

Part 1. Read the quotes below. Do you agree or disagree with each one?

<i>"Guilt is pleasure's way of keeping you humble."</i>	<i>"If nobody's getting hurt, pleasure doesn't need an excuse."</i>
<i>"We've turned simply enjoying things into something we have to justify."</i>	<i>"The pleasures we're most defensive about are usually the most honest ones."</i>

Part 2. Choose one option in each pair and explain your choice.

A reality TV marathon	or	A 'worthy' documentary
Admit your guilty pleasure openly	or	Keep it a secret
Fast food in front of everyone	or	Fast food alone, hidden
A cheesy pop song at full volume	or	A playlist you'd call sophisticated
A trashy magazine	or	A serious newspaper

Part 3. Which of these are true for you? Tick your answers, then compare with a partner.

- I have a TV show I'd be a little embarrassed to admit I watch.
- I've pretended not to enjoy something because it seemed beneath me.
- I judge other people's guilty pleasures more harshly than my own.
- I enjoy at least one thing completely unapologetically, with zero guilt attached.
- I've hidden the evidence of a guilty pleasure — wrappers, browser history, playlists.
- I think the whole idea of a 'guilty pleasure' is a bit ridiculous.

Part 4. Before you ask, guess your partner's answers. Then ask and check — how many did you get right?

- What genre would your partner be most sheepish about admitting they enjoy?
- Would your partner rather eat their guilty-pleasure food in front of people, or hide it?
- Does your partner have a song or artist they're a little embarrassed to admit they love?
- Has your partner ever pretended to like something 'cooler' just to fit in?

Part 5. Read each situation with a partner. What would you do? Discuss your choice, or come up with your own idea.

Your favourite trashy reality show has a new episode tonight, but a friend calls wanting to talk about something serious. What would you do?

1. *Tell them honestly you're mid-episode and call back later.*
2. *Pause the show and give them your full attention, resentfully.*
3. *Half-listen while the show plays quietly in the background.*
4. *Lie about what you're doing so you don't seem shallow.*

A colleague catches you reading a tabloid magazine, or watching something trashy, on your break. What would you do?

1. *Own it completely — explain exactly why you love it.*
2. *Feel a flicker of embarrassment, but brush it off.*
3. *Quickly switch to something that looks more 'acceptable.'*
4. *Make a joke at your own expense before they can.*

You're asked at a dinner party what your guilty pleasure is. What would you do?

1. *Share the honest, slightly embarrassing answer.*
2. *Give a safe, socially acceptable version of the truth.*
3. *Deflect with humour and never actually answer.*
4. *Ask the question straight back, to avoid answering first.*

Part 6. In small groups, rank these from 1 (most judged by other people) to 6 (least judged). Compare your rankings and explain your choices.

- Reality TV
- Fast food
- Tabloid gossip
- Cheesy pop music
- Mobile games
- Trashy romance novels

Part 7. Stand up and ask your classmates questions. Find someone who...

- ...has a guilty-pleasure song on repeat right now.
- ...has watched an entire series in one weekend.
- ...has a junk food they'd never admit to loving.
- ...has a trashy film they rewatch without fail.
- ...thinks 'guilty pleasure' shouldn't exist as a concept.
- ...has been caught red-handed enjoying something embarrassing.

Part 8. Read both viewpoints. Which is closer to your own opinion? Discuss with a partner, using evidence from your own life.

Viewpoint A <i>Guilt has no place in pleasure. If something makes you happy and harms no one, there's nothing to apologise for – the whole phrase is a hangover from snobbery.</i>	Viewpoint B <i>The guilt is doing something real. It's a signal, deep down, that the thing isn't actually good for us – whether that's junk food, toxic reality TV, or hours we'll never get back.</i>
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Part 9. Discuss the following questions.

- Why do you think some pleasures get labelled 'guilty' and others don't?
- Is the idea of a guilty pleasure more about taste, class, or image?

- Has social media made people more or less ashamed of their guilty pleasures?
- Should we retire the phrase 'guilty pleasure' altogether?
- Is there a real difference between a guilty pleasure and an unhealthy habit?

Part 10. Tell your partner about your own guilty pleasure.

Think about:

- What it is, and how it started.
- Whether you hide it or embrace it openly.
- How people react when they find out.
- Whether you think the guilt is actually deserved.

Reflection

Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. My guilty pleasure is...
2. The guilt I feel about it is none / a little / a lot, because...
3. A guilty pleasure other people judge me for is...
4. If I stopped feeling guilty about one pleasure, it would be...