fair to stop you from watching what you liked because she can imagine how that would feel.

However, Dad thinks it is a brilliant idea and he wants to start straight away. He does watch TV but when he was younger his parents were very strict with what he was allowed to watch and he thinks it would be a good idea to try out the no TV policy even it's only for a month.

Your parents do talk about this issue but can't agree, so both Mum and Dad write to the Headteacher to express their views. Their letters are very different but both are polite and both express very strong views about the proposals.

**Your writing task is to write a formal, persuasive letter to the Headteacher that could be written from the perspective of either Mum or Dad.**



### Top tips before writing

- Think about Mum and Dad's different views.
- Read over the letter sent by the Headteacher. Look carefully at the arguments that were used and think about how you could respond.
- Keep your writing formal and clear. Good paragraphs will really help to organise your ideas.
- For a top level, try to include at least five connectives as these will help to develop your argument. Connectives are words like: *however, although, on the one hand, on the other hand, despite, even though, yet, nevertheless.*
- Keep the letter polite. This way your views will be respected and listened to. Remember your personal writing challenge.

**TV is bad for you?**

**Children ordered to stop watching!**

**A local school has shocked parents and students by...**

**Your task is to write the front page news story for the local paper reporting on the Headteacher's letter and the reactions to the NO TV proposal.**

Good newspaper writing relies on the main details being explained clearly to readers. Your story should contain all the key facts, explain the reactions, and comment on the events.

Before writing, you should think about the possible reactions to the story. The school might be in uproar, or there might be a lot of support for the Head's idea, you must decide.

Plan out your story using the 5 W's:

**Who** is involved?

**When** did the events happen?

**Why** did the Head send the letter?

**Where** are the events taking place?

**What** is the main issue that you are reporting on?

### **Effective writing**

**Journalists have to check stories that they write very carefully for:**

- accuracy – have they reported the story correctly?
- spelling of key words: titles and names
- clear paragraphs to ensure that their writing is easy to follow and has a helpful structure
- punctuation that helps readers to understand their writing
- errors -check your writing like a good journalist would before handing in your final copy.

### **Special points of interest:**

After you have written your lead story you could:

- write a follow on piece that asks readers their view on the topic
- script an interview with some students and their parents
- You might like to include some research about the effect of TV on viewers.

## Sucked in to sing...

Mum loves to watch musicals on TV. The only DVDs she owns are musicals. At Christmas, whenever the local theatre puts a musical on she gets tickets for the whole family and we all have to go. This is OK I suppose, but it's really embarrassing when Mum joins in with the songs.

She also really loves watching any reality show which involves choosing a star (like Maria, Joseph or Nancy) and she never misses the X-factor. She sings around the house but when we say she should go for an audition she always says "No... no way."

But at least she can sing. I'm terrible and in music, my teacher, who demands that everyone in class should have a go and sing loudly, actually told me to mime! I do sometimes sing along to my iPod, but only when I'm alone, otherwise my sister makes jokes and my brother makes howling noises.

It was Sunday and only mum and I were in. I had heaps of homework to do and a special project for music - to write a review of a musical. Mum was delighted: "What a brilliant homework," she said, and rushed to get her pile of DVD musicals for us to choose from.

I flicked through them. I'd seen most of them at least once and had heard all of the songs hundreds of times but mum was so happy I couldn't disappoint her. I handed her a DVD and she put it on. The film began with a big song.

I started to jot down some notes about what was on screen and was humming along when the phone rang and mum went to answer it. She started chatting away and I was considering just making up my notes when a voice in my ear said, "That's your cue."

"My cue? My what?" I said.

I looked around. Suddenly I was surrounded by people in fancy dress costumes and I knew it had happened again. But this time I was in a musical and it was my big song. I cleared my throat. I had to make a choice...



**Your writing task**

You have ended up in a musical and you are one of the characters.

- This should be an entertaining task but you will need to think about the setting that you choose.
- You might know the song that you have to sing or you might make a mess of it! It is your choice.
- The musical could be from the past or modern day.
- Make sure you describe what it is like being in a world where everyone sings together all the time and people (or animals!) are ready to jump up and dance at the first opportunity!
- If you want, you could make yourself a talented singer, or you could be really bad. Maybe you have to mime, like in music class.
- Your story could start with a description of what you are wearing, where you are and all the people around you.
- You do not have to describe the whole musical—perhaps you are only there for one song before you pop back to your front room. Mum might still be on the phone when you return.

**Ideas for possible musicals:**

- Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory
- Once more with feeling (Buffy)
- Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
- The Wizard of Oz
- High School Musical
- Sound of Music
- Mary Poppins
- Annie
- Oliver
- Bugsy Malone
- Chitty Chitty bang bang

**Help:**

You might find the task easier if you pick either your favourite musical or the one you know best. If you aren't sure, don't worry! You could imagine you have been transported into a programme like *How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria*, *Any Dream Will Do*, *I'd Do Anything*, *X-factor* or *Pop Idol*.

**Extension tasks**

There have been many different adventures and now it's **your** turn to exercise your creative muscles. You can choose any task or invent your own.

**Top tips:**

Before you begin writing, look carefully at all the other tasks that you have completed. Think about the way that you will tell your strange tale. You could share ideas with a partner before beginning writing or planning.

- How will you start?
- How will you develop the idea?
- What ending will you come up with?
- What will make this story different to all the other stories that you have written?

**Your choices:**

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**Sports show**—you could be commentating or playing—any sport you want. Your writing could be a commentary on the game that you suddenly find yourself part of or you could describe actually being in the experience. Did you land into a football game, the Olympics or an important competition? You decide.

How would it be to end up in an **animal programme**? Do you go on safari. Are you hunting down a rare and exotic creature or are you part of a zoo documentary?

Could you be blasted into a **cooking show like MasterChef**? If you choose this you should include the recipe that you cooked on screen.

How about ending up in a **drama**? Think about all the popular shows like police dramas, hospital dramas or dramas set in the past. What character might you end up as? How does the story develop? Are you a police officer or suspect in **The Bill**, a doctor or patient in **Casualty** or do you end up in an old fashioned drama set in Victorian times? Think carefully before beginning your story.

What about a **reality show or documentary**? How would it feel to have the cameras following you and everything you do?

Your choice... be as adventurous as you can!

Good luck!

## Soapy, soapy...

I always watch the same soap from Australia at the same time every day. It's great to see some sunshine and listen to everyone saying "G'day".

After the week I'd had, you'd have thought I might have been ready to give up watching TV all together, but things weren't that bad yet. Besides, I needed to relax after school and try to recover from the wild things that had been happening.

I turned on the small TV in my bedroom (but got ready to run out of the room if anything weird started to happen). After a while, I sat back, relaxed and settled down to watch the latest episode of my favourite soap.

I must have been tired because my eyes closed, just for a second. Almost immediately I felt someone shaking my shoulder.

"Wake up mate." Was this my brother? It didn't sound like him. He was being polite for a start!

My eyes opened and shut again straight away. I was back in school... but not my school. And I wasn't wearing my school uniform. What on earth was going on? I'd already done a day at school. This wasn't fair. Everyone around me was suntanned and had this weird twangy accent. They seemed to be expecting me to say something...

Could I really be in Australia?



**Your writing task is to describe how it feels to star in your favourite Australian soap opera. Choose from one of the three options below.**

1. Write a postcard home from Australia.
2. Email your friend to let them know where you are and what has happened.
3. Write your story of the Australian adventure.

What do you do while you are there? Who do you talk to? Be creative with this task as it could be really fun to be in Australia and star in a show that you always watch.



**Meet the TV star**

If you could meet any five famous TV stars who would they be and why?

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

The good news is that you've won a competition to meet and interview your top TV star. They can be an actor, a presenter, or anyone else from TV. From your top list, choose just one person. A good interview should try to be informative, find out something new about the person and entertain the reader/listener.

**Think of five questions that you might want to ask your TV star.**

**Top tips:**

- Try to include an unusual question or a question that the celebrity hasn't been asked before.
- Make the questions ones that cannot be answered in a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This will make your interview more interesting.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

**Alternative creative tasks**

- These creative writing tasks can be done at any time. You might come up with your own spin-off idea after writing any one of the adventures.
- Mum's diary. You've been acting strangely and Mum is concerned. Write her diary for some of the days that you have been involved in strange events. What does she think has been going on?
- Write a newspaper report about the mysterious happenings. Is there something strange going on in the local area and has this happened before?
- Your sister or brother have a friend around and they have heard about your weird week. What do they ask you? Write a script of their conversation with you. Will they believe the tales that you tell? Think carefully about the structure of your writing for this task.
- Write your own diary or letter to a pen pal about the strange happenings. Convince them what you went through was real and that you are not joking when you say that you got sucked into the TV.
- Write a no-TV diary—what would life be like? Imagine how you'd spend your time. How might your family act and behave? Would they join in? Would you all manage it or would someone in your family cheat?
- Your own amazing or alternative writing idea.



**Welcome to the show!**

Some of the most important things in any TV show are the characters that are in it. There are many memorable characters on TV shows that viewers either love or loathe! Some characters are really popular and have been on shows for years and years and sometimes new characters join a show and change things.

**Your task is to invent a new character to join a TV show that you watch.**

Just like in a story when you create a character, you need to give lots of detail so that the actor playing the part can get the character just right. In your writing you will have to build up their profile with lots of interesting ideas to make your character unique. Will viewers love them or loathe them?

**Thinking points**

Before you begin, it is important to think about the type of show that you are creating the character for and how they might fit in to the show.

- Are they new arrivals or are they related to someone in the story already?
- Someone from the past?
- Will they cause trouble? Do they create problems or are they really friendly? How do they fit into the show?

**Headings for your notes**

1. Name, age and gender of the character.
2. Physical description—height, size and other details.
3. Appearance—typical clothes they wear.
4. Job or what they do.
5. Related to.....? This could be family or connections to others in the show.
6. Reason for being in the show: new job, new school, dating someone.....
7. What kind of character are they? Troublemaker? Friendly? Funny? Serious? Make sure you explain the way they behave when they are on screen.
8. Details of first arrival on screen—how do they get introduced to the show?

**Alternative non-fiction tasks**

These writing tasks can be done at any time.

You decide to write a help guide for anyone else that might get end up in a similar situation to yours. What advice would you give to someone who has been sucked into TV and transported to different TV shows? Before you begin, think about the structure of **advice texts** and the way that you will need to plan out your writing.

Write the '**NO TV?**' letter that was sent to all students by the Headteacher explaining his 'No TV' proposal. Be formal and persuasive. Think about letters that the school have sent out and the style that they are written in.

Write the script for the assembly in which the 'No TV' proposal was presented to students. Think about who does assemblies in your school and how assemblies are structured/what style they have.

Write your own ideal TV page of your dream TV night for you and one for someone in your family. What would you like to see?

Feeling brave and ready for a challenge? Could you really give TV up for week? Try it and write a journal about your experience. Challenge your teacher and friends to do the same!

Find out about the organisation **White dot** by going on their internet site [www.whitedot.org](http://www.whitedot.org) . After looking at the site, write a paragraph explaining your reaction to their ideas.

Can you answer this question: '**Would the world be a better place if there was no television?**' Ask at least four other people of different ages for their views before writing your response.

Find out about the history of TV. You could use the internet to help you research this. Present your findings as a timeline.



## TV free ...?

Today, I turned on the TV and everything seemed normal enough... Even so, I was still a bit wary. In the back of my mind I was considering giving up TV, but would you be able you do it? I mean what would I do instead?

No. I decided I couldn't possibly stop watching TV. Well, not today anyway. I mean the new series of Dr Who was about to start! I have to admit to being a big fan—I even have a sonic screwdriver pen that Gran got me for Christmas!

I don't really need to say anymore as you can probably work out what happened. But I'll tell you anyway. I turned the TV on, the credits started and the music came on but it sounded a bit too loud. I got up to turn it down. As soon as my hand touched the button I knew that I wasn't at home anymore.

I was in the Tardis. The actual, real Tardis.

There was a cough from behind me. I turned to see Dr Who. Slowly, they looked me up and down and said, "Welcome, and who are you?"

I coughed. I spluttered. Then, slowly, I replied...



## Writing task:

**You have the chance to go travelling with the Doctor as their assistant.**

- What world do you visit? What aliens/otherworldly beings do you see?
- What amazing events take place?
- This is a science fiction story and can be set any time and any place you choose.
- The Tardis might go back in time or into the future, you can decide where you'd like to go.
- You might go back to see your Mum and Dad as they appeared as children, or to an important date in history.

Don't worry if you're not a Doctor Who fan. You can share ideas with a partner or ask someone who is, for some help.

**Review page**

This is your chance to look back at what you've written during the course of this project. Use the headings below to help you to comment on your work. Be honest and think about what you have done well and how you could improve.

1. Which piece did you most enjoy writing? Explain why.
2. Which was the hardest piece to begin or to write? Try to give a reason as to why this might have been.
3. You set a challenge for yourself before starting to write, what was your challenge?
4. Do you think that you met your challenge?
5. Which is your best story from this project. Explain your answer.
6. Which is your best piece of non-fiction writing from this project? Explain your answer.
7. How did you try to improve your writing in this project?
8. What do you think you need to target in your next piece of writing?

