

# Arts: Entertainment & Classics

1. Contrast "Classical" and "Trending."
  - a. Enduring values vs. temporary and fleeting interest.
2. Explain Postman's & Huxley's "Entertainment vs. Mindfulness."
  - a. *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman
    - i. Television expresses ideas primarily through alluring visual imagery, thereby reducing politics, news, and history to mere entertainment.
    - ii. Therefore, television, which is mere entertainment, leads to the trivialization of public discourse.
    - iii. presidential debates
      1. [history](#)
      2. [Kennedy-Nixon](#)
      3. [Trump-Biden](#)
  - b. *Brave New World*
    - i. "a happy mindlessness" — feelies(movies), soma(drugs), sex, sports(mini-golf), entertainment, work(mind-numbing and minimal)
    - ii. John —Shakespeare, Bible
3. Explain Sommerville's "News vs. Classics."
  - a. "Why the News Makes Us Dumb," John Sommerville
  - b. News — "that which is new" (duh)
  - c. Classics — "that which endures" (because it has value)
4. Explain Johnson's "Vigorous intellect vs. happy and mindless distraction."
  - a. Curiosity is one of the most permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect. —Samuel Johnson
  - b. Fruit and vegetables vs. soda, Twinkies, Doritos, and beer
  - c. Shakespeare, Bible, and documentaries vs. YouTube's "World's Dumbest People"
5. Contrast entertainment with curiosity, knowledge, wisdom, and growth in the arts.
  - a. Amusement is another word for entertainment. The etymology of amusement is illuminating: "a" — "not" / "muse" — "to think".
  - b. Amusement is literally "not to think."
  - c. Entertainment, as a hobby or rest or enjoyment, is pleasure.
  - d. Entertainment, as an addiction, is "escape from reality."
  - e. Curiosity, knowledge, and growth. E.g., it is generally held that *To Kill a Mockingbird* encourages understanding and growth.
6. Contrast "Entertainment and Escape."
  - a. a glass of wine or beer vs. addiction or alcoholism

- b. a desert or treat vs. Type II Diabetes
- 7. Explain Mr. Dean's "My problem isn't that you know all about Taylor Swift, my problem is that you don't also know all about the "Declaration of Independence."
  - a. Know as much about the "critical foundations of America" and "classics" as you do about "celebrities and whatever is trending."
- 8. Food / Literature Analogy
  - a. Just read. So just eat?
  - b. toxic vs. junk/treats vs. wholesome
  - c. food
    - i. We pretty well know not to ingest rat poison, fentanyl, or cocaine.
    - ii. But a half gallon of ice cream and 6 pack of coke will kill you too, just not as quickly.
  - d. literature
    - i. We pretty well know what porn and graphic violence do to your mind.
    - ii. But straight diet of action thrillers, romance novels, and murder mysteries will kill your mind too, just not as quickly.