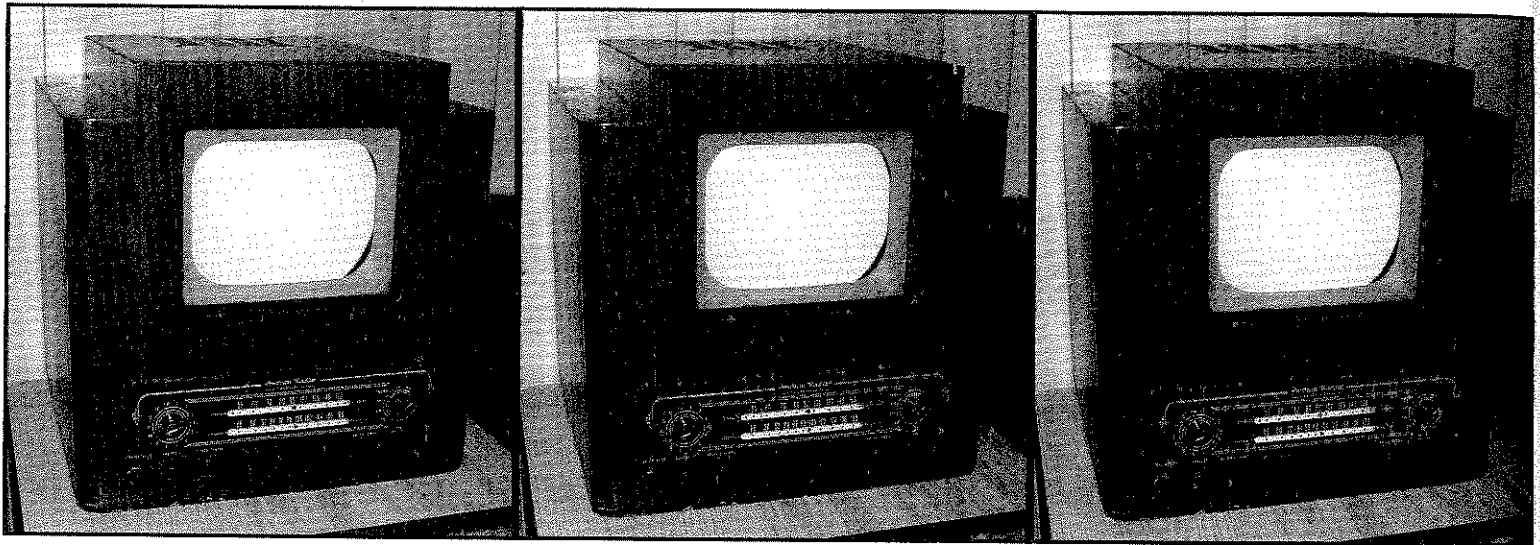


Americans

Discover TV

by Pat Cusick



Set Your Purpose

When did TV become an important part of American life? Read this article to find out.

In the 1940s, TV was still new. Early TV sets had small screens. The pictures were slightly greenish. There weren't many programs. Most people **amused** themselves in other ways. They listened to the radio. They went to the movies. They read books, and they played games. On special nights, they went out to restaurants and dance halls. TV was not very popular in those early days.



Then, in 1948, all that changed. A man named Milton Berle got his own TV show. He was a stand-up **comic**. He wore funny clothes. He twisted his mouth into strange shapes. He had pies thrown in his face. He acted out funny skits. Milton Berle made the whole country laugh.

Soon, new TV comedy shows, such as *I Love Lucy*, appeared. These shows were also **entertaining**. More families bought TV sets. Grown-ups rushed home from work to catch their favorite show. Children rushed home from school. America was in love with TV!

Suddenly, there was less time to cook after the workday was done. No one wanted to miss the evening shows. Families bought precooked dinners. Stores called them TV dinners. People ate their dinners on small tables in front of their TV sets.

TV **dramatically** changed our way of life. Americans spent less time reading. Bookstores sold fewer books. Many restaurants, dance halls, and movie houses closed down. Everyone was at home, watching TV.

The change was here to stay. TV became a **fixture** in most American homes. People saw the world from their living rooms as they watched TV news. They met candidates for president on their TV screens. They watched movies in their homes. TV changed the way America lived.

Think About It

Why do you think TV became
so popular?

Name _____

Date _____

Check Your Understanding

Fill in the letter with the best answer for each question.

- The first TV sets were not much fun to watch because
 - the picture was poor.
 - the sets were too large to fit into most homes.
 - there were too many programs to pick from.
 - the sound was not as good as the sound on radio.
- People watched Milton Berle's show because
 - he had good ideas.
 - he was funny.
 - he was the only person with a TV show.
 - he was a great storyteller.
- Instead of cooking, people began buying TV dinners because
 - they needed to save money on food.
 - TV dinners took less time to cook.
 - they wanted to eat different kinds of food.
 - they wanted to lose weight.
- After reading this article, you can conclude that TV caused people to spend more time
 - at work.
 - on the streets.
 - at home.
 - playing sports.
- The first successful TV shows were
 - comedy shows.
 - dramatic shows.
 - news shows.
 - sports shows.

Vocabulary

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Fill in the letter with the best definition of the underlined word.

- People amused themselves in different ways.
 - entertained; enjoyed
 - were thoughtful
 - lined up
 - worked for money
- Milton Berle was a stand-up comic.
 - someone who tells jokes
 - someone who sings songs
 - someone who dances
 - someone who tells scary stories
- Milton Berle's show was entertaining.
 - difficult
 - strange
 - enjoyable
 - serious
- TV dramatically changed our way of life.
 - in a small way
 - in an important way
 - slowly
 - partly
- TV became a fixture in the home.
 - something lasting
 - something funny
 - something ugly
 - something new

Word Work

A **noun** names a person, place or thing. A **plural noun** names more than one person, place, or thing. Most nouns are made plural by adding **-s** or **-es**. If a noun ends in a consonant and *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add **-es**. If a noun ends in a vowel and *y*, just add **-s**.

baby → **babies**

toy → **toys**

Write the plural of each word.

1. monkey _____
2. fly _____
3. day _____
4. party _____
5. supply _____

A **prefix** is a word part that comes at the beginning of a base word. The prefix **pre-** means "before" or "in advance." The prefix **sub-** means "under" or "below."

precook to cook in advance

subway a road or way under the ground

Read the definitions below. Add the suffix **pre-** or **sub-** to the base word to make a new word that fits the definition.

6. an early view of something, before the real thing _____ **view**
7. to pay in advance _____ **pay**
8. below the set standard _____ **standard**
9. the age before the teenage years _____ **teen**
10. a vessel that goes under the water, into the marine world _____ **marine**

Write Now

In the selection "Americans Discover TV," you learned how TV first became a part of American life. TV is probably part of your life today. Which TV show do you like best? Why?

- Plan to write a letter to a friend describing your favorite TV show and explaining why you like it. Look at the questions on the chart. Answer these questions in your letter.
- Write your letter. Try to convince your friend that this show is worth watching.

What is the name of the show?

Who are the main characters?

What kind of things happen in the episodes?

Why do you like the show so much?

Do you think it is an educational show? Why or why not?