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Imagine this. A producer came to you and said: “*Hi, I would love for you to be in a reality TV program*.” So you asked what it means to be in a reality TV program. He’d answer with “*all you need to do is act normally. Just do what you normally would do, but the exception that a camera crew will be following you around.”*

You agreed, and the camera men, producer, director and writer started following you around. And when they’re filming you and your friends having dinner together, they suddenly stopped and asked you to start talking about a certain boy in your school. You agreed and started talking about some boy you know. And then the director and writer asked you to pretend you like the guy. But the thing is, you don’t like this guy. You both are only friends but the director asked you to pretend that you like him.

So is that what reality TV is? Isn’t it about real life people doing real life stuff in a real life situation? But why are the producers and directors and writers asking you to do stuff that you don’t normally do? Why are they making something up to make it sound more interesting?

Reality television is a television program genre that presents unscripted situations, documents actual events and usually features unknown instead of professional actors.

Such shows usually have participants that are interviewed about the situation and the participants talk about how they feel about it and what they think about the situation.

Another type of reality TV shows are *competition-based* reality shows. They often have additional common elements such as participant being eliminated per episode, with a panel of judges, and the concept of immunity from elimination. The participants or challengers are put into tests and missions with the possibility of being eliminated or punished.

All these reality programs are very successful not only in U.S but also all over the world. They are well known to people of every age, race, education, and language. They show how relatable these stars are to the viewers and how alike these stars are to the viewers.

As for the competition-based reality programs, one of the most famous one is *American Idol*. It is a singing competition and after the preliminary rounds, the live shows start. And each week, a contestant will be eliminated through the votes of the public. Even with judges to give reviews of the participant’s performance that night, it is the public who will decide who would leave and be eliminated.

There are testimonies from an *American Idol* participant who came out to testify how it really is when auditioning for the show. How all that we see on TV is not what it really is like. She’s known as Maria Saint, and in her writings are very explicit accounts of what she encountered during her audition process. At one point, all the contestants were asked to learn a new song: *Billionaire* by Bruno Mars and Travis McCoy, to test their ability to learn a new song fast. And what is shown on TV is a bunch of people singing the same song in front of the judges. But if you look carefully at the clip, you’ll notice that there was not a frame that shows the contestants and the judges in the same room. In actual fact, they are recorded at different times. According to Maria Saint, it was actually taped “*to make that ridiculous compilation of people singing the same song privately, some good, and some bad*.”

And at the final round before really going in to meet the judges, she mentioned an event whereby an “*adorable but strange little blonde-haired boy, nice white dress shirt, slacks, and loafers, passionately waving an American Flag for the cameras”* screeching the song *“Smile*.” And at that particular round, if a contestant is cut, and they act crazy, they will be put back in so that they can air the reaction on the show. And when “flagboy” was cut, he started crying hysterically. Cameras immediately swarmed over him, and he was brought back into the audition room. A few minutes later, he came out proudly with his large sticker than indicates that he passed that round.

*The Amazing Race* is another competition-based reality TV show that is very famous around the globe. It is a game show in which teams of two people, race around the world with other teams. Each team is given missions and they have to complete these missions in order to be able to go to ‘pit stops’ where the last team to arrive would either be eliminated or be faced with disadvantages in the next round.

What is shown on television has also been controlled by the producers and directors. The clothes that they wear, the expressions that they have on their faces, and every scene has been altered so it would be shown on TV the right way and with the right angle.

The world of entertainment is making changes to spice up their programs. And the audiences love it. From a reality show of singing, acting, modelling, sports, magic, and even to parenting, audiences from all walks of life enjoys them.