

The financial crisis has hit Wenatchee quite hard in the past year or so. Businesses have closed, some people have lost their homes or jobs, or both. Everyone seems to be more careful about spending, and it has become normal to be frugal, or very careful or thoughtful about money. My husband and I have been trying to find ways to cut costs. One expense that was easy to lower was our television bill. The cable and satellite companies here in the U.S sell packages to their customers: a certain amount of channels for a certain amount of money. The more you pay, the larger the choice of channels. Well, I realized a while ago, that we only watch a few channels, but we pay for a lot that we don't even like. After calling the company we use and lowering our package, I was happy to find that we saved about forty dollars a month. Good savings! But, I knew that we could do even better. I signed up for an on-line, instant television and film viewing network called Netflix. It's monthly cost is less than ten dollars, you can instantly view on your computer from a list of thousands of items, or you can have them send you, at no extra cost, DVDs in the mail, one after another. Brilliant! It works, and we love it. The next step was trying to hook my PC up to the tv. "Well, that shouldn't be a problem," I said to everyone confidently. Oh my goodness. I had to make four trips to Radio Shack, where they sell all kinds of cables, plugs, and computers. Each time I went I experienced great service, but I came away with something that didn't quite work. I was so frustrated. By the fourth time, I was absolutely determined to get the right stuff, even if it meant buying a thousand cables. Okay, I'm exaggerating. I bought a package of cables that is used specifically to hook up a PC to a tv. I was almost scared to open it. When I did, I was horrified to see what looked like an ocean of cables. There were so many of them! The instruction booklet was so difficult to understand that I looked everything up on Google to get my step by step instructions. Thankyou Google! After plugging everything in, putting the tv on the correct setting, and changing the display setting of my PC, suddenly what was on my PC screen, appeared on the tv. Hurray! I did it! Now, we can instantly view programs and films that we like on our big tv.

Grammar notes.

Practice of 'should' and 'could' with related vocabulary: frugal, package, to hook up, booklet.

1. We should be more frugal these days and think carefully before we make a big purchase.
2. We could save money by getting the phone, the internet, and the television all in one package.
3. If he wants to make a speech to the crowd, he should hook up the microphone to the speakers.
4. The instruction booklet is hopeless, but you could google the instructions.