**“from Life at Home in the 21st Century” Study Guide**

1. **What is the author’s main purpose in this selection?**

To inform readers about the effects of TV on American life.

1. **According to the author, what is one way that TV shapes American’s lives?**

Furniture in most American homes is centered around the TV.

1. **According to the author, what is the effect of having TV’s in one or more bedrooms in the home?**

Parents are still more likely to watch TV together, but children tend to spend more time watching alone.

1. **What does it mean when we say something has left the “systemic context” and entered the “archaeological context”?**

Items in systemic context are still being used. When they are thrown away, they enter the archaeological context.

1. **How do archaeologists use seriation?**

Seriation refers to the various layers of discarded items, such as in a land fill. By looking at the items found in each layer, they can give the relative age of the items.

1. **What does a battleship graph show?**

An artifact’s use over time.

1. **What are some ways in which television has had an impact on American culture over the last three generations?**

Television has replaced oral history as the main way in which ideas are shared in a culture. It affects economic, political, and moral decisions. It has become so much a part of American family that 99 percent of U.S. households own at least one TV, and it affects how they organize their living spaces as well as how they spend their time.

1. **According to the author, what is one way in which television can have a positive effect on family life? What evidence does she provide?**

The author says that some researchers claim that TV watching can be a “platform for togetherness.” As evidence, she cites data that “during about two-thirds of observations where a child or adult watches TV, at least one other family member is present.” (lines 82–84).

**Critical Vocabulary**

Observation: information gathered by watching something or someone.

Proliferation: rapid growth

Municipal: related to the city or community

Precipitous: Steep and/or sudden.