

# Dangerous fun



## Lead in

Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- Do you do anything you would consider to be dangerous?
- What are *health and safety regulations*? Give some examples.
- What would these regulations be for the place you are in today?
- How important is it to have regulations like these for the workplace or public places?
- In your country are there any television programmes that show dangerous stunts?



## Read about it

1 Read the newspaper article and answer the questions.

### Dangerous driving?

A top TV programme with over five million viewers features three presenters discussing cars. It is called *Top Gear* and is one of the most popular programmes on BBC 2. In this programme the presenters do not simply discuss the cars in front of a studio audience – they also test drive them and do outrageous stunts such as racing cars against trains, planes and speedboats. They are concerned with the fun and thrill of driving and certainly not with the environmental or safety aspects of driving, even mocking ‘boring safe’ drivers. The show has a huge following of fans who love speed and want to experience a vicarious thrill – given that they themselves do not have the opportunity to drive at speeds of over 70 mph in the UK. However, recently

the whole future of *Top Gear* and similar programmes has been called into question after one of the presenters only just survived a crash when travelling close to 300 mph while apparently attempting to break the world land speed record. Many issues have been raised concerning health and safety regulations and whether programmes such as this should be allowed to show people taking risks in this way. If such programmes are banned or toned down, it would be a huge disappointment to the viewers and yet another example of how ‘the powers that be’ are becoming far too overprotective and in the process cutting out a lot of what makes life fun. As a journalist recently remarked, many people believe that personal risk should be a matter between a man and his insurance company. Otherwise, where do you draw the line?

- 1 What happens on the programme?
- 2 Why do people enjoy watching it?
- 3 What happened recently?
- 4 What effect might this have on the future of the programme and others like it? Why?
- 5 What is the attitude of the writer of the article?

2 Find words or phrases in the newspaper article to match the definitions.

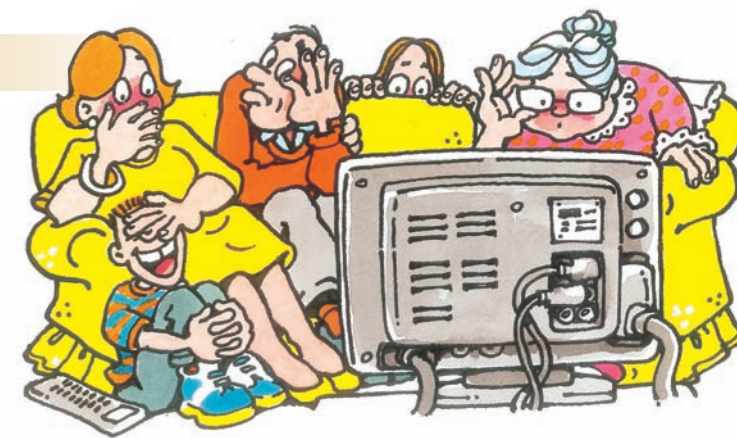
- 1 people who support a person or point of view \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 the people in charge \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 no longer allowed \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 when the advisability of something is doubted \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 unbelievable and shocking \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 points for discussion \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 when you don't do something yourself but watch someone else do it \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 made less extreme/exciting \_\_\_\_\_

## Talk about it

1 Work in pairs. Discuss and note down points to support an opposing view to the one given in the last part of the article on page 74.

2 As a class, discuss this question.

- Should programmes that feature excessively dangerous activities be shown on television?



## Write about it

1 Look at the contrasting language used in these sentences to express an opposing point of view and then finish the sentences.

1 Although many people maintain that passive smoking does not necessarily lead to lung problems, many experts ...

2 We like to think that we're doing as much as we can to help the environment but in reality ...

3 In spite of assertions by the Government that more money will be put into public transport, it now seems ...

4 Exam results in the UK indicate that standards are rising in schools. Teachers, however, insist that ...

2 Choose one phrase from each group write a follow-up sentence for one of the sentences in Exercise 1.

Recent events have shown ... The last few years have seen ...  
There is currently an important debate in progress about ...

What concerns me is ...  
We should not lose sight of ...

I would like to address some of the issues ... I intend to look at points in favour and against ...

The vast majority of people ...  
A tiny minority ... The silent majority ...

It is a well/little known fact that ...  
Most people are aware of the fact that ...

3 Write a discursive essay with the title ‘Should programmes that feature excessively dangerous activities be shown on television?’ Use the guide to help you structure your essay.

- Introduction: outline the controversy
- Present reasons for
- Present reasons against
- Draw a conclusion