

Bigotry in sitcoms: all in the family

[Family](#)



The impact of mass communication on society is interpreted by its audiences based on numerous factors. All in the Family was one of the first sitcoms that displayed bigotry in an open forum. Audiences interpreted the show based on their specific in terms of either dominant or oppositional. Audience's interpretations were based on their individual views or beliefs. Writing Intended to have the reader perceive a specific idea or thought is known as preferred reading.

Producers and writers intend for their audiences to interpret their material in a specific way. If their perception is different than the intended view this is known as oppositional reading or decoding. Oppositional Readings Dominant and The character of Archie Bunker is represented as a conservative, super patriotic, working class American who is a bigot. Both a dominant and oppositional view is perceived depending upon the viewing audience. It was the intent of producers and writers to bring bigotry out in the open where people would laugh rather than take offense.

Archie was considered a bigot who was admired for his candid style by some while others were able to accept it as humorous. " Some viewers applaud Archie for his racist viewpoint, while others applaud the show for making fun of Bigotry' (Vulgar and Reach). The article, " Archie Bunker's Bigotry: A Study In Selective Perception and Exposure reveals an oppositional reading in which viewers perceive Mike as the opposition. Mike provides rebuttals to Archie's derogatory slurs and racist remarks. The show gives the viewer a character they can relate to based on their selective perception. Avidler and Reach). Archie Bunker's Attitude Archie shows he is definitely without a doubt racist through his verbal comments and physical expressions In the video <https://assignbuster.com/bigotry-in-sitcoms-all-in-the-family/>

clip, " Hollywood Knows the Truth Opt. 1: Archly Bunker In All in the Family. " Archie classifies specific races, genders and ethnic backgrounds into categories. Some of his verbal remarks included colored as " Jews" and Polish people, Mike, as " anathemas". Archie's expressions during the toasting scene displayed different reactions when Barney drank out of his glass versus his reaction to Sammy Davis Jr. drinking out of the same glass. Archie didn't want to drink after a colored man. Archie asks Sammy if he thinks he is prejudice. Sammy responds sarcastically, " you can tell the difference between black and white" (" Hollywood Knows the Truth Opt. 1: Archly Bunker In All In the Family"). Finally, when Sammy gets ready to leave, he asks Archie's friend to take a picture of him and Archie. As the man snaps the picture, Sammy kisses Archie on the cheek. Archie's expression said it all! Throughout the video clip Archie tries to prove to himself and everyone else he is not racist.

No matter how much he tried to play it off, everyone was aware of his feelings on racism through his verbal comments and physical expressions. Selective Perception and Exposure unaware selective perception An exposure, unprejudiced viewers perceive Archie as a dumb bigoted " hardhat. " The prejudice viewer perceives Mike as a long haired, lazy " anathema Pollock. " In selective perception prejudice viewers are more apt to enjoy the show for its satire while high prejudice viewers enjoy the humor. Therefore, the show is viewed equally with allowing for opposite perceptions.