**Writing an answer for...**

**Media Language**

**You need to analyse media language in your exam, so content you could include is...**

You need to understand that an media language question is asking you to show understanding of the following things. It does depend on the question which of the topic areas you will include in your answer (you may use more than one of the following topics):

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| **Codes & Conventions**  Codes includes the typical use of media language (camera, editing, sound or mise-en-scene) within a media product. Conventions includes the typical things you expect to see, hear or experience with a media product.  While these sound very similar, conventions often have specific names to identify them (such as headlines on the front of a newspaper and a music video having footage that has been edited to the beat). It will be important to identify how the media text that you are analysing either uses codes and conventions as you expect (**CONFORM** to expectations) or how they are possibly challenging our expectations of how they should be used for the media text (**SUBVERT** our expectations). | **Communicating Meaning**  Once you have identified the use of codes and conventions in the media text that you are analysing, you should then look to see how they have created meaning for the audience to decode. This will include your understanding of how the media producers have **ENCODED** a message or value through their selection and construction of media language. Remember, this can include codes and conventions that have been left out, as absence of these can create meaning as well as how they are used.  Then, you should identify how an audience may **DECODE** and interpret the media language to understand how these messages have been communicated to the audience.  This entire process of the producers encoding a message and analysing how the audience may decode it is called **MEDIATION**. |
| **Genre, Narrative & Intertextuality**  Many things can have an impact on the use of media language, but the top three things that can have an impact are:   * **GENRE** - the genre (category) of a media text will bring with it certain expectations from an audience - these are known as genre conventions. Much like codes and conventions, genre conventions can be conformed to (following expectations) or subverted (expectations being challenged). * **NARRATIVE** - the structure of the narrative (using plot points) in a media text can shape the way that media language has been used to communicate this narrative. This may be the way in which the narrative is being hidden from the audience (**ENIGMA**) or how the narrative may be told in order (**LINEAR**) or out of sequence (**NON-LINEAR**). * **INTERTEXTUALITY** - this is the way in which a media text may refer to another media text. They can do this through **PASTICHE** (paying respect to another text) or **PARODY** (poking fun at another text). | **Viewpoints & Ideologies**  Finally, it’s important that you understand the contextual information behind the set texts that we are studying, as this will further help your understanding of why the media language has been constructed and selected in a certain way. The ideologies of a media product refers to the **BIAS** of the media producers who have constructed the media text to include their own viewpoints. For example, knowing that The Mirror is a left wing newspaper will help you understand the way that they have used media language to communicate their viewpoint on the election of Donald Trump.  For any unseen texts that you have in the exam, pay close attention to how similar or different they are to the texts that we have studied to see how you still may be able to use contextual understanding. For example, you may analyse a poster for another vampire film poster as an unseen example in the exam so therefore you can use some contextual understanding from when you studied Kiss of the Vampire. |

You will also need to identify which theories you can use within your answer from the following audience theories:

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| **ROLAND BARTHES** | * texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification * signs can function at the level of denotation, which involves the ‘literal’ or common-sense meaning of the sign, and at the level of connotation, which involves the meanings associated with or suggested by the sign * constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving the status of myth through a process of naturalisation. |
| **TZVETAN TODOROV** | * all narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another * these two states of equilibrium are separated by a period of imbalance or disequilibrium * the way in which narratives are resolved can have particular ideological significance. |
| **STEVE NEALE** | * genres may be dominated by repetition, but are also marked by difference, variation, and change * genres change, develop, and vary, as they borrow from and overlap with one another * genres exist within specific economic, institutional and industrial contexts. |
| **CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS** | * texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying structure * meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions * the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance. |
| **JEAN BAUDRILLARD** | * in postmodern culture the boundaries between the ‘real’ world and the world of the media have collapsed and that it is no longer possible to distinguish between reality and simulation * in a postmodern age of simulacra we are immersed in a world of images which no longer refer to anything ‘real’ * media images have come to seem more ‘real’ than the reality they supposedly represent (hyperreality). |

**Writing an answer for...**

**Representations**

**You need to analyse representations in your exam (a question that you may need to compare to an unseen text), so content you could include is...**

You need to understand that a representations question is asking you to show understanding of the following things. It does depend on the question which of the topic areas you will include in your answer (you may use more than one of the following topics):

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| **Events, Issues, Social Groups and Individuals**  The first thing you will need to do is identify what or who the question is asking you to analyse. For events and issues, this could be a topic or ideology that is being represented to the audience (such as the issue of racism and race based violence in the Formation music video by Beyonce). For social groups or individuals, this will be how a group of people or someone on their own is being represented (such as the representation of Donald Trump as an individual in The Times or the Daily Mirror or the representation of the Republican party - right wing - in the same newspapers). You will need to understand the producer’s point of view on the events, issue, social group or individual as this will determine how they are represented in the set text. | **Re-Presentation & Construction of Representations**  Re-Presentation is the way in which realism and reality is presented to the audience. All events, issues, social groups or individuals are re-presented (shown) to audiences from a certain perspective, which means that the representation may be biased. To identify how the media text may or may not be presenting realism to an audience, consider the media language (camera, editing, sound or mise-en-scene) that has been selected for the representation and how it has been constructed (or used) and combined to create the representation in the media text. This will lead to a set of ideologies (values, attitudes and beliefs) being created by the media text (such as the sexual empowerment of women in the Kiss of the Vampire poster, rather than always being represented as victims). |
| **Stereotypes, Countertypes & Archetypes**  You should know what stereotypes are, but you need to show understanding of how they may be used to construct negative representations of events, issues, social groups or individuals. An archetype is an exaggerated stereotype that may be represented for humorous purposes. This will often lead to the following:   * Mis-Representation - this is when an event, issue, social group or individual are being represented incorrectly in the media text (usually through stereotypes). * Under-Representation - this is when an event, issue, social group or individual will be excluded from the representation completely.   However, if an event, issue, social group or individual is being represented in a more positive and progressive way, they may be represented through countertypes (such as the representation of Claudia in the Water Aid advert as an independent and thriving young girl in an African country). | **Impact of Contexts**  A media texts contexts (background) will have a massive impact on how the representations are being constructed and how an audience may respond to the representation.   * Historical contexts - how the time period that the media text was constructed impacts society’s view on the representational issue (such as views on gender being much more traditional in the 1950s when Tide was produced) * Social and Cultural contexts - how audience’s own backgrounds may impact how they interpret a representation and the society that the media text was produced (such as the representation of ethnicity being more progressive in the Formation music video, due to movements like Black Lives Matter) * Economic contexts - the producers who have produced, marketed and distributed the media text and their influence on representations * Political contexts - the impact of the producer’s own political viewpoints being embedded within the representations (such as the left wing - liberal - viewpoints of the Daily Mirror leading to a negative representation of Donald Trump). |

**You will also need to identify which theories you can use within your answer from the following audience theories:**

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| **STUART HALL** | * representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs * the relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes * stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people to a few simple characteristics or traits * stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or ‘other’ (e.g. through ethnocentrism). |
| **DAVID GAUNTLETT** | * the media provide us with ‘tools’ or resources that we use to construct our identities * whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas. |
| **LIESBET VAN ZOONEN** | * gender is constructed through discourse, and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context * the display of women’s bodies as objects to be looked at is a core element of western patriarchal culture * in mainstream culture the visual and narrative codes that are used to construct the male body as spectacle differ from those used to objectify the female body. |
| **bell hooks** | * feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination * feminism is a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice * race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited, discriminated against or oppressed. |
| **JUDITH BUTLER** | * identity is performatively constructed by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results (it is manufactured through a set of acts) * there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender * performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual. |
| **PAUL GILROY** | * colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity in the postcolonial era * civilisationism constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness. |

**Writing an answer for...**

**Media Industry**

**So, you are about to write an answer for a media industry question and you need to know what to write...**

You need to understand that a media industry question is asking you to show understanding of the following things. It does depend on the question which of the topic areas you will include in your answer (you may use more than one of the following topics):

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| **Production, Marketing & Distribution**  This is the process of the media product being made, making the audience aware of its release and making the product available to the audience. It will differ per product and it is important to identify how the company, conglomerate or individuals have had an impact on these stages. For example, with Straight Outta Compton, the producers Ice Cube and Dr. Dre have clearly had an impact on production and the marketing of the film. | **Patterns of Ownership**  This is the impact of conglomerate and independent corporations, vertical and horizontal integration & national and international companies. The impact of these will determine the availability, the style and the appeal of the media product to the target audience. It’s important to show understanding of how the industry may impact the audience’s engagement with a media product. For example, The Times is produced by a large worldwide conglomerate, but the product is produced for a national audience, containing political stories for a UK audience. | **Economic Factors**  This is how media products relate to their economic contexts in terms of production, distribution and circulation in a global context, the significance of patterns of ownership and control & the significance of economic factors, including funding. There is some overlap here of content from patterns of ownership, but it should always relate back to funding (charity public funding and commercial funding) & commercial success (the money made from the media product). For example, Late Night Woman’s Hour on Radio 4 is publicly funded through the Licence Fee, so making mainstream content to make a profit is not a priority. |

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| **Digital Convergence**  This is how technologies are constantly improving their abilities and allowing new experiences for audiences with the same media texts. For example, mobile phone capabilities have allowed them to be used as a multimedia platform. Digital convergence has essentially had a large impact on media texts due to the impact of the internet. The internet has essentially allowed companies to reach a much larger audience through their marketing and distribution, even smaller independent corporations. For example, video games like Assassin’s Creed have been able to set up online communities, such as forums and online avatars for audiences to play against each other or to discuss their interest in the media product and share their prosumer content. | **Regulation**  This is how the media products are regulated and checked by an independent body to ensure that they are not causing offence to their audience. It’s important to identify the specific regulatory body for the media text (e.g. IPSO for newspapers) and the influence they can have on the media products. Most importantly, you will need to identify the impacts on regulation from digital media platforms (media convergence) and how this may make traditional forms of regulation obsolete. This normally leads to self-regulation and how regulation may have an impact worldwide. For example, films like I, Daniel Blake being rated a 15 and then being digitally distributed online where any audience can view it. |

**You will also need to identify which theories you can use within your answer from the following media industry theories:**

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| **DAVID HESMONDHALGH** | * cultural industry companies try to minimise risk and maximise audiences through vertical and horizontal integration, and by formatting their cultural products (e.g. through the use of stars, genres, and serials) * the largest companies or conglomerates now operate across a number of different cultural industries * the radical potential of the internet has been contained to some extent by its partial incorporation into a large, profit-orientated set of cultural industries |
| **JAMES CURRAN & JEAN SEATON** | * the 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 |
| **SONIA LIVINGSTONE & PETER LUNT** | * there is an underlying struggle in recent UK regulation policy between the need to further the interests of citizens (by offering protection from harmful or offensive material), and the need to further the interests of consumers (by ensuring choice, value for money, and market competition) * the increasing power of global media corporations, together with the rise of convergent media technologies and transformations in the production, distribution and marketing of digital media, have placed traditional approaches to media regulation at risk |

**Writing an answer for...**

**Audiences**

**You are faced with a question in your exam for audiences and you need to identify what content you could include in your answer...**

You need to understand that an audience question is asking you to show understanding of the following things. It does depend on the question which of the topic areas you will include in your answer (you may use more than one of the following topics):

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| **Categorising Audiences**  This includes how audiences can be identified through their demographics (age, gender, ethnicity and social class) or their psychographics (lifestyles, hobbies, beliefs etc.). This will include the audiences needs and uses that they may seek from media texts and how this affects how they interpret the media texts. This will also include how a national or international audience can be categorised by a media text and it’s producers. For example, for the newspaper topic The Daily Mirror clearly targets a more working class, left wing (liberal) younger target audience, which can be identified through the lower reading age with its vocabulary, the use of political stories (sympathising with liberal politics) and the celebrity content. | **Targeting Audiences (Interpreting Media Texts)**  Once you have identified who the target audience is, you will need to identify how the media text has specifically targeted this audience through its content and appeal through its marketing, distribution or circulation. This may include how the producers target, attract, reach, address and maybe even potentially construct their own audience. This will also include how audiences may interpret the media text in similar or different ways (preferred and oppositional readings) and the role of specific niche and fan audiences for media products. For example, Straight Outta Compton for the film topic targets a specific niche audience by hiring two original NWA members Ice Cube and Dr. Dre, as it will appeal to fans of the original NWA band. |
| **Digital Convergence (Impact of Technologies)**  Like media industry, this is how technologies have had an impact on the media product, but for audiences its more specifically about how technologies have impacted marketing, distribution and circulation when targeting audiences. This will include how audiences can interact and engage with media texts (active audiences), how the media text may be digitally distributed to audiences through different media platforms and how media platforms may impact marketing (viral marketing) when creating audience appeal and interest. For example, Assassin’s Creed III: Liberation for the video game topic has used the internet to create online communities and downloadable content (DLC) to improve audience’s experiences with the game and even create fan bases. | **Active Audiences (Interacting With Media Texts)**  This is the concept of audiences no longer being passive interpreters of media texts and now becoming much more active engagers and producers of media texts. The term ‘prosumer’ has been coined from active audiences - a mixture of the words producer and consumer, it assumes that audiences produce and consume media texts due to the rise of the internet. This will also largely be affected by different social and cultural contexts, as audiences interpret media texts differently due to their own different experiences. It will mean that audiences create their own identity and ‘cultural capital’ based on their interpretation, engagement and production of media texts. For example, with Late Night Woman’s Hour for the radio topic, audiences can interact with the producers of the radio show through the website or other digital forms of communication to engage with the producer’s discussion or create their own online communities based on what they’ve interpreted from the radio show. |

You will also need to identify which theories you can use within your answer from the following audience theories:

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| **ALBERT BANDURA** | * the media can implant ideas in the mind of the audience directly * audiences acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through modelling * media representations of transgressive behaviour, such as violence or physical aggression, can lead audience members to imitate those forms of behaviour. |
| **GEORGE GERBNER** | * exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them (i.e. cultivating particular views and opinions) * cultivation reinforces mainstream values (dominant ideologies). |
| **STUART HALL**  **(RECEPTION THEORY)** | Communication is a process involving encoding by producers and decoding by audiences There are three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be decoded:   * the dominant-hegemonic position: the encoder’s intended meaning (the preferred reading) is fully understood and accepted * the negotiated position: the legitimacy of the encoder’s message is acknowledged in general terms, although the message is adapted or negotiated to better fit the decoder’s own individual experiences or context * the oppositional position: the encoder’s message is understood, but the decoder disagrees with it, reading it in a contrary or oppositional way. |
| **HENRY JENKINS** | * fans are active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings * fans appropriate texts and read them in ways that are not fully authorised by the media producers (‘textual poaching’) * fans construct their social and cultural identities through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, and are part of a participatory culture that has a vital social dimension. |
| **CLAY SHIRKY** | * the Internet and digital technologies have had a profound effect on the relations between media and individuals * the conceptualisation of audience members as passive consumers of mass media content is no longer tenable in the age of the Internet, as media consumers have now become producers who ‘speak back to’ the media in various ways, as well as creating and sharing content with one another |