

**History of Television Notes**

I. Television in the 1930s

- a. Early television was designed and controlled by big businesses.
  - i. **TV was primarily tested where?**
  - ii. Remember the scene from “Modern Times”? **How do you think workers felt about TV?**
- b. Attempts to rouse interest in tv failed.
- c. Radio was the big thing in the 1910s-1930s. Radio continued to thrive in the 1930s and 1940s.

What was going on?	Why did people NOT want tvs at this time?
1930s:	
1940s:	

II. Television in the 1950s - the Golden Age of Television

- a. **The 1950s were known as the Golden Age of Television, meaning the peak of TV popularity. (SUPPORT THIS WITH EVIDENCE)**
- b. Television’s Appeal in the 1950s:
  - i. As more families moved from cities to suburbs, TV offered families a cheap, convenient form of entertainment.
  - ii. **Why was TV appealing to adults?**
  - iii. TV appeal - families:
    - 1. **TV sitcoms mirrored the lives of the white middle class. HOW SO?**





2. TV's appeal - kids: By 1953, Hollywood film studios were eager to invest in TV. In 1954, ABC entered a deal with Disney, which was interested in using TV to promote its films and new theme park in southern CA.
3. "I Love Lucy" (1951-1957)
  - a. Went on the air in 1951 and was the most watched show in the U.S. for 4 of the 6 years it aired.
  - b. Starred Lucy & Desi Arnaz as a married couple.

### **"I Love Lucy: Job Switching"**

1. Why do the women, Lucy and Ethel, want to get a job?
2. How do the men, Ricky & Frank, react at first when they accept the challenge to stay home? What are their attitudes to what their wives do at home?
3. What kinds of jobs are offered to the women at the employment office?
4. What problems do the men have as they complete household chores?
5. How does the episode support traditional gender roles?

### III. TV's Influence on Society - A Threat to Society?

#### a. **What concerns did some people have with television?**

- b. TV Reforms: Networks chose to censor & blacklist as a way to address concerns. (LIKE FILM!)

### IV. Television Reform in the 1960s

- a. In 1961, FCC commissioner Newton Minnow delivered a speech, which referenced the "vast wasteland" of tv. **What complaints did he have with TV?**

#### b. **What changes were made to television (from the govt. level) on the heels of this?**

- c. The criticism of TV increased the networks' desire to upgrade their image & prove their cultural worth. **(What did the networks do to change their image?)**

**MOVIE: “CNN, The Sixties: Television Comes of Age”**

1. How did TV impact the 1960 presidential election? (Consider what that meant for politics in the future.)
  
2. TV was both a place to ESCAPE to in the ‘60s AND a source of info about the world (REALISM.)
  - a. ESCAPE: Give 2 examples of TV shows that were popular with audiences in the 1960s. Briefly explain what people liked about the show.
  
  - b. REALISM:
    - i. What types of NEWS STORIES were Americans watching in the ‘60s? (LIST)
  
    - ii. Why did TV become people’s go-to source for news in the 1960s?
  
    - iii. Give ONE example of how ‘60s TV showed the changes that were taking place in the 1960s.

REFLECTION: The movie says that, “TV became the new fire around which people gathered to hear the elders tell them about the world.”

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

HOW DID TV DO THIS IN THE 1960s? (Consider the role TV played in Americans’ lives in the 1960s.)

*All in the Family: 1970s Social Satire on TV*

I. *All in the Family* redefined American sitcoms in the early 1970s. It introduced social realism and controversy to sitcoms, while keeping the focus on family.

a. Define the term “social realism”

II. Origins of the show: **What was Norman Lear’s goal in creating *All in the Family*?**

III. Breaking Taboos: **the show violated many of primetime tv’s norms – HOW SO?** (Cite 1-2 examples)

**EPISODE: “Sammy’s Visit”**

Archie/Edith



Gloria/Mike/Lionel



How would you describe their beliefs/ideas on race?

What role do the women play in their relationship?

What do you notice about their social class?

How could you make the case that this is an ex. of the generation gap?

What makes this episode an example of social realism?

IV. The **Anti-Hero** (DEFINE)

- a. APPLY THIS TO ARCHIE: **What made Archie the classic anti-hero?**

V. Impact / Legacy

- a. The show became the focus of a national debate on whether comedy was an appropriate way to combat prejudice & social inequality.
- b. The show led to a new generation of comedic shows that focused on topical themes with important social significance.

**The Cosby Show**

- I. **What set *The Cosby Show* apart from shows before it?** Instead of focusing on the working class, it was about...
- II. Cosby's goals for show
- A. Wanted to focus on the theme of family life (relatable regardless of one's race)
- B. Wanted to make a show about a middle class black family who was not totally defined by their skin color.

PILOT EPISODE: Given Cosby's goal to make a relatable family focused show, what are some examples from the episode that support this goal?

- III. What was important about *The Cosby Show*?
- A. Although the show was a comedy, Cosby used the show to talk about serious issues.
- B. It was praised for breaking racial stereotypes.
- C. Cosby made an effort to incorporate characters in non-stereotypical roles
- D. *The Cosby Show*'s success paved the way for a variety of black stories and casts on television shows.
- E. Some argue it had a lasting impact on Americans racial views.

### **Representation on TV - AAPI & the trouble with Apu**

1. HOW does the lack of representation of Indians on TV shape how people see things?

*What do you think? Should The Simpsons permanently retire the character of Apu? If so, why? If not, why not?*

### **Representation on TV - Indians on TV**

1. What point(s) are raised in the episode?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What complaints do actors of color have?

### **Representation on TV - Fresh Off the Boat**

1. What happens when writers' rooms aren't diverse?

2.

If you think about TV as a form of storytelling, what story is <i>Fresh Off the Boat</i> attempting to tell?	Why is this tv show an example of progress on TV for Asian-Americans?