

Kristin Harris

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

The Types of Reality Shows

These days, there are countless reality television shows airing on countless TV networks. To some people, these reality shows might all blend together. However, not all of these shows are the same. There are four basic types of reality shows: the dating reality, the celebrity marriage reality, the gaming reality, and the culture fusion reality.

One of the most common types of reality shows today is the dating reality. These shows usually take one person and present him or her with a certain number of possible mates to choose from. On each show, the bachelor or bachelorette usually eliminates a certain number of contestants. At first, because of time limitations, the bachelor or bachelorette will most likely base his or her eliminations on beauty and sex appeal. However, when the number of contestants dwindles and there is more available time, the bachelor or bachelorette may look deeper into the hearts of the contestants and then try to test whether certain contestants will actually follow through with a relationship. This type of speed dating usually does not result in a relationship that lasts more than a month after the show is filmed. One example of this is when *Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?* contestant Darva Conger was picked to marry millionaire Rick Rockwell on live television. It turns out that they were never legally married on the show and were never legally married after the show. The two are not together anymore, and their breakup was highly publicized. This goes to show that speed dating, especially on television, is not the way to go when looking for a mate.

Another type of reality show is the celebrity marriage reality show. On these reality shows, a camera crew follows a famous married couple around, filming their daily routines and activities. These shows are usually aired for the purpose of showing the public that star couples can make their marriage last. They are even sometimes dubbed the “let’s show off how great our marriage is” reality show. This type of reality show usually lays a curse upon the couple that is being followed. An example of this is the MTV marriage curse. In the past four years, the popular network MTV has put together various shows such as *Newlyweds* and *Meet the Barkers*. There were a couple of seasons of *Newlyweds* in which the stars were Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey. The next newlyweds were Carmen Electra and Dave Navarro. On *Meet the Barkers*, the stars were Travis Barker, Shanna Moakler, and their two children. After all of these shows aired, each of the couples got a divorce. This is why the press calls it the MTV curse. These kinds of shows draw in viewers because the American public wants to believe that celebrities are real people and that they can have real relationships. However, when celebrities display their relationships on national television, they often end up splitting up.

The next type of reality show is the gaming reality show. This type of reality show is a little less dramatic. On gaming reality shows, contestants try to win various challenges in order to stay in the game and win a grand prize. Usually, a person or team of persons is eliminated on each episode of the show. At the end, the last team or person standing will take home a grand prize. Some competitors will resort to anything in order to stay in the game until the end. This might include alliances between contestants, fake relationships between contestants, and betrayal of others. These kinds of competitors want to win the game no matter what the cost of winning is. One example of this is, when on the CBS show *Big Brother All Stars*, contestant Mike Boogie pretended to have alliances with other contestants, such as Janelle, Danielle, George, and

Erica. However, he and his real ally, Will, were plotting against every one of the other cast members. Mike even went as low as to pretend to love Erica. In the end, he betrayed her as he had all of the others. He even confessed to the cameras that every one of his alliances and relationships was fake, except, of course, his relationship with Will. This is a prime example of how although a contestant may win the prize, he or she may hurt many people on the way to the top.

One last type of reality show is the culture fusion reality. With culture fusion shows, a network puts several people in close quarters. These people are usually from different backgrounds. They may differ in sex, race, culture, and sexual orientation. The purpose of culture fusion shows is to create conflict, sexual attraction, and even friendships between housemates. One example of a culture fusion show is *The Real World* on MTV. MTV usually takes about seven young adults and houses them in an extravagant house in a random city. At some point during the show, the contestants will have to work together in order to make a living. Working together, living together, and doing almost everything together will take a toll upon one's relationships with others. This is why *The Real World* roommates are known for their constant fighting. However, they are also known for their frank displays of sexual attraction to others. This, again, is what will draw in viewers.

Although there are numerous reality shows out there in TV land, it is sometimes hard to see the purpose in some of them. However, these shows are produced mainly to draw in viewers by using conflict, sex, and competition. As a result, the dating reality, marriage reality, gaming reality, and culture fusion reality all make up today's most popular type of television show: the reality show.