TEACHER: Just before you read this we said... We know the text is called “Television: Friend or Foe?” Is it a friend or an enemy? What do you think? Do you think television is a good thing, a friend, or not such a good thing, an enemy?

What do you think, Grace?

GIRL 1: Well, I think sometimes 'cause no good TV shows, it's a foe, but sometimes it's a friend 'cause all your favourites are on.

TEACHER: OK. People can add to that. Tess. Yep?

GIRL 2: I think television is a friend because it can, like...make... entertains you.

TEACHER: OK. Zara?

GIRL 3: I think it's both because it can tell you important things, but it can also make you, like... it can, like, hurt your eyes if you watch it too long.

TEACHER: Great. What do you think, Sam?

BOY 1: I think the same as Zara.

TEACHER: Right. Why do you think that?

BOY 1: Because you can get documentaries and you can watch them, informational things, and you can also just watch cartoons.

TEACHER: Great. Fantastic. OK.

Now you can have a look at your books.

GIRL 1: (READS) "It gives us news and information. It entertains us. It can relieve boredom, and it is company for people who live alone. It also enables people to take alone...

"It... It also enables to take part in events all around the world, even those events that are out of this world. For example, in 1969, when Neil Armstrong took the first steps on the moon, people everywhere were able to share this moment with him through the medium of television.

GIRL 2: (READS) "He or she is sitting looking at a screen...at the screen. Most children watch several hours of television a week, and this may...may mean that they are not doing enough exercise.

"Without plenty of activities, the body becomes weak and unfit. Bones and muscles do not grow strong and blood...prus... pursues raises."

TEACHER: Try that again. Pruh.

GIRL 2: (READS) "Pressure raises."

TEACHER: Can you read that whole sentence again?

GIRL 2: "Bones and muscles do not grow strong, and blood pressure rises."

TEACHER: Excellent.

BOY 1: ...acts on the brain too. In 19... In 1997, 600 Japanese children became ill with fits, vomiting and sore eyes while watching a cartoon video. In the cartoon there was an explosion where flashes of red, white and blue light went on for about... over five seconds.

"Doctors thought the flickering colour...coloured lights interfered with the workings of the brain.

"Luckily the effects were not permanent, and all the children recovered.

"Television has also been blamed for causing children to not con... concentrate for long spans of time. For example, you might be watching a movie about a musician, but every few minutes it could be interrupted by a commercial. This sort of thing can split a child's attention span into short burts...bursts, and the constant interruption can make the children...child jumpy and inattentive."

GIRL 3: (READS) "Make sure you get the best from television. The most important thing is to make sure that you get plenty of exercise. Playing outside is a lot more interesting than being a couch potato, and better for you too.

Don't overdo the snacks, either. They are nice to eat, but sitting...sitting still and eating too much sugary or fatty food is not good for you.

"Next, be choosy. Try to watch only... quality programs. Think about the delete button on the computer. This button allows the computer to erase mistakes or anything that you do not want to keep. But there is no delete button in your memory. If you watch something bad, it can remain stored in your memory.

"Spending time with your family is more important than a television program. Talk to your parents and friends about what you see on television. Make time to watch programs that teach you something. It is an easy way to learn.

"Think about what you have seen - do you agree with it? Would you like to learn more? Do you know a person who comes from a place... Do you know a person who comes from a place you have ever seen on a television?

"In this way, you get the most benefits from watching television and avoid the drawbacks."

TEACHER: Fantastic. You can sit down.

TEACHER: Tell us what were some of the reasons the text gave us for television being a friend?

GIRL 1: Gives you information.

TEACHER: Great. Sam, can you add to that?

BOY 1: There's benefits 'cause, like, you can watch informational shows and you can also, like... Like, you can watch the Olympics instead of just spending money and being there live.

TEACHER: Great. Can you add to any of that, Zara?

GIRL 3: Um... It... it can be like... Like, um...sort of the same as Tess - it can be, like...interesting and... entertain you for a bit.

TEACHER: Great. What about some things the text told us about being a foe? Sarah...Zara?

GIRL 3: It... it can, like, be... So if children...do it... If children watch a lot of TV before bed, they can have poor sleeping.

TEACHER: Great. Can you add to that, Sam?

BOY 1: Um...they can... when you watch television, your...you don't grow as much, and you don't exercise, and most people eat while they're watching television, so instead of burning all the sugar, then it turns into fat.

TEACHER: Great.

GIRL 2: Mine was the same.

TEACHER: Can you add more information, if it was the same?

GIRL 2: Mmm, well, don't overdo eating snacks while watching TV.

TEACHER: Great.

GIRL 1: Mmm, well, watching too much TV can... contact will lessen between your parents.

TEACHER: Great. So you won't have as much contact with your parents, and maybe not talk to them as much. Is that what you mean?

GIRL 1: Yeah.

TEACHER: Fantastic. Have a look at the pictures they've used, and the photos of they've used of...TVs. Can you tell me a little bit about the... pictures and the illustrations in the text?

Grace?

GIRL 1: Well, in this one...I usually see different symbols, like... Yeah.

TEACHER: So what is it telling us about the symbols?

BOY 1: Well, the PGR means you need parental guidance.

TEACHER: Can you explain that a little bit more?

BOY 1: So you need parents watching you, if you're like under 15 or something, while you're watching it.

TEACHER: And what would the reason for that be, do you think?

BOY 1: Uh, there might be a little bit of violence, something like that.

TEACHER: OK. Can you tell us about any of the other symbols?

BOY 1: Well, M's 'for mature audiences'.

TEACHER: Yep.

BOY 1: And that is for, like, 15, 12 year olds.

TEACHER: Yep.

BOY 1: Teenagers. And I think R's for 18 plus.

TEACHER: Great. Are there are any other symbols in there? Zara, would you like to comment on some of the other ones?

GIRL 3: I think...G, um...it means, like, anyone can watch it without, like...parents watching over you, and anyone can watch it.

TEACHER: Does anyone know what the G stands for?

GIRL 1: General.

TEACHER: Fantastic. Well done. So we've spoken about all those. What about C? One more.

GIRL 2: Maybe critical?

TEACHER: Critical? Any other ideas?

BOY 1: It said C and G are... It says C and G, those are both suitable for children.

TEACHER: Great. So what do you think C might stand for, then, Sam?

BOY 1: Children.

TEACHER: Correct. Well done. Fantastic. Excellent. So maybe if you have got little brothers or sisters that watch ABC Kids... have a little look at the ratings. You might see a C or a G in there. Fantastic. OK.

TEACHER: So now that you've read this text, I'm going to ask you the same question I asked you at the start. Do you think... TV is a friend or a foe? Grace?

GIRL 1: Well, I think it's more of a foe because it does stuff to your body and you're not very healthy and you can just damage it.

TEACHER: In what way? Can you explain a little bit more?

GIRL 1: Like, you can damage your hearing and just your body in general because, like, if you eat too much, you're not getting that fit.

TEACHER: Great. Fantastic. Tess? What's your opinion?

GIRL 2: I think it's a foe as well, 'cause it doesn't benefit you, but only if you're, like, watching an informational one.

TEACHER: OK. Great. Zara, what do you think?

GIRL 3: Um...I...I still think it's kind of both, because you can...you can watch, like, information, or you can watch just... like, cartoons or something like that.

TEACHER: So which one is beneficial and which one is foe, of the examples you've given us?

GIRL 3: Like, the cartoon would be foe because it's not really giving you any information about anything. And... Yeah.

TEACHER: And which...what's a friend?

GIRL 3: Like, a documentary or... Because it's giving you information about... something.

TEACHER: So you think it's a bit of both.

GIRL 3: Yeah.

TEACHER: Great. OK. Sam?

BOY 1: Yeah, I think the same as Zara. It's kind of both, 'cause you can watch information or cartoons.

TEACHER: Can you give us a bit more information?

BOY 1: Not really.

TEACHER: Why do you think it's a friend?

BOY 1: Well, 'cause you can...Like, if you only watch it... Like, if you don't watch it that much, but you still watch it a little, and you exercise and stuff like that, but then it won't really affect you much. But... Yeah.

TEACHER: But...? How is it a foe?

BOY 1: If you...if you don't exercise, like... at all or something, then it's a foe.

TEACHER: Great. Fantastic. So... Can anyone think of other reasons, besides the ones that we read today, where television would be a friend? Other reasons why that aren't listed in this text.

Grace?

GIRL 1: It can be a friend because... you can record stuff and then you can, like... You do what usually do, and then in your free time, you can just watch it.

TEACHER: Great. Fantastic. So do you mean other stuff like exercise, the stuff that helps you be healthy?

GIRL 1: Yeah.

TEACHER: Great. That sort of added on to your other answer.

Anyone else can think of another reason why TV would be your friend?

OK. Can anyone think of another reason that's not in here why TV would be a foe? Tess?

GIRL 2: Um, well, it's... Your eyes can get damaged from watching too much telly.

TEACHER: Great. And how do you know that, Tess?

GIRL 2: Um... 'Cause if you watch it for a long period of time, like, you're only looking in one spot. And then, like...you're not looking around everywhere else.

TEACHER: And you think that might damage your eyes? Wow, that's a very good... good observation. Anyone else can think of another reason why?

BOY 1: Well, I'm going to read into Tess's question.

TEACHER: Great.

BOY 1: Um... There's the saying that you can get square eyes, and it sort of means that television can just break your eyes.

TEACHER: Great. Fantastic. And has anyone's parent or grandparents ever said, “Don't sit too close to the TV"?

GIRLS: Yes.

TEACHER: Yeah. "It's going to damage your eyes." I've heard that lots from my kids' grandparents. Tess, does that happen to you all the time?

GIRL 2: Yes.

TEACHER: Thought so.

TEACHER: Has anyone learnt anything new about TVs today that they didn't know before? Grace?

GIRL 1: Well, I learnt more of the foe side - that if I watch too much TV, it can damage my body.

TEACHER: So has this maybe changed the way you might use your TV?

GIRL 1: Yeah.

TEACHER: How has it changed?

GIRL 1: Um...it's changed because now I'm gonna get outside more and be more fit, instead of just being on the couch and watching TV.

TEACHER: Fantastic. What about you, Tess? Something you've learned?

GIRL 2: Well, that...I learnt that tellies can sometimes, like... It can affect your body and make you, like, bigger and...then your blood can increase.

TEACHER: Your blood pressure will increase. Great. So has this changed the way you're going to be using TV from now?

GIRL 2: Yes.

TEACHER: Can you explain how?

GIRL 2: Well, I'm gonna...like Grace, I'm gonna go outside more and play.

TEACHER: Fantastic. Zara, have you got something to add?

GIRL 3: Um...I learnt about, like... I learnt about the...the...the... kids that watch TV, they...they don't have much contact with their parents. So... They're... So they won't know what's happening, so the parents won't know what's happening with them and what's going on, 'cause they won't talk to them.

TEACHER: So it affects the relationship between the child and the parent. So has this changed how you're going to use the TV, Zara?

GIRL 3: Yeah.

TEACHER: Can you tell us a bit more about how it's changed?

GIRL 3: Um, I'm gonna go outside a bit more and... do more things outside than watch TV.

TEACHER: Maybe talk to your parents a bit more, by the sound of it.

GIRL 3: Yeah.

TEACHER: Do you have anything to add, Sam?

BOY 1: Well, I learnt that TV can affect your concentration, your sleeping and... just the way you act.

TEACHER: OK. So has that changed how you're going to be using TV?

BOY 1: I think I'll watch it less, like, on the weekends and during weekdays.

TEACHER: OK, Great. Well done, everybody. That's the end of our reading session today.