

## Outline: Teens and Television

- I. Television viewing by teenagers is a negative force in American society.
- II. The violence that is shown on many television shows today influences teen behavior.
  - A. Violence influences later life. “Teenagers and young adults who watch more than just one hour of television a day are more likely to get into fights and exhibit other aggressive behavior” (Fitzgerald, 6).
  - B. Viewing violence influences later life behavior. “Researchers found that 29% of 14-year-olds who watched TV for more than three hours a day went on to commit violent acts in their late teens and early 20s” (August, Barovick 12).
- III. The images and situations portrayed on many television shows are unrealistic and give teens an sense of unreality.
  - A. Evidence/Support for III from research
  - B. Evidence/Support for III from research
- IV. Instead of being involved in productive and meaningful activity, many teens watch television, a motionless activity, as their main source of relaxation and entertainment.
  - A. Evidence/Support for IV from research
  - B. Evidence/Support for IV from research
  - C. Evidence/Support for IV from research
- V. Something must be done about television viewing among some teens.
  - A. You are what you eat. (common phrase) “You become what you watch.”
  - B. Parents should monitor television viewing.
  - C. With less TV viewing, teens will become more productive, thoughtful, well-rounded adults.

## Turn off the Tube

Looking through a *TV Guide*, viewers of television can find something with which to be entertained almost twenty-four hours a day. From *Jerry Springer* to *WWF* wrestling, from *Sponge Bob Square Pants* to *Southpark*, and from *ABC* to *MTV* the American teen can participate in hours of inactive television viewing. The constant repetition of staged violence and brutality on television is influencing and making teens less sensitive to the real effects of violent behavior. Many teens make decisions and form opinions based on hours of watching scripted television shows that show unreal portrayals of wealth, racism, and sexism. As a way to relax many teens park themselves in front of a television instead of socializing with friends or reading a book or playing sports—things that could actually benefit the health and well-being of many teens. Since its invention in the 1950s television has become a fixture in most American homes and it is here to stay, but something must teenagers must realize the possible negative effects it is having on their development. Television viewing by teenagers is a negative force in American society.

The violence that is shown on many television shows today influences teen behavior. Shows like *Jerry Springer* may influence teens to believe that violence and brutality are not just okay, but good ways to solve problems. Research shows that “teenagers and young adults who watch more than just one hour of television a day are more likely to get into fights and exhibit other aggressive behavior” (FitzGerald, 6). Many teens would say that watching violent content on television does not influence them to go out and commit violent acts, but watching violence over and over makes teens more accepting of violence. In an article in *Time Canada*, researchers found that “29% of 14-year-olds who watched TV for more than three hours a day went on to commit violent acts in their late teens and early 20s” (August, Barovick, 12). Although teens may not believe that watching television shows with violent content influences them, research shows differently.

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Instead of being involved in productive and meaningful activity, many teens watch television, a motionless activity, as their main source of relaxation and entertainment....

The phrase “you are what you eat” can also be applied to television viewing. “You become what you watch.” Teens should fill their lives and minds with interesting, accurate, and healthy activities so that they become well-rounded and thoughtful adults instead of mindless hours of inactivity. There are many wonderful things that television has brought us—up-to-the-minute news, educational programming, self-help shows—but teens must not rely only on television for entertainment and information. Parents should discourage heavy television viewing among teens and instead encourage active and thoughtful pursuits.

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