TAKING TV TIME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A PBS Viewing Guide for 7th-12th Graders

When you're watching shows on PBS, engaging in discussion or related activities before, during, and/or after the show can help you remember what you've learned. Check out these discussion questions and activities for any show you watch on PBS - no internet needed! - to take what you just watched to the next level.

DISCUSS

BEFORE WATCHING: Discuss with your co-viewers (or write down if you're watching solo) what you think the program will be about and what you hope to learn. Share what you already know about the topic.

WHILE WATCHING: Write down, draw, or discuss new or interesting things presented in the show. What information is surprising? What sparks your interest to learn more?

AFTER WATCHING: Discuss what was most interesting to you personally, and ask your co-viewers to share what resonated most with them, too. Make connections between what you just saw on TV and personal experiences. Throughout the coming days, see if you can explore the featured topic in more detail through books, online research, discussions or observations (at home, at school, or in your community).

The activities below can be used with any program. Feel free to get family members of all ages in on these activities, too!

1. Magazine Editor.

After watching a program, write an article. You can write as if you are a journalist reporting on the content, or as a critic, reviewing and giving your opinion on the show. In addition to writing your article, draw or find images to accompany your piece, and don't forget to give your article a title. You can complete this activity multiple times with different programs and eventually compile all the articles into a full length magazine, either exclusively of your journalistic work or as a collaboration of the whole family.

2. Take it to the Stage.

After the program ends, create a reenactment of what you just saw. If possible, get others in your home involved. Start by writing out what elements of the program you think are most important to share with someone who hasn't seen the show. Outline your script, including all the information or moments you've decided is important. After you have a script, cast your actors and direct the movement of all the performers. (This applies for a one-person show, as well as a larger cast of actors.) Feel free to record your play, either with video or audio, to screen and share your creation.

3. Think Like a Producer!

After watching the show, think like a TV producer. Write notes for the following questions: Who was this made for - who's the audience? Who would most enjoy watching it? What other topics might that person be interested in learning about? From there, come up with a pitch for a new show that would complement the one you just watched. Think about what the NEED is for a new show...Would it give more in-depth information on the same topic? Would it be for a different age group? Would it present information that wasn't included? After you develop your idea, pitch the new show to someone in your household, by telling them about your idea, why audiences would like it, and why it would be a good companion for this show. Make sure your presentation is convincing...producers hear a lot of ideas!

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