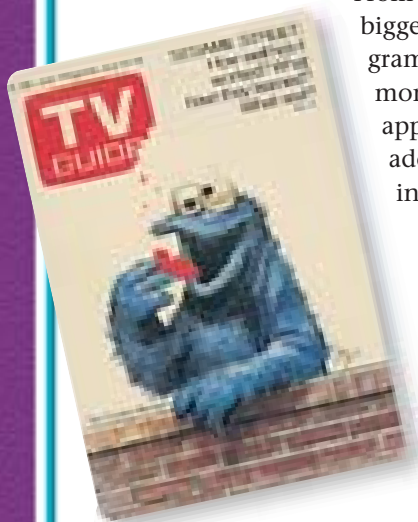


DAILY LIFE

1968-1980

Television Reflects American Life

From May until November 1973, the Senate Watergate hearings were the biggest daytime TV viewing event of the year. Meanwhile, television programming began to more closely reflect the realities of American life. Shows more often addressed relevant issues, more African-American characters appeared, and working women as well as homemakers were portrayed. In addition, the newly established Public Broadcasting System began showing many issue-oriented programs.



▼ DIVERSITY

Chico and the Man was the first series set in a Mexican-American barrio, East Los Angeles. The program centered on the relationship between Ed Brown, a cranky garage owner, and Chico Rodriguez, an optimistic young mechanic Brown reluctantly hired.



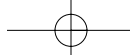
▲ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Public television devoted much of its programming to quality children's television. Shows such as *Sesame Street* and *Zoom!* made it fun for children to learn. They were deliberately fast-paced to appeal to the new generation of "television babies."



◀ SOCIAL VALUES

All in the Family was the most popular series of the 1970s. It told the story of a working-class family, headed by the bigoted Archie Bunker and his long-suffering wife, Edith. Through the barbs Bunker traded with his son-in-law and his African-American neighbor, George Jefferson, the show dealt openly with the divisions in American society.



◀ INDEPENDENT WOMEN

The Mary Tyler Moore Show depicted Mary Richards, a single woman living in Minneapolis and working as an assistant manager in a local TV news department. Mary symbolized the young career woman of the 1970s.

▼ CULTURAL IDENTITY

The miniseries *Roots*, based on a book by Alex Haley, told the saga of several generations of an African-American family. The eight-part story began with Kunta Kinte, who was captured outside his West African village and taken to America as a slave. It ended with his great-grandson's setting off for a new life as a free man. The groundbreaking series, broadcast in January 1977, was one of the most-watched television events in history.



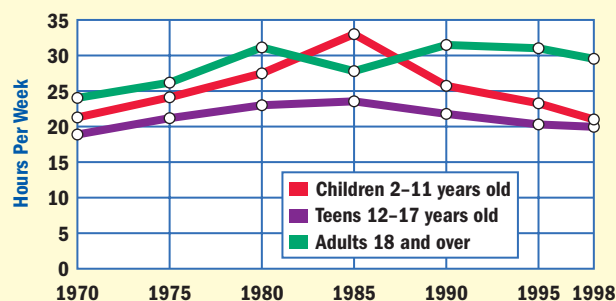
DATA

FILE

TV EVENTS OF THE 1970s

- A congressional ban on TV cigarette commercials took effect in 1971.
- ABC negotiated an \$8-million-a-year contract to televise *Monday Night Football*, first broadcast in September 1970.
- In 1972, President Nixon, accompanied by TV cameras and reporters from the major networks, made a groundbreaking visit to China.
- *Saturday Night Live*—a show that would launch the careers of Dan Aykroyd, Jane Curtin, Eddie Murphy, and many other comic actors—premiered in October 1975.
- WTCG-TV (later WTBS) in Atlanta, owned by Ted Turner, became the basis of the first true satellite-delivered “superstation” in 1976.
- In November 1979, ABC began broadcasting late-night updates on the hostage crisis in Iran. These reports evolved into the program *Nightline* with Ted Koppel.

Average Weekly Hours of TV Viewing



Source: Nielson Media Research

THINKING CRITICALLY

CONNECT TO HISTORY

1. **Analyzing Causes** In what ways did television change to reflect American society in the 1970s? What factors might have influenced these changes?



SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R7.

CONNECT TO TODAY

2. **Creating a Graph** Use the Internet or an almanac to find data on the number of televisions owned in the United States and the number of hours of TV watched every day. Make a graph that displays the data.



RESEARCH LINKS

CLASSZONE.COM