

## KEY TERMINOLOGY:

**Representation:** the way in which people, issues and events are depicted in media products.

**Mediation:** how media producers represent (rather than just present) the world to audiences.

**Reality:** 'real life', actual events, facts and truth - how aspects of reality and versions of reality are constructed.

**Stereotype:** an exaggerated, oversimplified representation, reducing a social group to a set of common characteristics e.g. grumpy older people or flat cap wearing northerners.

**Feminist:** supporting equal rights for women (society was traditionally male-dominated but there has been a move towards more equality, especially from the 1960s onwards).

## KEY CONTENT:

**The choices media producers make about how to represent:**

**Events:** e.g. *how the set newspaper front pages combine images and text to convey information about the issues and events in the main splash (story).*

**Social groups:** categorised by age, gender and ethnicity.

**Ideas:** e.g. *how the set magazine front covers communicate ideas about gender/ identity in the use of media language.*

**The ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers:**

e.g. newspapers are informative and need to include factual detail, a sitcom might exaggerate/ subvert reality to entertain.

**Apply it...** select one set product and analyse how the representations of social groups (e.g. different ethnic groups, genders and/ or age groups) have been constructed.

## KEY CONTENT:

**How and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented:**

Media products often feature representations of powerful social groups (who have traditionally controlled the media). Certain groups (e.g. minority ethnic or LGBTQ people) may be absent, or under/misrepresented (e.g. stereotyped).

**How representations convey: viewpoints, messages:**

The choices about how to represent a social group will communicate a point of view, e.g. *the set Pride cover conveys positive messages about black female empowerment.*

Representations also convey **values & beliefs**, e.g. *about diversity and human rights in the set video for Freedom.*

**Apply it...** identify the key messages in one of the set products. Try to find examples from other media texts that reinforce the same point of view.

## WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY REPRESENTATION?

### PAPER 1 SECTION A

Newspapers; Advertising & Marketing; 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:

**The different functions and uses of stereotypes, e.g:**

- to communicate meanings that audiences will easily recognise, e.g. products such as adverts need to convey a quick, clear message.
- to create humour, e.g. in the set episode of *The IT Crowd*.

**Stereotypes become established** when a social group (often a minority group) has been categorised repeatedly in the media and becomes recognised by a particular set of attributes.

**How they may vary over time:** stereotypes alter and develop over time, mainly due to changes in culture and society.

**Apply it...** identify examples of stereotypes in the set products and think about how and why they are used. Now, try to find examples of representations that challenge stereotypes and consider why the producers might have made this decision.

## KEY CONTENT:

**How representations reflect the contexts in which they were produced, e.g:**

**Social:** reflecting society at the time/place of production e.g. in terms of issues such as gender or racial equality, or economic prosperity.

**Historical:** the time/ period in which a product is created, e.g. the 1950s (*Quality Street*), the 1970s (*The Man With the Golden Gun*).

**Cultural** influences on a product, e.g. current trends or direct references (such as representations of *Countdown* in *The IT Crowd*).

**Apply it...** analyse how the representations in the set products reflect the time and place in which they were made.

e.g. *the representation of the active female on the This Girl Can poster differs from the passive females in the historical Quality Street advert, as women now have more power and equality in society.*

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

**Representation, including processes of:**

**Selection:** producers choose to include certain elements in a representation (and exclude others); this communicates meanings/ messages.

**Construction:** representations are 'built' by producers, using elements of media language.

**Mediation:** media producers construct their own 'version' of the world that is represented to audiences. We do not see the 'actual' world, but a producer's view of it.

**Apply it...** consider how these ideas apply to the set products; e.g. how representations are constructed to show a particular point of view.

**Gender and representation, including feminist approaches:**

Media industries have traditionally been male-dominated, with fewer opportunities for women.

Women have often been under-represented in the media; they also tend to be 'passive' in the narrative, and portrayed as 'objects' (Mulvey's Male Gaze theory could also be studied here).

**Apply it...** find examples of passive/ objectified females in the set products, and of women who are active/ empowered. Consider why these representations have been constructed.

Other perspectives on gender, such as hypermasculinity, may also be studied.

**CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:**

How these are reflected in terms of representations, themes, values, messages and viewpoints.

## APPLYING REPRESENTATIONS: PRACTICAL TASK

**Art skills not important!**

1. Create profiles (written or drawn) for three characters from a new **TV programme** in a genre of your choice.
2. Create a **film poster** depicting 3 characters (hero, side kick and villain) for a new film in a genre of your choice. You could sketch or photograph your characters.

**For each task:** Consider how to construct representations using media language (e.g. dress codes, gesture codes and props) and what messages about age, gender and ethnicity to convey.