

A Level Media - Language

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

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

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

Codes and conventions: the elements of media language that usually occur in particular forms (e.g. magazines or adverts) or genres (e.g. sitcom).

Narrative: how stories are structured and communicated.

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

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

KEY CONTENT:

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

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

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

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

Language codes: written or spoken words.

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

KEY CONTENT:

How choice (selection, combination and exclusion) of elements of media language influences meaning in media products, for example:

- How the selection and combination of camera shots **creates narrative** in the *set television episodes* or *music videos*.
- How the written text anchors meanings in the images on the *set newspaper front pages* to **portray aspects of reality**
- What has been excluded from the *set print advertisements*— and how the **point of view** might be different if alternative elements had been included.
- How the combination of design elements, images and cover lines **conveys messages and values** on the *set magazine front covers*.

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

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

Give examples to support this point.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY MEDIA LANGUAGE?

PAPER 1 SECTION A

Newspapers; Music Video;

PAPER 2 SECTION A

Television in the Global Age

PAPER 2 SECTION B

Magazines

PAPER 2 SECTION C

Media in the Online Age

KEY CONTENT:

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

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

How they may vary over time, for example:

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

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

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

KEY CONTENT:

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

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

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

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

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

GENRE, including:

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

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

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

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

NARRATIVE theories:

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

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

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

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

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

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

APPLYING MEDIA LANGUAGE: PRACTICAL TASKS

Art skills not important!

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