

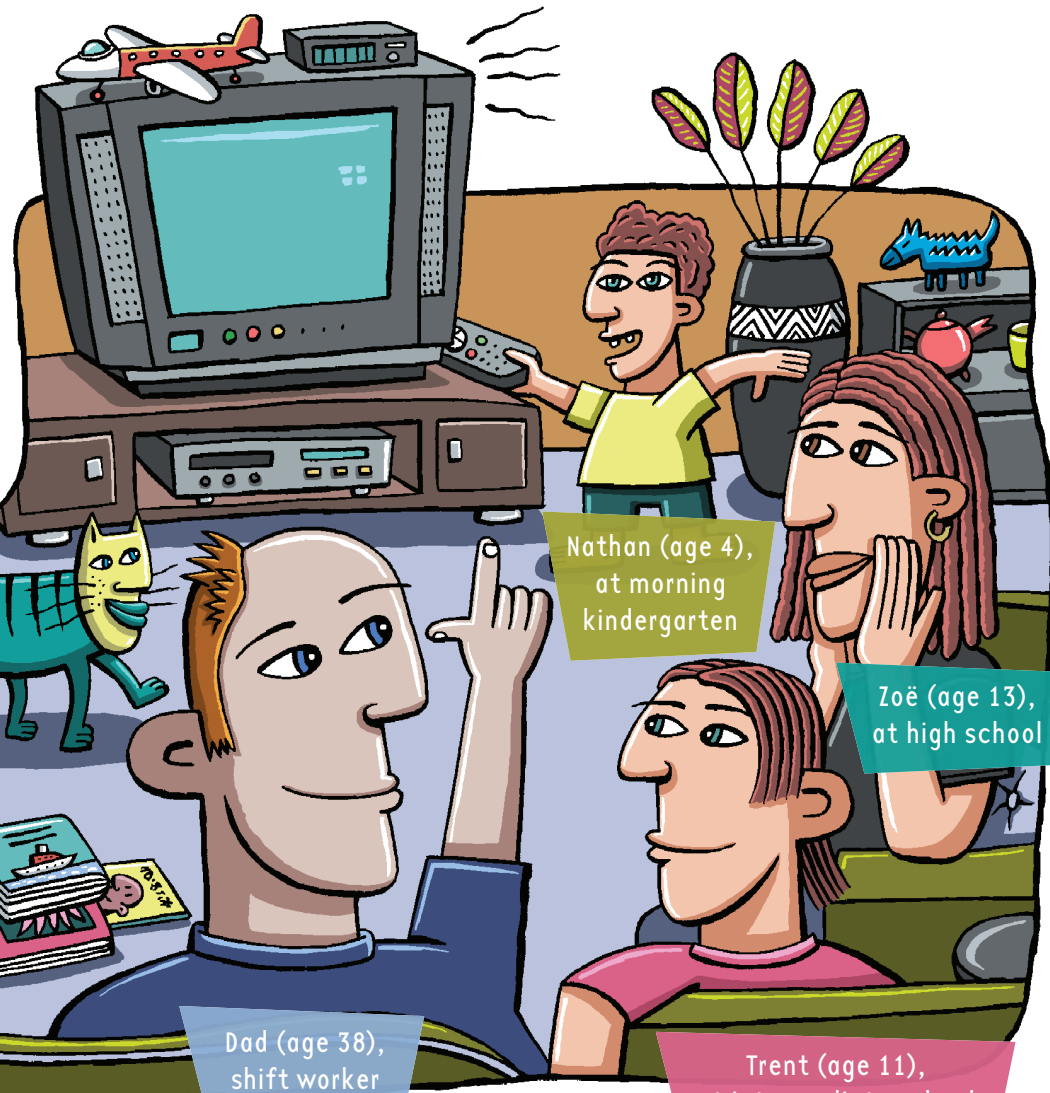
People Meters

You need

- ★ a copy of the people-meter viewing record (see copymaster)
- ★ a computer spreadsheet/graphing program (optional)
- ★ a classmate

Data collection companies put “people meters” in homes to record what people view on TV.

The Wade family have a people meter. Every time a family member watches TV, they log on and off with a special remote. Guests can also log on and off.



Mum (age 39), works part-time

Dad (age 38), shift worker

Nathan (age 4), at morning kindergarten

Zoë (age 13), at high school

Trent (age 11), at intermediate school

Activity One

The viewing record provided shows the family’s logged-on viewing times for 1 week.

People Meter Schedule: 12–18 March
Mum (M), Dad (D), Zoë (Z), Trent (T), Nathan (N), Guest (G)

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| 6 a.m. | | | | Z | | N | N |
| 6.30 a.m. | | | | Z | | N | N |

1. Using the information from your copy of the viewing record:

- make a table to show the number of 30-minute slots that each person was logged on for each day
- make another table to show each person's total viewing hours for 1 week for each 2-hour period.

| Number of 30-minute Slots | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Day | Mum | Dad | Zoë | ... |
| Mon | 7 | | | |

2. a. Graph the information from these two tables. What do your graphs tell you?

| Total Viewing for 1 Week (in hours) | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Timeslot | Mum | Dad | Zoë | ... |
| 6-8 a.m. | 5 | | | |

b. What "stories" about the Wade family's TV viewing *don't* your graphs tell you?

3. Using your graphs and the viewing record:

- What do you notice about each family member's viewing habits? (Look for patterns.)
- Who watches most TV? Least TV?
- Do you think the guest this week is a child or an adult? What makes you think this?

4. Which information looks unusual? Why? What could be the reason for this?

5. Do you think this data might represent a typical week for the Wade family? Explain.

- Mum says she never has time to watch TV. Does the data support Mum's claim? Why might she say this?
- How useful might Mum's data be to a data collection company?

Activity Two

1. TV ratings are based on data about who is watching what and when. Discuss with a classmate:

- why such data is collected
- how it might be used
- why the age of viewers is important.

2. Could the Wade family's data be used to reach conclusions about the viewing habits of the nation? Why or why not?

3. What other investigative questions could be asked about TV viewing? What extra data would need to be collected to answer these questions? Discuss with a classmate.

