

Question: Create an argument in which you discuss the best television series that's been on the air. Use citations to strengthen your argument and include a counter-claim.

Response #1: *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* is the best television show there is. The premise itself calls for strong writing, or the series would completely fall apart; the episodes follow the agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., not the superheroes themselves. Running a parallel track to the success of recent Marvel films is a tough challenge to take on, but one that the producers have done with grace. "Whedon and Marvel are attempting to broaden the story's already multi-platform universe by giving it concurrent plotlines" (McNamara). The show itself is captivating, with a complex array of storylines that are enhanced by the talented actors who play a diverse set of characters. It's impossible not to fall in love with the well-written personalities that dominate the sets each week, and the captivating scenes will hook any watcher. Yes, the Marvel movies are great, but this "television series [is] just as good, in its own way, as the film franchise" (McNamara).

There are people who don't like this show. They say "the show has an opportunity to get into the details, politics, and character development that necessarily get excised from a two-hour movie, but forgoes it to be a slightly cheeky procedural instead" (Paskin), those folks may not be pleased by anything that doesn't fit exactly what they are looking for. I'd also argue that just because something is "cheeky," doesn't mean it lacks the capacity to be intellectual. If anyone actually watches the show, they'd notice that *S.H.I.E.L.D.* discusses a lot of important issues that parallel our own culture today.

Using the "evidence" section of your rubric, score this response. What grade would you give this response? Explain why.

Score: 12 or 13

Reasoning: The evidence used is adequate, but in no way is thorough or convincing. The writer has not introduced where their sources come from, which affects the credibility of the evidence used. Citations should always be discussed afterwards as well.

Response #2: *The Walking Dead* is hands down the most extraordinary show to ever grace the world of television. Not only is the show captivating, it's also wildly complex, as it plays out near our current time period, but essentially throws those who watch it back in time to witness the feudal system, when those in power could take whatever they wanted and seemingly suffer no consequences unless the lower classes overthrew their leader. We see this happen a lot in *The Walking Dead*, and being able to note the distinct changes of the characters as they are further affected by the environments around them makes it exceptionally interesting to watch.

Unfortunately, there are people who try to argue that *The Walking Dead* is "boring." Many times, I see "fans" complain that there weren't enough walkers in a given episode, which only further proves their inability to comprehend the larger scope of the show's subject matter: the psychological repercussions of living in a world with no government, no laws, and no order. The show's tagline "kill the dead, fear the living" is intended to showcase the true meaning of the series: the walkers may kill you, but the cruelty of human nature is much worse.

Using the "evidence" section of your rubric, score this response. What grade would you give this response? Explain why.

Score: 8

Reasoning: This wouldn't be a 7, because it's not "illegible, incoherent, off-topic or off-purpose," but that being said, there is literally no evidence used. Therefore, the terminology from 8, "use of evidence from sources is minimal, absent..." works for this score.

Response #3: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* remains the best television series, regardless of the fact that it turns 20 this year. Throughout the course of 7 seasons, Joss Whedon (the show’s creator), takes his viewers on a journey of the teenage experience, as told through the metaphor of fighting demons. Tracy Little, one of the contributors to the book *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale* discusses this use of metaphor throughout the show, and how the true beauty of *Buffy* begins “with the idea that teens struggle with social pressures, violence, and pain... [leaving] the viewers with a show where the metaphor is made literal—high school really is hell...and yet these forces of evil are not the toughest problem they have to deal with” (Irwin 286). *Buffy* paints this metaphor as a way for the audience to truly understand (or remember) the devastation that is often involved with growing up: be it because popularity can be isolating; coming out of the closet can be scary; keeping secrets can be painful; the loss of virginity can be more complicated than anticipated; and that friends who stick by through it all are the people worth saving. The literary genius behind this show is what makes it stand the test of time.

While there are people who generally dislike *Buffy*, I’ve found in my own experience that their dislike stems from giving up after only watching the first few episodes. I will admit, initially there is a profound cheesiness in the first season of *Buffy* that is hard to stomach if the viewer didn’t grow up in the 90’s. Such details are discussed at length in the article “Prophecy Girl,” that some of the weaknesses apparent are “weekly music appearances, monster-of-the-week tropes, and a rushed premiere” (Golden & Holder). These shortcomings caused the first 12 episodes to be cringe worthy at times. Past the first (shorter) season, however, Joss Whedon delivers a soul-wrenching, captivating television show that will make those who watch laugh, cry, and want to kick some serious monster butt.

Using the “evidence” section of your rubric, score this response. What grade would you give this response? Explain why.

Score: 14/15

Reasoning: This response takes the time to first introduce a source, which helps us understand its credibility, effectively integrates the source into the flow of the response, and takes time to discuss the relevance of the information being used. The counter-claim is cited and also refuted. There is depth to the overall response.