



Pre-Reading Preparation

1. How many items in your household can be operated using a remote control?
2. Do you think modern technology makes life more complicated or less? Explain.

That Darn Remote

1 I entered the room with a large bowl of chips and a soda. My favorite TV show was just moments from starting. The TV was already on, and my little sister was watching cartoons. She **bounced** towards me.

5 “Hey!” She said, “It’s almost nine o’clock!”

“I know,” I smiled, pointing at the TV, “We need to change the channel.”

10 “Here,” she said throwing a **remote** in my direction. I caught the remote and started **clicking**. The channel stayed the same. I clicked and clicked. Nothing changed. I circled the room trying to get the best signal for the remote to **access** the TV. The box simply **glowed** red.

15 “Oh, come on!” I **grunted**. I was beginning to think that the TV was **intent** on watching the cartoon show.

20 Another dark box sat on the edge of the couch eyeing the TV. The soft buttons appeared **innocent**

25 and **unsuspecting**. I looked down at the remote controller in my hand, *Could this be the wrong remote?* I bounced to the other end of the couch, and **grabbed** the controller. Click. The cartoon show was **immediately** replaced by a talk show about traffic.

30 “I wonder what this remote is for...” I looked back down at the first remote and decided to find its match. I **scooped** the remote **up** and started clicking. I **circled** the house a few times, nothing happened.

35 I walked through the kitchen, nothing beeped or blinked. I continued my **quest** into the living room. I saw the buttons start flashing **random** colors. I **approached** the cabinet. A **buzz** came from one of the cabinets... I **wielded** my remote. Sure enough,

40 on one of the shelves was a small radio. The music came and went as I clicked the power button. I set the remote down and rushed back to the TV room. I didn’t want to miss my show.

45 When I got back into the room, I realized that I had completely forgotten where I had put the TV controller. In the center of the pillows, I saw a remote lying quietly. I **hesitated** for a moment, “Was *that* the one?” I looked around the room. There was

50 one on the shelf, one on the coffee table, one sitting in the chair – all four of them lying there harmlessly... *NO!* I wanted to scream. How could there be so many remotes in one room? Why couldn’t I remember which the TV remote was? Their little

55 buttons were all staring at me from odd angles. I swear I heard them say, “Me! Me! Me! Me!”

access *v.* to connect to an electronic device.

We couldn’t access Jill’s computer because we don’t know her password.

approach *v.* to move closer to someone or something.

The boat slowed down as it approached the dock.

bounce *v.* to jump or move up and down quickly.

Young children enjoy bouncing on their beds.

buzz *n.* a steady humming sound (zzzzz).

Michelle was afraid that the buzz she heard was a wasp.

circle *v.* to move along a route that ends where it began.

The hiking trail circled the lake.

click *v.* to press a button on a remote control or computer mouse.

Click on “next” to continue.

darn *adj.* used instead of a swearword to indicate

irritation or emphasis. I wish that darn dog wouldn’t track mud into the house!

glow *v.* to emit a soft light.

The candles glowed in the dark room.

grab *v.* to suddenly take hold of something.

The robber grabbed my purse and ran.

grunt *v.* to make a low, throaty sound to indicate irritation or indifference. Jake grunted when I interrupted his TV show.

hesitate *v.* to be slow to act.

Kelly hesitated before she dove into the cold lake.

immediately *adv.* without delay; right away; at once.

Come here immediately!

innocent *adj.* not guilty of an offense; not capable of being harmful.

The suspect insisted he was innocent.

intent *adj.* determined to do something.

Max is intent on improving his golf score.

quest *n.* a long or difficult search for something.

I went to ten shoe stores on my quest for purple boots.

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random *adj.* without a regular pattern or system.

The border guards perform random checks on cars.

remote *n. (slang)* same as remote control, a device that can operate an electronic appliance from a distance.

We use a remote to open the garage door.

scoop up *v.* to pick something or someone up quickly.

The little boy scooped up the coins I dropped.

unsuspecting *adj.* not suspicious of someone or something; trusting.

It is easy to play tricks on Mary because she has such an unsuspecting nature.

wield *v.* to hold and use a tool or weapon.

The police officer wielded his gun confidently.

Vocabulary Exercise

A. Fill in the Blanks:

grab approach immediately bounce quest
innocent hesitate realize intent random

- The basketball _____ out of the court and into the crowd of spectators.
- When Alison failed her exam, she _____ she should have studied harder.
- Everyone hopes cancer researchers will be successful in their _____ for a cure.
- Eric works out every day; he is _____ on qualifying for the track team this year.
- We were told to leave the building _____ because there was a gas leak.
- You should _____ stray dogs cautiously – they might not be friendly.
- Carl _____ when he was offered the job, so the company hired somebody else.
- That horror movie frightened Lindsey! She kept screaming and _____ my arm.
- The game-show host selected _____ people from the audience to participate in the show.
- The raccoons at the campground look cute and _____, but they are actually quite vicious.

Vocabulary Exercise

B. Multiple Choice:

- “Here,” she said throwing a remote in my direction.
 - the way I instructed
 - toward me
 - across my path
- Another dark box sat on the edge of the couch eyeing the TV.
 - facing the TV
 - desiring the TV
 - looking at the TV
- I looked back down at the first remote and decided to find its match.
 - I looked for the appliance that is operated by the first remote.
 - I decided to find another remote that looks like the first remote.
 - I decided to look for some matches.
- Their little buttons were all staring at me from odd angles.
 - strangely
 - crookedly
 - from different directions
- I swear I heard them say...
 - I said a swearword
 - I promise
 - I imagine



Grammar Point

A verb becomes a gerund (or verb’s action noun) by adding the suffix “ing” – such as try becomes trying. Practice the following verbs and gerunds by adding the appropriate words in the blanks.

1. lie, lying

Someday, Alex’s _____ about other people will get her in trouble.
Most parents teach their children not to _____.

2. point, pointing

The girl was embarrassed by her classmates’ _____.
Can you _____ to the correct answer on the chalkboard?

3. throw, throwing

The new pitcher doesn’t _____ the ball as well as the old one.
Max has been practicing! His _____ has improved.

4. click, clicking

I wish my brother wouldn’t _____ the remote when I’m watching TV.
Stop snapping your fingers! The _____ is an annoying sound.

5. watch, watching

Monica’s constant TV _____ is a bad habit. She needs more hobbies.
Do you want to _____ a DVD tonight?

6. flash, flashing

Tom saw the lightning _____ brightly, but he didn’t hear any thunder.
The drivers were confused by the unusual _____ of the traffic lights.

Comprehension

A. True or False:

- ___ 1. The narrator's TV show started at 9:00.
- ___ 2. The second remote operated the television.
- ___ 3. The TV show switched from cartoons to the narrator's program.
- ___ 4. The first remote operated the radio in the kitchen.
- ___ 5. When the narrator returned to the TV room, he saw three remotes there.

B. Multiple Choice:

1. I was beginning to think that the TV was intent on watching the cartoon show.
 - a. I thought the TV wanted to watch cartoons.
 - b. I began to think I wanted to watch cartoons.
 - c. I thought the TV was programmed to only play cartoons.
2. I continued my quest into the living room.
 - a. I was looking for the living room.
 - b. I decided to watch my show in the living room.
 - c. I checked if the remote worked on anything in the living room.
3. I saw the buttons start flashing random colors.
 - a. The buttons flashed for no apparent reason.
 - b. The buttons lit up in no particular sequence.
 - c. The buttons flashed incorrectly.
4. The music came and went as I clicked the power button.
 - a. The music turned on and off in response to the remote.
 - b. The music continued playing when I clicked the power button.
 - c. The remote didn't affect the music from the radio.
5. The narrator feels like the remotes are
 - a. harmless and innocent
 - b. taunting him
 - c. useful

Writing Exercise

1. What human characteristics does the author give the remotes?

2. What different emotions do you think the author feels in this story?
