

Television: the downfall of american society

[Media](#), [Television](#)



Sean Conway Professor Stevens WRT 102 Essay #2 Television: The Downfall of American Society Televisions have only been around since their debut in the middle of the 20th century and have since become a huge part of everyday life here in America. Originally having good intentions, the television and watching of television in the last couple of decades has changed greatly. The amount of time people spend watching their televisions has also changed in the sense that people spend much more time in front of the television than they used to. Some argue that television has had a huge negative effect on American families.

In her essay, “ Television: The Plug-In-Drug,” Marie Winn explores the ways in which television has lowered the quality offamilylife, rituals, and values. She recognizes that there is a problem with our society and the way in which it is consistently influenced by television. She shows this when she says, “ Television’s contribution to family life has been an equivocal one,” (Winn 353). Winn is true in saying this because television has caused children across America to have undeveloped intelligence, creativity, and imagination. TV is also detrimental to family life, family relationships, and outside relationships as well. When the television made its first debut in the early to mid 20th century it came with good intentions. This idea of good intention however did not last long with the critics.

As early as 1961 the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission referred to television as a “ Vast Wasteland,” (351). Many other critics would come to share in his beliefs about television. There have been numerous books, articles, essays, and research done on the subject of television and its negative effects on children in particular. Marie Winn’s article is just one of <https://assignbuster.com/television-the-downfall-of-american-society/>

many. The amount of time America's youth spends watching television can be correlated to a decrease in the quality of the lives of children across this nation. As a result of watching too much television, children lack the proper development of intelligence, creativity, and imagination. Parents are so used to the idea of television that they do not think to link it to their family's problems or issues.

Winn mentions a few examples of this issue in her text, one of which being a family of two boys, ages three and seven. The boy's entire evening after school revolves around their television shows. This same situation appears countless times in households across America. The reason that this is so bad is because when young children are spending all of their free time watching television they do not develop certain characteristics that they should be developing at this age. The children who spend more time in front of the television do not gain the experience that comes from playing sports, being part of a team/club, or getting to have a large group of friends to play and explore new things with. This is why they do not develop certain characteristics which are all important traits to develop, especially at this young age. I know that when I was young, and still to this day, I always loved being outside and playing sports or other activities.

I am so thankful for this because I now realize that by spending less time in front of the television I was able to learn so many more useful traits for life. Another aspect of life that television has a negative effect on in this country is family rituals. Family rituals are defined as "The part of family life that the families like about itself, is proud of, and wants formally to continue," (354).

Family rituals are extremely important because they are unique for the family and in most cases are what keeps a family together and close throughout years and generations. Somehow television has affected these rituals in many households. Winn uses an example of a young woman from Chicago in her article to show this effect. The young woman tells how she comes from a large family that loved getting together over holidays and had many lasting rituals that never failed to appear.

Except one year when her family got a television set in their house. This particular year, instead of the usual conversations and game playing the whole family crammed in front of the television to watch a football game. This is a perfect example of family rituals going down the drain due to television. Instead of interacting and having face-to-face conversations, everyone just stared at the screen without conversing at all. This validates Winn's argument of television having a negative effect across the nation. Television also has a huge effect on not only family relationships but others outside relationships as well. Watching television causes people to get a false sense of reality and when presented with a real world situation do not know what to do or how to act.

Winn states that, "The hours children spend in a one way relationship with television people, an involvement that allows with no communication or interaction, must have some effect with their relationship with real-life people," (Winn 355). Winn is correct in saying this and in fact she proves it when she supports it with examples. She writes about a teacher who says she has trouble interacting with people after watching television for a few hours.

The teacher says that because there was no necessary effort while watching, it was hard to deal with real people who require effort to talk to. Also, “Studies have been done to show the importance of eye- to-eye contact in real-life relationships,” (355) says Winn, something not required while watching television. This is more evidence to further validate Winn’s argument against television. I was lucky enough to be very involved in sports and other activities to steer me away from television.

I noticed from an early age that the children in school who were not athletic and had problems interacting with the other children were also the ones who spent many hours a day watching television or playing games on the television. Thankfully my group of friends were always active and outdoors. Swimming also took up a lot of my time. I still swim today at the collegiate level and I still do not have time for much television. People need to learn that although television is entertaining, there is almost always something better they could be doing. Most of the people living in this nation today were born into television and watching television has been irreplaceably drilled into the minds of Americans and some people would not know how to live a life without it. The reality of television is that it has severely negative effects on people, especially America’s youth who tend to spend way too much time sitting in front of television sets.

Marie Winn was able to see the significance in this and writes about it in her article, “ Television: The Plug-In-Drug. ” The title speaks for itself; she believes that television has a huge negative effect on quality of life including family life, real-world relationships, character development and many other

things as well. She proves her believes true throughout her work and shows the reader just how important it is to limit television viewing, especially for children who are watching more and more television each year. Without these limitations and more face-to-face interactions, this nation's future may not be a bright one. Work Cited Winn, Marie. " Television: The Plug in Drug. " Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide.

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