

Collect some television reviews from newspaper TV guides and magazines. Using any one or more of these as a model, note the sort of information given about a program in a review.

- Imagine you are writing for one of these guides. Who would your audience be?
- Review one or more episodes of *House Gang*, or record a review for a radio program. To get started you could think of your initial response when watching one of the episodes for the first time and compare this to your feelings at the end of the first or several episodes.

House Gang takes an unconventional look at 'family' in the '90s. It uses comedy and drama in a domestic situation with the focus on the characters and the dynamics between them. Several other television programs such as *Nanny* could be said to do the same. Refer to the list you made earlier.

Think of two or three shows you are familiar with and that have popular appeal with young teenagers. Don't just focus on the situation comedies; consider shows like *Neighbours*?

- List the similarities and differences that *House Gang* has with these.
- Like most TV shows, the plot of each episode of *House Gang* revolves

around a conflict, dilemma or event. By the end of each episode the conflict or difficulty is usually resolved or overcome in dramatic and/or comic ways. For each episode complete the following table:

Conflict/Dilemma Characters' positions Climax Resolution

The setting or place of TV episodes adds important information to the story.

It is the job of production designers to create a setting. Props, furniture and the use of colours and lighting are important elements in set design.

- Describe the house that the five share. Is it a regular-looking house? Why do you think it was designed to look the way it does?
- What do the bedrooms of some of the characters, especially Robert and Belinda, tell us about them?

The audience of television comedy usually laugh at things that are seen or things that are said.

- Identify one or more funny moments in one or more of the episodes and explain exactly how the humour was created.
- Sometimes there is a serious side to jokes or comic situations. Explain any serious message that may have underlined any of the comedy you have discussed.

Accessible Arts - disabling barriers to the Arts

Accessible Arts Inc. promotes access to and participation in all cultural experiences and art forms for people with disabilities. As the peak arts organisation in New South Wales working in the field of disability. Accessible Arts develops networks and alliances with both the arts and disability communities as an effective strategy for change and better integration.

People with disabilities face extreme disadvantage in artistic participation and in gaining ongoing arts skills, training and development. Research

and experience have directed Accessible Arts programs providing opportunities through a variety of arts initiatives. Accessible Arts involvement with *House Gang* continues the aims of the organisation by challenging the accepted notion of what people with disabilities are like and capable of. This comedy drama showcases the artistic talent and potential displayed by people with disabilities when given the opportunity.

Credits

Producer: Gaby Mason, Director: Mandy Smith, Executive Producers: Chris Oliver and Barbara Mariotti

Actors: Jocelyn Rosen as Chloe, Chris Haywood as Mike, Ruth Cromer as Belinda, Saxon Graham as Trev, Jeanette Cronin as Jack and Chris Greenwood as Robert.

Year of Production: 1996, Duration: 6 x 26 minutes

A Film Australia National Interest Program in association with Alfred Road Films and Accessible Arts Inc. for SBS Independent. Produced and developed in association with the NSW Film and Television Office;

produced in association with the Australian Film Commission; the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the Department of Human Services and Health.

Any educational institution that has an agreement with the Audio Visual Copyright Society is able to tape off air for educational purposes. If you are unsure, ring AVCS on (02) 9904 0133.

Copies of *House Gang* can be purchased from:

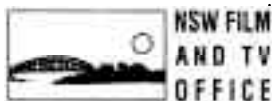
National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

Sales and Distribution | PO Box 397 Pyrmont NSW 2009

T +61 2 8202 0144 | F +61 2 8202 0101

E: sales@nfsa.gov.au | www.nfsa.gov.au

House Gang Series



This study guide was written for ATOM by Rodger Edwards, Pauline White and Michelle Liddy © ATOM November 1996