

ENTERTAINMENT



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The Truth Lies Beneath

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3-2-1 Contact Returns To PBS September 15

NEW YORK, NY — 3-2-1 Contact, the daily Children's Television Workshop series that inspired more than 23 million at home viewers to "tune in" to science, returns to television on Monday, September 15 on more than 280 stations of the Public Broadcasting Service, with four Emmy awards to its credit and a record response from teachers and children to its initial airing earlier this year. For the first time the series will be broadcast twice daily — in the morning for classroom viewing and in the evening for audiences at home.*

The 13-week series, an introduction to science and technology for 8-to-12 year olds, is the most extensive science effort for children ever undertaken on TV. The series is also scheduled to be seen overseas, with French and German language versions in the offing for 1980-81.

Science in Action

3-2-1 Contact aims to whet the scientific appetites of its young audience by letting them share the adventures of three youthful co-hosts, Mark (played by Leon W. Grant), Lisa (played by Liz Moses) and Trini (played by Ginny Ortiz), whose curiosity about the world around them takes them on excursions to more than 70 locations ranging throughout the U. S. and Puerto Rico.

Each week's programming centers on a specific theme, such as the opposites in nature, communication, surfaces or natural forces. Marc, Lisa and Trini experience the effects of scientific principles in action, become interested and seek out explanations.

Marc, for example, rides a roller coaster that hurtles through vertical loops. He wonders why people don't fall out and visits the desinger in his shop to learn about the forces involved.

Trini feels the effect of natural forces through a ride in a blimp, a snorkeling lesson and a brush with a hurricane. Lisa finds out about sound waves by watching dolphins communicate silently, visiting a school for the deaf and sitting in on a music session with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie.

Along the way the trio and their viewers gain a new understanding of how science affects everyday living and meet many kinds of scientists.



stars. At the end of each program comes the adventures of the Bloodhound Gang, a fictional mini-mystery in which three young detectives demonstrate that powers of observation and logic can unravel baffling clues.

Success With Non-Scientists

The location segments are presented as mini-documentaries in a fast-paced magazine format that also in-

cludes animation and guest at work, broadening their view of potential careers in the field.

The show's approach is calculated to make science more accessible and appealing to children, including those who are not presently interested in topic, according to Kathy Mendoza, the series executive producer. "Girls and minority youngsters, who

often feel scientific matters are beyond their grasp, are special targets," she said.

Audience surveys during the first season indicate singular success in reaching a wide range of viewers. A. C. Nielsen figures report that the show was seen in 16 million homes with children under age 17, Mendoza noted.

Public TV stations reported hundreds of calls from parents and children urging return of the series when it completed its first broadcast run last April.

The show garnered four Emmy awards for film editors Jack Sholder and Merle Worth, art director Ron Baldwin and set decorator Nat Mongioi.

The response prompted interest from abroad. A French language version will be seen in Belgium and Switzerland in the fall and in France in January, 1981. A German adaptation is also scheduled for early 1981.

Teachers Tune In

The Friday showing of 3-2-1 Contact, a review of each week's themes and adventures, is for viewing in classrooms as well as on home screens. Teacher response in the first season was extraordinary, reports Anne Marie Santoro, school services coordinator.

CTW was flooded with more than 200,000 requests for teacher's guides for classroom use with the series.

The series was recommended by the National Education Association to its 1.8 million teacher members.

Girl Scout leaders will also begin using the show this fall as a resource for youngsters working toward science merit badges.

"The show is not intended to substitute for school science curriculum," Producer Mendoza stresses, "but to help teachers by building interest and awareness of science. We hope to use television's unique potential to show the audience things they've never seen before, tell them things they didn't know — and make them want to find out more for themselves, just as the show's hosts do. Judging from the thousands of letters and calls we have received from our viewers, and from teachers, we are succeeding."

3-2-1 Contact is funded by grants from the National Science Foundation, the U. S. Department of Education, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and United Technologies Corporation.