

Math in the Media: Introduction to TV Program Ratings



Math In The Media



TOPIC #1

Television Program Ratings

INTRODUCTION



Each week, the news media report the top rated, most watched, television network programs. Teachers can easily locate this week's ratings figures and/or a news story related to the ratings by going to [Collider](#).

Sun Feb 14, 2021		Sales Demo Ratings			Demographic Shares			Persons
Demographic Profile		Adults	Adults	Adults	Women	Men	Adults	2+
Official Broadcast Nationals		18-34	18-49	25-54	18-49	18-49	50+	(000s)
ABC	GOOD MORNING, AMERICA 8:19 AM	0.15	0.39	0.61	7.8	4.8	11.0	3,294
	THIS WEEK 9:00 AM	0.13	0.38	0.63	5.2	4.6	9.4	3,330
	ABC WRLD NEWS TONIGHT 6:30 PM	0.27	0.65	1.05	4.5	4.6	12.6	7,498
	AMER FUNN HM VIDEOS-7 7:00 PM	0.43	0.83	1.20	5.6	5.3	8.5	5,965
	(P) AMERICAN IDOL 8:00 PM	0.64	1.17	1.66	8.0	6.1	9.2	6,946
CBS	ROOKIE, THE 10:00 PM	0.35	0.62	0.93	4.5	3.7	6.7	4,082
	SUNDAY MORNING 9:00 AM	0.16	0.48	0.83	5.9	5.8	16.4	5,669
	FACE THE NATION 10:30 AM	0.16	0.32	0.47	3.4	3.4	8.6	3,298
	(S)(C) PGAT AT&T PEBBLE 3:05 PM	0.42	0.61	0.79	3.7	6.2	7.7	4,193
	60 MINUTES 7:00 PM	0.43	0.77	1.24	4.7	5.4	15.3	9,438
NBC	EQUALIZER 8:00 PM	0.49	0.93	1.45	6.2	5.1	12.3	8,212
	(P) NCIS: LOS ANGELES 9:00 PM	0.40	0.70	1.11	4.7	3.7	9.5	6,148
	(P) NCIS: NEW ORLEANS 10:00 PM	0.33	0.55	0.86	4.2	3.0	9.0	4,995
	MEET THE PRESS 10:00 AM	0.15	0.35	0.61	4.3	3.5	9.9	3,717
	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS-SUN 6:30 PM	0.39	0.59	0.89	3.8	4.5	11.1	6,635
FOX	(R) WEAKEST LINK-SUN 7:00 PM	0.27	0.35	0.46	2.4	2.3	3.1	2,232
	(R) WALL-SUN 8:00 PM	0.16	0.28	0.38	1.8	1.5	2.5	1,816
	(S) GRAND OLE OPRY: 95 9:00 PM	0.14	0.30	0.52	2.3	1.5	4.7	2,844
	(P) FOX NASCAR RACEDAY 1:00 PM	0.33	0.66	0.97	4.3	7.6	8.1	4,064
	(S) FOX DAYTONA 500-RACE 3:41 PM	0.46	0.75	1.08	3.9	7.1	5.9	4,000
CW	(S)(G) FOX NASCAR DAYTONA 9:07 PM	0.52	0.91	1.34	4.5	8.3	7.6	4,830
	BATWOMAN 8:00 PM	0.05	0.11	0.16	0.6	0.7	0.6	509
	CHARMED 9:00 PM	0.05	0.09	0.11	0.6	0.4	0.5	368

Listed above: Broadcast network
telecasts with program averages.
(S) indicates special program
(R) indicates repeat telecast

KEY: Each rating/ share for ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX shows are
color-coded by above/ below average status within each demo.

Above Avg
Average
Below Avg

Before beginning this lesson/activity, it will be important to provide students with some background.

BACKGROUND In the television industry, the audits of people's television viewing behavior that help determine where much of the money goes are called ratings. One firm, Nielsen Media Research, dominates this business. The stations, networks, and major advertisers foot most of the bill for the firm's reports. Nielsen uses meters and diaries to determine viewing numbers.

(source: Media Today, An Introduction to Mass Communication, by Joseph Turow, Houghton-Mifflin, 1999 pg 280)

Teachers: For an excellent backgrounder, read this [history of The Nielsens](#).

Have your students read [The Ratings Game](#) and/or print out this

backgrounder from How Stuff Works: [How Do TV Ratings Work?](#)

Recommended teaching resource:

[Mass Communication How Television Ratings Work](#) (DVD)