

Media Studies A Level

Transition Materials: Year 11 - 12

Media Language:

Media language refers to how media products communicate with an audience. This is mainly done through the use of visual codes - media texts communicate meaning through the use of signs and symbols.

Terminology Task- Write your own definitions of these key media language terms:

- Denotation
- Connotation
- Representation
- Symbolic codes
- Target audience

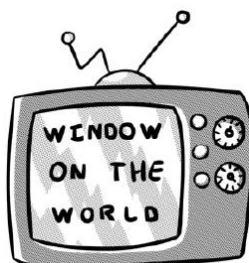
- Preferred reading
- Polysemy
- Encoding
- Decoding
- Anchorage

Textual Analysis:

In order to understand how MEDIA LANGUAGE works you are going to practise analysing different media texts and explaining how meaning is created within them.

Task: find one advert that represents women in a positive way and one advert that represents them in a negative way. For each of the adverts you should explain the following:

1. What is the target audience for the text? How do you know this?
2. What assumptions about the audience and their values/beliefs are implied within the text?
3. How might different audiences respond to this text in different ways?
4. How have technical codes, such as camera shots and angles, and symbolic codes such as body language and facial expressions, been used to position the audience?
5. Are there different readings of this text (polysemy)? What is the preferred reading?
6. Why have the producers used media language to construct this representation of gender?



Representation:

Representation refers to how the media portrays events, issues, individuals and social groups. Many theorists such as Stuart Hall and David Gauntlett have explored the notion that the media do not actually reflect the world, but they shape it through their representations.

Task: Watch this short film from the YouTube channel 'The School of Life'.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=NwPdAZPnk7k

Q. Do you think the media offer audiences a window on the world?

Media Industries:

Media industries refer to the business aspect of the media. As media students you will be exploring how different media industries produce, distribute and market their products.

Researching key terms - Research the meaning of these key terms. You should write your own definitions (make sure you understand what you are writing):

- Conglomerate
- Regulation
- Synergy
- Convergence
- Mainstream
- Independent
- Ideology
- Hegemony
- Democracy

Mainstream media products are often produced by big global conglomerates that have a large amount of power within the industry. Watch this documentary about press ownership:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FnbbgUIO4w>

Watch the Rupert Murdoch Documentary on iplayer:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000kxw1/the-rise-of-the-murdoch-dynasty>

Task: Carry out a case study research task into Rupert Murdoch's NEWS CORP. As part of this you should produce a mind-map illustrating all of the companies they own across different media forms.



Audience:

What would be the point of any media text if there was no audience to consume it? Within Media Studies 'audience' refers to how different forms of media target, reach and address audiences. We also explore how to group people into audiences and how these groups respond differently to different media texts.

One way of grouping audiences together is by looking at their PSYCHOGRAPHIC profile. Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhby7s9OJv0> and then carry out your own research into psychographic groupings.

Task: Produce an INFOGRAPHIC explaining the seven different psychographic groups, according to Rubicam's 4 Cs theory. For each group you should include a description of their members' personalities, examples of media texts they would choose to consume and why they would choose these texts.



Media Production:

The new specifications at A-Level are split between examined work and NEA (non-examined assessment) coursework. This typically accounts for one third of your final A Level grade.

Developing your digital production skills:

In order to prepare for this section of the course you should work on developing your own production skills over the summer. Choose one (or both if you are feeling ambitious) of these production briefs:

Brief 1: Magazine Production

Design and create the front page, contents page and a double page spread for a new lifestyle magazine aimed at a fashion conscious 18-25 AB demographic audience. You can choose whether this would be a mainstream or independent magazine, but whichever you choose it should clearly follow the conventions of the medium within that field.

EXPERIMENT WITH CANVA SITE. You should think carefully about the following aspects:

- **THE NAME** – what is the brand name? What are the connotations? How does it appeal to the target audience? What does it suggest about the magazine?
- **USP (unique selling point)** – what is the USP of your magazine brand? What gap in the market does it fill? What does it offer the audience that is different to other current magazines?
- **AUDIENCE** – how are you going to appeal to the target audience?
- **WHAT USES AND GRATIFICATIONS** does the magazine offer the audience?
- **CONTENT** – what issues are explored within the magazine? How are the contents organised into different sections in the contents page?
- **AESTHETIC STYLE** – what colour palettes and typeface have you chosen to represent the brand and appeal to the target audience? Main image? How will you grab the audience's attention and communicate the genre of the magazine?

Brief 2: Music Video Production

Shoot and edit the first minute of a music video for any song of your choice – but make sure it does not already have a music video of its own. Your video can either be a narrative video, performance based or a mix of both. Whichever genre you choose to work in, you must remember to clearly encode genre signifiers throughout the footage. You should also think carefully about the following aspects:

- CAMERA SHOTS, ANGLES and MOVEMENTS – how do these engage the audience and work with the genre of music? Remember the camera needs to keep moving to keep the audience interested.
- MISE-EN-SCENE – how have you included props, locations and settings to engage the audience and communicate the genre?
- What USES and GRATIFICATIONS does the music video offer the audience? Why would they enjoy watching this?
- How have you constructed a STAR PERSONA in the music video?
- Have you thought carefully about LIP SYNCING and matching the visuals and music?

Wider Reading

As Sixth Form students it is essential that you develop your independent learning skills and carry out wider reading around your subject. Here is a list of books and websites which will help you prepare for the theoretical aspect of the Media Studies course.

Books:

- Media, Gender and Identity by David Gauntlett
- Feminism is for Everybody by bell hooks
- Feminist Media Studies by Liesbet van Zoonen
- Gender Trouble by Judith Butler
- After Empire by Paul Gilroy
- There Ain't No Black In The Union Jack Paul Gilroy
- Media Regulation by Lunt and Livingstone
- Here Comes Everybody by Clay Shirky
- Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age by Clay Shirky
- Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices Edited by Stuart Hall
- Power without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain by James Curran
- The Cultural Industries by David Hesmondhalgh
- Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide by Henry Jenkins

Websites:

The Media Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/media>

EMC's Media Magazine: <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/media-magazine>
(well worth subscribing to)

British Film Institute: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/>

University Guide to Media courses:

<https://www.topuniversities.com/courses/communication-media-studies/guide>

Media Theorists:

During the Media Studies course you will encounter many media theorists that have studied various areas of the media. In order to give you a head start you should research as many of these theorists as possible and produce a document that outlines their key theories linked with each of the concepts below:

Media Language

Semiology – Roland Barthes

Narratology – Todorov

Genre Theory – Steve Neale

Structuralism – Claude Levi-Strauss

Postmodernism – Baudrillard

Media Representations

Theories of Representation – Stuart Hall

Theories of Identity – David Gauntlett

Feminist Theory – Van Zoonen

Feminist Theory – bell hooks

Theories of Gender Performativity – Butler

Theories Around Ethnicity, and Post-Colonial Theory – Gilroy

Media Industries

Power and Media Industries – James Curran and Jean Seaton

Regulation – Livingstone and Lunt

Cultural Industries – Hesmondhalgh

Media Audiences

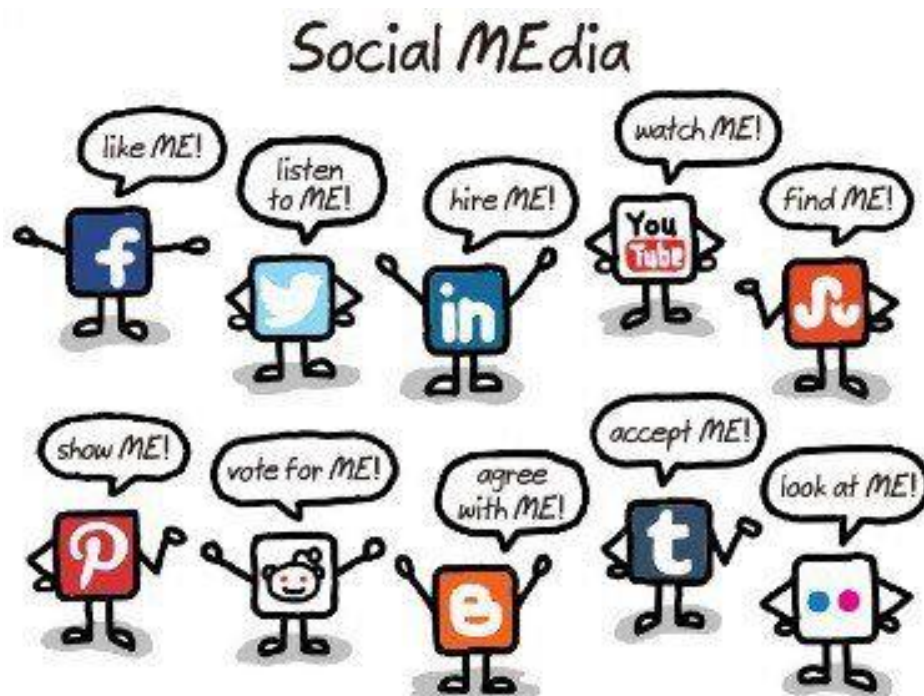
Media Effects – Bandura

Cultivation Theory – George Gerbner

Reception Theory – Stuart Hall

Fandom – Henry Jenkins

‘End of Audience’ Theories – Clay Shirky

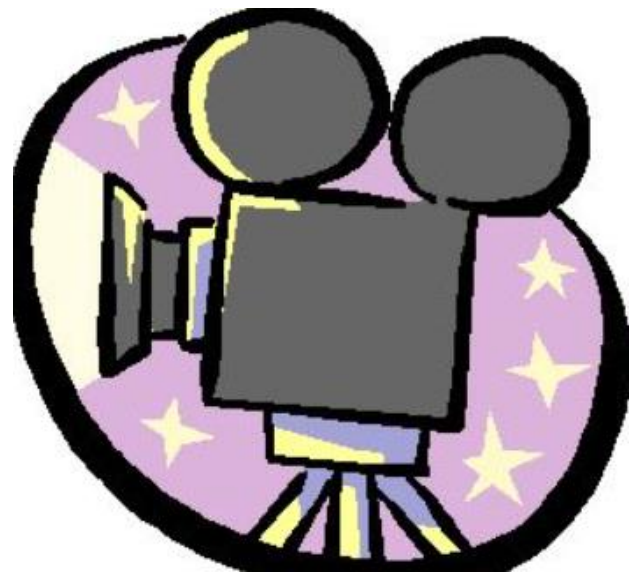


Investigating Technical Codes:

Below is a list of key technical terms that will support you within your Media Studies course. To help you prepare for the course you should begin by researching and writing your own definition of the key terms below. You could also include the effect of the technical code.

Cameras and photography terms to know:

Medium shot
Close-up
Long shot
Medium close-up
Extreme close-up
Medium long shot
Establishing shot
Overhead
Point of view (POV)
Two-shot
Over shoulder shot
Angles
High angle
Low angle
Canted angle (Dutch)
Movement
Static
Pan
Whip pan
Tilt
Track
Dolly
Crane
Hand-held (Steadicam®)
Zoom
Aerial
Composition
Aspect ratio
Rule of thirds
Depth of field
(deep and shallow focus)
Focus pulls
Dissolve
Jump cut
Cross cut
Fade
Montage
Mise en scene
Diegetic sound
Non-diegetic sound



Developing your Digital Technology Skills

A large part of the media world involves embracing digital technologies. Developments in technologies and advancements of Web 2.0 means audiences are now becoming producers of their own media products, from shooting and uploading their own films on YouTube, to designing and maintaining their own blogs.

As a confident media producer, you should use the summer holidays to familiarise yourself with the technologies listed below, and have some fun producing your own.

1. Blogging - Create your own blog to record your summer adventures

www.blogger.com

2. Graphic Design - Create your own graphic design products and videos using Adobe Spark

<https://spark.adobe.com/home>

or Canva

https://www.canva.com/g/pro/?v=2&utm_source=google_sem&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=REV_UK_EN_CanvaPro_Branded_Tier1_Core_EM&utm_term=REV_UK_EN_CanvaPro_Branded_Tier1_Canva_EM&gclid=Cj0KCQjwmcWDBhCOARIsALgJ2QejsK3Iokrlmgg1rVwNqsaSBXfWdjAplc4wZo2glLhCHfFSNWq66RcaAj8hEALw_wcB

3. Sharing and distributing your own content - Create your own YouTube channel to upload your own videos, and then share with friends and family: <https://www.youtube.com>

4. Website creation - Create your own website:

<https://users.wix.com/signin?view=login&sendEmail=true&postSignUp=http:%2F%2Fwww.wix.com%2Fnew%2Faccount&loginCompName=cta%20fold1&referralInfo=cta%20fold1&postLogin=https:%2F%2Fwww.wix.com%2Fmy-account&forceRender=true>

TED Talks

Here is a list of links to TED talks that are connected to the concepts explored within Media Studies:

https://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news

https://www.ted.com/talks/johanna_blakley_social_media_and_the_end_of_gender

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_puttnam_what_happens_when_the_media_s_priority_is_profit

TED Talks Playlist

https://www.ted.com/playlists/21/media_with_meaning

You should watch the videos above and think about the key points raised in each one.

Analytical Task: Write a blurb explaining what each talk is about, and then add your thoughts on this talk.

Creative Task: Produce your own style TED talk exploring one of the key Media concepts (outlined in this booklet) that interests you.