

The background features a dark blue gradient with a starry space pattern. On the left side, there are several technical diagrams, including a large circular scale with numerical markings from 140 to 260 and various concentric circles and arcs. On the right side, there are smaller circular diagrams with arrows and curved lines, suggesting a technical or scientific theme.

BABYLON 5 VS. STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

MODERATORS:

MARK HAYNES, ANN ARBOR, MICH. – B5 FAN

JULIE WASHINGTON, CLEVELAND, OHIO – DS9 FAN

INTRODUCTION TO B5

- Years on the air: Five seasons starting in 1994
- Creator: J Michael Straczynski
- Main premise: Humans and aliens gather on a space station, Babylon 5, which is a neutral place for diplomacy and trade. The station is pivotal in a cyclic conflict in an inter-race war between alien civilizations. The station also resists the rise of totalitarianism on Earth.

B5 CAST

- Capt. John Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner, 88 eps)
- Commander Susan Ivanova (Claudia Christian)
- Delenn, a Minbari (Mira Furlan)
- G'Kar, a Narn ambassador (Andreas Katsulas)
- Londo Mollari, a Centauri ambassador (Peter Jurasik)
- Security chief Michael Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle)
- Dr. Stephen Franklin (Richard Biggs)
- Lennier, a Minbari (Bill Mumy)
- Vir Cotto, a Centauri (Stephen Furst)

INTRODUCTION TO DS9

- Years on the air: January 1993 to June 1999
- Creators: Rick Berman and Michael Pillar
- Main premise: At the end of a long war between the Cardassians and the Bajorans, the Cardassian station Deep Space Nine is handed over to the United Federation of Planets, which hopes to get the planet Bajor as a new member. Commander Ben Sisko is put in charge and has to defend the adjacent wormhole connecting the Federation to the Gamma Quadrant.

DS9 CAST

- Ben Sisko (Avery Brooks)
- Security Chief Odo (Rene Auberjonois)
- Ben's son Jake (Cirroc Lofton)
- Dr. Bashir (Alexander Siddig)
- Chief Miles O'Brien (Colm Meaney)
- Major Kira, a Bajoran (Nana Visitor)
- Quark, a Ferengi (Armin Shimerman)
- Jadzia Dax, a Trill (Terry Farrell)
- Worf, a Klingon (Michael Dorn)

REASONS WHY B5 AND DS9 ARE IMPORTANT

- B5 – one of the first TV shows with CGI; multifaceted characters; showed growth of characters
- DS9 – darker, grittier tone; no Gene Roddenberry influence; overshadowed by Next Gen and Voyager.

HOW THE SHOWS ARE SIMILAR

- Both set on space stations
- Emphasis on story arcs; moving away from stand-alone eps
- Ensemble casts
- Unsavory characters were redeemed (Ferengi and Basheer; G'Kar and Mollari)
- War vs Peace – Shadow War (B5) and Dominion War (DS9)
- Mature love affairs (Sisko/Kassidy Yates, Worf/Dax, Delenn/Sheridan)

SIMILARITIES IN COMMANDERS

- Cisko and Sheridan both lost their wives
- Cisko becomes central focus of Bajoran Spiritual religion as the Emissary; Sinclair becomes Valen, a central focus of Minbari culture

MORE IMPORTANT COMPARISONS

- Cisko loses ship in desperate forlorn hope against the Dominion/ Sinclair fights in the last-ditch, forlorn hope against the Minbari
- Cisko becomes central focus of Bajoran religion as the Emissary / Sinclair becomes Valen, a central focus of Minbari culture

- DS 9 uses excessive use of technobabble and misused terms/ B5 provides a deeper treatment of complex issues in science and engineering.
- Cisko is drawn to the day his wife died/ Sinclair has a hole in his mind and is missing a critical time in his life.

HOW EACH SHOW HANDLED:

- Angry Woman cliché: (Kira Nerys on DS9, Ivanov and Capt. Elizabeth Lochley (Tracy Scoggins) on B5
- Morality vs expediency of the moment

WHO DID HIS JOB BETTER?

- **Commanders:** Sheridan/Sinclair vs. Sisko
- **Security chiefs:** Odo vs. Garabaldi

THE BEST/WORST OF DS9

- BEST

- Characters over technobabble-heavy plots
- “Hard Time,” “Far Beyond the Stars,” “In the Pale Moonlight,” in which Sisko compromises his ethics to win the Dominion War.

- WORST

- Anti-Semitism and the Ferengi/ Quark
- Dominion War: overly complicated
- Jadzia replacement Ezri Dax

BEST/WORST OF B5

- BEST
- The Deathwalker – a revisit to Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein theme of the cost of scientific advancement on the moral values of a civilization.
- Babylon Squared – The disappearance of Babylon 4 is explained. It was pulled back into time to help the Minbari fight the Shadows. Introduces Zathras who helps Sinclair become Valen.

WORST

- The pilot was clunky and poorly framed for TV.
- Talia Winters, the resident telepath, is contracted by Ambassador Kosh of the Vorlan Empire to engage in a series of discussions with a Vicker. Vickers are cyborgs who can record thoughts.

RIVALRY BETWEEN B5 AND DS9

- Accusations of plagiarism
- J Michael Straczynski's book

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Time for questions and comments!

Thanks for attending our panel!