Y9 Intro to Media Knowledge Organiser

Name: _____

Target Grade: _____

Media Studies

AWE05 – Mr Williams

Sectors and Formats of Media Products

Publishing	Audio/Moving Image	Interactive
Newspapers	Radio	Websites
Magazines	Podcasts	Video Games
Film Posters	Music	Applications
Advertising	Music Videos	Social Media
Album artwork	Film	
	Television	
	Advertising	

Media Language

Key Terminology	Definition	Example
Denotation	The surface meaning of a sign – what you see	A gun in a film poster being held by the character.
Connotation	The deeper meaning of an image / sign / text.	Gun signifies action and violence. The character holding the gun is the hero/villain.
Sign	An element in a media product that is used to communicate something	Low key lighting is a sign of a dark theme/story
Signifies	What something suggests	The gun signifies violence
Codes and conventions	The elements of media language that usually occur in particular forms (e.g. magazines or adverts) or genres (e.g. crime drama)	Horror films conventionally feature a villain and low-key lighting
Polysemic	A sign can have many different connotations/interpretations depending on the audience	The colour red could connote danger or passion or anger. The colour red is therefore polysemic.
Stereotypical	A widely held and over simplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.	Boys stereotypically like sports, cars and video games. Girls stereotypically like the colour pink, fashion and make up.
Genre	The type or category of product	Crime, comedy, thriller, adventure pop, rock, high fashion, high-street fashion
Narrative	How stories are structured and communicated	Katy Perry's Roar is structed as an action adventure story. The way the Guardian and The Sun present the same story to different audiences
Intertextuality	Where a media product refers to another text to communicate meaning to the audience	In Duran Duran's Rio video there are references to the first James Bond film Dr No. Katy Perry's Roar is sequenced as a mini adventure film.

Semiotics - the study of signs and symbols and what they mean.

The codes of media language can be divided into four categories:

Visual	Written & Language	Technical	Audio
lighting & colour	Written or spoken words	Camera angles	Non-diegetic music
mise-en-scène / clothing, hair, make-up	slogans, headlines, captions, mastheads, titles, sub-titles etc.	Framing of shots	Effects
colour palette	font style / font size	Cropping	Dialogue
layout and design	language techniques	Transitions	
facial expressions & body language	emotive language	Juxtaposition	
objects			
key signifiers/images			

- When you analyse a media product, first describe what you see (denotation).

- Then explain what this suggests to the audience/reader (connotation).

- You could then evaluate the interpretations of the signs (polysemic).

Codes and conventions of a genre can vary and develop over time due to new technologies and changing social/ cultural contexts.

Choice = selection, combination and exclusion

You need to understand how the **choice** of elements of media language influences **meaning** in media products, for example:

- How the selection and combination of camera shots creates narrative in the set television episodes or music videos.

- How the written text anchors meanings in the images on the set newspaper front pages to portray aspects of reality

- What has been excluded from the set print advertisements—and how the point of view might be different if alternative elements had been included.

- How the combination of design elements, images and cover lines conveys messages and values on the set magazine front covers.

Denotation: what you can see/hear – the sign ➡ **Connotation**: what this suggests – the deeper meaning to you, the audience

Denotation: Skull with two bones crossed
Connotation: danger, death, pirates, poison

Denotation: The colour red
Connotation: Danger, passion, love, anger

Denotation: Black rimmed glasses
Connotation: Clever, nerd, geek, intelligent, educated

Mise-en-scene

Mise-en-scene (French for 'put in the picture/scene): the arrangement by a filmmaker of everything that is to be included in a shot or frame.

It's the film's visuals; meaning, all of the elements that appear on camera and their arrangement. Mise en Scene generates huge meaning for the audience. Often filling in gaps in knowledge.

Element of Mise-en-Scene	Purpose	Example
Location/Setting Location = external Setting = internal	Helps tell the audience where it is set, when it is set and additional context.	The film, *1917,* opens in the trenches. The audience can tell that this film is set mid battle during WWI.
Lighting	Used to add mood and feeling to the scene.	Most horror films will have dark lighting, and a lot of red lighting. The dark lighting will add fear and tension, whilst the red will show an element of danger or evil.
Colour	Colour is used in multiple ways, often paired with costumes, lighting, props, etc. The colour of certain objects will help provide information to the audience.	For example, the red lighting will show danger, the red box of chocolates will connote love, and a red flashing light will show an emergency.
Costumes/Make-up	This is used to add characterisation to our characters. Costumes and make-up will transform the actors into their roles but will also tell the audience more information about the film.	In *Pirates of the Caribbean,* it is clear of the period the film is set, the wealth status of people and who belongs to the army and the pirates. This is all due to costumes. Johnny Depp is transformed into Jack Sparrow with wigs and a make-up.
Props	Often used as part of a scene or narrative. Key props are indicated through camera angles/framing/interaction. It's important to pay attention as the prop could be a turning point in a narrative.	*Inception* relies heavily on a spinning top as part of the film. This prop is used to tell the audience (and the characters) if they are in a dream sequence or reality.
Proxemics	The distance and space between characters. Otherwise known as blocking. This can tell audiences about the relationship between characters.	If characters are close and touching this can suggest a loving relationship, however if they are head on this could show an enemy.

Genre

a. GENRE IS...
the word is used to describe a particular style which has certain characteristics or 'Ingredients', which we call genre CONVENTIONS

Sub-Genre	Within most genres we can find sub genres, for example within Comedy we can find RomCom
Hybrid Genre	A hybrid genre is a genre which blends themes and elements from two or more different genres, for example *The Office* is a documentary/comedy

b. Main Film Genres
Listed below are some of the most common and identifiable film genre categories, with descriptions of each type or category.

WOW! ACTION

CRIME & GANGSTER

HORROR

DRAMA

ADVENTURE

EPICS/HISTORICAL

WAR

SCIENCE FICTION

COMEDY

MUSICALS/DANCE

WESTERNS

c. Genre Iconography – What do you expect to see/hear?
Iconography can be defined as those particular signs we associate with particular genres. For example, blood, dark lighting and monsters are associated with the Horror genre, whereas, roses, chocolates and pinks are connected to the Romance genre.

d. What are codes?
Codes are systems of signs, which create meaning. Codes can be divided into two categories – technical and symbolic. Technical codes are all the ways in which equipment is used to tell the story in a media text, for example the camera work in a film. Symbolic codes show what is beneath the surface of what we see. For example, a character's actions show you how the character is feeling.

What are conventions?
Conventions are the generally accepted ways of doing something. There are general conventions in any medium, such as the use of interviewee quotes in a print article, but conventions are also genre specific.

How codes and conventions apply in media studies
Codes and conventions are used together in any study of genre. It is a convention of the horror genre that side and back lighting is used to create mystery and suspense – an integral part of any horror movie.

Genre Theory – Steve Neale

Steve Neale developed his Genre Theory to explain why audiences choose different types of media.

We already know that genre is made up of specific conventions and iconography allowing the audience to identify a film they may enjoy based on their interests.

Neale states, that **'genres are instances of repetition and difference'** and **'genres are not systems, they are processes of systemisation'.** (systemisation = system for organising ideas or plans)

Repetition

Steve Neale argues that audiences like repetition when choosing a film. They like to know what to expect from a certain genre, style and choice.

Example –

Slasher Horrors:

- Villain with some form of flaw, could be physical or character based

- Chase scenes

- Manual weapons – knives, chainsaws, axes, etc.

- Final girl – the pretty blonde is always the final victim remaining who may get away.

- Tense and synthesised music that peaks at moments of killing
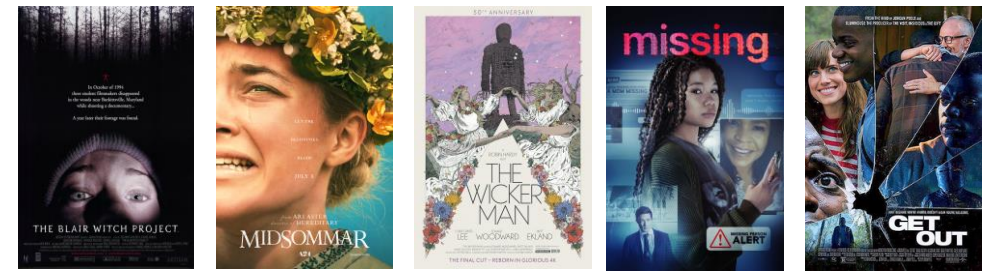
Films that conform:

Difference

Neale then challenges this idea by arguing that audiences will stray from their interested to find something exciting and new to consume. They look for films that will break the expected horror conventions.

Example –

- Films set in daylight

- Films that are filmed in a different way – e.g. through technology, cinematically

- Varied mise-en-scene – pastel colours, new environments, etc

- Breaking character archetypes

Films that challenge the genre:

Narratives

Key term	Definition
Narrative	The 'story' that is told by the media text. All media texts, not just fictional texts, have a narrative. For example, magazines have a clear beginning, middle and end. Most narratives are linear and follow a specific structure (see Todorov).
Narrative trope	A recurring motif, theme, or narrative device that is commonly used and recognized across various genres and forms of storytelling. Example would be romance films where boy meets girl, and they fall in love.
Character archetype	Archetypal characters are people who fulfil specific roles within the plot or conflict and help develop the products theme, meaning, or purpose.
Enigma codes	A narrative device which increases tension and audience interest by only releasing bits of information, for example teasers in a film trailer or narrative strands that are set up at the beginning of a drama/film that make the audience ask questions; part of a restricted narrative.
Action codes	Something that happens in the narrative that tells the audience that some action will follow, for example in a scene from a Casualty, a character forgetting to switch the iron off might lead to an accident which results in them attending the casualty department.

Propp's Character Theory

Hero	**The hero** reacts and responds to the donor and gets married to the Princess. This is Harry Potter himself
Villain	**The villain** is the antagonist who plots against the main character. In the Harry Potter films this function is served by Voldemort
The Prize/Princess	**The princess** is the hero's love interest but they cannot be married until the villain is defeated. In *Harry Potter and The Half Blood Prince* (2009), this role is fulfilled by Ginny Weasley
The Helper	**The helper**, often literally magical, helps the main character during their quest. In the Harry Potter universe, Ron and Hermione fulfill this role
The Dispatcher	**The dispatcher** is a character who informs the hero or heroine of some emergency or need and sends them on their quest. This role is carried out by Dumbledore
The Princess' Father	**The princess' father** gives the hero his task and exposes the False Hero. Ginny's father Arthur fulfils this role
The False Hero	**The false hero** is jealous of the hero, plots against them and takes false credit for the hero's achievements. Draco Malfoy is the False Hero in the Harry Potter stories
The Donor	**The donor** prepares the Hero for the challenges ahead. In the Harry Potter stories this role is fulfilled by Hagrid

Narrative Structures

Narrative Structures	Definition
Linear	The story follows a clear story in one straight line of time.
Non-linear	The story will jump around in time, often features flashforwards and flashbacks to help tell the story.
Open	The plot has been left on a cliffhanger, often happens in a series of films, or at the end of a TV episode to make the audience want to watch more.
Closed	There is a clear solution to the narrative. The story has ended, the characters have finished their quest, and the film has a clear ending.
Three-Act Structure	A form of Linear Narrative. The story has three acts. A beginning, middle and end. The beginning is used to set up the characters, the location, and their motives. The middle is where the main bulk of action happens with an exciting peak. The ending is then used to resolve the issues and show the audience the solution to the narrative.
Cause and Effect	A linear structure that follows the line of time. One thing happens so that means something else will too. For example, in Harry Potter, Harry receives a letter telling him he needs to go to wizard school, he then goes with Hagrid to buy supplies for school where he finds out Voldemort is after him, therefore he then embarks on a quest to defeat him, etc. Harry is in the only spare cabin, and he then meets Ron and Hermoine who then become his friends. Everything happens for a reason meaning something else will in turn.
Circular Structure	This is a form on non-linear narrative. The film begins at the end and then explains how they got to the conclusion. Media products with a circular narrative often features a narrator and have a closed ending.
Single stranded	One storyline for the audience to follow throughout.
Multi-stranded	Multiple storylines for the audience to follow throughout. Often used in TV series, soap operas or film.

Todorov's Narrative Theory

Traditionally, narrative structures followed a *formula* which was identified by the theorist Tzvetan Todorov.
Todorov studied classic fairy tales and stories.
He discovered that narratives moved forward in a chronological order with one action following another. In other words, they have a clear beginning, middle and end.
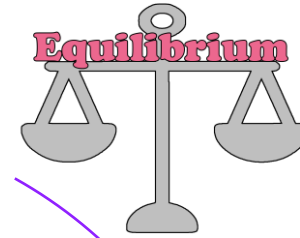Todorov also suggested that the characters in the narrative would be changed in some way through the course of the story and that this would be evident by the *resolution*.

Equilibrium - The balance of life is equal and even.

New Equilibrium – The balance is restored but something has changed, could be a character's morals or a situation.

Disturbance - The balance is broken by an incident.

Repair - Characters of the story will begin to try and repair the situation.

Recognition - One of the characters will recognise that a disruption has happened.

Audiences

a. Mass Audience = A larger broad group of people that will consume a media product. E.g. Eastenders, Marvel Films, charity adverts and the NHS website are all products that will target a mass audience. There is always something that will appeal to all.

Niche Audience = A smaller specific group of people who will consume a media product. E.g. Horror Films, Crime Documentaries, protein adverts and Call of Duty, are products that target a smaller group of people. They are made for people with interests.

b. Demographics
- Age – What is the age range of the Target Audience? (e.g. 18-25, 35-50, etc.)
- Gender/Sexuality – How would the stereotypical target audience identify? (A straight female is more likely to watch something about fashion compared to a straight male. However, a gay male might enjoy a show about fashion.)
- Location – Where is the person based? Someone in the US will be more likely to consume news about US politics compared to someone in the UK.
- Class – What is their occupation and income? Which class category do they fit into?

A	Upper Middle Class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional job employment
B	Middle Class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional job employment.
C1	Lower Middle Class	Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional job employment.
C2	Skilled Working Class	Skilled manual workers.
D	Working Class	Unskilled manual workers.
E	Casual / Lowest Grade Workers	Pensioners and others who depened on the welfare state for their income.

c. Psychographics
- Interests
- Values
- Beliefs
- Lifestyle
- Personality Traits

By considering the above it helps target products to a particular type of person. We use the acronym MASTERS to help remember the groups.

Mainstreamers	The largest group of people. Tend to be conventional and conformists of today's society. They tend to follow the latest trends. They seek security.
Aspirers	Materialistic and geared towards image and appearance. Typically younger people as there is emphasis on persona and fashion. They seek status.
Succeeders	Usually have strong goals and a good work ethic. They can be quite confident and have good organisation. They seek control.
Resigned	Rigid in their ways and usually stick to one thing. Also may have authoritarian values. Interested in past and tradition so typically refers to older people. They seek survival.
Explorers	Energy, individualism and experience is important to them and may have an influence on their decisions. They value difference. Typically younger people (e.g. students.) They seek discovery.
Strugglers	People that feel alienated or disorganised. Tends to be lower demographics and has few resources beyond physical skills. They seek escape.
Reformers	Believes in the freedom for growth and loss of restrictions. They have a social awareness and independent judgement. Anti-materialistic but aware of good taste. They seek enlightenment.

d. Primary Audiences
The intended audience for a media product. All media producers will tailor their products to target a certain group of people to make sure the product gains profit and views from the intended group.

e. Secondary Audiences
People who may watch a product but aren't the intended audience. These people may have an interest in the type, style, actors, or may watch it with people around them.

Audience Response

Media products are **polysemic** (communicate multiple meanings), so different people are likely to find different meanings in the same text.

Media producers make assumptions about a target audience that people in a certain age group and income bracket might share similar values/beliefs. This is now not always the case due to the wider availability of information.

Example: depending on the time / place in which a product is consumed, and a person's age, upbringing, education, where they live, their values and beliefs, audiences might respond very differently to the confrontation between two characters in a soap opera.

Component 1: Exploring Media Products

Audience Theories

a. Hypodermic Needle Theory – Lasswell

Theory argues that all audience members are passive (laidback and unresponsive) when consuming media, allowing the media to "inject" ideas and messages to the audience.

HYPODERMIC NEEDLE THEORY

THE MEDIA SAID IT, THEREFORE IT MUST BE TRUE!

MESSAGE DELIVERED BY THE MEDIA
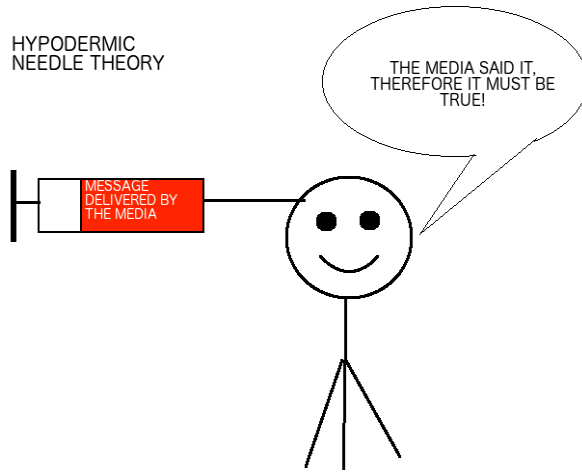
An example would be propaganda in the war. They pushed messages to audiences to make them believe certain things about the opposition.

The media today still works like that. Advertising, the news, magazines, social media, etc. Imagine you are thinking you want Pizza Hut for dinner, you then see an advert for a Domino's deal, you then proceed to order Domino's because the media told you to.

Newspapers and new broadcasting does this quite often, they try to persuade the audience to take a certain viewpoint. For example, The Sun wants to convince you that the conservatives are the better political party, and that you should vote for them, whereas The Guardian is a left-wing paper (supports Labour or Liberal Democrats)

b. Uses and Gratifications Theory – Bulmer and Katz

Theory to explain the idea of audiences consuming media to satisfy a need or want.

Personal Identity:
Testing yourself and comparing yourself to people in the films, wondering how would you react to the same situation, if you could would you make the same decisions or complete the challenges that character's face.

Social Interaction:
Getting familiar to the characters as if they are friends; getting involved with their lives and wanting to find out what happens to them; having something to talk about with other people.

Inform and Educate:
It may teach you or inform you about things you didn't know. These things could be from around the world, your local town or subject based like history or sciences.

Entertainment and Diversion:
Can also be known as escapism. This takes you away from any problems. It brings excitement and drama to your life.

c. Reception Theory – Stuart Hall

Stuart Hall suggested that media texts contain a variety of messages that are encoded (made/inserted) by producers and then decoded (understood) by audiences. Therefore, what we see is simply a 're-presentation' of what producers want us to see.

Hall suggested that there are three different ways audiences can decode/view the media messages put forward by the producer:

- **Dominant/Preferred Reading** - The audience accept and agree with the messages put forward in the media text
- **Negotiated Reading** - The audience agree with some part but reject or are opposed to other parts
- **Oppositional Reading** - The audience reject the messages that are trying to be conveyed and do not accept/agree with them

For example, when watching a political speech, audiences will either agree with the messages, partly agree or disagree completely depending on their political persuasion and stance.

Media Industry: The companies making the products and distributing them to the audiences.

Key Term	Definition	Example
Conglomerate	A very large organisation that owns different types of media companies. These organisations have huge financial resources and a lot of power. They can control the messages in many areas of the media.	Comcast or Newscorp.
Diversification	Where a media company moves from producing one type of product to creating different media forms to increase their chances of success	A TV company moving into film production
Horizontal Integration	is where an organisation develops by buying up competitors in the same section of the market	A music publisher buys out other smaller music publishers and they end up owning more than one company at the 'production' stage.
Vertical Integration	Where one organisation owns more than one stage of the industrial process (production, distribution and circulation) of media product creation.	These companies can control every stage and ensure that their products reach the audience.
Convergence	Making a product available across different platforms, in order to reach different audiences. This enable organisations to construct/reinforce a brand identity and maximise audience reach	A film marketing campaign including posters, trailers, social media/ viral content and a website, where all of the different elements converge (e.g. James Bond)
Government Funded	A product that is financed by government money	A public health campaign, for example This Girl Can and all the Covid-19 information adverts
Non-profit	Products that are made for a reason other than to make money	The BBC is funded by the licence fee and its programmes need to fulfil a public service remit.
Commercial Model	Companies producing products in order to make a profit, often funded by advertising.	ITV, Channel 4, Sky (almost everything except the BBC)
Regulation	Monitoring / control of media industries by independent organisations.	Ofcom (TV), IPSO (News), BBFC (Film) and PEGI (Games)

Representation: the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way

| Key Terminology	Definition	Example
Representation	The way in which people, issues and events are depicted in media products. How aspects of reality and versions and perspectives of events are presented to the audience	Brexit was presented as a good thing or a bad thing depending on the media presenting it – e.g. The Sun vs The Guardian. The editors of these papers "re-presenting" news from their own viewpoint.
Selection	The action of carefully choosing something as being the best or most suitable of the message. This includes what is, and isn't, included	The Sun chose to omit any benefits of being in the EU so that the emphasis in its Brexit position of the need to save our British culture had more impact
Mediation	How the maker/producer draws on all possible ideas and resources to present their version of reality to you	The Sun newspaper uses populistic images, large bold text and sensational quotes from well-known figures and celebrities.
Construction	Representations are 'built' by producers, using elements of media language. i.e. how things have been designed, laid out, edited, put together	Magazines will often build representations using a person with star quality on the front and align headlines and other images to present the side of this persona that they want to promote
Stereotype	A widely held and over simplified image or idea of a person or thing	Grumpy older people or flat cap wearing northerners.
Archetype	A very typical example of a certain person or thing	a male archetype = muscly, strong, powerful with short hair and tall.
Feminism	Supporting equal rights for women (society was traditionally male dominated but from the 1960s onwards there has been a move towards more equality)	Media industries have traditionally been male-dominated, with fewer opportunities for women. Women have often been underrepresented in the media; they also tend to be 'passive' in the narrative, and portrayed as 'objects' (Mulvey's Male Gaze theory)
Dominant	1) The main idea or message. 2) The person considered to be in charge or who has the power	1) A dominant message is that adults must work and pay their taxes. 2) Traditionally, men have been portrayed as more dominant than women. This stems from the concept of a patriarchal society
Inferior	Lower in rank, status, or quality	This could be a product, a style, a genre or a person

a. Representation often includes stereotypes:

- Stereotypes are a widely held, often negative and over simplified image or idea of a type of person or thing. They are used to communicate meanings Unruly, rude, lazy, disrespectful, defiant, unmannered...that audiences will easily recognise.

- Stereotypes become established when a social group (often a minority group) has been categorised repeatedly in the media and becomes recognised by a set of attributes.

- Stereotypes may alter and develop over time, mainly due to changes in culture and society.

Group	Stereotype
Women	Motherly, cooking, cleaning, feminine, weaker gender, emotional, concerned about appearance...
Men	Masculine, strong, powerful, dominant gender, sports, gadgets, emotionally strong, cars...
Teenagers	Unruly, rude, lazy, disrespectful, defiant, unmannered...

b. Media producers make choices about how to represent:

Events	Newspaper front pages combine images and text to convey information about the issues and events in the main splash (story).
Social Groups	• Are often categorised by age, gender and ethnicity. e.g. how some magazine front covers communicate ideas about gender/ identity in the use of media language. • Media products often feature representations of powerful social groups (who have traditionally controlled the media). Certain groups (e.g. minority ethnic or LGBTQ+ people) may be absent, or under/misrepresented (e.g. stereotyped). • The choices about how to represent a social group will communicate a point of view, e.g. Pride Magazine cover conveys positive messages about black female empowerment.
Aspects of Reality	These may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers. Newspapers are informative and need to include factual detail, a sitcom might exaggerate/ subvert reality to entertain
Values and Beliefs	Examples of these are diversity and human rights, e.g. the multi-ethnic representation in a music video like Uptown Funk.
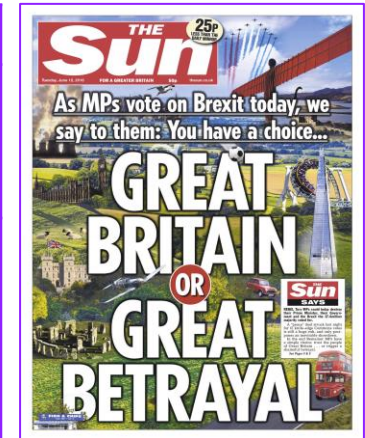
Remember: the representation in a media product will reflect the contexts in which it was produced:

- **Social**: reflecting society at the time/place of production e.g. in terms of issues such as gender or racial equality, or economic prosperity.

- **Historical:** the time/period in which a product is created or set, does this impact the outcome?

- **Cultural influences** on a product, e.g. current trends or direct references to popular and/or classic culture.

Representation Gender Theories

The Beauty Myth – Naomi Wolf

Naomi Wolf's concept of the beauty myth refers to the unrealistic beauty standards imposed on women and the relentless pressure to conform to those narrow representations. She argued advertisers and women's magazines were reinforcing gender inequalities by deliberately undermining women's self-esteem and potential.

Wolf argues that all women in the media should be "slim, young, blonde and overwhelmingly white". Think of your typical female protagonists, they often fit these requirements, however some media products are beginning to challenge these ideas.

The Male Gaze – Laura Mulvey

Women are presented as sexual objects to be enjoyed by men in films, games and other media content. Laura Mulvey (1991) argues that in film, women are objects to be gazed on as the camera acts as the masculine eye from a male viewpoint. For example, when the camera pans up/down the female body, this is done for the male viewer's pleasure.

The Male Gaze presents women through a lens of male objectification, making females seem an object there for the use of a male. This is common in films like James Bond. Bond will meet many women whilst on his missions, they aren't there for anything other than Bond's pleasure, and in turn the pleasure of the male audience.

Patriarchal -
A society dominated by males in power is known as a patriarchal society. The inequality within society can be reflected in representations, often resorting to stereotypical representations of gender as the media industry is heavily dominated by men. This is why women can seem inferior in media products as it has been created by men.

Psycho Femme -
Producers of media often represent women in a delicate and inferior manner. Some producers will challenge this representation by making the female protagonist strong, dominant and powerful. This often happens in horror, action or action-adventure films, but the media today is starting to challenge the ideas around women in the media. Can this theory be applied to any of your chosen products? Does the female character have the control, power or appear stronger than the traditional ideologies?

Tough Guise-
At times, the media represents the male gender as being strong, powerful, violent, dominating and highly sexual. Whilst in some cases some of these stereotypes could be seen as positive it can have a negative effect on the younger male audiences.

The Tough Guise Theory looks at how men are made to feel that they need to be strong and violent to be considered masculine. Examples of this are films that feature actors like Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, etc. Typical action films feature the overly "masculine" stereotypes. Take James Bond, he is constantly in conflict, he blows things up, he has a string of women wanting him, but he isn't a positive male role model as such.

This can have a huge impact on the younger audiences as they will try to mimic the behaviours of the stars in films and TV shows, meaning they gain negative ideas and expectations of reality.
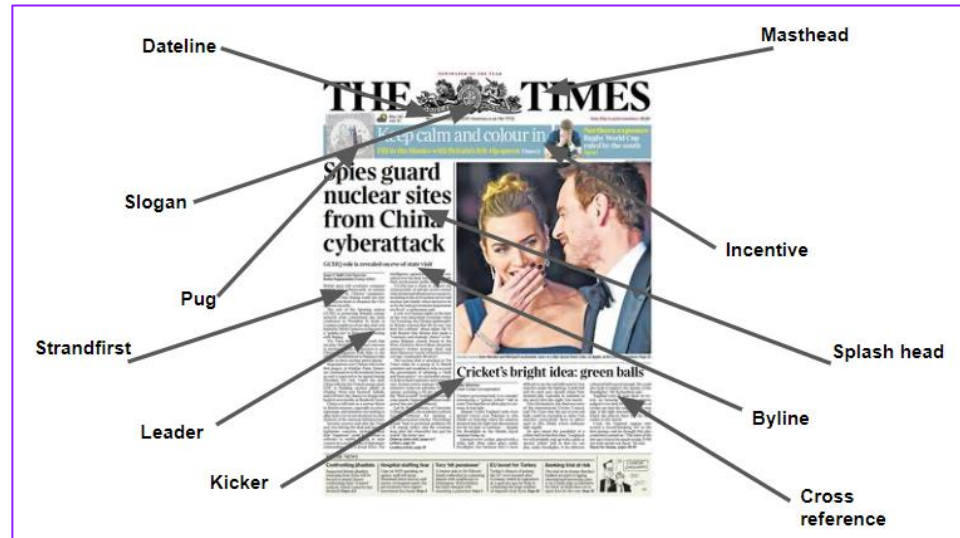
Print Based Conventions

Film Poster

Magazine

Newspaper

Notes