

Checkpoint

Checkpoint (Evangelical Broadcasting Company, Netherlands) is an infotainment program targeted at boys and hosted by Klaas Van Kruistum (cf. screenshot 1). The series consists of 13 26-minute segments in which the host tries to answer questions by performing practical checks, assisted by the teenage Checkpoint team. When the show begins Klaas challenges a participant to remove all of his clothes down to swim trunks while going down a water slide (cf. screenshot 2). He fails, but realizes his mistake and how to succeed next time. Contestants are also shown survival techniques by learning how to filter water (cf. screenshot 3) and make any water potable, including their own urine, by distilling it (cf. screenshot 4). Then, the Checkpoint team demonstrates how to create the illusion of walking up walls like Spiderman, using wallpaper, a plastic pipe, and a camera tilted on its side (cf. screenshot 5). Finally, boys go head-to-head against girls to see who is better at performing brainteasers. In the first test they must remove balls from a vase with a small opening using as few aids as possible (cf. screenshot 6). Then each participant must move cheese, a mouse, and a snake from one area to another without the snake eating the mouse and the mouse eating the cheese (cf. screenshot 7). The third test is to get wooden platforms to panels without pulling the panels or stepping outside the field (cf. screenshot 8). Boys win the first and third test making them the victors of brainteasers.

Checkpoint was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012 finalists in the 7-11 Non-Fiction category. It was awarded the Prize of the Children's Jury.

International experts' opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *Checkpoint* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. Experts felt that the program was amusing and fun to watch. Some experts commented on the balance between fun and learning. They felt that children would be entertained, sparking their attention, and therefore making them connect with the lessons.

"It was not a brand new idea of a show, but they did it very well because the presenter, and also the kids, they had so much fun. And they enjoyed it so much, I also enjoyed it." (female expert, Germany)

"In terms of coolness: it was cool." (male expert, Zambia)

"Excellent piece of work. The age range, 6- to 11-year-olds, would probably want to watch teenagers become cool." (male expert, UK)

"That was a good use of humor without seeming too contrived." (female expert, USA)

Many experts felt the program may have been for older children. They felt the age ranges of the participants on camera were that of teenagers years and did not suit the 7 to 11 age group well.

"You wonder if the target group really is 7 to 11. I would say 12 to 15, because they acted just like teenagers having a lot of fun." (female expert, Germany)

Other experts commented on the host. They felt he was authentic and not stereotyped. This made experts feel that the host would offer a role model for those watching this program.



Ill. 1: Klaas explains the mechanics and fun of a waterslide



Ill. 2: The participant is taking off his shoes while going down a waterslide



Ill. 3: The team learns that by using sand, charcoal, pebbles, a paper towel, and a plastic bottle, they can filter water



Ill. 4: Klaas and the team examine their urine before learning how to make it drinkable



Ill. 5: Passion Man “climbs” up a pole



Ill. 6: The male participant flips the vase in an attempt to free the balls



Ill. 7: The participants have to figure out how to get a mouse, a snake, and cheese over



Ill. 8: The female participant struggles to solve the third brainteaser

“The presenter was doing a pretty good job at it. I liked him very much. He was one of the most authentic and natural ones. You just liked him right from the beginning. He was not trying too hard or pretending to be just like a teenager.” (female expert, Germany)

Some experts argued that the boys-versus-girls segment was problematic, and that the competition had been unfair in deciding overall who was better at brainteasers.

“Where they had the competition, some people were questioning whether it was really necessary to go for boys versus girls, one competitor against the next one. They were always trying to say okay, is it that boys are more clever, or girls? I mean, you can’t tell from just having two people so it would’ve just been enough to have a girl and a boy but not really mentioning that this is about boys against girls.” (female expert, Germany)

The Children’s Jury in Germany awarded *Checkpoint* a PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL:

“In this infotainment series teenagers are actively involved. They can gain new experiences firsthand. ... The topics are inventive, creative and realised in a funny way. In each episode children and teens learn new things. The presenter always behaves at eye level with the young participants.”

Kathryn Tullis (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)

Screenshots from *Checkpoint* © Evangelical Broadcasting Company, Netherlands

Target Audience 7.22	Idea 6.92	Script 6.73	Realization 7.16
Average Score per Category by experts’ voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012			

PRIX JEUNESSE 2012 Winner of Prize of the Children’s Jury