

# A Powerful Presence in Your Home

## Pre-reading

### Questions:

- What do you think this reading is about?
- What does the title mean?

### Definitions:

- Undesirable – not good or helpful
- Recommend – to suggest or advise something
- Aggressive – ready to start fights, forceful

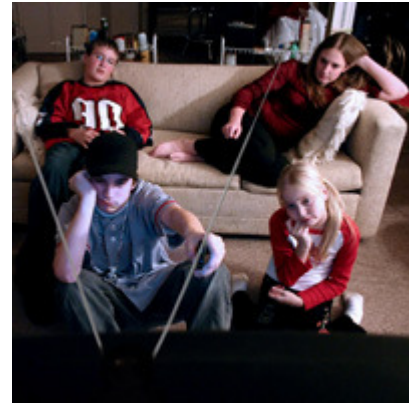


Photo Courtesy of [www.eyefithear.com](http://www.eyefithear.com)

## Reading

17 There may be an unwanted guest in your home. This someone, or something, is influencing you and  
33 others living with you, especially children. Most Americans, 99% to be exact, have willingly invited this  
51 guest into their living rooms. Some have even welcomed it into their bedrooms! Have you guessed what this  
invited, but often times undesirable guest is? It's your television.

61 At least one TV can be found in nearly every home in the U.S. Most homes have two or three TV sets.  
83 According to recent research: 65% of children ages 8 – 18 have a TV in their bedroom, 43% of 4 – 6 year  
106 olds have a TV in their bedroom, and 30% of infants ages birth – 2 have a TV in their bedroom. This last  
129 statistic is especially alarming because the American Academy of Pediatricians recommends no TV viewing  
143 for children under 2 years of age.

150 TV has a profound effect on the children and youth of our country. It is a powerful teacher of many  
170 things. When **used in moderation**, some good things can be learned from watching TV. Preschool children  
186 can get help learning numbers and letters. Grade-school children and teens can learn about nature, wildlife,  
203 and history. Adults can stay current with the events of the day by watching the nightly news.

220 Too much TV, however, can have very negative effects. Research shows that TV contributes to sleep  
236 problems, health problems, behavior problems, and struggles in reading and academics. TV viewing,  
249 especially when done at night, reduces the quality and quantity of a child's sleep. Children ages 3 and under  
268 who watch TV are at a higher risk of having both irregular nap and bedtime schedules.

284 The number of overweight and obese children is growing at an alarming rate. The sedentary nature of  
301 TV (and other screen) viewing is partly to blame. We now know that children who consistently spend more  
319 than four hours a day watching TV are more likely to be overweight.

332 A recent study by the National Institute on Media and the Family links children's viewing of violent  
349 programming with aggressive, violent behavior towards other children. Research compiled by the Public  
362 Broadcasting Service shows that by the age of 18, the average U.S. child's TV viewing has included 16,000  
380 murders, not to mention the over 200,000 other acts of violence they view.

493 Too much TV harms the reading and academic skills of children and youth. Researchers have found  
409 that our youngest learners, ages five and under, who watch small amounts of TV score better in reading and  
428 math tests than those that watch a lot of TV. This also holds true as children age.

445 Research tells us that children who watch a lot of TV are much less likely to earn a college degree by  
466 their mid-20s. In fact, the more children watch TV, the more likely they are to leave school before earning a  
486 degree.

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Level 7.5

## Understanding

1. What are some positive aspects of TV? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What are some negative impacts of TV? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Which negative effect surprised you the most? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who should not be watching any TV? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do children mimic what they see on TV? How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does the phrase “**used in moderation**” mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How or why is TV linked to obese kids? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Why is the TV described as an “invited, but often times undesirable guest”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

Option A: Write about the TV viewing habits in your home. When is it on and for how long? Who is watching it? What is your TV teaching you and others who live with you? What affect does it have on your household?

Option B: Summarize the reading in your own words.

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