

GCSE TV Quiz Show Research

Support Materials

**Use these case study outlines as a starting point for detailed research on quiz shows.
Answer the questions in the brackets and expand on the basic information provided.
This will help prepare you for the paper released on the 27th April**

Name: **Who Wants to be a Millionaire? (UK)**

Date Aired: 4th September 1998 - Present

Channel: ITV1

Time shown: Primetime Saturday and occasional Tuesdays (*consider reasons for scheduling, why at these times?*)

Audience Profile: Broad, notably ABC1s (*who are these and why are they important?*)

Host: Chris Tarrant (*develop a profile of the host*)

Contestants: Members of the public (*Research details of the selection process*)

Programme Structure: One contestant answering multiple choice questions for ever-increasing prize money (*consider what is appealing about this structure, is it more traditional?*)

Set Design: Basic. Audience is seated in a circular fashion with the contestant and host in the centre (*why would this be?*)

Prizes: Cash prizes of various degrees starting from £500 rising to £1.000.000

Appeal/Popularity: Vast. The most popular international television franchise, exported to over 100 countries. At its peak in the UK was receiving audience figures of 19million nightly (*consider reasons for its international appeal*)

Name: **Who Wants to be a Millionaire (USA)**

Date Aired: August 16th 1999 - Present

Channel: ABC

Time shown: Primetime at first, currently a daytime show (*what does this suggest?*)

Audience Profile: Broad appeal (*expand on this, what type of people would watch this and why?*)

Host: Initially Regis Philbin, currently Meredith Vieira

Contestants: Members of the public (*can the selection process for a quiz show affect it's popularity? How?*)

Programme Structure: Broadly similar to the UK version but with some key differences, such as time limits for giving answers (*what reasons could there be for changing from the UK format?*)

Set Design: Identical to UK version (*is this the same for every version of Millionaire in every country? Why would this be?*)

Prizes: Cash prizes of various degrees starting from \$100 rising to \$1.000.000

Appeal/Popularity: At first it drew audiences of around 30million but this has since dropped (*why?*)

Name: Countdown

Date Aired: 2nd November 1982 - Present

Channel: Channel 4

Time shown: 3:25pm (*who would this appeal to?*)

Audience Profile: Typically older generations but has open appeal. Joked to be a favourite of students (*consider why*)

Host: Originally Richard Whiteley (1982 – 2005) followed by Des Lynam (2005 – 2006) then Des O'Conner (2006 – 2007). Currently Jeff Stelling (*consider why these presenters were chosen*)

Contestants: Members of the public. Winners return for subsequent shows until beaten or upon winning 8 times.

Programme Structure: Three games are played with two contestants going head to head (*what are these games? What is appealing about them?*)

Set Design: Semi-circular desk with presenter at one end, lexicographer and celebrity guest at the other and contestants in the centre, in front of the signature Countdown clock (*consider reasons for this layout*)

Prizes: Winners compete for a Countdown teapot with the series champion winning a leather-bound copy of the 21 volume Oxford English Dictionary, worth £4000 (*consider the effect the prize has on a quiz show*)

Appeal/Popularity: 1.7 – 2.5 million daily.

Name: Mastermind

Date Aired: 11th September 1972 - Present

Channel: BBC 1, BBC Radio 4, Discovery Channel, BBC 2,

Time shown: Varies. Currently 8pm Friday (*who would this appeal to?*)

Audience Profile: Mixed, older adult mainly but has spawned a number of spin offs such as *Junior Mastermind* and *Celebrity Mastermind* (*were these successful?*)

Host: Originally Magnus Magnusson, followed by Peter Snow (Radio 4), Clive Anderson (Discovery) and John Humphreys (current – BBC2)

Contestants: Members of the public who apply to appear.

Programme Structure: Four contestants face two rounds of two minute questioning; one round of general knowledge and one on their 'specialist subject'. (*Why does this format appeal?*)

Set Design: Very basic. Contestants sit in a leather chair under a spotlight in a dark studio while answering questions. The creator of the show based this design on a Gestapo interrogation he faced during WW2 (*what effect would this layout have on the contestant and the viewers?*)

Prizes: Each year, the grand final winner is awarded an engraved cut glass bowl. No other prizes are awarded at any stage of the series (*why would contestants still participate with no real prize incentive?*)

Appeal/Popularity: At it's most popular, Mastermind was receiving around 23million viewers. However, a gradual decline led to it being cancelled in 1997 with 6million viewers only to emerge again in 2003 (*what reasons could be given for its decline in viewing figures and subsequent return?*)

Name: The Weakest Link

Date Aired: 14th August 2000 - Present

Channel: BBC 2 and BBC 1

Time shown: BBC 2 – early evening, BBC 1 – primetime (*why is this?*)

Audience Profile: Mixed

Host: Anne Robinson (*how important is the host, such as Anne Robinson, to the success of a quiz show?*)

Contestants: 9 members of the public

Programme Structure: Each contestant is asked a question in turn until time runs out. Money can be accrued for correct answers and banked or lost. At the end of each round, one contestant gets voted off by the other players until a head-to-head remains the winner of which takes all (*is this format original? If so, why?*)

Set Design: Each contestant has a podium arranged in a semi-circle around the host on her own podium in the centre. During prime time, the contestants have another semi circle of audience seats behind them (*are live audiences important to a quiz show?*)

Prizes: The maximum possible winnings in regular episodes is £10,000. In reality, few teams do well enough to earn enough for the winner to take home this amount (*how much of an effect does a prize fund have on the success of a show?*)

Appeal/Popularity: The second most popular international television franchise (behind *Millionaire*). Received around 5.3million viewers in the first few years.

Name: QI

Date Aired: 11th September 2003 - Present

Channel: BBC 2 initially, now BBC 1. Repeats on BBC4 and Dave.

Time shown: Primetime

Audience Profile: *(who would be interested in this show?)*

Host: Stephen Fry *(how much does a quiz show's style depends on the presenter?)*

Contestants: Permanent guest Alan Davies and a rotation of 3 celebrities or public figures *(why do they keep just the one guest?)*

Programme Structure: A panel based quiz show in which points are awarded for interesting answers due to the difficult nature of the questions. *(how does this differ from normal quiz shows and what appeal does it have?)*

Set Design: Traditional set up with a semi-circular desk in which the presenter sits between the contestants, two at either end.

Prizes: None *(does this make a difference?)*

Appeal/Popularity: QI stands as the most popular show to be broadcast on BBC 4 and Dave. It manages and audience of around 5million every week.

Name: Have I Got News for You

Date Aired: 28th September 1990 - Present

Channel: BBC2 initially, BBC1 currently

Time shown: Primetime Friday night with regular repeats.

Audience Profile: Mixed. *(expand on this)*

Host: Originally Angus Deayton but following a public scandal, guests hosts have presented each week. *(does this suggest a presenter is not that important? Why might this be?)*

Contestants: Regular team captains Ian Hislop and Paul Merton are joined by different celebrities, politicians and public figures each week. *(consider the reason for keeping two regular guests)*

Programme Structure: Several rounds of news based questions are presented in a variety of formats *(is this the only news based quiz show?)*

Set Design: Traditional, the teams sit either side of the presenter. The backdrop consists of a montage of manipulated photos and newspaper headlines. *(how important is set design to a quiz show?)*

Prizes: None

Appeal/Popularity: Receives audience figures of around 6.5million on a weekly basis. *(what reason can you give for this type of show remaining popular for so long?)*

Name: University Challenge

Date Aired: 21st September 1962 – 31st December 1987 on **ITV**.
21st September 1994 – Present on **BBC**

Channel: ITV initially, BBC 2 currently

Time shown: Early evening.

Audience Profile: More middle class, University educated perhaps. *(why would this be?)*

Host: Initially Bamber Gascoigne, currently Jeremy Paxman *(why is Jeremy Paxman suitable for this role?)*

Contestants: Four members form a team representing a University (or college of the University) within the UK *(is this unique?)*

Programme Structure: A knockout tournament of initially 28 teams. These teams go head to head in a series of direct question rounds, the team with most points winning.

Set Design: Basic. Though shot with both teams on screen at once (one above the other) they actually sit side by side to the right of the presenter. *(why would they choose to film the show with both teams visible simultaneously?)*

Prizes: None.

Appeal/Popularity: Manages to achieve viewing figures of around 3million. The most recent final attracted 5million after extended press coverage of a member of the Corpus Christi College of Oxford. *(what was this coverage regarding?)*

Name: Jeopardy

Date Aired: March 30th 1964 - Present

Channel: Originally NBC, currently syndicated. *(what does this mean?)*

Time shown: Daytime. *(who would this attract and why?)*

Audience Profile: Broad.

Host: Originally Art Fleming, currently Alex Trebek.

Contestants: 3 members of the public per episode, one of whom is usually a returning victor. *(describe the audition process)*

Programme Structure: Questions must be answered in reverse, with responses phrased as questions themselves. There are three rounds with the final round requiring contestants to wager an amount of their winnings on a category of question previously announced.

Set Design: Game-show style setting, with contestants facing a large screen. Has changed much over the course of its existence but has retained basic framework. *(what reasons would a show have to change its set frequently? Why don't all shows do this?)*

Prizes: Cash prizes for individual questions ranging from \$200 to \$1000 are accumulated and won. Cars and holidays can also be won. Consolation prizes for 2nd and 3rd place. *(does this add to the show's appeal?)*

Appeal/Popularity: Very popular in America, has also been exported to other countries. Has won a record 28 Daytime Emmy awards and remains one of the top rated shows in syndication. *(why would this be?)*

Name: Blockbusters

Date Aired: 29 August 1983 – 23 March 2001

Channel: Initially ITV, then to Sky One, then BBC 2 before coming back to Sky One (*what could the reason behind these moves be?*)

Time shown: Early evening time every day (except weekends)

Audience Profile: Mixed.

Host: Bob Holness originally, Michael Aspell and finally Liza Tarbuck

Contestants: During Bob Holness' reign, contestants were sixth form students playing for their colleges. Subsequent series have seen adults compete (*which format was more successful?*)

Programme Structure: One contestant challenges two others, working together, in an attempt to answer number of questions, each of which correctly answered led to a chain being created across a hexagonal board, the winner being the first to reach the other side (*what could the reasons be for using a special board?*)

Set Design: Contestants sat together behind a desk facing a board, the height of the studio powered by 38 slide projectors.

Prizes: Varied from photocopiers for the contestant's schools to clothing to holidays to Africa (*consider why some shows have cash prizes and others have objects and holidays*)

Appeal/Popularity: Around 6million viewers at its most popular

Name:

Date Aired:

Channel:

Time shown:

Audience Profile:

Host:

Contestants:

Programme Structure:

Set Design:

Prizes:

Appeal/Popularity: