

Impact of RTE | Sample answer

‘During the period of 1949-1989, what was the importance of one or more of the following: changing attitudes towards Irish language and culture; the impact of RTE, 1962-97’ (2017)

RTE contributed to the modernisation of Irish society. The first GAA match was broadcasted on Teilifís Éireann in 1962. Michael O Hehir was the main commentator and gave extensive coverage to all matches.

Organisations like Conradh na Gaeilge wanted RTE to promote the use of Irish language and to reverse the decline. However, through the 60s and 70s there was conflict between them, because they thought they weren't doing enough. Even though they had programs like Buntús Cainte, which was a five minute programme and set up Radio na Gaeltachta, which was the Irish language radio station.

They had soap operas such as "The Riordans" about rural life which showed city people what country life was like. A programme called "Teilifís Feirme" showed people about farming, and a programme called "Teilifís Scoile" broadcast programmes in maths, science, literature in Irish and English for second-level students.

The Late Late Show, introduced in 1962 and presented by Gay Byrne. They discussed controversial issues like sex, divorce, religion and contraception. Different opinions, bishops and politicians criticised and reduced the influence of the catholic church. It also liberalised Irish society.

JFK's visit in June 1963 was broadcasted by RTE, live and used multiple cameras. The visit gripped the country for 4 days. Five months later, after his death in Dallas, there was a national day of mourning as the Irish public felt very close to him.

The troubles in Northern Ireland caused further problems for RTE. Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was used by the government to control access to television by the Provisional IRA and Sinn Féin as they did not want to see violence "glamourised".

Radharc was a programme to make Irish people more aware of the social problems faced by people in foreign developing countries such as Africa, this led to the setting up of Trocaire.

British and American programmes were also now heavily portrayed as they were much cheaper to buy in than to produce locally such as cheap BBC and ITV programmes. Thus, cinemas in many country towns closed down.