Media Studies Year 11

Therapy and Testing

Key Focus: Audience
Area of Understanding

To reach the top grades, students need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the different ways audiences interpret and respond to media texts.

Q. What does this mean?
Key Terminology

Can you write a definition of each of these media terms?

• Preferred reading
• Negotiated reading
• Oppositional reading
• Aberrant reading
• Participatory culture
• Fandom
• Cultural values
• Active audience
• Passive audience

To test your understanding can you put each of these into a sentence when discussing any of your set texts for the exam?
Audience Theories

There are many different audience theories that exist within Media Studies. You are not expected to know all of them, however there are several key theories that you should know and understand. You should also be able to apply these theories to your set texts:

*The Frankfurt School’s Effects Model*

*Blumler and Katz’s Uses and Gratifications Theory*

*Stuart Hall’s Reception Theory*
The Effects Debate

The effects debate is one of the longest running debates within the field of Media Studies. This theory explores the notion that the media has a direct (and often negative) effect on its audience.

It explores the notion that media texts have the power to shape the audience’s views and beliefs and make them behave in a certain way.

Q. What do you think the problems are with this theory?
Q. Why do you think people have argued against this theory?
Q. What are your thoughts on this theory?
Q. Does this theory apply to some forms of media more than others?
Uses and Gratifications Theory

This theory was produced by two academics, Blumler and Katz in the 1970s, in response to the Effects. They saw audiences as having more of an active role in their consumption of media texts. They identified keys uses that audiences had for different forms of media products. This theory sees the audience as having more control and choice.

Q. What are the different uses and gratifications that Blumler and Katz identified?

Q. How does this link with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory?

Q. Do you agree with this theory?

Q. How can you apply this theory to your set texts for your final exams?
Reception Theory

Stuart Hall’s reception theory takes the idea of the audience being active and making choices a step further, by suggesting the audience play a key role in understanding the meaning within a media text. He suggested there are several different ways a text could be read by the audience.

Q. Referring to the reception theory what are the different ways a text can be read?
Q. How do social and cultural factors play a role within this theory?
Q. Why might an audience member read a text differently to how the producer intended it to be read?

You need to be aware of the various readings an audience could have for the set texts that you will be discussing in the media exam.
Reviewing Your Learning

I understand what the definition of 'active audience' is and can discuss this.
I understand what the definition of 'passive audience' is and can discuss this.
I understand Reception theories and the different ways audiences can interpret the same media product including:

- Preferred readings
- Neogiated readings
- Oppositional readings
- Aberrant readings.
Social Factors

Hall argued that social, cultural and political factors play a key role in determining how an audience responds to a media text. Writing as a black male who had moved to England, he saw the power of repeated representations within the media and how these were used to keep certain groups in power (namely white, educated, affluent males).

Task: Using your set texts, explore how they reinforce or challenge ideologies within our society. You should examine how they represent different groups, and whether their representations challenge or reinforce hegemonic values.

Analyse how meaning has been encoded into the texts you examine, then explore how different audiences could read these in different ways.

What factors do you need to be aware of when you explore how an audience might respond to a media text?
Changing Attitudes...

The messages and values within media texts often reflect those present within society at the time they are produced, they can also be seen to shape ideologies too. As such, media texts can be used as social historical documents, used by researchers to explore attitudes towards a range of issues within a society.

Q. Which groups are the dominant groups in contemporary society?
Q. Has this changed since Hall was writing in the 70s?

Task: Choose a particular social group and find two media products that were produced in different eras that demonstrate contrasting views. Ideally you should incorporate your set texts, however you should also explore a wider range of texts to give you a clearer idea of how media products can reflect the views of society and influence cultural values.
### Reviewing Your Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I understand audiences can respond to texts in a variety of different ways.</th>
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<tr>
<td>I understand audiences can interpret a text in many different ways.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand the influence on social factors on an audience's readings of media texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand how audience's responses to media texts may change over time, including readings of gender and ethnicities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I understand how changing cultural values within society have the potential to influence how audiences perceive historical products.</td>
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