1. Audience

• Always question who are the audience and what’s in it for them?
Audience Classification

Mass Audience = products created for broad appeal
Niche Audience = a small audience targeted to consume a niche media product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Social class</th>
<th>Chief income earner's occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>upper middle class</td>
<td>Higher managerial, administrative or professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>middle class</td>
<td>Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>lower middle class</td>
<td>Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>skilled working class</td>
<td>Skilled manual workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>working class</td>
<td>Semi and unskilled manual workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Those at the lowest levels of subsistence</td>
<td>Casual or lowest grade workers, pensioners and others who depend on the welfare state for their income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Demographic social grade scale used in UK to judge audience type

Primary Audience = the main or intended audience
Secondary Audience = an additional & unintentional audience

BARB, RAJAR and NRS count audience figures

Other scales are based on audiences values, lifestyles, political beliefs & activities. This is known as Psychographics.
Uses & Gratifications

The belief that audiences passively receive messages is long gone. Katz and Blumler proposed from their research into audience behaviour that audiences use media texts for a variety of reasons.

1. **Information**
   - finding out about events, satisfying curiosity
   - gaining a sense of security through knowledge

2. **Personal Identity**
   - reinforcement for personal values, finding models of behaviour, insight into one's self

3. **Integration and Social Interaction**
   - insight into circumstances of others; social empathy, identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging, interaction, enabling one to connect with family, friends and society

4. **Entertainment**
   - escaping, diversion from problems, relaxing, getting enjoyment, filling time, emotional release
Two-Step theory

Opinion leaders like critics, reviewers, entertainment commentators, editors and social networking sites can help shape trends and suggest popularity. The public then become ‘opinion followers’. This means audiences receive media ‘secondhand’.

Two-step theory also relates to political, institutional theory about the elite as the media producers. Opinion leaders represent the views of the elite and reinforces the ‘status quo’.
Audiences *read* texts. Hall’s *Reception Theory* states that texts are encoded for a specific and *preferred reading*.

If the construction of meaning needs the audience, it is now believed that, at best audiences 'negotiate' reading as they modify, select and discard parts of the text based upon personal experiences etc.

**Oppositional or subversive** readings occasionally happen when the audience read a text is a way unintended and unexpected by the text producers. *Polysemic texts* are open to multiple readings.
Audience as Product

Through media texts, Audiences are delivered to producers as potential consumers for their products. The ‘price’ that the audience has to pay for viewing their favourite programme is exposure to continual, subtle and invasive advertising.

Find examples of audiences being subjected to advertising in subtle and invasive ways.
2. Narrative Theory

Media texts tell a story. From print posters, adverts, news articles, films, television documentary – all have a narrative. **Narrative theory** is concerned with how the story is constructed – from character types, plot organisation, plot development and genre.
Todorov stated that narrative is often structured with a pattern of equilibrium (everything is ok, stable, as it has been), Disequilibrium (a problem that threatens the equilibrium) and New Equilibrium (a new and slightly altered state resulting from the conflict).

Give an example of a Todorov narrative structure in a media text.
Give two examples of binary oppositions in media texts and how they are constructed.
Propp analysed typical character types from fairytales. He believed that most narratives a variation or combination of these character types.

Identify the character types from a soap opera using Propp’s characters.
Barthes described Five Codes which are woven into any narrative. The most important of these are:

The Hermeneutic Code:
This refers to any element of the story that is not fully explained and hence becomes a mystery to the reader. The purpose of the author in this is typically to keep the audience guessing, arresting the enigma, until the final scenes when all is revealed and all loose ends are tied off and closure is achieved.

The Proairetic Code:
This code also builds tension, referring to any other action or event that indicates something else is going to happen, and which hence gets the reader guessing as to what will happen next.

The Hermeneutic and Proairetic Codes work as a pair to develop the story's tensions and keep the reader interested.
3. Media Language

A Media Text = the sum of its many parts.

These parts include every element within it ......

Camera angles, sound, font choice, lighting, body language, colours etc. etc.

This is Media Language

Media Language also known as Codes, or Form can be split into ....

Technical

Symbolic

Written
Semiotics is the study of the language of signs. It deals with the meanings we attach to signs. Signs consist of a **Signifier** (the thing or sign itself) and the **Signified** (the meaning we attach to the sign).

Other important terms include....

- **Denotation** = the literal meaning of a thing or a sign
- **Connotation** = the second level of meaning agreed by the community but not an inherent quality in the thing itself.
Syntagm & Paradigm

Paradigm = the set of choices that could be made within the sub-group or genre.

Syntagm = the choice that has been made, the 'chain' which communicates meaning.
Where signs, codes & syntagm are repeated over time, they become **Conventions** - expected patterns in texts.

Like rain on a British summer holiday, Conventions equal the ‘typical’ form.
McLuhan tells us that a "message" is, "the change of scale or pace or pattern" that the brings. It is not the content of a text, but the change that it brings with it. For example, the message of theatrical production is not the musical or the play being produced, but perhaps the change in *Tourism* that the production may encourage. In the case of a *specific* theatrical production, its message may be a change in attitude or action on the part of the audience that results from the medium of the play itself. Similarly, the message of a news broadcast is not the news stories themselves, but a change in the public attitude towards crime, or the creation of a climate of fear.

A McLuhan message always tells us to look beyond the obvious and seek the non-obvious changes or effects that are enabled, enhanced, accelerated or extended by the new thing.

Mcluhan’s work was groundbreaking because it forces us to consider media texts in a radical new way.
Media texts have to appear to be real in order for the audience to accept them – even a fictional dramatic 19th Century period piece needs to suggest reality through high production values, by not having an actor taking a call on their mobile during the shoot.

Where reality issues are also important is in News, Documentary, Confessional talk shows and of course Reality TV.

All of these are constructs of reality, some with higher entertainment values than others.
Post-Modernity

Simply, postmodernism is the layering of old ideas with new ideas, from multiple sources to create something new again.

Postmodern texts may include elements of......

- Intertextuality
- Pastiche
- Parody
- Extending or re-writing fictional lives
- Multiple, unreliable and disjointed narratives
- Reinvention
4. Representation

**Representation** relates to how a ‘thing’ (person, place, object, concept) is presented to an audience. This is a ‘representation’ as the ‘thing’ has been through a process of modification, mediation and selection before being presented. Even words and photographs are ‘re-presentations’. The physical shape of a word has no meaning in itself – it is merely lines and curves. It has been given an agreed and accepted meaning. A photograph is not the ‘thing’ but an image or representation of the ‘thing’.

Understanding the central concept that **presentation has been constructed and meaning is negotiated or accepted and agreed**, means that we can examine representations more critically and analytically.
Key Questions

What is being represented?

How are they represented?

Who is creating the representation?

Who benefits from the representation?

Does the representation fit with dominant ideology?

What is left out of the representation?
Stereotypes are representations of people that are repeated over time and so become a symbol of the group itself. They are sometimes thought of as a simplification, a shorthand used to rapidly access and conceptualise a diverse ‘group’.

Perkins argues that Stereotypes are not ‘simple’. They contain complex understanding of and information about roles and status in society. Perkins also argued that they are not always negative and often contain truth.
**Dominant Ideology**

**Ideology** is a set of deep rooted beliefs that impact on a person’s actions, expectations and goals.

**Dominant ideology** are the widely held beliefs by many members of a society. In Marxist theory, this dominant ideology serves the interest of the ruling classes.
Dyer proposes that:

A star is an image, not a real person, that is constructed (as any other aspect of fiction is) out of a range of materials (eg advertising, magazines etc. as well as films).
Gender

Mulvey's Male Gaze theory states that media texts are created as if through the eyes of a heterosexual male - women are viewed for the pleasure of men.

Even well into the 21st C. Women are often represented in stereotypical ways - either flawed for not living up to the 'madonna' or 'mother' role or admired as an object or beauty or sex.

Some argue that, far from being equal, women's status has only appeared greater post-feminism, because of women's importance as consumers. They are vital in a capitalist society.

The Bechdel test has three criteria that a media product must fulfill in order to pass. 1) it must have at least two women in it 2) who talk to each other 3) about something other than a man.
Baudrillard argued that ‘reality’ in the modern world cannot exist.

The media saturation of society means that all ‘presentations’ of truth or fact are actually ‘re-presentations, mediated, filtered, selected.’

Truth becomes lost and obscured.

He believed we live in a state of ‘hyperreality’ that seems real but is in fact a version of reality.
5. Institution

Institution can relate to a company or organisation.

It can also relate to an industry or sector such as the Media, or Education.

Finally, you may need to consider wider institution such as the government and society.
To understand why a text has been constructed the way it has, you have to understand where it has come from, what limits and constrains it or gives it freedom.
Political Theory

Marxist theory states that a small ruling, elite group have control. This group dominate the poorer, less powerful mass - the workforce, the larger group.

Gramsci took classic Marxist ideas further. He theorised that the mass are in a way 'complicit' with the ruling power. The mass accept this power, with the belief that the ruling class know what is best for them. They agree to maintain or keep 'the status quo' on the condition that they have the opportunity to negotiate or fight against restrictions that they do not agree with. This is called Hegemony.

Many media organisations are controlled by a small group of people, who have access to significant money - they represent the Elite, the ruling group. The audience are the Mass. It could be argued that Media shapes and promotes the 'Status Quo'.

It has been suggested that one of the Media’s functions is to 'sedate' the mass audience. The high percentage of entertainment and ‘Reality’ TV keeps audiences minds on trivial matters rather than more important issues such as their rights and conditions.
Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow created his Hierarchy of needs which marks the stages of growth in an individual’s physical, social and psychological development.

How do media texts work on fulfilling these needs at each of the stages?
Moral Panic

A moral panic is the intensity of feeling expressed in population about an issue that appears to threaten the social order. According to Stanley Cohen, author of Folk Devils and Moral Panics (1972) and credited as creator of the term, a moral panic occurs when "[a] condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests." Those who start the panic when they fear a threat to prevailing social or cultural values are known by researchers as "moral entrepreneurs," while people who supposedly threaten the social order have been described as "folk devils."


How do Moral Panics help to maintain Institutional ‘status quo’?
Who creates them?
Who benefits from them?
Dyer came up with the following lines of appeal used in advertising to sell consumer goods.

- Happy families - everyone wants to belong
- Childhood – desire to go back to childhood or nurture
- Rich, luxurious lifestyles - aspirational
- Dreams and fantasy
- Successful romance and love
- Self-importance & pride
- Comedy & humour
- Elite people (celebrity) or experts
- Glamorous places
- Successful careers
- Art, culture & history
- Nature & the natural world
- Beautiful women