A Level Media Studies
Bridging Work 2023

Hello! Welcome to Media Studies A Level. My name is Mr Soltysik and I am Head of Media. Throughout your A Level course you will be taught by myself and Mr Samways (Head of English). We are very excited to welcome you in September and look forward to embarking on a really exciting and academically challenging course.

At Presdales, we follow the OCR A Level specification. You can find more about the exam specification here. Year 12 is predominantly focused on Paper 01: Media Messages and the NEA, a cross-media production where you will create either a magazine or a music video as well as a website.

You will study the following texts (think of these like novels or plays that you would have studied in GCSE English) throughout the whole A Level course:

- **Advertising:** Dove - Beautifully Real Mums, Shelter - We Can Help and River Island - Smooth Moves Only
- **Magazines:** The Big Issue
- **Music Videos:** Stop Where You Are and Titanium
- **News (Synoptic):** The Guardian and Daily Mail
- **Radio:** BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show
- **Video Games:** Animal Crossing
- **Film (Industry Only):** Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
- **Television Drama (Synoptic):** Stranger Things and Money Heist (La Casa De Papel)

We will hit the ground running pretty fast in September so it is crucial that you complete all of the activities below in-depth. You will begin with a synoptic unit on the newspaper industry with Mr Soltysik and a short bridging unit developing on some of the key concepts you will hopefully acquire in this bridging work before moving onto advertising with Mr Samways.
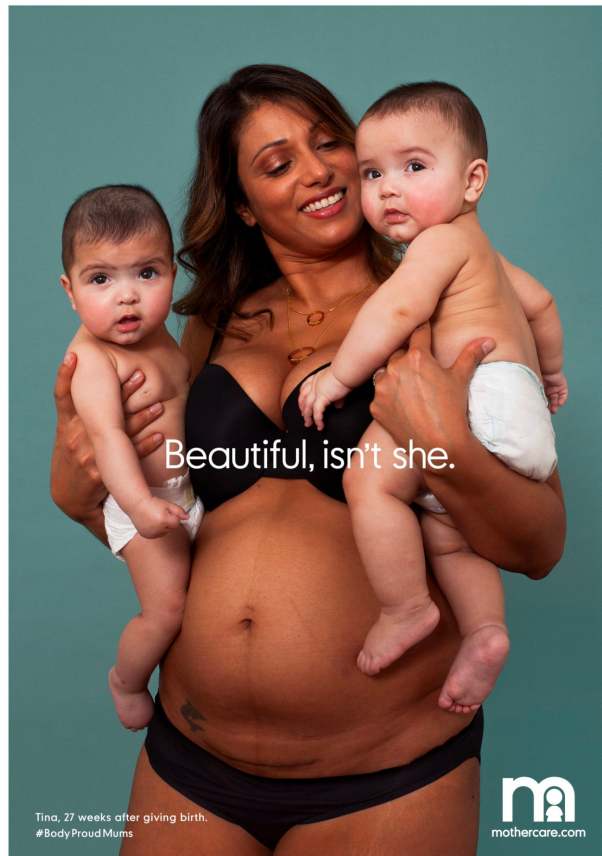
In Media Studies we tend to be tech-savvy so you'll find all of the course information and lesson resources on our google site. If you need any further help, do get in touch with me on dsoltysik@presdales.herts.sch.uk.

<u>Bridging Work 2023</u>

It is absolutely essential that you buy a lever-arch folder to store all of your handouts and worksheets. Use dividers to divide the folder into: Paper 1A, Paper 1B, Paper 2A, Paper 2B.

1. Complete the reading material and all of the associated activities on **introduction to the theoretical framework of Media.**

2. Complete the reading material and all of the associated activities on **the introduction to advertising.**

3. Complete the reading material and all of the associated activities on **the introduction to newspapers.**

4. Begin a key terminology glossary at the back of your folder.

5. Annotate the adverts on the next page, considering:

   a. how does media language construct specific meanings and representations
   b. and how these target their specific audiences.

Your bridging work will be checked by your teacher during induction week and it is absolutely imperative that you complete everything in as much detail as possible to ensure we can hit the ground running in September.

Beautiful, isn't she.

Tina, 27 weeks after giving birth.
#BodyProudMums

mothercare.com

MEET THE SUPERHUMANS

29 . 08 . 2012

the Paralympic broadcaster

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theoretical Framework of Media Studies provides a structured approach for analysing and understanding media. This fact sheet will introduce the four key concepts, including the study of context.

- **Media Language:** This aspect focuses on the elements that make up media texts, such as television or advertising. It examines the use of images, sound, editing, narrative structure, text and generic conventions to convey meaning and messages.

- **Representation:** This aspect explores how social groups, individuals, and events are portrayed in media texts. It investigates stereotypes, ideology, diversity, and the ways in which media constructs and shapes our understanding of reality.

- **Audiences:** This aspect considers the role of audiences in media consumption. It examines how audiences interpret and respond to media texts, the factors that influence their media choices, and the impact of media on their attitudes and beliefs.

- **Industries:** This aspect looks at the economic and organisational aspects of media production and distribution. It considers the structures, practices, and strategies of media industries, including media ownership and regulation.

- Whilst context does not make up one of the four key concepts, it is important in making sense of all of the above. This aspect considers the broader social, cultural, and historical contexts in which media operate. It takes into account factors such as political and ideological influences, technological advancements, social values, and cultural norms that shape media production and reception.

Media Language

Media language refers to the unique ways in which different modes and forms of media use different visual and stylistic elements to convey multiple meanings. All media texts are highly constructed. Thought has been given to every last tiny detail and everything has a meaning. However, as Fiske argued, all media texts are **polysemic** meaning they have many meanings so different audiences may interpret the same media text very differently.

Different media texts use various elements of media language, such as image, text and **paralanguage** to convey meanings and messages to their audiences. For instance, in film and television, **cinematography**, **mise-en-scène**, and **editing** techniques are essential in constructing meaning. In print media, language and **typography** are crucial elements.

Genre and generic conventions

Genre refers to a category or classification of media texts that share similar characteristics, themes, narrative structures, and stylistic elements. It provides a framework for audiences and creators to identify and understand different types of media content.

Genre conventions are the established norms and expectations associated with a particular genre.

It is important to remember that media language is a crucial element of making sense of the media. You should never consider media language in isolation and always consider elements of media language in context. Media texts are composed of multiple elements that work together to shape meaning. Always consider how a *combination* of elements of media language work together to communicate meaning as opposed to how they work individually.

In the Media Messages paper, you will predominantly focus on analysing print media, such as newspapers, magazines and advertising.

Combination of elements of media language
Make a list of the conventions of magazines and print advertising. Once you have done this, annotate how different elements of media language communicate meaning in this charity advert.

Barthes' Semiotics theory

Barthes' theory is grounded in semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their role in communication and meaning-making. Barthes' theory is one of the most important theories in understanding how meaning is constructed in media texts.

According to Barthes, signs are the basic units of communication and meaning. A sign is a combination of two components: the signifier and the signified.

- **Signifier (denotation)**: The signifier refers to the literal, surface-level, or primary meaning of the sign. For example, a red traffic light denotes the instruction to stop.

- **Signified (connotation):** The signified refers to the associative or symbolic meanings that are culturally constructed. These connotative meanings can vary among individuals based on their experiences, beliefs, and cultural background. For example, a red rose may connote love or passion.

- **Myths:** The concept of myth explains that over time, certain meanings can be **naturalised** into a myth. This naturalisation process involves the repetition of certain ideological meanings, which can lead these myths to be perceived as **universal truths**, despite being nothing more than constructed narratives.

For instance, let's consider the myth of the bulldog as a symbol of British culture. Over time, through constant repetition in various cultural contexts, the bulldog has been associated with notions of Britishness, strength, and resilience. This myth of the bulldog as a representation of British culture has become naturalised through the cultural narratives surrounding it.

Definitions

Naturalisation: This refers to the process by which constructed meanings become accepted as natural. It involves the repetition and normalisation of certain ideas or beliefs to the point where they are perceived as natural or common sense.

Universal Truths: This refers to ideas or concepts that are considered to be universally valid or applicable across different contexts or cultures. They are seen as timeless, objective, and independent of cultural or subjective interpretations.

Applying Barthes
Look at the two images of a heart below. The **denotation** is the literal meaning, a heart. What **connotations** does each image conjure up? Why are they different?

The point that Barthes is trying to make is that every image, text, choice in mise-en-scene will be important in communicating specific meaning. Every single audience member will decode the meaning differently based on their own cultural upbringing and understanding of the media around them.

Media Representations

Media representations refer to the ways in which the media portrays and depicts individuals, groups, events, or themes and issues. Media representations are always highly **constructed** and **mediated** and rarely ever the true representation. Representations are constructed through a combination of elements of media language.

Definitions

Mediation: This refers to the process by which the media selects, filters, and presents information to the audience.

Construction: This refers to the deliberate shaping of representations by media producers. It involves the selection and arrangement of elements of media language to create a particular meaning or message.

Re-presentation: This involves the process of transforming real events, people, or ideas into media content. Re-presentation is not a direct reflection of reality but rather a mediated and interpreted representation.

Stereotypes: These are simplified and often exaggerated generalisations or assumptions about individuals or groups based on their characteristics, attributes, or identities.

Hegemonic representation: This is a type of representation that uses outdated views, shaped by dominant values and beliefs. E.G., patriarchy.

Pluralistic representation: A type of representation that is more positive and progressive, recognising diversity and co-existence of new values and beliefs.

Media representations play a crucial role in shaping our understanding and perceptions of the world around us. Representations are constructed and mediated by media producers, who make choices regarding what to include, how to frame it, and what perspectives to highlight or marginalise. Therefore, they have a huge influence on how we perceive different social groups, cultures, identities, and issues.

Media representations are not neutral or objective (e.g., they never truly represent the real world); they are influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, power dynamics, economic interests, and media production practices. Representations can shape public opinion, perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices, or provide platforms for underrepresented voices and alternative narratives.

One of the main topics you will study in Year 12 will be newspapers. Newspapers are read by many people everyday and so they have the power to shape the audience's understanding of the world around them, influence their political voting habits or even shape their perceptions of particular social groups.

Deconstructing representations

The below cover is from the *Daily Mirror,* 5 September 2019. The *Daily Mirror* is a left-wing tabloid so they do not support Boris Johnson, who was the prime minister at the time. Explain how a combination of elements of media language construct an **unflattering** representation of Boris Johnson. Consider:

- The choice of image and how Johnson is represented?
- The choice of headline 'Britain's worst PM' - what sort of message is this sending to their readers?
- The choice of the subheading '(since the last one)' - who is this referring to? What is the *Daily Mirror* alluding to about the Conservative party?
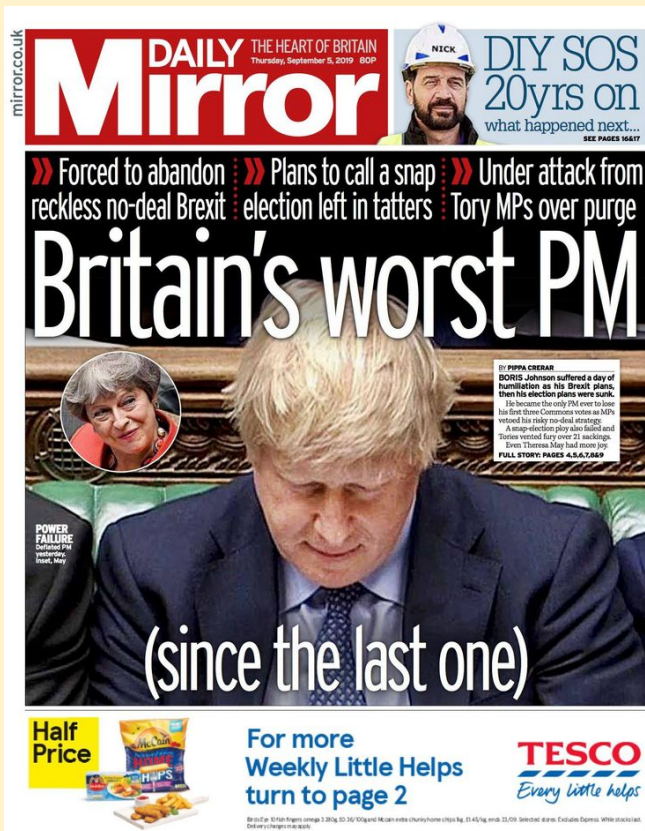
Representations of social groups

Media texts often rely on constructing representations of different social groups. In Media Studies, we look at how Class, Age, Gender, Ethnicity and Sexuality is represented through media language. Whichever way you look at it, a lot of the media is still owned by rich, white, straight men so

hegemonic representations generally align with the interests and perspectives of dominant social groups who hold power and influence in society. Sometimes representations of non-dominant social groups may be contested by the media, whilst other times they may not.

Representation of ethnicity

The below covers are from the same day (June 8 2020) and construct representations of the Black Lives Matter protests. The *Daily Mail* is a right-wing tabloid and the *Daily Mirror* is a left-wing tabloid. The representations of the event are vastly different, even though they use the same image. Write a paragraph considering the following:

   How has the front page been **mediated** differently?

Consider:
- Is the front page constructing a positive or negative representation of the event?
- How does text and image work to construct this representation?

Media Audiences

Media audiences refer to the individuals or groups who consume and engage with media texts, such as films, television shows, newspapers, websites, or social media platforms. These audiences play a critical role in the communication process of media texts.

Media texts are created with the intention of conveying messages or information to specific target audiences. The content, style, and format of media texts are tailored to appeal to certain demographics, interests, or needs of the intended audience.

Understanding how audiences interpret and engage with media products is a significant aspect of media analysis. It involves exploring the reasons behind why certain media texts are understood and interpreted differently by different audience members. Factors such as cultural background, personal experiences, social identities, and individual preferences can influence how audiences perceive and make meaning out of media texts.

An **active** audience is characterised by its proactive engagement with media content. Active audiences are actively involved in selecting, interpreting, and responding to media messages. Active audiences may actively seek out specific media texts, participate in discussions or debates about media, and may even create their own media content in response or as a form of expression.

A **passive** audience, on the other hand, is characterised by a more receptive and less engaged approach to media consumption. They tend to accept media messages at face value without questioning or challenging the underlying assumptions or ideologies presented in the content. Passive audiences may consume media as a form of entertainment or relaxation without actively seeking to interpret or engage deeply with the content.

Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory

Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on understanding why and how individuals use media and the gratifications they seek from it. This theory emphasises the **active role** of media audiences and suggests that people make deliberate choices about which media to consume based on their needs and preferences.

According to Blumler and Katz, individuals engage with media for specific reasons or gratifications, which can be classified into four main categories:

- **Surveillance**: Individuals seek media to acquire knowledge, stay informed about current events, and satisfy their curiosity. They use media to gather information, learn about topics of interest, or to keep up with the latest news.

- **Personal Identity and Social Integration:** Media serves as a means for individuals to shape their personal identities, gain a sense of belonging, and connect with others. People use media to form social bonds, establish relationships, and identify with specific social groups or communities.

- **Entertainment and Escapism:** Media offers entertainment and an escape from daily routines or challenges. Individuals seek relaxation, enjoyment, and diversion through media consumption. They may use media for relaxation, to experience emotional catharsis, or simply for pleasure.

Categorising audiences

Audience demographics and audience psychographics are two key aspects of audience categorisation we use to discuss different audiences in Media Studies. They provide insights into the characteristics, preferences, and behaviours of specific target audiences.

Audience **demographics** refer to the observable characteristics of a specific audience segment. These characteristics are typically based on age, gender, income, education level, occupation, ethnicity, and geographic location. For example, a television network might target a specific age group for a particular program based on demographic data that suggests their content preferences.

Audiences can be categorised into the following demographics segments:

Social Grade	Social Status	Occupation
A	Upper middle-class	High Managerial, adinistrative or professional
B	Middle Class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle-class	Supervisory or clerical, managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at lowest	State pensioners or widows (no other earner), casual or lowest grade workers

Audience **psychographics** go beyond demographic factors and focus on the psychological and behavioural characteristics of an audience segment. Psychographics delve into the audience's attitudes, values, interests, opinions and lifestyles. For example, a fashion brand might target an audience segment with a specific lifestyle and set of values by emphasising sustainability and ethical practices in their advertising campaigns.

MAINSTREAMERS	SEEK SECURITY. Tend to be domestic, conformist, conventional, sentimental – favour value for money family brands. Nearly always the largest group.
ASPIRERS	SEEK STATUS. Materialistic, acquisitive, orientated to image and appearance, persona and fashion. Attractive packaging more important than contents. Typically younger people, clerical and sales jobs.
SUCCEEDERS	SEEK CONTROL. Strong goals, confidence, work ethic, and organisation. Supports stability. Brand choice based on self-reward, and quality. Typically higher management and professionals.
RESIGNED	SEEKS SURVIVAL. Rigid and authoritarian values. Interested in the past and tradition. Brand choice stresses safety, familiarity and economy. Typically older people.
EXPLORERS	SEEKS DISCOVERY. Energy, individualism and experience. Values difference and adventure. Brand choice highlights satisfaction, and instant effect. The first to try new brands. Younger demographic – students.
STRUGGLERS	SEEKS ESCAPE. Alienated and disorganised. Few resources beyond physical skills. Brand choice involves impact and sensation. Buys alcohol, junk food, lottery tickets. D and E demographic.
REFORMERS	SEEKS ENLIGHTENMENT. Freedom of restrictions and personal growth. Social awareness and independent judgement. Anti-materialistic but aware of good taste. Has attended higher education and selects products for quality.

Targeting audience through media language

Look at the below advert for *Versace Eros*. Write a short audience profile, explaining who the target audience is (i.e., demographics and psychographics) as well as their age, job, income etc. Be as creative as you can!

Then, explain how media language has shaped your decisions when writing the audience profile.

Media Industries

Media industries encompass the production, distribution, and monetisation of media texts with the aim of reaching and engaging a target audience. The motives behind media production can be both economic and ideological.

Commercial media production primarily operates under contractual arrangements where audiences exchange their money or attention for entertainment, information, or other content. This can involve various **monetisation** models, such as purchasing magazines, paying for online subscriptions, or generating revenue through advertising click-throughs.

The media industry is diverse, ranging from large **conglomerates** to **indie** media companies and individual content creators known as **prosumers**, including vloggers and podcasters. The advent of **digital convergent technologies** has had a significant impact on media production, distribution, and consumption.

Definitions

Monetisation: Refers to the process of generating revenue or profit from a product, service, or platform. It involves ways to generate income from media content, such as through advertising, subscriptions, pay-per-view models, merchandise sales, or licensing agreements.

Conglomerates: Large corporations that own or control multiple companies or entities operating in diverse industries. These conglomerates often have significant influence and resources within the media industry.

Indie (Independent): In the media industry, 'indie' or 'independent' refers to content or companies that operate outside of the mainstream or dominant media establishments. Independent media companies are typically smaller in scale and often focus on niche markets or alternative perspectives. They may have more creative freedom and flexibility in their content production and distribution, catering to specific audiences or ideological purposes.

Prosumer: The term 'prosumer' combines the words 'producer' and 'consumer' and refers to individuals who not only consume media content but also actively produce or create their own media. Prosumers participate in content creation, sharing, remixing, or curating through platforms such as social media, blogs, vlogs, podcasts, or other user-generated content channels.

Digitally Convergent Technology: It involves the convergence (merging) of previously separate technologies, such as computing, telecommunications, broadcasting, and multimedia, into a unified digital framework. Examples of digitally convergent technologies include smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and streaming platforms, which enable the consumption, production, and distribution of various media formats through a single device or platform.

Getting ready for September

In September, you will begin by studying Newspapers and Advertising. During your summer holidays, buy at least **one** edition of *Daily Mail* and **one** edition of *The Guardian*.

Create a short fact file outlining how the papers represent news events, who their readership might be, what genre of newspapers they are etc. Please present this as one A4 fact file.

Media Studies

Advertising and Marketing – The Most Necessary of All Media Forms

The aims of this **Media Studies Factsheet** are to:

- Define advertising and marketing.

- Engage with advertising and marketing using a range of ideas from the theoretical framework.

- Identify recent changes in advertising and marketing practices.

In Media Studies, advertising and marketing is identified as one of the nine media forms that need to be studied. Unlike other media forms, it does not exist on one platform and advertising and marketing products are varied and use different ways to reach and engage their audience.

First – definitions: What is advertising? What is marketing?

Although closely related advertising and marketing are two different media practices.

- **Advertising** is the promotion of a specific product or service using media products constructed by professionals. A product manufacturer would hire an advertising agency to create a campaign that could include moving image, audio and/or print adverts. The agency would work to a brief created by the manufacturer, but they would be paid to come up with a campaign that engaged the audience and created the message the manufacturer wanted. These adverts would be placed in media locations – on TV, on the radio, in magazines, newspapers, online and/or on billboards. The manufacturer (usually through the agency) would pay to have their adverts shown. Advertising is usually easily identified and recognisable. It is **overt** marketing.

- **Marketing** is a broader term that can include advertising – but doesn't have to. Marketing is the act of promoting and selling goods and services and marketing strategies can be less obvious and easy to spot than 'paid for' advertising. PR agencies will spend a great deal of money on promotional materials and activities but often promotions are integrated into and within other media products in a way that is not obvious to the audience. When an influencer says how much they enjoyed eating at a particular restaurant it is not always made explicitly clear if the restaurant has paid for this promotion. This is called **covert** marketing.

- Any activities or strategies that aim to promote /sell something are marketing activities. These activities can include:

  - **Promotions**

    Where a brand pays to have their logo/branding attached to another product or event.

  - **Product placement**

    Where a brand pays to have their products 'in shot' within other media products in a way that appears natural.

  - **Celebrity/influencer endorsement**

    Where a celebrity or influencer is paid to integrate a product into their social media/public performances.

  - **PR (public relations) event/stunt**

    Events or activities that are organised to create media/ social media interest. These could be formal events such as a celebrity interview or they could appear more 'natural'.

  - **Promotional merchandise**

    Products using logos, images or other brand identifiers that are sold sometimes directly (via the media brand) or indirectly (using 3rd party shops/websites, etc.).

PR

PR stands for public relations. PR acts as a bridge between media or non-media companies, the media and audiences. A PR company or individual will represent a person or organisation and their job is to use the media to present their clients to audiences in the most positive way possible. This can include feeding positive news stories about their clients to the media and even creating the stories themselves. PR companies may also try to suppress negative stories to protect their client's public image or brand identity.

Advertising and Marketing in the Exam

Your exam board will identify where advertising and marketing will be assessed in their examination structure. They will also select specific advertising materials for you to study and apply theoretical ideas to.

You may have a broader knowledge of advertising and marketing that goes beyond these set texts but make sure you focus on and respond to the specific question or questions on your paper. Always check to make sure you are studying the correct advertising and marketing texts for your examination year. You should also know which paper advertising and marketing will appear on and what type of questions your examiner could ask about this media form.

Advertising and Marketing for the NEA

Advertising and marketing can be part of media production briefs. You may be asked to create specific advertising and marketing materials for a product or service, or you may be asked to create advertising and marketing materials related to the media form you are creating in one or more of the set tasks.

The Theoretical Framework and Advertising and Marketing

Industry

Advertising is immensely important for media producers. For many media companies it is one of the main ways it generates an income and so is crucial for the survival of media companies and it funds the production of media products. Most media industries have a commercial element. Outside of the BBC, a publicly funded media producer, most media products you access will have been, at least in part funded by advertising or paid promotion.

Product Placement in Billie Eilish Videos
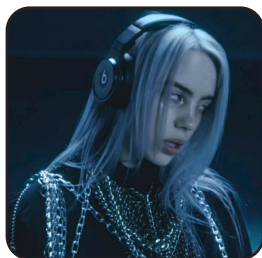
Media companies also use promotion to raise awareness of their own media products. Trailers, posters and a range of online methods are used to market and promote media products to help find and build their audience and attract them to the media product. Large organisations can advertise one of their products within another which is a cost-effective way to advertise, and people associated with the media product (actors, presenters, writers, directors etc.) are often contracted to take part in interviews and other promotional activities.

Audience

At the centre of all advertising and marketing activity is the target audience. The producers of advertising need to know who the target audience is and how to target their advertising to make it as effective as possible. There are two ways that audiences are usually defined – demographics and psychographics.

Activity 1

Find examples of visible advertising and/or marketing from within these media forms:

Media Form	Example of advertising	Example of marketing
Newspapers		
Magazines		
Music Video		
Radio		
Film		
Online Media (including social media)		
Gaming		
TV		

Demographics

Demographics categorises audiences by several different grouping categories. Some of the most common demographic groups are age, gender, ethnicity, geographical location, religion, and income group. An understanding of these groups is based on generalising and social stereotypes in the main and some of the categories are difficult to define or are simply outdated. However, with this understanding that demographics will never take the individuality of people into account demographics can help focus decisions being made in the way a product is produced and advertised. Even though binary ideas about gender are being challenged and subverted in some areas of contemporary culture, it makes a marketer's job easier if it is known that the target audience for a product being marketed is male or female.

Gendered marketing from the Gillette and GilletVenus websites

An excellent example of the way demographics is used in marketing can be found here:

https://www.experianintact.com/content/uk/documents/productSheets/MosaicConsumerUK.pdf

MOSAIC categories divide audiences into different groups by location, age, and wealth.

F Suburban Stability	F22	Boomerang Boarders	Long-term couples with mid-range incomes whose adult children have returned to the shelter of the family home.
	F23	Family Ties	Active families with adult children and some teens, giving prolonged support to the next generation.
	F24	Fledgling Free	Pre-retirement couples enjoying greater space and reduced commitments since their children left home.
	F25	Dependable Me	Single mature owners settled in traditional suburban homes working in intermediate occupations.

Psychographics

Often used with demographics, psychographics categorises audiences by character types rather than age/gender etc. Psychographics works on the premise that different people respond in different ways and so advertising needs to focus on these character types if it is to be successful. Identifying the type of person who is most likely to respond positively to the product being sold allows advertisers to construct adverts that tap into people's innermost needs and desires.

Two examples of demographic categories can be found here:

VALS: https://www.d.umn.edu/~rvaidyan/mktg4731/VALSFramework2002-09.pdf
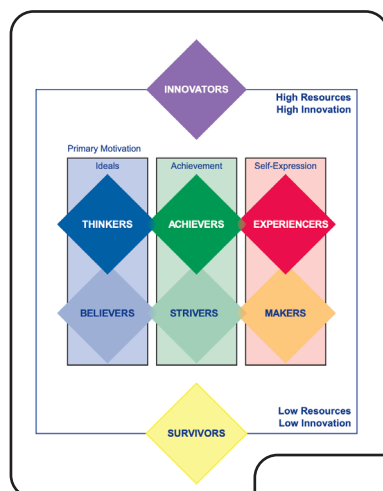
Young and Rubicam: http://www.not-perfect.com/files/content/4Cs_booklet.pdf

THE ASPIRER

Materialistic, acquisitive people, who are driven by others' perceptions of them rather than by their own values.

As a result, they respond to what others perceive as being superficial: image, appearance, persona, charisma and fashion. An attractive pack is as important to them as its contents.

Their core need in life is for *status*.

Each of these systems uses different terms and ways to categorise people but they take the same approach creating a psychological profile for each 'type'. Adverts are constructed carefully using media language choices that aim to appeal to the identified group. Narratives and representations are constructed in order to appeal to this group and to persuade them to act a certain way.

Activity 2

Access the Young and Rubicam document via the link above.

Imagine you are launching a new shampoo. In what ways would you change your marketing strategy to meet the needs of these seven audience groups. You can consider the look of your advertising, persuasive techniques, placement etc. You may feel that some of these categories would not be appropriate target audiences for your product.

Young and Rubicam Category	Marketing Strategy
The explorer	
The aspirer	
The succeeder	Sell as luxury brand with specific qualities (anti-dandruff/create shine, etc.). Visuals would reflect 'taste and class' and exclusivity so a minimalist style would be used but advertising would include signifiers of success and power.
The reformer	
The mainstream	
The struggler	
The resigned	

Adverts and promotional materials may have slightly different functions. Adverts may wish to sell something, promote an idea, be informative and helpful or simply raise awareness. Whatever their function is though, they use media language to appeal to their audience and they want to persuade the audience to do something – buy a product, accept an idea, learn something, or just know about a product. A useful way of thinking about advertising and its aims is this:

AIDA

Advertising needs to:

- Draw the **A**ttention… also **A**ttract and **A**ppeal to the audience.
- Generate an **I**nterest.
- Create a **D**esire.
- Persuade the audience to **A**ct.

Knowing who the audience is makes it easier for decisions to be made that will make the adverts more effective.
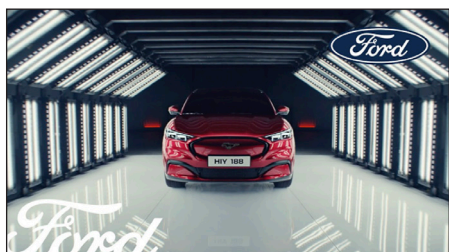
Media Language and Representations

As we have seen, knowing who the audience is will help shape the media language choices made in the production of advertising and marketing materials.

Media language choices will also be influenced by the advert's **genre**. Advertising falls into several different categories. These categories may be based on the format of the advert – for example, billboards use fewer words and large images whereas a magazine advert may use significantly more copy to sell the product. These differences are down to the different ways the audience will access the advert – the context of reception (Hall). People driving past a billboard need to take in and take away the marketing message in an instant. Magazine readers may be more included to pause and read more information.

Trailers have their own codes and conventions as do product adverts and within these categories, further categories exist, e.g. horror trailers, shampoo adverts (moving image), supermarket adverts (print/online).

Activity 3

Identify the codes and conventions of the following types of adverts that make them distinct and recognisable.

Type of advert	Codes and Conventions
Supermarket advert https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/meat/mands-plays-up-beef-traceability-in-new-ad-push/566325.article	
Car advert https://www.tvadsongs.uk/tag/ford-mondeo/	

Narrative

Most adverts rely on a simple narrative structure. There is an ideal (equilibrium) and this is disrupted by a problem or a conflict of some sort (disequilibrium). Often, especially in short moving image or print ads, these two aspects of the narrative are implied rather than depicted with the focus being on the resolution to the problem. The resolution will be related to the product being sold. Often the product takes the role of the hero – solving problems and establishing a new equilibrium. The message is clear – to solve the problem you need to buy the product.

As narrative is part of the sales technique being used, the story being told will be one that it is assumed the target audience will identify with and be interested in. The problem must be one that the audience have or fear having, and they must respond positively to the new equilibrium on offer. Although it may sound dramatic, most adverts base themselves on some sort of fear as this is an effective way to encourage the audience to respond to the call to action inherent within the advert.

Nivea – the hero product sold to solve the problem identified in the advert

Activity 4

Looking at the Nivea advert:

1)   Identify the target audience.

Now, explain how the advert:

2)   Creates identification for the target audience?

3)   Creates interest in the target audience?

4)   Taps into a fear the target audience may have?

5)   Offers a solution to the problem?

6)   Implies a new equilibrium?

7)   Encourages an action?

The 'fears' adverts focus in on can be largely innocuous (e.g. fear of missing out) but some adverts rely on the audience's insecurities and phobias to be successful.

Not all adverts rely on fear as a persuasive technique. Other methods of persuasion can include:

- Memorability.
- Aspirational lifestyle.
- Celebrity endorsement.
- Humour.
- Scientific credibility.
- Setting or reflecting current trends.
- Reliability.

The persuasive techniques chosen by advertisers will always be related to the target audience.

Representations

The representations used in advertising are, again, related to the target audience. It is not always the case, but the target audience is often represented in adverts and so the way they are represented should create a sense of identification. Where adverts are attempting to create desire through aspiration, the representations will show an ideal world and the product being sold will be positioned within this ideal.

Given the short amount of time adverts must establish the representations they are using, they will often rely on narrative shortcuts and stereotypes. Some stereotypes may be innocuous, e.g. young adults enjoy socialising. Some adverts have been criticised though for replicating reductive ideas about social groups – especially related to ideas about gender and ethnicity.

Gender in domestic product advertising

Products related to the domestic environment (related to cooking, cleaning, childcare etc.) have a history of being gendered. In the first half of the 20th Century advertising shows the domestic sphere as being feminine but adverts were often targeted at men rather than women. This reflected the social norms of the day when men oversaw household spending. Domestic products were often advertised to show how much **he** would benefit from the purchase.

"Cooking's a thrill now I have a Kenwood in my Kitchen"

Later, as attitudes to gender began to change women were identified as being domestic decision makers, adverts targeted her and offered benefits such as being labour-saving.

She may benefit from the purchase but the stereotypical assumptions were that was because **she** was still responsible for cooking, cleaning and childcare.

Later still, this attitude was seen as sexist and adverts showed men to be more active in the domestic environment – although at first, he was shown to be largely useless, getting confused by washing powders, or as heroic when engaging in duties such as cleaning the floor. The Advertising Standards Agency updated its guidance in 2019 to remove simplistic and stereotypical representations of gender in advertising.

You can read the guidance in more detail here: https://www.asa.org.uk/news/gender-stereotyping-new-rule-and-guidance.html

Extract from the ASA website

Scenarios featuring gender-stereotypical roles and characteristics Ads may feature people undertaking gender-stereotypical roles, e.g. a woman cleaning the house or a man doing DIY, or displaying gender-stereotypical characteristics, e.g. a man being assertive or a woman being sensitive to others' needs, but they should take care to avoid suggesting that stereotypical roles or characteristics are:

- always uniquely associated with one gender;
- the only options available to one gender; or
- never carried out or displayed by another gender.

Advertising in the digital age

Whilst print, moving image and audio advertising still exists, these traditional formats do not generate the same amount of money for media producers that they used to. Most newspaper and magazine content is now accessed online and social media platforms such as Instagram, Snap Chat, TikTok, Twitter and Facebook have become news and information sources for many. TV programmes and films are often accessed online via streaming services and traditional radio is competing with massive amounts of podcast content.

As viewing figures and readerships have declined, traditional media's advertising revenue has also been reduced. Media producers need to find alternative ways to generate an income as much of the money spent on advertising is spent 'online'.

Whilst advertising can sometimes be seen as an inconvenience or even an irritation, its existence is important as it helps fund the production of media content from films and TV programmes to news and documentaries. It is the media form that allows other media forms to exist.

Activity 5

Online media uses a range of different advertising and promotion strategies that generate incomes for media platforms and producers whilst raising awareness of products and services.

Add your own examples to the ones given below.

- Banner adverts.
- Pop up adverts.
- Influencer recommendations.
- Sponsorship.

Media Studies

Newspapers: An Update

The aims of this **Media Studies Factsheet** are to:

- Discuss the impact of digital media on the newspaper industry and to consider how newspapers have attempted to adapt to changing audience behaviours.

- Apply some areas of the theoretical framework to the context of contemporary newspapers.

You will find it useful to read **Factsheets 212: The Industrial Context of News** and **217: Applying Theory to News** in conjunction with this one.

Other useful **Factsheets** include:

- **7 Media Language and Newspapers**
- **71 Citizen Journalism**
- **131 Social Media and the News Agenda**
- **134 Social Media and News**
- **173 The Rise of Fake News**
- **189 The i**
- **175**, **177** and **182 The Daily Mail**

British Newspapers

Newspapers are one of the nine media forms you need to study for A Level Media Studies. Individual exam boards will identify which newspapers you will be expected to write on in the examinations and the theoretical focus you need to take in your study.

The Impact of Digital Media on the Newspaper Industry

Newspaper sales have been on a steady decline since the rise of digital media and the related changes to audience behaviours and expectations. At first, the competition for newspaper sales came from the newspapers themselves who saw the benefit of online media. Newspapers embraced the use of the internet as a way to present their content to their audiences. At this point the economics of print newspapers was very straight forward. Newspapers had two primary income streams; the cover price and advertising. Both methods of making money depended on attracting large audiences and attempting to create audience loyalty. The larger the audience, the more direct income could be made from sales and the more a newspaper could charge for advertising space.

The British tabloid press sold in massive numbers during the 20th Century. Newspapers competed aggressively against one another for a larger share of the market offering incentives such as low cover prices, cash prize 'bingo', vouchers for discounted holidays, etc. Daily sales could be influenced by the front-page story and celebrity/royal gossip and scandals were used to attract audiences. In January 2000, *The Sun* sold 3.5 million copies per day, making it the most successful British Newspaper at that time. Daily sales figures for 2020 had dropped to 1.2 million. This is the most recent circulation information that is available as *The Sun*, and other newspapers recently decided to keep their sales figures private.

An infamous front page from The Sun in 1996

Recent Circulation Figures

- *The Sun* 1.2 million (2020)
- *The Metro* (free paper) 1 million (2022)
- *The Daily Mail* 860,000 (2022)
- *The Times* 365,000 (2020)
- *The Telegraph* 317,000 (2019)
- *The Daily Mirror* 309,000 (2022)
- *The Daily Express* 201,000 (2022)
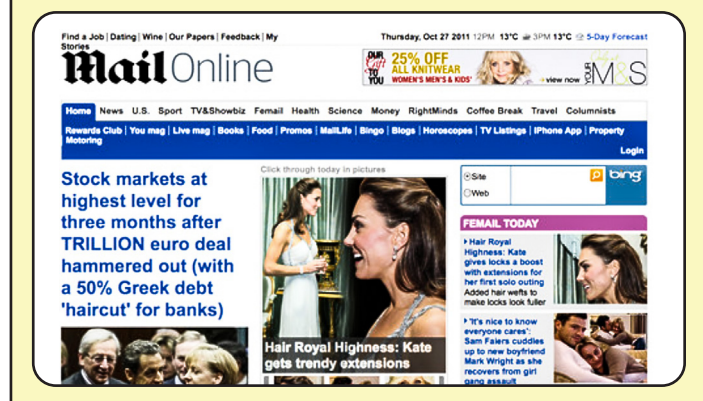- *The Guardian* 105,000 (2021)

Source: Press Gazette

Activity 1:

The sharp decline in sales has impacted on all British Newspaper titles. Online newspapers offer a range of benefits for readers.

From a reader's perspective, make a list of reasons why they might prefer to use a news website rather than buy a newspaper.

The Mail Online

The decline in sales has, of course, led to a massive decline in income for newspaper companies. The loss of the cover price had an impact but more importantly, advertising revenues fell dramatically. The relationship between print newspapers and advertisers was a simple one – newspapers charged a fee based on the size of the advert and advertisers paid the fee direct to the newspapers. Online advertising is more complex with incomes being based on data-mining algorithms that collect and sell user data to advertisers as well as information about audience behaviours on the website such as how long people spend on the site, whether they **click-through** to other stories, how interactive they are etc. The competition for news audiences also broadened out to include social media platforms, news **aggregation** sites (see glossary) as well as the use of YouTube/podcasts by professional and amateur news companies and commentators; video, audio, photographic and written citizen journalism on blogs, Instagram and other social media platforms, etc. Some British newspapers moved their websites behind a **paywall** to ensure readers were paying for their content.

As audiences moved from buying print media to accessing news and information online, British newspapers have changed to accommodate the new audience demands. For example:

- Many online newspapers remain free although some may ask for contributions or offer 'premium' subscriptions that allow access to additional and/or ad-free content.
- Online newspapers offer immediate audience interaction by allowing comments on their published stories.
- Online newspapers can illustrate their stories with video, audio and animations to provide more information and different ways to access the story.
- Online newspapers are updated throughout the day and they can react as stories break and develop.
- Online newspapers use social media platforms to promote their content and to encourage audience interaction and, crucially, the sharing of the paper's content.

Theoretical Analysis

On the surface, the **uses and gratifications** of newspapers remain the same. **Audiences** access newspapers for **information** and **entertainment**. Different **genres** and titles approach the information/entertainment balance differently. Tabloid newspapers prioritise entertainment, while broadsheets still focus on providing detailed information. There has been some blurring of **news values** across the genres. **Tabloidisation** is the adoption of tabloid values in non-tabloid media. This is evident in the way soft news/celebrity reporting has become increasingly important in broadsheet newspapers where lifestyle, opinion and entertainment content **attracts readers** and can be useful in generating engagement and attention on social media.

Representations in British Newspapers reflect their **political/ideological position**. British Newspapers tend to lean towards the right of the political spectrum, with only *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mirror* offering a more centre-left position. *The Guardian* is socially progressive but tends to favour centre to centre right economic policies. *The Telegraph* is economically and politically on the right and has close ties to the Conservative party (Boris Johnson and other Conservative politicians have direct relationships with this paper). *The Daily Mail* and *The Express* also take right-wing positions on social and economic issues.

In 2022, the run-up to an exceptional heatwave in the UK was **represented** according to these political positions. On July 19th *The Guardian* used the heatwave to criticise the Government's inaction, while *The Daily Mail* scoffed at these concerns about the heat using the language of the 'culture war', accusing the British of being 'snowflakes'. *The Daily Mail* reframed their position the following day in response to the wildfires caused by high temperatures, and *The Guardian* connected the heatwave to global heating.

The two papers can be seen to use **conflict** to tell their stories but the **problems** they identify are quite different. *The Guardian* identifies a **conflict** between government inaction and the support of national infrastructure and personal safety. The **development** of this **conflict** broadens into a 'bigger picture' **conflict** on the 20th relating to the impact of global heating. The **conflict** in the first *Daily Mail* headline is cultural. It is playing on the loosely defined culture war that pits people against one another based on their ideological beliefs. It is an ill-defined term but tends to be identifiable as a **conflict** between more traditional, **conservative** thinkers and those with more **progressive** beliefs.

July 19th 2022

July 20th 2022

(*#TomorrowsPapersToday*)

The Daily Mail takes the **conservative position** and criticises what it defines as 'woke' ideas. 'Snowflake' is used a pejorative term usually targeted towards young people implying they are both fragile and entitled. The change of perspective on the 20th is identified in the use of an image of a house fire and recognises an aspect of the threats presented by this story. These differences reflect the broader values of these newspaper genres. **Broadsheet newspapers** (even when presented on tabloid sized paper like *The Guardian*) tend to take a more analytical approach to providing information which includes engaging with why an event happened and what the long-term impact might be. **Tabloids** (including **mid-range/black top tabloids** such as *The Daily Mail*) focus on the impact of stories on the individual/local community.

Other genre codes are present in these front pages:

Tabloid	Broadsheet
Image led	Text led
Informal language (slang, wordplay, etc.)	Formal language
Local approach	Political/Global/International approach
Deference to selected establishment figures (e.g. Military/Prince Charles, as he was at this time)	Limited deference to selected establishment figures (e.g. 'Johnson')

Activity 2:

Focusing on the reporting on the heatwave, find examples of the following on the front pages provided:

Reporting Technique	Which paper?	Where and how? Use a quote or description
Reference to social infrastructure	*The Guardian*	'Hundreds of firefighters battle blazes'
Reference to personal property		
Use of experts' knowledge		
Use of anecdote/ personal observation		
Use of literal description of event		
Use of pun/ wordplay/ sensationalised language/ exaggeration		
Use of colour/ layout/design to create tone		
London-centricism (see glossary)		
Recognition of UK regions		

A loss of income has led to radical changes in the way newspapers are staffed and how they make editorial choices. Paper newspapers relied on eye catching headlines to attract readers. Online newspapers use **click-bait** images and headlines to encourage readers to click and stay on the site. Online readers expect visual and multi-media content and online newspapers can keep the audience's attention by offering briefer stories and hyperlinks to related articles, analysis and discussion. Newspapers employ fewer journalists today as news is often sourced from news agencies, PR agencies/press offices, citizen journalists, other media outlets and, increasingly, social media.

Activity 3:

Using an example of one of the newspapers set by your exam board consider the sources of information and images used. Starting with the most commonly used to the least, rank these sources of information from **1** to **6**:

☐ Journalists working for the paper.

☐ Freelance opinion writers.

☐ PR firms/press offices representing a celebrity, company or organisation.

☐ Press offices representing politicians.

☐ Another media outlet.

☐ Social media.

Most Used **1 2 3 4 5 6** *Least Used*

Soft news and opinion (especially controversial opinions) tend to attract more views than hard news stories. This has raised some concerns about the way news stories are selected and the accuracy and validity of reporting in the current media context. It is rational for news companies to follow a news agenda that has the potential to attract most readers as this is what will generate the most income. Similarly, being up to date and responding to events as they occur allows an online newspaper to complete with the fast-moving world of social media. It is common for social media development to become the news story – even if this is temporary until official information is received. This can, however, lead to inaccuracies as facts are not always clear when a story is breaking. Reports are updated as new information is received but newspapers cannot guarantee that all readers access the correct version of events. This type of reporting often includes speculation as reporters wait for information. Speculation undermines the idea that news stories are reports of facts and accurate information.

As newspapers are declining in terms of their sales, it would seem logical to assume they are losing their cultural and social power. Fewer people buy print newspapers, but audiences of all ages do engage with newspaper content either directly or indirectly online. *The Mail Online* is a successful news website and it has an average daily UK readership of 4.1 million (this figure is closer to 10 million if the global audience is included), and *The Sun* and *The Guardian* attract around 3.7-3.5 million daily readers respectively (*statista.com*). Print newspapers however, still have an influence as they are used to set the daily news agenda by broadcast news providers, and so a newspaper headline can have an impact on the news agenda across the day. Politicians and establishment figures pay close attention to the attitudes and values represented in newspapers.

Newspapers and the 24-Hour News Cycle
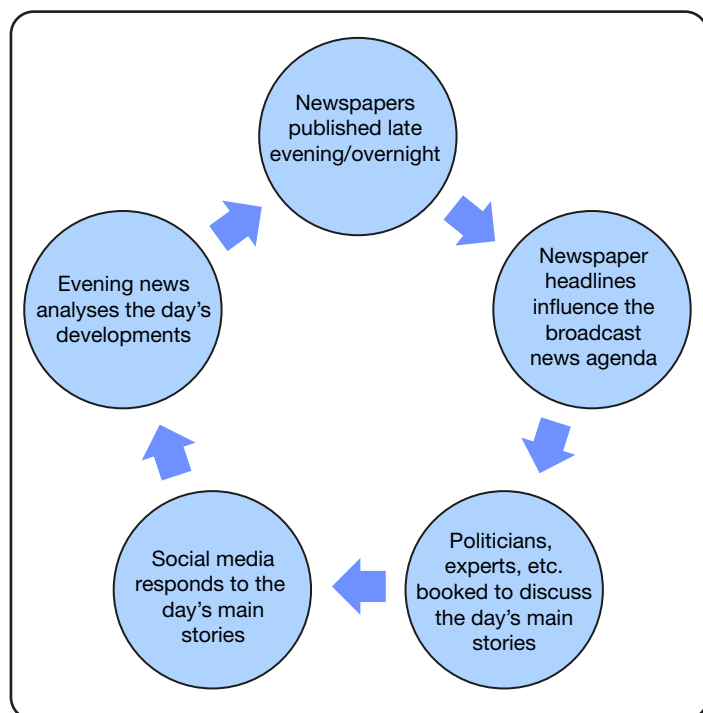
Activity 4:

Make a list of all the theoretical terms and ideas discussed under the heading **Theoretical Analysis** above. Use the following headings:

- Media Language (including genre and narrative)
- Media representations/ideologies
- Media audiences
- Media industries

Glossary

Data Mining: The collection of information and the observations of patterns about users and user behaviour online.

Click-Through: The act of clicking on a link to access more in-depth content.

News Aggregation: The collection of content from a range of content sources.

Paywall: The blocking of online content to readers unless they pay a subscription fee.

News Values: The criteria used by news producers to aid selection and the prioritisation of events in news reporting.

Tabloid Values: A focus on soft news (entertainment, sport, celebrity, human interest stories).

London-centric: A narrow focus on events in London, at the expense of other UK locations.