

**Theoretical Framework**

**Media Language:** is the way in which the meaning of a media product is communicated to the audience.

**Language:** the key conventions (features) you would expect to find associated with a media product. The language is different depending on the product and the platform.

**Semiotics:** the study of signs and symbols and what they mean

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



e.g

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



e.g

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



e.g

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

### Analysing Media Language: Media Language Framework

We can divide codes of media language into three categories – these can help you to understand the meanings of a media product

SYMBOLIC	WRITTEN	TECHNICAL
Lighting & Colour	Slogans	Camera Angles
Setting & Locations	Font style	Framing of shots (ELS, LS, MLS, MS, CU, ECU, POV)
Facial Expressions & Body Language	Headlines	Cropping
Objects	Captions	Juxtaposition (2 separate signs that together make contrasting meaning)
Key Signifiers/Images	Choice of words	
Clothing, Hair & Make Up	Emotive language	
	Size of text	
	Language techniques	

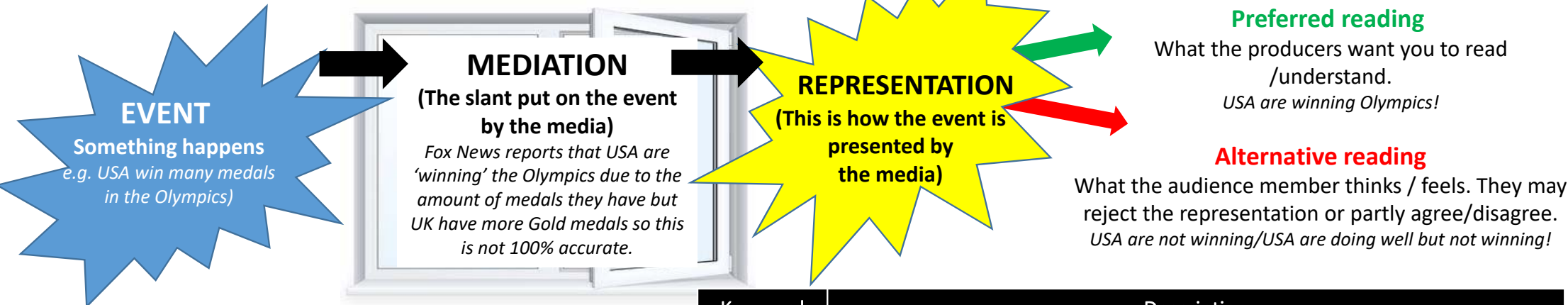
When you analyse a media product you should look at the above signs and describe (denotation) and then explain what this suggests to the audience/reader (connotation). You could then evaluate the interpretations of the signs (polysemic)

Key word	Description	Example
Convention	Typical features of a genre or product	Horror films <b>conventionally</b> feature a villain and low key lighting
Denotation	The surface meaning of a sign – what you see	A gun in a film poster being held by the character.
Connotation	The deeper meaning of the sign	Gun <b>signifies</b> action and violence. The character holding the gun is the hero/villain.
Signifies	What something suggests	The gun <b>signifies</b> violence
Sign	An element in a media product that is used to communicate something	Low key lighting is a <b>sign</b> of a dark theme/story
Polysemic	A sign can have many different connotations/interpretations depending on the audience	The colour red could connote danger or passion or anger. The colour red is therefore <b>polysemic</b> .
Audience reception	How the audience receive / interpret the meaning of a sign	Media producers want audiences to accept and agree with their messages. Audiences will either <b>agree</b> with, <b>reject</b> or <b>negotiate</b> the dominant messages.
Stereotypical	A widely held and over simplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.	Boys <b>stereotypically</b> like sports, cars and video games. Girls <b>stereotypically</b> like the colour pink, fashion and make up.

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

Representation is not a 'window to the world' – it is how the media producers want you to see the world!

Representation is the process of how reality is constructed for an audience (this is known as **Mediation**)



## Stereotypes

Representation often includes stereotypes but to be completely fair in the media these need to be avoided. Stereotypes are a widely held, often negative and over simplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing. Have a look at the below examples.

GROUP	STEREOTYPE
WOMEN	Motherly, cooking, cleaning, feminine, weaker gender, emotional, concerned about appearance...
MEN	Masculine, strong, powerful, dominant gender, sports, gadgets, emotionally strong, cars...
TEENAGERS	Unruly, rude, lazy, disrespectful, defiant, unmannered...

Although these are negative, stereotypes are used in media products so that the audience quickly recognise the characters and can pick up the narrative easily.

Key word	Description
<b>Stereotype</b>	A widely held and over simplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
<b>Archetype</b>	A very typical example of a certain person or thing. For example a male archetype would be very masculine and muscly, strong and powerful with short hair and hall.
<b>Dominant</b>	Powerful for example men are seen as more dominant than women. Another meaning for dominant is the main idea. For example the dominant message in the media is that adults must work and pay their taxes.
<b>Inferior</b>	Lower in rank, status, or quality. For example, women are usually seen as inferior to men (this is a stereotype).
<b>Selection</b>	The action or fact of carefully choosing something as being the best or most suitable of the message. This includes what is, and isn't, included!
<b>Construction</b>	Technical and symbolic codes – how things have been designed, laid out, edited, put together
<b>Mediation</b>	How the maker/producer draws on all possible ideas and resources to present their version of events/perspective to you

**Theoretical Framework**

# Audiences: are the people consuming the media product.

A **media audience** may be as small as one person reading a magazine or as large as billions of people around the world watching events, like 9/11, unfold live on television. **Audiences** have a complex relationship with the products they consume.

Media products are consumed by different audiences in different ways – an audience member can be passive or active.

**Passive audience**

A passive audience suggests that media has an effect on them.



- Accepts media messages
- Easily influenced
- 'Watch' media
- Controlled by media
- Does not make own use of the messages or interpret in own way

**Active audience**

An active audience suggests that audiences interact with media



- Involved in their own interpretations and form own opinions
- Create their own meanings
- Question or respond to media
- In control of their own mind and not influenced by media

## Audience theories

The **Hypodermic Needle Theory** suggests that media inject messages into the brains of audiences and they are controlled by these messages. If you watch something violent, you will act violent. Audiences are **passive**



**Uses & Gratifications theory** suggests audiences actively seek out media products to satisfy their needs and pleasures. For example, audiences want to be entertained so will find funny clips on YouTube to watch. will visit a website to find out. Audiences are **active**.

According to Blumler and Katz, these are the reasons why people consume media texts.



- **Personal Identity** – lets us learn about ourselves and how we are similar to others
- **Information** – gives us information about what is going on around us and what we are interested in.
- **Escapism: Entertainment/Diversion** – provides the opportunity for enjoyment, relaxation and distraction.
- **Social Interaction** – People use media to interact socially with people e.g. snapchat/social media. AND/OR people might use media products in order to be included in social interactions.

**Target audience:** a particular group at which a media product is aimed. Every media product needs an audience to target.



**Demographics** is: dividing consumers into groups based on age, gender, income etc. This can help media producers determine their **target audience** for particular products and develop ads geared toward a specific **demographic**. Media producers typically combine several to define a **demographic** profile.

**Active audiences** are also able to interpret and form their own opinion on media messages, question messages and are not influenced. Reception theory looks at the how messages are received by audiences. If they negotiate or oppose, they are **active**.

## Audience Reception Theory: Stuart Hall

According to Stuart Hall, audiences receive messages in one of three ways:

AGREE	AGREE AND DISAGREE	DISAGREE
<p><b>DOMINANT or PREFERRED READING</b> Audiences will agree with the message. This means that they have received the message intended by the media producer.</p> <p><b>THIS IS WHAT THE MEDIA PRODUCER WANTS</b></p>	<p><b>NEGOTIATED READING</b> Audiences will accept parts if the producer's views but has their own opinions and views on it as well. This means they have received the dominant reading but do not 100% agree.</p>	<p><b>OPPOSITIONAL READING</b> Audiences will reject the message (opposed reading) based on their own views, experiences and culture. This means the producer's message was not received in its intended.</p>

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# Industry: are the companies making media product and getting it to the audience.

The **media industry** can be defined as a varied collection of **organisations** that share the production, publication and distribution of **media products**. In this context, "media" refers to publishing outlets for TV, film, books, video games, newspapers, magazines, radio and other modern forms of information delivery. Examples of **media organisations** include: BBC, NewsCorp, Disney, Time Warner, Sony and Comcast.

**THESE ARE COMMERCIAL COMPANIES**

Today, consumers have access to more media and entertainment choices than ever!  
But in reality, a huge portion of these choices belong to one of **SIX media conglomerates**.

All of these company's **primary aim is to make money!** \$\$\$

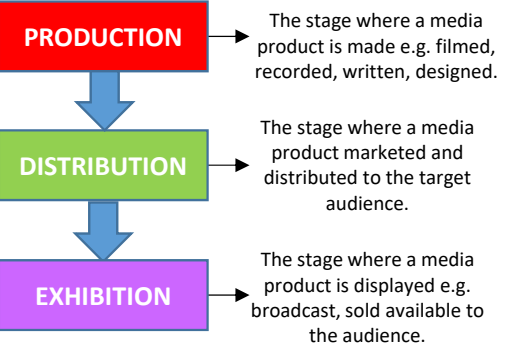
**PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY**

In the UK, the term "**public service broadcasting**" refers to **broadcasting** intended for **public benefit** rather making money. All of the BBC's television and radio stations have a **public service** remit, including those that **broadcast** digitally.

Every household in the UK must pay a **licence fee**. In return, the BBC provide viewers with a service of programmes with wide appeal that are guaranteed to conform to its **public service** remit to

**'inform, educate, and entertain.'**

## MEDIA PRODUCTION PROCESS



There are businesses that solely exist to make media product e.g. film production companies. There are also companies that exist to market and distribute media and exhibit media.  
Media conglomerates often own companies that fit in to all three areas. This is explained in more depth under 'Media Ownership'

## Power and Media Industry Theory By Curran & Seaton

- Curran and Seaton says that:
- media is **controlled** by a small number of companies primarily driven by the logic of profit and power.
  - media concentration generally **limits** or inhibits **variety, creativity** and **quality**.
  - more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions

## TYPES OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP

### HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

Horizontal Integration is where an organisation develops by buying up competitors in the same section of the market e.g. one music publisher buys out other smaller music publishers and they end up owning more than one company at the 'production' stage.

### VERTICAL INTEGRATION

This is where an institution has shares or owns each part of the production and distribution process. For example: Warner Bros Entertainment calls itself a fully integrated broad based entertainment company which owns film studios and the means to distribute the films as well as some of the cinemas in which they are shown. A company can become vertically integrated if they purchase another company that is within the production process, e.g. if a film production company purchases a distribution company. Warner Bros in itself is part of an even bigger conglomerate called Time Warner which is a huge media conglomerate institution which uses horizontal integration to consolidate its power and profits – so Warner Bros Entertainment is vertically integrated but owned by one of the big six media conglomerates, which is horizontally integrated.

**B B C** The BBC would be both Vertically and Horizontally integrated... but remember their aim is to serve the British public, not make profit

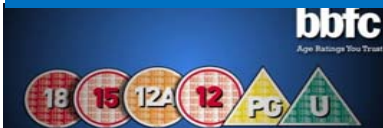
## REGULATION

Regulation refers to the **control** or **guidance**, by established rules, applied by governments and other political and administrative authorities to all kinds of **media** activities. For example, media is controlled and censored to protect minors from harmful content such as swearing, violence and sexual content.

### P.E.G.I. - Video games



### B.B.F.C. - Films



### OFCOM – TV & Radio



### I.P.S.O. – Newspapers

