

新TOEFL 読解問題演習

(文意理解／適文挿入)

Television in the United States

1 Although experimentation with television broadcasting began in the late 1920s, technical difficulties, corporate competition, and World War II postponed its introduction to the public until 1946. Television constituted a revolutionary change from radio, but its introduction was not as chaotic as that of radio, for an institutional framework already existed. The television boom occurred between 1949, when 940,000 households had a set, and 1953, when the number soared to 20 million.

2 The rapid integration of television into American life coincided with the explosive rise of a consumer culture after the war. Pent-up demand fueled by the privations of the depression and the war, coupled with prosperity, was exploited by advertisers who turned to television to sell their products. In the early 1950s, many corporations produced and sponsored entire shows, and ads were at least one minute in length. But as programming became more expensive, and advertisers discovered that 30-second spots were as effective as longer ones, shows were sponsored by several products, increasing dramatically the sheer number of commercials. As the pace and intensity of advertising increased, the images on television became more homogenized, portraying in such programs as "Leave It to Beaver" and "Bonanza" idealized white middle-class families and norms. Advertisers' desires to appeal to the broadest possible audience, coupled with an atmosphere of conformity fueled by McCarthyism, blacklisting, and Cold War paranoia, made programmers extremely cautious, and they pandered to the lowest common denominator. Television excluded diversity and elevated consumerism into a national obsession.

3 Yet the voices of those ignored or betrayed broke through on television in the 1960s, primarily on the nightly news. The often horrifying footage of the civil rights movement, followed by John F. Kennedy's assassination, brought a new primacy to network news, which expanded from 15-minute to half-hour broadcasts in 1963. Soon television was bringing the Vietnam War, antiwar demonstrations, and the women's movement into the nation's homes. Television in the 1960s was an agent both of conformity and of rebellion, providing some images that unified America and others that reflected, and sometimes exacerbated, the country's deep racial, class, and gender divisions.

4 Television has had both a salubrious and a corrupting effect on politics. Congressional investigations from the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954 to Watergate in 1973 and the Iran-Contra hearings in 1988 exposed the

wrongdoings of government officials. But politicians also learned to be cautious and calculating in their use of television. They emphasized appearances, exploited visual symbols, and stage-managed the news whenever possible. Television journalists, dependent on highly placed sources and government handouts, were not inclined to challenge official versions of reality. Network news executives, increasingly drawn from the ranks of the business community rather than from journalism, believed that the public did not want analyses of complex issues but simply entertainment. The symbiotic relationship between politicians and television journalists led to an emphasis on style over substance in the coverage of presidential campaigns so that, in 1988, the Pledge of Allegiance was a major campaign topic while the nation's huge deficit was virtually ignored.

5 Because television brings images, as well as sound, into the home, it has been more criticized than radio for squandering its potential to educate and inform. Newton Minow, the FCC chairman in 1961, called television "a vast wasteland." Others worried about the levels of violence in programming and its effects on children. Spurred by such criticisms, Congress in 1967 established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and, in 1969, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), which received some federal money to support noncommercial and educational programs. But PBS must still rely on viewer support and corporate sponsorship to survive.

6 Criticism of the medium has intensified, and many of the nation's problems, from widespread illiteracy to political apathy, have been attributed to television. [A] Critics on the right charge that television news is infused with a liberal bias and that programming contains too much sex. [B] Critics on the left counter that news programs serve to legitimize the status quo and marginalize any proposals for far-reaching social change. [C] Although television continues to provide viewers with common stories and scenes of events that help construct a sense of national unity, the ideology of television programming, especially the message that limitless consumerism is the most important freedom, has alarming political and cultural implications. [D]

Questions:

1. In Paragraph 2, what criticism does the author make about television in the 1950s?
 - (A) The quality of news reporting was poor.
 - (B) Television contributed to the feeling of Cold War paranoia.
 - (C) Programs became more violent to attract audiences.
 - (D) Programming became increasingly uniform.

2. What positive quality does the author describe television as having in the 1960s?

- (A) The quality of advertising was higher than in the 1950s.
- (B) Programming was more varied than television in the 1950s.
- (C) It revealed the major events of the time to a mass audience.
- (D) There was a lower emphasis on consumerism.

3. The following sentence could be added to Paragraph 6.

Also cultural critics lament the privatization of American life, with viewers staying home glued to the tube instead of participating in political or social activities.

Where would it best fit into the paragraph?

SAMPLE