

How do media producers CATEGORISE audiences?

Producers can categorise/classify a target audience/**demographic** by their **AGE, GENDER, INCOME/CLASS, VIEWING HABITS** as well as their **INTERESTS** or the **SIZE** of the audience.

How do media producers TARGET specific audiences?

They can use **CHARACTERS** and **CELEBRITIES** the audience like/look up to/relate to/find attractive;
GENRE CODES (to appeal to **fans** of that genre);

INTERTEXTUALITY (refer to other media texts the audience likes);

a **COLOUR SCHEME** (e.g. bright pink for young girls/green for environmentalists etc.).

Also consider: **general content; word choice; platform/distribution method** (e.g. Radio 4/newspapers for older audiences); **TV scheduling** (e.g. the 9pm **watershed** for adults).

Why do audiences consume different media? (USES & GRATIFICATIONS)

According to **BLUMLER & KATZ'S USES AND GRATIFICATIONS** theory, the audience may consume a text for:

INFORMATION & SURVEILLANCE (to learn/find out about...);

PERSONAL IDENTITY (to relate to.../aspire to be more like...);

SOCIAL INTERACTION (to help connect with others);

ENTERTAINMENT & ESCAPISM (to provide distraction/emotional release/cultural enjoyment).

How do producers/media texts POSITION audiences?

What is the text **positioning** audiences to:

THINK (e.g. "that James Bond is strong" or "exercise is good for you") or

FEEL (e.g. "excited/sad/scared")?

How (and why) may audiences read (or RESPOND to) the same text differently?

According to **STUART HALL'S RECEPTION THEORY**, media texts are **polysemic** (have many possible meanings)

A **PREFERRED READING** is where audiences read the text in the way it was intended

A **NEGOTIATED READING** is where audiences modify the text's intended message

An **OPPOSITIONAL READING** is where audiences completely disagree & reject the text's message

How have changes in TECHNOLOGY affected audiences?

Technology has helped:

INCREASE audience interactivity & collaboration (prosumers) & variety/choice (what/where/when)

DECREASE sales (e.g. of print news), privacy as well as split/segmented audiences

ABC1	According to NRS social grades, ABC1 are the audiences with the highest incomes.
Active audience	The idea that audiences are more likely to engage with ideas they see in the media, even disagreeing with them.
Audience interactivity	The idea that audiences are increasingly interactive (e.g. sharing content on social media, writing reviews/blog posts etc.)
C2DE	According to NRS social grades, C2DE are the audiences with the lowest incomes.
Demographic	A particular section of the population (e.g. men/women/teenagers etc.).
Mass/Mainstream audience	Large, typical audiences (e.g. fans of action films).
Niche/Alternative audience	Small, specialised audiences (e.g. fans of anime in the UK).
Passive audience	The outdated theory that audiences are easily influenced by media.
Prosumer	"Producers" and "consumers", suggesting audiences are often <i>creators</i> of media (e.g. YouTube videos or Insta posts).
Reception theory	The theory (by Stuart Hall) that suggests that media encode messages in media texts but that audiences actively decode these messages in different ways—either taking a preferred, negotiated or oppositional reading (see left).
Target audience	The group(s) who a product/media text is aimed at and created for.
Uses and Gratifications	Theory (by Blumler & Katz), suggesting active audiences seek out and use different media texts in order to satisfy a need and experience different pleasures.

Media Audiences Glossary

FROM EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERMS MARKED WITH ASTERIX (*) ONLY REQUIRED AT A-LEVEL

Active audience	Audiences who actively engage in selecting media products to consume and interpret their meanings.	Mainstream	These are media products that are the most popular at the time and tend to be the most conventional.
Appeal	The way in which products attract and interest an audience	Mass audience	Traditional idea of audience as a large, homogenous group.
Aspirational	Encourages the audience to want more money, up market consumer items and a higher social position.	Niche audience	A relatively small audience with specialised interests, tastes, and backgrounds.
Attract	How media producers appeal to audiences to encourage them to consume the product.	Opinion leaders	People in society who may affect the way in which others interpret a particular media text – e.g. influencers.
Audience categorisation	How media producers group audiences (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity) to target their products.	Passive audience	The idea (now widely regarded as outdated) that audiences do not actively engage with media products, but consume and accept the messages that producers communicate.
Audience consumption	The way in which audiences engage with media products (e.g. viewing a TV programme, playing a video game).	Persona	The image or personality that someone, for example a celebrity, presents to the audience.
Audience interpretation	The way in which audiences 'read' the meanings in, and make sense of, media products.	Personal identity	This means your ability to relate to something that happens in a text because it has happened to you.
Audience response	How audiences react to media products e.g. by accepting the intended meanings (preferred reading).	*Pick and mix theory*	Theory by David Gauntlett, arguing that audiences select aspects of the media texts that best suit their needs and ignore the rest (a form of selection bias). .
Audience segmentation	Where a target audience is divided up due to the diversity and range of programmes and channels, making it difficult for one programme to attract a large target audience.	Privileged spectator position	Where the camera places the audience in a superior position within the narrative, who can then anticipate what will follow.
Cultural capital	The media tastes and preferences of an audience, traditionally linked to social class/background.	Specialised audience	A non-mass, or niche, audience that may be defined by a particular social group (for example young, aspirational females) or by a specific interest (for example skydiving).
Fan	An enthusiast or aficionado of a particular media form or product.	Strip programming	A technique used in radio and television whereby a certain programme is broadcast at the same time every day, helping people fit it into their daily routine, for example driving home from work.
Four Cs	This stands for Cross Cultural Consumer Characteristics, categorising consumers into groups: Mainstreamers, Aspirers, Explorers, Succeeders and Reformers.	Subject-specific lexis	The specific language and vocabulary used to engage the audience, used to make the reader feel part of the group who belong to the world of that magazine.
Global	Worldwide - e.g. a media product with global reach is a product that is distributed around the world.	Target audience	The people at whom the media text is aimed.
Hypodermic needle model	An out of date media effects theory which suggests media injects ideas into the mind of a passive audiences who will all respond in the same way.	*Textual poaching*	The way in which audiences or fans may take particular texts and interpret or reinvent them in different ways e.g. by creating fan fiction.
Intertextual	Where one media text makes reference to aspects of another media text.	Viral marketing	Where the awareness of the product or the advertising campaign is rapidly spread through social networks and the Internet like a biological virus.
Ludology	The study of (video) games and those who play them.		

AUDIENCES (A-Level Theory)

<p>Does the text feature characters or actions that are highly imitable?</p> <p>OR does it present violence in such a way that audiences may feel encouraged to imitate it?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Bandura (T40)</p>	<p>Bandura's research appeared to show that media texts can directly implant ideas in the mind of the audience. He argues that people copy what they see in the media through modelling. He also argued that media representations of transgressive behaviour (e.g. violence or physical aggression) can lead audiences to imitate those behaviours.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Bandura argues that media texts model behaviours for audiences, which are directly imitable. For instance, ..."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Bandura's research appears to show that audiences are likely to imitate transgressive/violent behaviours. For instance, the violence in ... could encourage audiences to..."</i></p>
<p>Does the text appear to be repeating a message, which is dominant in the media, and likely to influence audiences?</p> <p>OR does it feature violence, which could encourage audiences to think the world is more dangerous than it really is?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Gerbner (T41)</p>	<p>Gerbner argues that - by repeating messages over long periods of time - the media can shape and influence the way people perceive the world around them (i.e. cultivating particular views and opinions). He proposes that the views and opinions they cultivate often reinforce mainstream values or dominant ideologies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Gerbner argues that media texts influence audiences over time by repeating certain messages, cultivating particular views and opinions. For instance,..."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"by repeatedly focusing on violent acts, ... cultivates audiences into believing the world is more violent than it really is (what Gerbner refers to as "mean world syndrome")"</i></p>
<p>Could audiences actively interpret the text's message(s) or meaning in different ways?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Hall (T42)</p>	<p>Hall's theory advocates the view that media producers encode messages (meaning) in texts, which are then decoded by audiences - who interpret those messages in one of three ways.</p> <p>(1) the dominant/hegemonic/preferred reading (where the message is accepted),</p> <p>(2) the negotiated reading, where the message is adapted or negotiated to better fit the audience's own individual experiences or context and</p> <p>(3) the oppositional position: the encoder's message is understood, but the decoder disagrees with it, reading the text in a contrary or oppositional way.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"... encodes the message that ..., which Hall may argue is the text's preferred reading. However, according to Hall, audiences may actively interpret the text in other ways. For instance, audiences may have a negotiated reading ... or an oppositional reading ..."</i></p>
<p>Is there evidence that fans interpret, modify and share media in ways which were not fully intended by the producer?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Jenkins (T44)</p>	<p>Jenkins argues that fans are active participants in constructing and circulating the meaning of media texts. They appropriate texts, reading them in ways that are not fully intended (or authorised) by the media producers (what he terms as 'textual poaching').</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Jenkins argues that fans are active participants in constructing and circulating the meaning of media texts. They appropriate texts, reading them in ways that are not fully intended (or authorised) by the media producers (what he terms as 'textual poaching')..., for example, is a form of textual poaching, where ..."</i></p>
<p>Do fans use media to create their own identities or communities with others?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Jenkins (T44)</p>	<p>Jenkins also argues that fans create their own identities through borrowing and inflecting media/mass culture, and are part of a participatory culture that has a vital social dimension.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Jenkins also argues that fans create their own identities through borrowing and inflecting media, and are part of a participatory culture that has a vital social dimension. This is evident in..."</i></p>
<p>Is there evidence of audience interactivity (e.g. via comments or reviews) or audiences actively producing their own media?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Then use Shirky (T46)</p>	<p>Shirky argues that the internet and digital technologies have had a profound effect on the relations between media and individuals. According to Shirky, the traditional idea (or conceptualisation) that audiences are passive consumers has ended for two reasons:</p> <p>(1) They are now able to 'speak back to' the media in various ways (e.g. by sharing comments or reviews online);</p> <p>(2) They are now able to create and share their own media content online. Therefore, the separation between 'audiences' and 'producers of media' has – in some ways – dissolved. Audiences are producers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"By ..., audiences are able to actively engage with media texts in new ways. This supports Shirky's theory that the traditional conceptualisation of audiences has ended. Audiences are no longer passive, but are now able to "speak back" to the media."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"...This supports Shirky's theory that the traditional conceptualisation of audiences has ended. Audiences are no longer passive consumers of media, but are actively producing their own media texts."</i></p>