

CODES AND CONVENTIONS

This front cover uses the conventions of a newspaper:

- Layout, use of cover photographs/images, house style, mastheads.
- Emotive vs Formal language to engage different audience responses.
- Roland Barthes enigma codes - headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories

There is also a **strapline** that reads "For A Greater Britain' that suggests The Sun has a clearer idea than MPs what is good for the country.

The start of the **headline** addresses MPs directly, and has a threatening tone. The huge letters for the 'choice' is phrased more like an ultimatum. This reduces what is obviously an extremely complex piece of legislation to something very simple and emotive. 'Cutting through bureaucracy' is something right wing populists favour, and this kind of 'straight talking' is what The Sun is renowned for.

The masthead is in block, capitalised text and uses the colours red and white. Other newspapers in the UK also use this design (such as The Mirror, The Daily Star and the Daily Sport) and these are termed "red tops" as they specialise in tabloid journalism – journalism that often relies on sensationalism, celebrities and gossip. Tabloids are also renowned for simplifying complex political issues.

REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION: HISTORICAL & POLITICAL CONTEXTS

In its early years, The Sun nominally supported the Labour party but has moved back and forth between Labour and the Conservatives, depending on party leadership. The paper has always been very vocal in telling its readers how they should vote ("Why it must be Labour" 1970; "Vote Tory this time" 1979; "Do you really want this old fool to run Britain?" 1983). Today, The Sun is described as having **political allegiance** to the **Conservative party** and does not support the EU, so it is not surprising they are backing offering a **pro-Brexit** viewpoint that links to nationalist values. The paper does have an ambivalent representation of politicians. They often flatter and endorse specific MPs and policies, but also regularly feature articles that expose government policies they consider too left wing (especially concerning immigration or multiculturalism). This links to the populist belief that politics is run by an 'elite' who have 'lost touch with the people'.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The Sun is a British **tabloid** daily newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch's **News Corp.** It was originally published six days a week until News Corp. also started producing The Sun on Sunday in February 2012 to replace the News of the World. With an average daily circulation of roughly 1.6 million copies of their print edition in the UK and a daily readership of around 4.1 million <http://www.newsworks.org.uk/The-Sun>), The Sun has the **largest circulation** of any daily print newspaper in the United Kingdom. In addition, The Sun on Sunday is the UK's biggest selling Sunday newspaper. On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union. This was nicknamed 'Brexit'. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting leave and 48.1% voting remain. This reflects the divisive nature of the referendum and the sometimes ugly nature of the campaigns where the Leave camp was accused of fuelling racism and xenophobia (fear of strangers), and the Remain camp was accused of 'betraying Britain' (nationalism). Almost two years later (on the date this edition of The Sun was published) different factions were still arguing. The Prime Minister, Theresa May was trying to put a bill through Parliament to approve her plan for Brexit, but many MPs (from both sides) were critical.

The **dominant image** is a photo-montage of iconic British landmarks or traditions. There are key historical sites like Stonehenge and the Shard; popular British brands like Minis and red buses and Spitfires; and even the Houses of Parliament to show a respect for our political system. These are set on backdrops of rolling fields, forests and coastline. It creates the image of Britain as a 'green and pleasant land' (a common term from William Blake's poem 'Jerusalem', itself a song with a nationalist message). This is a very positive representation but also quite a stereotypical one.



The cover is a **montage** of different British cultural traditions that we should be proud about (including fish'n'chips and the Loch Ness monster!) These are also quite stereotypical elements of British identity, what foreign tourists may expect from a visit to the UK.

This montage is **anchored** by the **headline**, "Great Britain or Great Betrayal". The headline's use of the emotive term 'betrayal' make it clear that the cultural icons featured on the cover are at risk from politicians.

The opening to the article can be seen on the left third of the cover beginning, "The Sun says..." suggesting the newspaper has real influence when it comes to the decisions MPs make.

The landmarks and traditions are closely associated with England and particularly the South of England where there was **strong support for Brexit**. There is only one Northern landmark (the Angel of the North) and no representations of Scotland and Northern Ireland except for Loch Ness. This may be because Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted to remain, so are not part of The Sun's **target audience**. The Sun does have specific Irish and Scottish editions, so this may also explain the focus on England.

The **strapline** 'For A Greater Britain' implies, along with 'The Sun Says...' suggests The Sun has a clearer definition of what makes Britain great than others, and implies the reader should trust its vision.

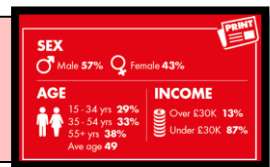
The Sun isn't just **reinforcing** these **stereotypes**; it is saying that if we don't celebrate and protect them then we will be 'betraying' Britain. The only way to 'protect' British identity is for MPs to vote in favour of the Brexit bill.

AUDIENCE: The Sun targets the lower middle social classes, most of whom haven't attended higher education. Two thirds of its readers are over 35 years old, 54% are male and its biggest audience share comes from the C2DE demographic. The average reading age of the UK population is 9 years old. The Sun has a reading age of 8 years, which means it is accessible to everyone and especially appealing to members of our society who have weaker literacy skills.

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

The Sun started life as a broadsheet in 1964, becoming a tabloid in 1969 after being purchased by its current owners. Sex was an important feature of the paper's marketing strategy and the first topless page 3 model appeared in November 1970. This soon became a regular feature of the paper and has been an area of contention for some people. The Sun has always been considered controversial in terms of its output, partly due to its over-reliance on sensational news and partly due to complete fabrication for the sake of a story ("Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster", 1986). It has also maintained an antielitist agenda where it regularly exposes the sex or drug scandals of celebrities or authority figures. In the past five years there has been a surge in 'populist nationalism'. This is a political ideology that distrusts 'experts', statistics and mainstream politicians in favour of returning control to 'the common people' (populist).

In many countries across the world, there has been a rise in nationalism; the belief that your country and customs are superior to all others. Positively, nationalism could be seen as pride in your country's culture, traditions and achievements. Negatively, the dismissal or fear of other cultures could be viewed as xenophobia or racism. The Sun is unashamedly right wing, and part of its brand is to support a nationalist ideology - especially in sporting events and stories about the royal family, but also extending into politics. These have been controversial: during the 1980s Falkland War they featured a photo of a sinking Argentine battleship with the headline 'Gotcha!'. They often employ outspoken columnists like Katie Hopkins whose descriptions of migrants as cockroaches were condemned by the UN Commission for Human Rights. During the Brexit campaign and aftermath, The Sun enthusiastically supported the leave party and published a number of exaggerated or plainly untrue stories that linked into nationalist beliefs: that migrants from the EU are stealing British jobs, overwhelming the welfare services, planning terrorist attacks etc. They even reported the Queen supported Brexit, a claim that Buckingham Palace denied.





News Corp



Executive Chairman:
Rupert Murdoch
\$22.3 million annual salary



REGULATION

- The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) is the independent regulator for the newspaper and magazine industry in the UK.
- They ensure that individual rights are protected and that standards of journalism are high in the UK – to ensure that audiences are given the correct information and not ‘fake news’.

CONTROVERSY & REGULATON

- The Sun has always been considered controversial. The most notable controversy was The Sun’s coverage of the Hillsborough Football Stadium disaster in Sheffield on 15th April 1989, in which 96 people died.
- The paper ran a front page headline of “The Truth” and printed allegations that fans pickpocketed victims, urinated on members of the emergency services and assaulted a policeman who was administering the kiss of life to a victim. The story was seemingly based on allegations from anonymous sources that were later proved to be false and The Sun apologised. The front page caused outrage in Liverpool where it was soon titled “The Scum” and a significant proportion of the city’s population still boycott the paper today with many shops even refusing to stock it.
- More recently, The News of The World, which was owned by NewsCorp was forced to close after allegations that journalists were involved in hacking people’s phones for information. This led to the closure of the 168-year-old News of the World tabloid in 2011 and a trial costing reportedly up to £100m.
- This led to the Leveson Inquiry, which investigated the scandal and then IPSO was set up to monitor journalism in the UK more effectively.

- ### WHAT DOES IPSO DO?
- make sure that member newspapers and magazines follow the Editors’ Code.
 - investigate complaints about printed and online material that may breach the Editors’ Code.
 - make newspapers and magazines publish corrections or adjudications if they breach the Editors’ Code (including on their front page).
 - monitor press standards and require member newspapers and magazines to submit an annual statement about how they follow the Editors’ Code and handle any complaints.
 - investigate serious standards failings and can fine publishers up to £1 million in cases where they are particularly serious.
 - operate a 24-hour anti-harassment advice line.
 - run a low cost compulsory arbitration scheme to settle legal disputes.
 - provide advice for editors and journalists.
 - provide training and guidance for journalists so they can uphold the highest possible standards.
 - provide a Whistleblowing Hotline for journalists who feel they are being pressured to act in a way that is not in line with the Editors’ Code.
 - work with charities, NGOs and other organisations to support and improve press standards.



INSTITUTION: NEWSCORP

- Newscorp is a media conglomerate and they own The Sun. They are one of the “big six” media companies in the world so are very powerful.
- Newscorp is owned by Australian Rupert Murdoch, well known for supporting right wing political agendas
- They are horizontally integrated as they own many newspapers
- They also own The Times and The Sunday Times newspaper as well as shares in Sky and Fox.

TECHNOLOGY & CONVERGENCE

In August 2013, The Sun launched Sun+, a subscription service digital entertainment package. Subscribers paid £2 per week but were able to access all of The Sun’s regular content as well as have exclusive access to Premier League clips, a variety of digital rewards and a lottery. Despite the cost of this, Sun+ had 117,000 subscribers who they could engage with on a more personal level due to the brand loyalty created from the subscription. This was just one of the ways The Sun adapted to people’s reading habits, with people now having little time to spare and increasingly ‘reading on the go’.

- However, in November 2015, the paper had to remove the paywall and offer most of its web content for free in order to compete with major rivals such as The Mail Online. Since removal of the paywall, it now has around 1 million browsers per day.
- Despite the move of most news services to online platforms, the print edition continues to be extremely popular with approximately 3 million daily readers, compared to 4 million who consume it on their mobile devices.

FUNDING AND REVENUE

- Increasingly newspapers earn revenue from their advertisements and so, in this sense, journalism is being seen more and more as a commodity whose purpose is predominantly for profit. £1 in every £7 spent on groceries is spent by a Sun reader making it a very attractive advertising vehicle.
- The Sun is also sold for 55p Monday – Friday and 75p on a Saturday. This also brings them revenue.
- As readership figures of print news continue to drop and advertisers choosing to leave if figures drop too low, newspapers are under increasing pressure to capture audiences, so the populist nationalist ideology and emotive ultimatum that dominate the cover is a clear bid to attract those readers who voted leave. The range of British cultural institutions, from royalty to the Red Arrows is trying to appeal to the largest range of audience interests.

PASSIVE & ACTIVE AUDIENCES

Historically, readers of print newspapers were considered to be **passive** (i.e. they read what was in front of them and believed it), especially as there is an expectation that what is shared in the news genre is true. However, **today’s audiences** are much more **active** and understand how tabloids often don’t report full facts. This potentially changes the way they interpret the information they are given.




TARGETING AUDIENCES

- The Sun targets the **lower middle social classes**, most of whom haven’t attended higher education. Two thirds of its readers are over 35 years old, 54% are male and its biggest audience share comes from the C2DE demographic.
- According to www.see-a-voice.org, the average reading age of the UK population is 9 years old. The Sun has a reading age of 8 years. Using of words in bold, lots of visuals and smaller chunks of text means they are purposefully making their product accessible to everyone and especially appealing to members of our society who have weaker literacy skills.
- In addition, this way of formatting makes it easier to read at speed – on the daily commute for example - and to skim and scan the paper to find specific articles that interest you. This could help explain why The Sun is “Britain’s most popular paper” as stated by its tagline, as it is an easy read..

AUDIENCE APPEAL

- The average reading age of the UK is 9 years old. The Sun has a reading age of 8 years.
- Use of words in bold, lots of visuals and smaller chunks of text means they are purposefully making their product **accessible to everyone** and especially appealing to members of society who have **weaker literacy skills**

<p>Production Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average daily circulation of roughly 134,000 • In 2006, The Guardian went through a complete redesign. It became smaller, had a new typeface and balanced the longer pieces of journalism out with many shorter stories. • The Guardian is described as having mainstream left political values. It does not have an affiliation with any political party, but does lean towards the left and has a very liberal tradition 	<p>Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience= well-educated, relatively young and liberal audience(ABC1.) • 52% of Guardian readers are male, and the average reader age is 44. • online edition has over 42.6 million readers. 	<p>Cultural context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health issues attract ABC1 audience with more money to spend on healthier food and gym membership etc. The newspaper features stories about the latest scientific studies and reports about how to live longer, healthier lives. e.g. that too much dairy is bad for our health.
<p>Political Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU). This was nicknamed 'Brexit'. • The campaigns before the referendum were quite aggressive. The leave camp was accused of fuelling racism the remain camp was accused of 'betraying Britain'. • One of their catchphrases of the Brexiteers was to label the economic concerns of the remain party 'Project Fear' while they called theirs 'Project Prosperity'. • Boris Johnson and the other politicians on the cover were very fervent Leave campaigners. • Entrepreneurs like James Dyson supported leaving the EU and insisted it would be good for UK businesses. • Alan Sugar (host of The Apprentice) insisted Brexit would be terrible for the UK economy, because without the trade deals, big businesses would move abroad. • Britain's plan to leave the EU, and to limit migration, was supported by other EU nations. One such country is Hungary, whose prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has directly challenged the EU about migration issues. 	<p>Key terms and conventions of a tabloid + examples from The Guardian</p> <p>Cover line (or puff box) announcing a guide to fitness. The 'How to...' phrasing makes a healthy lifestyle seem achievable, even when the "for the rest of your life" seems hyperbolic. The cartoon of the woman running has a light hearted tone</p> <p>The dominant image is of a group of politicians looking sad and frustrated- striking as politicians are usually represented as confident people</p> <p>The dominant image is anchored with the caption, explaining they are at a meeting with Brexit supporters. The despairing look about the success of Brexit reinforces the left wing, anti-Brexit beliefs of The Guardian's target audience</p> <p>"From Project Fear to Project Prosperity'. The optimistic tone of this slogan is ironic when juxtaposed with the defeated, sad posture of the politicians.</p>  <p>The Guardian's masthead is written all in lowercase and uses a serif font to make it stand out from the crowd</p> <p>A much smaller part of the front page is given over to the G2 supplement, a regular segment in the paper which, because of its placing, when displayed on newsstands may well be the section people see first.</p> <p>There is a linked article about Orbán in conflict with the EU, the labelling of Orbán of 'right-wing' tells the liberal target audience of The Guardian that this man is a political enemy The photo showing Orbán with a belligerent facial expression suggests he is an aggressive, uncooperative figure.</p>	
<p>Representation of Issues</p> <p>Politicians: are often portrayed as inept and useless in both left/right wing press, and in both tabloids and broadsheets. This portrayal of the most powerful people in the country could offer audiences a sense of superiority. The Guardian cover, in both the photograph and the article, portray politicians as ridiculous and inept. The tone of the headline suggests that May, the Prime Minister, doesn't know what she's doing and that Boris is in despair of her leadership.</p> <p>Brexit Narrative of the cover story positions the audience into accepting the newspaper's viewpoint, analysis and opinion. It portrays Brexit as dangerous for the economy. The omission of any positive stories about Brexit and the economy reinforces the target audience's beliefs on this issue. The article about Orbán's conflict with the EU and his combative facial expression suggests the EU is a positive organisation and that the UK is foolish to leave</p> <p>Link to Theorists and theories: Narrative: headlines used to tease people to want to read certain stories (could be linked to Roland Barthes – enigma codes). Active/Passive audience, Hall's Reception, stereotype and selection theories. Proppian characters,</p>		

THEORIES

• Uses & Gratifications: Fortnite - along with many videogames - could relate to the 'escapism' and 'catharses'. • The collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide social interaction. • The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to Dyer's 'Star Theory'.

PRODUCTION CONTEXT

• Produced by Epic Games, launched 2017
• Fortnite franchise is a series of multiplayer free-to-play battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices.
• The franchise includes Fortnite: Battle Royale, Fortnite: Save The World, and Fortnite: Creative
• Fortnite: Battle Royale is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the Battle Royale version was offered for free.
• The Fortnite franchise had revenue of £2.4 billion in 2018 and the franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
• Fortnite: Battle Royale won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

SYNERGY

• Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

GAMEPLAY

• Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
• The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
• As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
• In terms of genre, Fortnite could be considered as fusion of battle games (like Battlegrounds) and construction games (like Minecraft).



SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXTS

• The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.
• In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.
• The range of genres - from first-person shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.
• Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

CROSS-MEDIA CONVERGENCE

• Fortnite is also a good example of cross-media convergence, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. Fortnite is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
• It has also incorporated other media brands and franchises. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special Avengers: Infinity War segment and recently a tie-in with Godzilla. The format of Fortnite means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh.
Films/TV/sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep Fortnite in the news and social media.

FUNDING AND REVENUE

Fortnite is an example of the 'Games as a Service' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from 'in-game purchases' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)
• Some of these are 'micro transactions' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In Fortnite, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is Candy Crush.
• Unusually in Fortnite the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
• Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer 'season passes' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
• Fortnite offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

INSTITUTION: EPIC GAMES

Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur game designers.
• In 2014, the Guinness Book Of Records named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
• Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer Cloudgine, and has subsidiaries in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
• Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.

ACTIVE AUDIENCES

The basic gameplay of Fortnite: Battle Royale is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative. • Fortnite: Creative is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing 'skins', 'emotes' and landscapes. • In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of game developers.

TARGETING AUDIENCES

Fortnite has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.
• The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
• The rise of 'eSports' stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where Fortnite is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major celebrities. Ninja, the most famous Fortnite player has over 10m subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo!
• This creates gamer celebrities that have become aspirational role-models for some audiences.
• The use of non-traditional gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of 'Twitch Girls' (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
• Fortnite's use of 'seasons' - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/on-line subscription style of long-form TV drama.

HISTORICAL & POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many moral panics. These ranged from fears that violent games encourage copycat behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of 'screen time' that is healthy. Fortnite, when compared to other successful titles like Grand Theft Auto or Call Of Duty contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players. In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender 'skins' at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the collaborative nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale). The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is dangerous'.

TECHNOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE

• One of the things that have made Fortnite so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of technological convergence.
• Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop Fortnite. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like Batman: Arkham City and Infinity Blade.