After reading the articles on Reality TV Shows, write an essay in which you explain why reality TV is taking over the entertainment industry, and why these types of shows are so appealing to watch. Support your discussion with evidence from the texts.

**WHY DO WE WATCH REALITY TV?**

http://www.sociology.com/2013/04/watch-reality-tv/

The recent death of the reality TV personality, Shain Gandee of *Buckwild*, brings to light the popularity of reality TV shows. After all, this show had only filmed its first season of a dozen episodes that were aired in 2013. Now, following the death of the show’s star, the show will not be renewed for its second season. Yet most 12- to 34-year-olds across America know who Gandee was, as this reality TV show was the top-rated cable show for MTV’s 12- to 34-year-old demographic.

**Buckwild No More**

The community associated with the show expresses mixed feelings. Mayor Danny Jones of Charleston, West Virginia, where the show was filmed, is actually “happy the show is canceled,” going on to state: “everyone around here [is]. The show does nothing for us and exaggerates every negative stereotype about us.” The show featured a small group of young adults who spent their time partying and going “buckwild,” which led to plenty of drama and entertainment. While the show may have stereotyped the community in WV where it was filmed, the size of its audience proved that the show was quite popular.

**Financial Issues**

What does reality TV say about our culture? From a sociological perspective, we can start by noting that reality TV shows are much cheaper to produce than scripted programs. There are no specially created costumes or stages. The actors and actresses work for much lower pay in comparison to the top thespians of television. For example, one of the best-known reality TV stars, *Kim Kardashian*, makes $40,000 per episode, while *Charlie Sheen* was bringing home $825,000 per episode when he was on *Two and a Half Men*—quite the pay difference.

The U.S. economy has been on a tailspin in the past few years, and everyone is having to cut costs. It is no wonder that long-running daytime soaps with hefty budgets for costumes and sets, like *One Life to Live* and *All My Children*, were canceled while reality shows featuring Honey Boo Boo and the Real Housewives of…are taking over.
Social Implications

What do reality TV shows mean for our society? Since these types of shows are lightly scripted, or not at all, they are purported to reflect society as a whole. However, anyone who has watched a reality show will note that these shows attract viewership thanks to dramatic events. No one would use their TiVo to capture someone working a 9 to 5 job at a fast food joint, only to come home to watch television before dozing off in the recliner. While television is switching over to a cheaper method for producing shows, without the entertaining acts expected with a TV program, even reality shows would be dead in the water. Therefore, we can all agree that these so-called reality shows are not so much reality but rather melodramatic made-for-television-audience shows.

WORLD FAMOUS CREATIVE STRATEGY

“Once we rid ourselves of traditional thinking we can get on with creating the future.”
James Bertrand
February 16, 2010

Is Reality TV Taking Over?

Each year you might notice that more and more reality television shows are popping up. It started with the Real World (as far as I can remember) on MTV. However fast forward about fifteen years later, and reality television has taken over- Flavor of Love, Keeping Up With the Kardashians, Survivor, College Hill, The Hills, American Idol, Survivor, Amazing Race, America's Next Top Model, and my personal favorite, Jersey Shore. The birth of these shows and being catapulted into prime time has taken merely less than a year. The average sitcom, however, must first forgo a pilot and then pray to get enough viewers for a first season. After the first season, if the show still has not brought in enough viewers, the station is more than willing to drop them.

One particular story that I found quite interesting is the salary that these F list celebrities (in my opinion) make per show. MTV received a record high with 4.8 million viewers for a finale, surpassing the former number one show they had which was the Hills. However, the most mind-boggling thing about this all, is that after the end of the season it was quite apparent that MTV was going to do a second season. MTV offered the original members of Jersey Shore to come back for a second season, however the number placed on the table was not one that they were even considering. All of the original members banded together and demanded $10,000 dollars per episode (I guess a college education really isn't necessary). Initially, MTV did not even consider their request, but People Magazine has confirmed that all the original members will be returning, leading the public to believe that they were granted their wish.

My main concern is paying these astronomical prices for normal people who have no training in acting whatsoever, but are glorified for spending extra time in the gym, the tanning salon, or cosmetic surgery. I am honestly not mad at how they are making their money, but I really do believe that it demeans actors and actresses who do take this job seriously, people who have studied drama and have been in theater their whole lives. It also demeans the entire process of writing sitcoms and the amount of work that editors and writers endure, for a reality show to come along and steal their viewers. The current situation is this: in order to be on reality television, you can be moderate, however, in order to dominate sitcoms or shows, you must be above average.

I will not sit here and lie to you, because I am an avid consumer of reality television, especially Jersey Shore. I tuned in every Thursday night to see Snooki to do something stupid and laugh. However, I was not laughing with them, I was laughing at them. As a potential advertiser I do not see this becoming a major problem in the advertising world, but as an English double major, I am a bit worried, to say the least.