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Issue "In many countries it is now possible to turn on the television and view government at work. Watching these proceedings can help people understand the issues that affect their lives. The more kinds of government proceedings - trials, debates, meetings, etc. - that are televised, the more society will benefit." Sample Essay Anything that makes a country 's government more transparent is certainly a good thing, at least in democratic countries. These societies have a great deal to gain by being able to watch their elected government officials in action. But to broadly state that the more government proceedings that are televised, the more society will benefit is to ignore the fact that sometimes, less is more. Some types of proceedings can even be adversely affected if televised, making society worse off rather than giving it a benefit. Some types of governmental proceedings should receive more televised coverage, but there are some that should probably receive less to ensure that they are properly conducted. One example of the possible negative effects of televising all governmental proceedings was the trial in the United States of accused murderer and former National Football League superstar O.J. Simpson. The trial was televised and became a huge media spectacle, captivating the nation 's attention during the entire trial. Attorneys were well aware that the proceedings were being televised and almost behaved as if they were acting in a movie. The spotlight

was so unrelenting that the circus atmosphere affected even the judge. The presence of television cameras and the effect of the intense media coverage led to a trial like no other, and adversely affected the natural progression of the trial. The participants played to the cameras rather than focusing on the task at hand. Largely because of television, many people would argue that justice was not served during this particular trial. On the other hand, television of the day-to-day workings of government in action provides direct insight into how a government actually works. Because the television cameras are there everyday, the governmental officials become accustomed to them and are no longer greatly affected by their presence. In this way, society benefits because they are able to see what is happening as it happens. The government in action is no longer hidden behind such a veil of secrecy so that no one knows the mysterious ways of their elected officials. One of the problems with stating that the more governmental proceedings that are televised, the better of a society is, is that people might come to believe that they are seeing everything when in fact, a television camera can only see part of what is happening no matter how many cameras there are. Much of what happens in government takes place "behind the scenes", not necessarily in full view of the cameras in the meeting place. While to an extent "seeing is believing", quite often it is what you don't see that makes the difference. Merely televising governmental proceedings certainly enhances understanding, but to fully understand the process a person would actually have to actively participate in that process. Another problem with the statement that

the more televised governmental proceedings, the better, is that it assumes that people actually watch the proceedings when they are broadcast. There is a television channel in the United States that broadcasts Congressional proceedings every day, but few people watch it. Only when some big issue comes up for a debate or for a vote does a significant number of people tune in. To merely televise governmental proceedings will not affect society unless society watches these events. Society can certainly benefit from the television coverage of certain governmental proceedings. To actually see the elected officials in action can bring an extra element of understanding into the inner workings of a government. Politicians can be held accountable for their actions while they are being "watched" by the television cameras. No longer can they hide in anonymity while they are conducting the business of the people. But not all governmental proceedings should be televised. There are times when secrecy is an absolute requirement for making sure that the correct decisions are made.

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