

Part 7

You are going to read four reviews of a science documentary series on TV. For questions 43–52, choose from the reviews (A–D). The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

In which review does it say that

an effort was made to connect a number of unrelated issues?

43	
----	--

the topics covered are well chosen?

44	
----	--

viewers are shown how science can occasionally do better than nature?

45	
----	--

the series deals with something people have hoped to achieve for a while?

46	
----	--

the series unfortunately didn't spend a lot of time explaining the topics covered?

47	
----	--

viewers are clearly informed?

48	
----	--

it's good that viewers are not required to consider all aspects of the subject carefully?

49	
----	--

the series was worth making despite the topic not appearing very interesting at first?

50	
----	--

viewers may not always find the series comfortable to watch?

51	
----	--

the series achieves its aims by astonishing its viewers?

52	
----	--

A

Fortun
everyv
there t
series
doesn'
curiou
all the
an ent
last se
interes
proble
series
to tack
on oth
memor
So, wh
are ge
a com
of dip
public

B

Althou
series,
in *Sp*
subjec
we lea
how tl
of phe
all car
atmosph
explor
to skip
essenti
if you
'why?'
be that
presen
by taki
only oc

Reviews of TV science documentary series

Paul Hansen looks at the latest science programmes.

A Science for All

Fortunately for me and non-scientists everywhere, the makers of *Science for All* are there to plug the gaps in our knowledge. The series is rather like a knowledgeable parent who doesn't mind being pestered by wide-eyed and curious children: it takes the time to explain all those fascinating mysteries of nature in an entertaining and understandable way. The last series opened my eyes to all manner of interesting facts and demystified some of the problems faced by modern physics. And the new series shows no lack of inspiration for subjects to tackle: everything from the existence of life on other planets to the odd properties of human memory are rightly considered suitable subjects. So, while it's a shame that factual programmes are getting increasingly scarce these days, it's a comfort that *Science for All* shows no signs of dipping in quality or disappearing from public view.

B Out in Space

Although I wasn't expecting much from this series, I'm pleased that the producers of *Out in Space* persisted with their unpromising subject. In the course of the first programme we learn about hurricanes, deserts, and even how the Moon was made; a bewildering mix of phenomena that, we were assured, were all caused by events beyond our planet's atmosphere. That's not to say the programme explored them in any great detail, preferring to skip breathlessly from one to the next. The essential logic of the series seemed to be that if you take any natural phenomenon and ask 'why?' enough times, the answers will eventually be that it's something to do with space. The two presenters attempted to get it all to fit together, by taking part in exciting activities. Sadly these only occasionally succeeded.

C Stars and Planets

The second series of *Stars and Planets* is an attempt to take advantage of the success of the first, which unexpectedly gained a substantial general audience. Like its predecessor, this is big on amazing photography and fabulous graphics, most of which are much less successful at communicating the immensity of the ideas involved than one human being talking to you directly. This time the scope is even wider, astronomically speaking. What we are being introduced to here are ambitious ideas about time and space, and the presenter succeeds rather better than you might expect. It helps that he doesn't go too deep, as once you start thinking about it this is tricky stuff to get your head around. The point of such programmes is less to explain every detail than to arouse a generalised sense of amazement that might lead to further thinking, and *Stars and Planets* is certainly good at that.

D Robot Technology

This ground-breaking science documentary series follows a group of experts as they attempt to build a complete artificial human from robotic body parts. The project sees scientists use the latest technology from the world's most renowned research centres and manufacturers. It is the realisation of a long-held dream to create a human from manufactured parts, using everything from bionic arms and mechanical hearts, eye implants and microchip brains. The series explores to what extent modern technology is capable of replacing body parts – or even improving their abilities. The presenter, very appropriately, has an artificial hand himself. This ambitious series gives us a guided tour of the wonders of modern technology. Though it can be a slightly upsetting journey at times, it engages the audience in a revolution that is changing the face of medicine.