

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Representation: the way in which people, issues and events are depicted in media products.

Mediation: how media producers represent (rather than just present) the world to audiences.

Reality: 'real life', actual events, facts and truth - how aspects of reality and versions of reality are constructed.

Stereotype: an exaggerated, oversimplified representation, reducing a social group to a set of common characteristics e.g. grumpy older people or flat cap wearing northerners.

Feminist: supporting equal rights for women (society was traditionally male-dominated but there has been a move towards more equality, especially from the 1960s onwards).

KEY CONTENT:

The choices media producers make about how to represent:

Events: e.g. *how the set newspaper front pages combine images and text to convey information about the issues and events in the main splash (story).*

Social groups: categorised by age, gender and ethnicity.

Ideas: e.g. *how the set magazine front covers communicate ideas about gender/ identity in the use of media language.*

The ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers:

e.g. newspapers are informative and need to include factual detail, a sitcom might exaggerate/ subvert reality to entertain.

Apply it... select one set product and analyse how the representations of social groups (e.g. different ethnic groups, genders and/ or age groups) have been constructed.

KEY CONTENT:

How and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented:

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).

How representations convey: viewpoints, messages:

The choices about how to represent a social group will communicate a point of view, e.g. *the set Pride cover conveys positive messages about black female empowerment.*

Representations also convey **values & beliefs**, e.g. *about diversity and human rights in the set video for Freedom.*

Apply it... identify the key messages in one of the set products. Try to find examples from other media texts that reinforce the same point of view.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY REPRESENTATION?

COMPONENT 1: Section A

Question 2b (extended response) will require comparison of the representations in one of the set products detailed on Page 11 of the Specification with an unseen resource in the same form.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of media language or representation in an extract from the set television crime drama or sitcom.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 3 will require analysis of media language or representation in the set music products detailed on page 19 of the Specification: music videos and online media.

COMPONENT 3

Learners will be assessed on their ability to use media language to construct representations in the production (Non-Exam Assessment).

KEY CONTENT:

The different functions and uses of stereotypes, e.g:

- to communicate meanings that audiences will easily recognise, e.g. products such as adverts need to convey a quick, clear message.
- to create humour, e.g. in the set episode of *The IT Crowd*.

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

How they may vary over time: stereotypes alter and develop over time, mainly due to changes in culture and society.

Apply it... identify examples of stereotypes in the set products and think about how and why they are used. Now, try to find examples of representations that challenge stereotypes and consider why the producers might have made this decision.

KEY CONTENT:

How representations reflect the contexts in which they were produced, e.g:

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, e.g. the 1950s (*Quality Street*), the 1970s (*The Man With the Golden Gun*).

Cultural influences on a product, e.g. current trends or direct references (such as representations of *Countdown* in *The IT Crowd*).

Apply it... analyse how the representations in the set products reflect the time and place in which they were made.

e.g. *the representation of the active female on the This Girl Can poster differs from the passive females in the historical Quality Street advert, as women now have more power and equality in society.*

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

Representation, including processes of:

Selection: producers choose to include certain elements in a representation (and exclude others); this communicates meanings/ messages.

Construction: representations are 'built' by producers, using elements of media language.

Mediation: media producers construct their own 'version' of the world that is represented to audiences. We do not see the 'actual' world, but a producer's view of it.

Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products; e.g. how representations are constructed to show a particular point of view.

Gender and representation, including feminist approaches:

Media industries have traditionally been male-dominated, with fewer opportunities for women.

Women have often been under-represented in the media; they also tend to be 'passive' in the narrative, and portrayed as 'objects' (Mulvey's Male Gaze theory could also be studied here).

Apply it... find examples of passive/ objectified females in the set products, and of women who are active/ empowered. Consider why these representations have been constructed.

Other perspectives on gender, such as hypermasculinity, may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How these are reflected in terms of representations, themes, values, messages and viewpoints.

APPLYING REPRESENTATIONS: PRACTICAL TASK

Art skills not important!

1. Create profiles (written or drawn) for three characters from a new **TV programme** in a genre of your choice.
2. Create a **film poster** depicting 3 characters (hero, side kick and villain) for a new film in a genre of your choice. You could sketch or photograph your characters.

For each task: Consider how to construct representations using media language (e.g. dress codes, gesture codes and props) and what messages about age, gender and ethnicity to convey.

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Denotation: actual/literal meaning e.g. a candle.

Connotation: deeper meanings e.g. a candle might connote hope or light, or have religious connotations.

Codes and conventions: the elements of media

language that usually occur in particular forms

(e.g. magazines or adverts) or genres (e.g. sitcom).

Narrative: how stories are structured and communicated.

Genre: the type or category of product (e.g. crime, sitcom).

Intertextuality: where a media product refers to another text to communicate meaning to the audience.

KEY CONTENT:

The various forms of media language used to create and communicate meanings in media products, for example:

Visual codes: elements that relate to the look of a product, e.g. mise-en-scène, colour palette, layout and design.

Technical codes: e.g. camera shots/ angles, editing.

Audio codes: e.g. non-diegetic music, effects, dialogue.

Language codes: written or spoken words.

Apply it... analyse how these elements of media language are used in the set products e.g. *the red, white and black colour palette on the set GQ cover connotes masculine strength and power to appeal to the target audience.*

KEY CONTENT:

How choice (selection, combination and exclusion) 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*.

Apply it... analyse how the choices producers make about media language communicates meanings in the set products.

E.g. *the combination of images and headline on the front page of The Sun (for assessment from 2021) conveys patriotic values and communicates a point of view that MPs should vote for the Brexit Bill.*

Give examples to support this point.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY MEDIA LANGUAGE?

COMPONENT 1: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of one of the set products detailed on Page 11 of the Specification: magazine front covers, newspaper front pages, film posters and print adverts.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of media language or representation in an extract from the set television crime drama or sitcom.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 3 will require analysis of media language or representation in the set music products detailed on page 19 of the Specification: music videos and online media.

COMPONENT 3

Learners will be assessed on their ability to use media language to communicate meanings in the production work (Non-Exam Assessment).

KEY CONTENT:

Codes and conventions of media language: how they develop and become established as 'styles' or genres, for example:

How the conventions of a genre (e.g. crime drama or sitcom) have developed and solidified.

How they may vary over time, for example:

How the conventions of a form (e.g. print advertising) have changed, due to new technologies and changing social/ cultural contexts.

Apply it... analyse how the contemporary set print advert, film poster, television programme and music videos show developments from the older/ historical set products you have studied.

E.g. *The Spectre poster uses digital technology to construct an enigmatic layered main image in contrast to the montage of drawn images depicting narrative scenes in the historical poster.*

KEY CONTENT:

Intertextuality, including how inter-relationships between media products can influence meaning:

Several set products use intertextuality, for example the set music videos by Katy Perry and Taylor Swift are constructed as 'mini-films' and show the influence of other texts.

Apply it... identify references to other texts in the set products you have studied and think about how these communicate meanings.

E.g. *Roar includes intertextual references to the well known 1969 film, The Jungle Book, in the use of visual codes and elements of narrative. These familiar references can communicate meanings (e.g. about a human 'taming' the jungle) and create humour.*

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

GENRE, including:

Principles of repetition and variation: products usually include typical genre conventions that audiences recognise, and also different elements to engage the audience/ keep the genre 'fresh'.

The dynamic nature of genre: genres are not 'set in stone', they change and develop over time.

Hybridity (combining elements of two or more genres in a product) and **intertextuality** provide further variation and offer something 'new' to engage audiences.

Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products you have studied for Component 2.

NARRATIVE theories:

Propp's theory must be studied: the key character types (hero, villain, 'princess', father, donor, helper, dispatcher, false hero) and their role in the stages of the narrative.

Apply it... consider how Propp's character types could apply to the set products you have studied.

Other theories, such as Todorov's theory (equilibrium, disruption, resolution), Levi-Strauss' Binary Oppositions or Barthes' Action and Enigma codes may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How the media language in the set products reflects the contexts of production in terms of:

- themes, values, messages, viewpoints
- genres, styles, technologies, media producers.

APPLYING MEDIA LANGUAGE: PRACTICAL TASKS

Art skills not important!

1. Choose a different song by Katy Perry or Taylor Swift: **storyboard 20 shots for a new music video.** Include some performance and narrative to reflect conventions. Think about the range of camera shots and the mise-en-scène to communicate the meanings in the lyrics to your audience.
2. **Design a front cover for a new magazine** in a genre of your choice. Sketch the layout and design, paying close attention to the colour palette, the font style and the main image. Write 5 cover lines, aiming to communicate messages and use language codes.

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Mass audience: large group of people, not individualised.

Specialised audience: smaller/narrower group, defined by factors such as age, socio-economic group or interests.

Target audience: the specific group of people that a media product is aimed at.

Consumption: how a media product is used or experienced by an audience e.g. watched/ listened to/ played etc.

Response: how audiences react to a particular product.

Active audience: selects media to consume for a purpose, interprets/ responds to/ interacts with media products.

Passive audience: not active, e.g. accepts messages in media products without question.

KEY CONTENT:

How and why media products are aimed at a range of audiences, for example:

Small, specialised audiences: producers can target a very specific group to try to guarantee an audience for the product e.g. a specialist magazine might target people with an interest in gardening or heavy metal music.

Large, mass audiences: producers can reach more people, and possibly make more profit, by appealing to a mass audience. These products might include, for example, popular or 'universal' themes/ ideas, or include representations of different social groups to appeal to a wide range of people.

Apply it... identify which of the set products are aimed at a mass audience and which are more specialised.

KEY CONTENT:

How media organisations categorise audiences:

Media producers categorise audiences in order to target their products more effectively. They often use a combination of demographic categories (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic group) and psychographic factors (e.g. interests, lifestyle and values).

The ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing:

Marketing is very important in appealing to and reaching the target audience for a product. Increasingly, digital technologies and social media platforms are used to target audiences. Media organisations might make **assumptions** about the target audience, e.g. that people in a certain age group and income bracket might share similar values/beliefs that are conveyed in the marketing.

Apply it... select one of the set products you have studied and research the marketing materials. Make notes on the ways in which these target the intended audience.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY AUDIENCES?

COMPONENT 1: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of audiences in one of the forms studied: newspapers, radio or video games.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 2 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences or media contexts in relation to the television topic studied.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences or media contexts in relation to the music videos and online media products studied.

COMPONENT 3

Learners need to apply knowledge and understanding by creating a media production for an intended audience.

KEY CONTENT:

The ways in which audiences may interpret the same media products very differently:

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

These differences may reflect both social and individual differences, e.g. the time/ place in which a product is consumed; a person's age, upbringing, education, where they live, their values and beliefs etc. E.g. *audiences might have very different interpretations of the confrontation between Luther and Madsen in the set episode of Luther.*

Apply it... choose a set product and consider how different audiences (e.g. older and younger age groups, or people who live in different countries) might interpret it in different ways.

KEY CONTENT:

The social, cultural and political significance of media products, including:

The themes or issues they address: media products often explore topics of current interest and importance, e.g. social issues relating to health or the environment, or political issues such as Brexit.

The fulfilment of needs and desires, e.g. for information, entertainment, artistic inspiration, sense of identity etc.

The functions they serve in everyday life and society:

The media fulfil many roles in society, e.g. reporting news/ factual information, discussing/ debating important issues, exploring aspects of human experience, providing entertainment and popular culture.

Apply it... identify the key themes and issues that are addressed in some of the set products you have studied. Think about how these themes reflect current social or political issues.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

Active and passive audiences:

In the past, audiences were assumed to be passive, with the potential to be negatively affected by media products (e.g. if the product contained violence). More recent theories argue that individuals actively choose, engage, respond to and interact with products.

Audience response and interpretation:

how audiences react to media products, e.g. they might respond in the way the producer intended (e.g. by agreeing with the viewpoints in a product), or question/ disagree with the intended meaning.

Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products you have studied, e.g. through examples of audience interaction or actual responses.

Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory:

States that audiences actively select media products to fulfil particular needs, or pleasures:

Information: to find out about the world.

Entertainment: pleasure of diversion/ escapism.

Personal identity: they can relate to the characters/ situations/ values and beliefs in a product.

Social interaction: pleasure of discussing products with others.

Apply it... consider how the Uses and Gratifications theory applies to all the products you have studied.

Other perspectives, e.g. Stuart Hall's Reception Theory (preferred, negotiated, oppositional readings) or the Effects Debate, may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How products reflect the context in which they were made in terms of audience consumption.

How audience responses to/ interpretations of media products may change over time.

APPLYING AUDIENCES: PRACTICAL TASKS

- Research task:** look at a range of magazine covers (e.g. online). Identify the target audience for each and make notes on the methods used to appeal to this group.
- Imagine you are creating a **magazine** in a genre of your choice for a young adult audience. Think of a title, a strapline and a topic for a feature article that would appeal to this audience. Consider how you would need to change your ideas if you wanted to appeal to an older audience.

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Conglomerate: a very large organisation that owns different types of media company, e.g. Comcast or NewsCorp.

Diversification: where a media company moves from producing one type of product to creating different media forms (e.g. a TV company moving into film production).

Vertical Integration: where one organisation owns more than one stage of the industrial process (production, distribution and circulation) of media product creation.

Convergence: making a product available across different platforms, in order to reach different audiences e.g. newspaper content is usually available in print form, on a website, via a digital app, on social media platforms etc.

Government funded: a product that is financed by government money, e.g. a public health campaign.

Not for profit: products that are made for a reason other than to make money e.g. 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.

Regulation: the monitoring/ control of media industries by independent organisations such as Ofcom and IPSO.

KEY CONTENT:

The nature of media production, including by large organisations, and by individuals and groups:

Media products vary in the way they are produced, e.g. some are large scale productions (often high budget, mainstream) by large media organisations, while others are smaller productions (often lower budget, targeting specialised audiences) by independent companies or individuals.

Apply it... identify the companies involved in producing the set products; consider which are large organisations and which are smaller, independent companies.

KEY CONTENT:

The effect of ownership and control of media organisations, including:

Conglomerate ownership: these organisations have huge financial resources and a lot of power, e.g. they can control the messages communicated in many areas of the media.

Diversification: companies branch into different types of media to increase their chances of success / audience reach.

Vertical integration: these companies can control every stage and ensure that their products reach the audience.

Apply it... identify how one set product, produced by a media conglomerate, has been impacted by its ownership, e.g. in the budget/ production values or messages conveyed.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY MEDIA INDUSTRIES?

COMPONENT 1: Section B

Question 3 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries in one of the forms studied: newspapers, radio, film or video games

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 2 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences or media contexts in relation to the television topic studied.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences or media contexts in relation to the music videos and online media products studied.

COMPONENT 3

Media industries are not assessed in Component 3.

KEY CONTENT:

The impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different platforms which enable organisations to construct/reinforce a brand identity and maximise audience reach e.g. a film marketing campaign including posters, trailers, social media/ viral content and a website, where all of the different elements converge (especially in established franchises such as Bond).

Different national settings:

Many organisations operate on a global scale, distributing their products in many different countries, although elements such as the marketing might vary in each country.

Apply it... note examples of convergence in relation to the set products, e.g. how the products are made available on different platforms.

E.g. The Spectre poster uses digital technology to construct an enigmatic layered main image in contrast to the montage of drawn images depicting narrative scenes in the historical poster.

KEY CONTENT:

The functions and types of regulation of the media:

Regulation varies across different industries in the UK, but usually aims to protect people (especially children/ young people) from unsuitable, inaccurate or harmful media content.

Types of regulation include: establishing standards ('Code of Practice'); providing age ratings for a product and monitoring organisations to ensure they follow guidelines.

The challenges for media regulation presented by 'new' digital technologies:

The internet is very difficult to regulate as vast numbers of people can generate content. Some media products online are regulated by other industry bodies (e.g. the BBFC age rates some music videos). There is ongoing debate about how to regulate online and social media—but much of the internet remains unregulated.

Apply it... identify references to other texts in the set products you have studied and think about how these communicate meanings.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How a product reflects the contexts in which it was made through aspects of its production, distribution, marketing, regulation, circulation and audience consumption.

E.g. The contemporary music artists reflect current cultural contexts in terms of the use of digital platforms and social media to market and distribute their products.

How a product reflects the political contexts in which it was made through aspects of its ownership and political viewpoints.

E.g. Newspapers are likely to reflect the political leaning of the organisations that produce them, in terms of the way in which they construct representations of issues and events, and versions of reality.

Apply it... find examples of how the set products reflect their contexts in the ways they are produced, distributed and marketed.

KEY CONTENT:

The impact on the final product of:

Production processes: these will depend on the industry, but most involve content creation (filming, photography, written copy), editing etc. to construct the media product.

Personnel: the importance of key people; e.g. TV directors, journalists, designers, stars often have a signature 'style', or explore certain themes/ issues in their work. They might also attract an audience due to their past success/ status.

Technologies have a significant impact on media products and enable organisations to create exciting and cutting edge products that are likely to appeal to audiences e.g. CGI and special effects are important in many music videos and TV programmes, while video games use techniques such as augmented reality to engage users.

Apply it... select two different set products (e.g. a newspaper and a music video) and find out how they were produced e.g. the production processes (such as where, when and how the content was created), the people involved in production and the technologies that were used.