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### Wanna Be on Top?

Since its 2003 debut, the television series *America's Next Top Model* has faced harsh criticism by those who feel that the program should be discontinued. Some people perceive a majority of the unapologetically beautiful contestants to be superficial due to the obvious acknowledgement of their good looks by society. At first glance, the perpetual fault-finders of the world believe that the show focuses mainly on external beauty and the ease of being photographed for a living. On the contrary, each episode is proof of the misconception that wrongly plagues professional modeling. Commonly abbreviated as *ANTM* or simply *Top Model*, the twelve-part reality television series has aired a whopping twenty-four seasons as of 2018 and has produced over forty widely successful international spin-offs. In theory, the show is a fierce competition for aspiring models that intend to have a professional career in the ever-evolving art of modeling. The show begins with thousands of unique people who virtually audition and are eventually limited to a select fifteen to twenty contestants, who then relocate to an extravagant home that serves as the model house for the duration of the competition, where they participate in various challenges, such as abnormal photo and commercial shoots, with one individual being eliminated at the end of each episode, based on lack of modeling skills, attitude, personality, etc. Despite what critics believe, the television series *America's Next Top Model* should be renewed for its twenty-fifth season because of its large fan-base who depend on the show for entertainment purposes, because of its ability to empower people of all ages, and because host

Tyra Banks deserves to remain in the spotlight.

The first reason that *America's Next Top Model* should be renewed for another season is due to the fact that the show has millions of fans who rely on it for a weekly dose of quality entertainment. Because this show is one of the most popular competitions for American models, people tune-in to see the true dedication and countless hours that it takes to become a model. The show depicts the mental, physical, and emotional struggles that correspond with the training to become a full-time model. Many watch the hit show to understand the more human side of the exquisite people who grace the cover of magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Covergirl*, and *Vogue*. Not everyone can understand that gorgeous specimens do struggle in everyday life. Each contestant has a turbulent back story that regular people of all backgrounds can relate to; whether the aspirant's past and present story revolves around homelessness, past trauma, bullying, substance abuse, or other forms of difficult-life obstacles, *Top Model* has had it all.

Another reason that *America's Next Top Model* should be renewed for an additional season is that it empowers people of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, religions, and physical attributes. A majority of the contestants mention that they would watch the show during their youth, proving that impressionable minds are inspired from the competition. The recurring theme proposed in the series is that beauty is undefinable. Whether someone is black or white or has vitiligo, is plus-sized or petite, is young or old, is Muslim or Wiccan, is male or female or nonbinary, that person is unquestionably beautiful and should feel confident, no matter how different from others that person may seem. The unique qualities stated above are some that specific victorious models have focused their brand on to captivate certain audience members. For example, in the twentieth cycle of *ANTM*, gender norms were obliterated with the entry of male contestants in a former all-female modeling competition, being the first such competition to

hit airways in America and over 150 countries. Individuals who watch the series will hopefully learn to love themselves for who they are, take ownership in the characteristics that make them stand out, and learn to utilize their uniqueness to better themselves mentally through empowerment.

Lastly, *America's Next Top Model* should be renewed for another season owing to the fact that its multi-talented host, Tyra Banks, has great insight to offer the world. In addition to being a television personality, Banks has various other titles she has acquired over her illustrious career, including, but not limited to, actress, businesswoman, philanthropist, model, and author. The woman who taught the world to smize (the action verb she created to mean to smile with the eyes and not the mouth) began her career as a teenager and quickly found herself walking the cat-walks of the most famous international designers before her early twenties. She became the first African-American woman to pose for the cover of well-known magazines such as *GQ* and *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition*, sparking a revolution for diverse models to come. As the epitome of a black queen who radiates positivity, Banks is the most fit to host and manage a top-rated television series until its final cancellation.

Altogether, the cut-throat competition *America's Next Top Model* should be renewed for season twenty-five because millions of fans depend on the program for an hour's worth of unparalleled entertainment, viewers can feel a sense of control over their life through viewing the show, and Tyra Banks gives valuable life lessons that all human beings could benefit from. If *ANTM* were to be discontinued, there would be an uproar of irate American citizens demanding that the dominant competition return to production for a glimpse into the bizarre, yet magnificent world that is fashion and beauty.