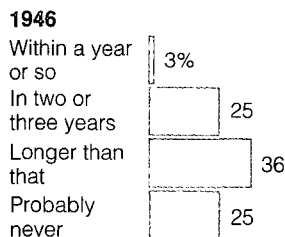


THE REACH OF TELEVISION

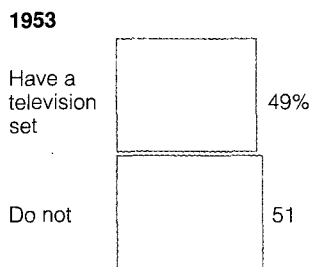
Fifty years ago, a quarter of Americans thought that they would never own a television set. Today, almost all Americans say they have a working set in the house, and a majority say they have three or more. Nearly three-quarters think television is a necessity, and only 27 percent describe it as a luxury they could do without. About 30 percent call a remote control or a VCR "necessities," but over 70 percent own them. Fewer than three in ten call basic cable or a second TV necessities, but significant numbers say they have these, too.

Question: **Do you think the chances are that you will own a television set...?**



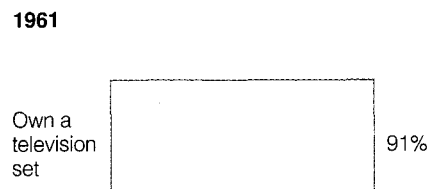
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune*, January 1946.

Question: **Do you...?**



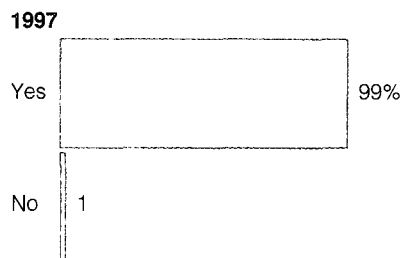
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 1953.

Question: **Do you...?**



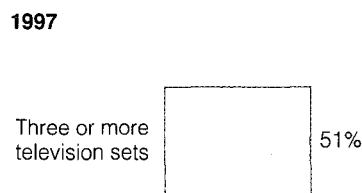
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 1961.

Question: **Is there at least one television in this household that is usually kept in working order...?**

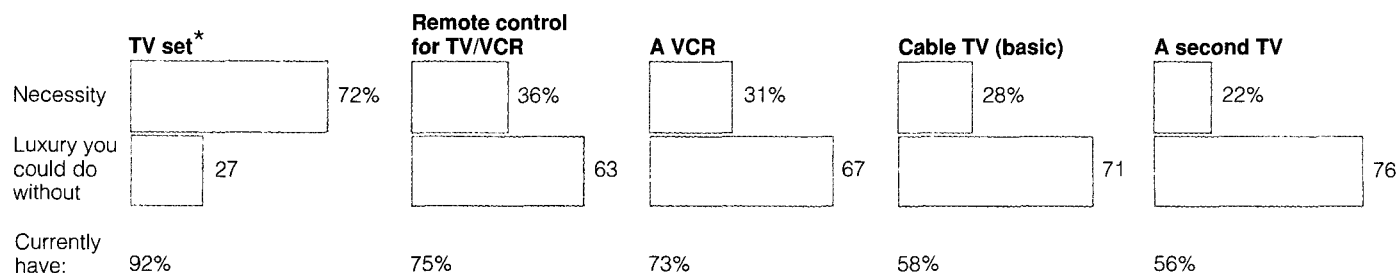


Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, June 1997.

Question: **Let me read a list of electronic devices and services. Please tell me which ones, if any, your household has.**



Question: **Would you read down this list and tell me for each one whether you personally think of it pretty much as a...?**

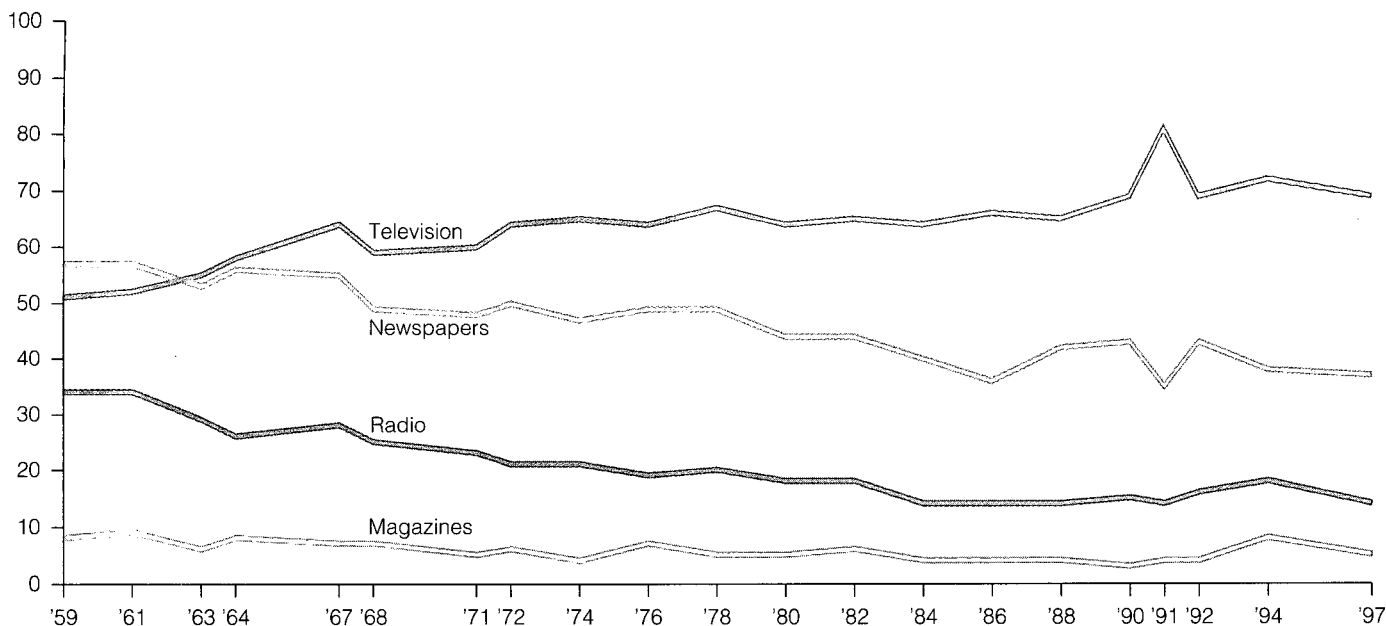


Note: *In 1976, the first time this question was asked, 59 percent said a TV set was a necessity.
Source: Survey by Roper Starch Worldwide, January 1997.

Television's Credibility . . .

Since 1963 more Americans have said they usually get their news from television rather than newspapers, radio, or magazines. In 1959, people said newspapers were the most credible source of news if there were conflicting reports. Today, people believe television is more credible. CBS, NBC, and ABC have seen a sharp decline in their audience share over the past 20 years.

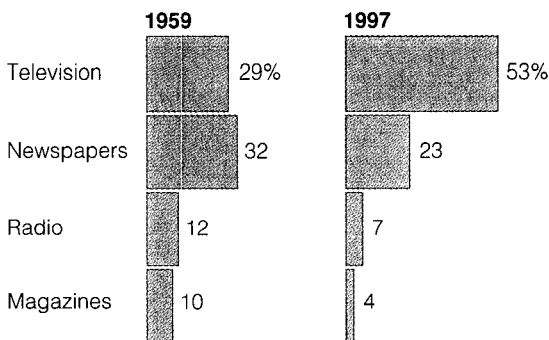
Question: I'd like to ask you where you usually get most of your news about what's going on in the world today...?



Source: Surveys by Roper Starch Worldwide, latest that of March 1997.

Question: If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from..., which of the four versions...?

Would be most inclined to believe...



This question has been asked over 20 times by Roper Starch World-wide. The second time it was asked, in 1961, more people said they would be more inclined to believe television than newspapers (39 to 24 percent), and this has been the case ever since.

Source: Surveys by Roper Starch Worldwide, latest that of March 1997.

Prime-time Network Audience Shares

The decline in audience share of the three major networks during prime time has been dramatic. The audience share of the highest rated network in the 1988-1989 season (NBC at 26) was lower than the audience share of the lowest rated network in the 1978-1979 season (also NBC at 27).

	ABC	CBS	NBC	Fox
1978-1979	34	30	27	—
1988-1989	21	20	26	—
1996-1997	15	16	18	13

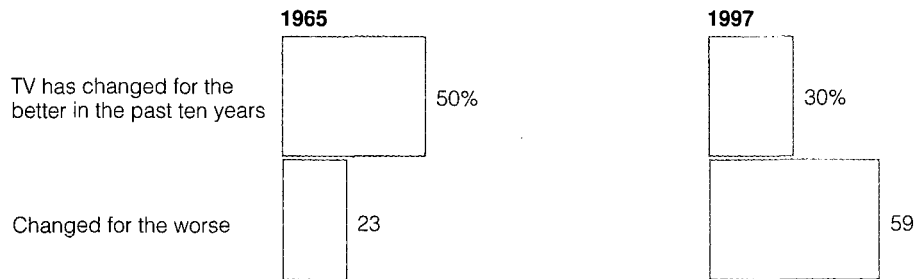
Note: The season is September-April for 1978-1979 and 1988-1989. It was September-mid May for the 1996-1997 period.

Source: Nielsen Media Research.

and its Content

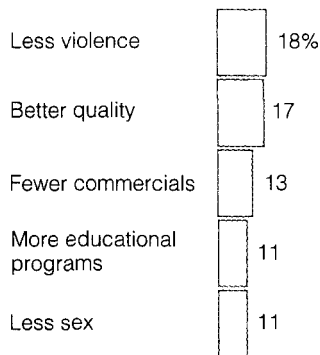
In 1965, when Gallup asked whether TV had changed for the better or worse in the past 10 years, 50 percent said it had changed for the better. When NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal* repeated that question recently, 59 percent said it had changed for the worse. Why the change in attitudes? Too much violence is the major concern, though the quality, commercials, and sexual content also trouble viewers. Majorities say they want more histories and documentaries, movies, news, and dramas. Eighty percent would like to see fewer talk shows, and 85 percent fewer soap operas.

Question: **Would you say...?**



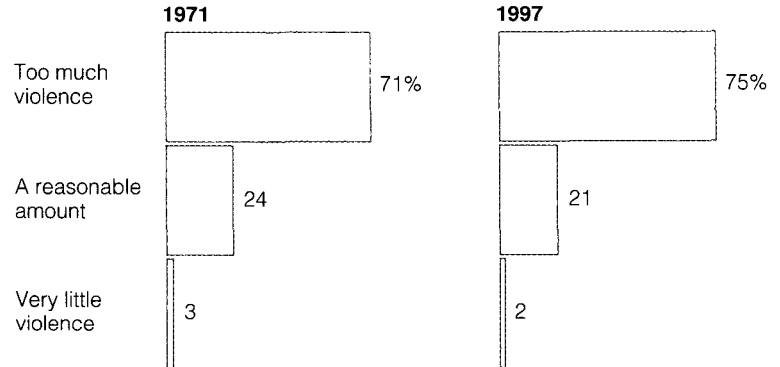
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, 1965 and by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, June 1997.

Question: **What do you think is the most important thing the networks and the television stations could do to increase your satisfaction when you watch television...?**



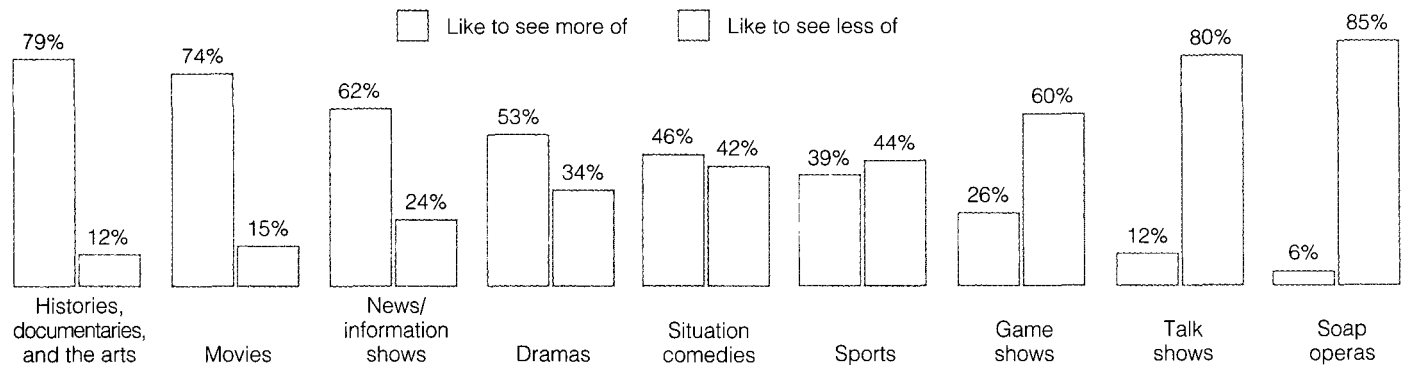
Source: Survey by the *Los Angeles Times*, September 1989.

Question: **How do you feel about the amount of violence portrayed on television programs today, not including news programs? Is there...?**



Source: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, 1971 and the Pew Research Center, January 1997.

Question: **Looking ahead to the next few years, for each of the following types of TV programs I name, please tell me whether you'd...**

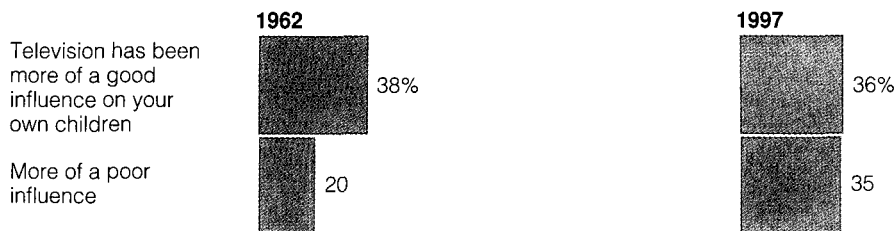


Source: Survey by NBC News/*Wall Street Journal*, June 1997.

TV's Effects on Children and Adults

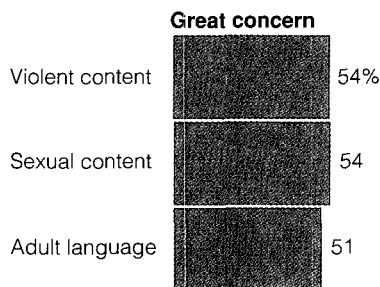
Over the past 35 years, the number saying that television is a poor influence on children has risen from 20 to 35 percent. Parents are concerned about violence, sexual content, and adult language. A majority of parents limit the television their children watch, but a third do not. The mean time allowed for viewing on school days is 2.3 hours. Only 13 percent of adults describe themselves as addicted to television. A near majority say their life would not be much different without television, but of the remainder, more say it would be worse than better.

Question: **In general, would you say that...**



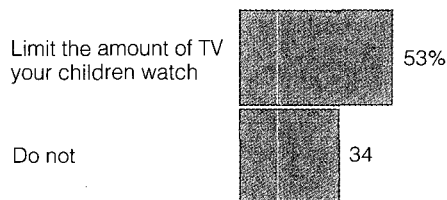
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, 1962 and NBC News/Wall Street Journal, June 1997.

Question: **How concerned are you that your (child/children) is being exposed to too much...**



Source: Survey by the Pew Research Center, January 1997.

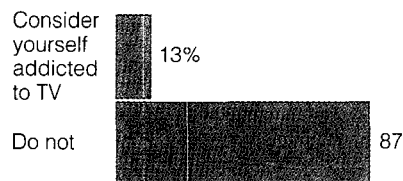
Question: **Do you...?**



The mean amount of television that parents with children said they allowed their children to watch on a school day was 2.3 hours.

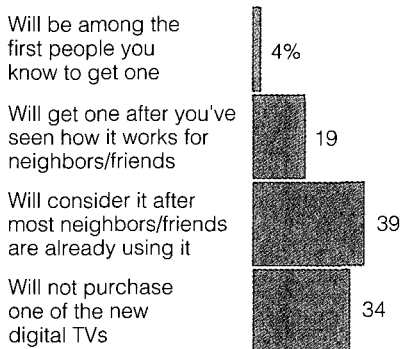
Source: Survey by Bruskin-Goldring Research, February 1997.

Question: **Do you...**



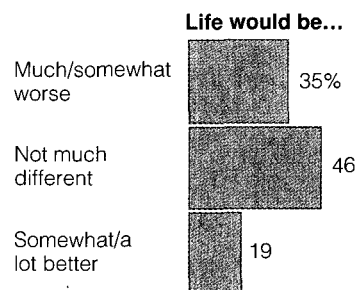
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, August 1990.

Question: **By the end of next year, there will be a new generation of digital TVs on the market offering much clearer pictures and better sound, but they will be expensive. Generally speaking, when it comes to buying the new generation of digital TVs, do you think you personally...?**



Source: Survey by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, June 1997.

Question: **Trying to be as honest as you can, what would be the impact on your life if television was taken out of your home altogether?**



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, August 1990.



As a longtime reader of and sometime contributor to TAE, I was disappointed with the logic behind Dave Geisler's account of his older brother's dissipation ("A Ruined Life," May/June). Paralleling the faulty logic of gun-control advocates, Geisler argues that people don't ruin their lives, drugs ruin people's lives.

But he ignored the fact that most casual drug users evince absolutely no problems relating to drug use. Most drug users responsibly regulate their use of controlled substances. That's one of the reasons why, as government statistics show, drug use peaks in young adulthood (ages 18-25), when users have relatively few responsibilities, and declines with age.

In any case, individuals remain responsible for their actions. Foisting that responsibility off on an inanimate substance that most people consume without engaging in "unpredictable and scary" behavior is dangerous personal and public policy.

But if Geisler wants to argue from personal anecdote, then how about this one: In college, I knew a half-dozen people who, on occasion, smoked pot, dropped acid, and used other drugs—and who went on to earn Ph.D.s, become productive members of society, and responsibly raise children.

Nick Gillespie
Houston, Texas

I read with great dismay Armstrong Williams' sanctimonious, self-righteous article ("60s Kids Grown Big," May/June). It is typical of the mind set which is increasingly driving voters away from the GOP. So what if Clinton's or Newt's parents re-married? Unfortunately, most of us do not have perfect,

pristine lives because reality is often difficult, painful, and complex.

Working-class voters of my generation are as alienated from the intolerant, narrow-minded, authoritarian moral terrorists of the Right as we are from the Hillary-loving leftists in the Democratic Party. Just as the Democrats lost supporters because they allowed the radical Left to gain control of their party, the GOP is now in danger of losing their hard-won support because of the radical Right's domination. Most voters see the dangers and fallacies in both these extremist movements and ideologies.

Linda Warren
Wichita, Kansas

Keith Richburg put into words what I have been unable to articulate for the past 13 years ("An American in Africa," July/August). I actually lived and worked in Africa from 1980-84. I am a white male and was working as an engineer in the oil industry. After my return to the U.S., my experiences had a powerful impact on my attitudes toward the national news media and political leaders, as well as my co-workers and friends.

One particularly vivid experience was a meeting with a black American family in a restaurant at the Hotel Ivoire in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The father was a New York attorney who had been tracing his roots after reading Alex Haley's best-seller. When I asked him how it was going, he said, "Thank God for slavery because I'm no more African than you are."

Kevin Brabec
Pleasanton, California

Bravo to T.J. Rodgers (LIVE, July/August) for making the principled case for

laissez-faire capitalism! How refreshing to find a successful corporate executive who eschews dangerous liaisons with the political class.

Having read his excellent defense of the free market, it came as no surprise that Rodgers' favorite author is Ayn Rand and that he believes "she is the patron saint of capitalism." In a similar vein, in 1975 a young James Fallows wrote in *The Atlantic Monthly* that "[Ayn Rand's point] is that some people are in business for the joy, even the nobility, of bringing men and materials together, taking risks and staving off disasters, and finally producing something good that other people can use or enjoy."

Which begs the question: Why wasn't Rand given any other mention in your issue on the ethics and aesthetics of business?

Sean Rushton
Washington, D.C.

As a founder of Young Americans for Freedom and someone who is mentioned in "Revolt on the Campus," I want to add some details to the enjoyable remarks by Karl Zinsmeister and Dana Rohrabacher on the beginnings of modern political conservatism ("Right in the '60s," May/June).

In the early '60s there was some positive mainstream press recognition of the new young conservatives—*Fortune* had a piece, for example. These had somewhat of a man-bites-dog aspect. But the tone turned hostile as Senator Goldwater became a more viable candidate. We were always clearly a minority; the civil rights and later the anti-war movements were larger. Many students did not support the Left, however.