# A Level MEDIA STUDIES TERMS AND THEORIES

*Summer Homework: You must learn all of the terminology inside this booklet. You should also begin to read through the theories to give you a background understanding of concepts required for the course.*

VLS - Very Long Shot



LS - Long Shot



MLS - Medium Long Shot



MS - Medium Shot



MCU - Medium Close Up



CU - Close Up



BCU - Big Close



ECU - Extreme Close Up

# CAMERA TERMINOLOGY



**Birds Eye View shot –** a shot taken directly from above something, looking down on it (as though the camera was a bird flying over the scene).

**Canted Angle** – A shot which is tilted to one side. This is often used to create a feeling of disorientation, anxiety or chaos. Often called a Dutch Tilt.

**Close up (and variations)**: close ups, including extreme, big and medium close ups, are used to draw the viewer closer and to involve them in what is happening; they also used to observe reactions and emotions, such is happiness, elation or tension. These shots are often used to help the audience feel sympathy for that character or side with them. Alternatively, a series of close ups / extreme close-ups often make the audience feel quite claustrophobic and uncomfortable.

**Crane Shot (or Aerial)**: a type of shot in which a camera is positioned on a specially designed crane, which can be raised and lowered and will. A crane shot is a very high-angle shot but the versatility of the equipment allows a director to start a shot from a high-angle and then swoop down toward the subject at ground level.



**Deep Focus**: a camera technique that allows objects both near and far from the camera to be in focus at the same time.

**Establishing shot**: the shot (usually wide or long), often used at the start of a programme or film, a new section of a programme or at the start of a new scene to establish the relationship between the set/location and the characters and to show the whole view

**Hand-Held shot**: A shot filmed with the camera not on a tripod but instead held by the camera man, often whilst walking. This makes the shots seem quite shaky. This can make the audience feel the scene is more realistic, or can make us feel like we are part of the action.

**Head-On Shot**: for a type of shot in which the action comes directly toward the camera. Head-On shots are often used in war or action movies to enhance the sense of involvement and excitement of the audience, for example, charging cavalry may be directed at the camera.

**High angle**: A shot where the camera is positioned higher than the person's eyeline, looking down at them. This is often used to make a character in the shot seem weaker, younger or more vulnerable.

**Long Shot:** a distance shot where the camera is a long way from the subjects being filmed. A long shot can be effective as an establishing shot that sets the scene for the action and roles in the viewer.

**Loose Frame** – Describes a shot where there is a lot of room around an object or person.  Usually used to show them as being alone or isolated or unimportant.

**Low-Angle Shot:** A shot where the camera is placed lower than the eyeline of the person in the shot, looking up at them.  It can make the character shown seem big and powerful and it can make us or the character we are seeing through, seem small and weak.

**Medium Shot**: A shot showing around half of a person to their waist.  Normally used to show their emotions and some of their body language and setting in order to aid our understanding

**Over The Shoulder Shot**:  A shot which is filmed just over the shoulder of one character, normally looking at another character.  This is used to make us feel like we are part of the scene and show us some of the character's perspective.

**Pan**: camera action involving gently moving the camera left or right across the subject matter horizontally

**Point-of-View Shot (POV or Subjective Filming)**: a camera shot taken from the position of the subject, used to enhance a sense of realism and audience involvement in the action.

**Pull Focus** – Describes a shot where one thing was in focus, and then the lens is changed so that something else stops being blurry and becomes in focus.  Often used to draw the audience's attention to something.
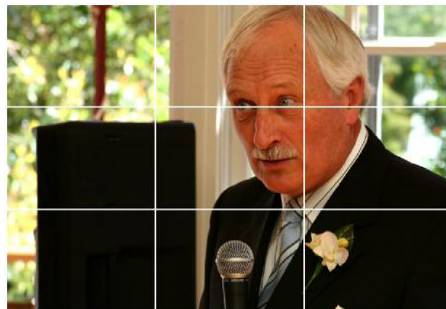


**Rule Of Thirds** – Describes a technique used to make a shot look interesting and realistic at the same time. Rather than placing a person or object in the middle of the frame, they are placed at the sides, or where the lines cross on this imaginary grid. If a director chooses to "break" the rule of thirds  and places someone smack bang in the middle of the grd it can make the character seem uncomfortable, quirky, stylish, alone, or out of place

**Shallow Focus** – Describes a shot where an object near the front is in focus, and everything else behind is out of focus (blurry). Often used to make one thing seem more important. Eg



**Soft focus:** in images, the use of a special lens or filter to create a hazy light around the subject. Soft focus shots are associated with the romantic or sentimental treatment of subject matter.

**Subjective Filming (or POV)**: a type of shot in which the camera is positioned as if looking at the world through the character's eyes.

**Tight Frame:** Describes a shot that is composed with the person or object given very little space around them. Often used to make them seem important, or trapped.



**Tilt:** a camera movement that involves moving the camera vertically up and down from a fixed position. Often used to show something off to the audience like a character's body.

**Tracking Shot**: a camera shot in which the camera moves along rails to follow the subject. When the rails are replaced by a moving platform on wheels, the shot is called a dolly shot. As you won't know how this shot was filmed you can call it either a Tracking OR a Dolly shot. A tracking shot normally helps us feel like we sympathise with the character, or focuses our attention on them as important.

**Trombone Shot** – A shot that allows the subject to stay roughly the same size whilst their surroundings appear to move and get bigger or smaller. Often used to show them realising something, or being massively effected by something. Most famous in the scene in Jaws where Chief Brody realises the shark is attacking people in the sea.

**Two Shot**: A shot that frames two people on screen at the same time. It is used to show the audience the relationship between two characters.



**Whip Pan**: a very fast pan between two or more characters or points of interest. It gives the impression that the camera has been 'surprised' by activity and is used in the place of a more conventional shot/reverse shot. It can help to speed up the pace

**Wide shot**: A shot where the whole subject is shown within the frame. Also known as a Long Shot. This can be used as an establishing shot of a set or location or to show a large crowd of people. They can also emphasize the isolation of a single figure.

**Zoom/Reverse Zoom:** the adjustment of the camera lens which makes the scene / character appear to get bigger or smaller in the frame. A zoom is normally used to focus our attention on something as important.

**180 degree Rule** – Where, during a scene featuring two people or more, we can imagine a make believe line joining those two people together. Adhering to the 180 degree rule would mean you would always ensure your camera was on one side of that line and the camera would never be crossed to the other side. Sticking to the 180 degree rule allows the viewer to feel comfortable, helps us understand the positioning of the characters and makes it feel like real life.

**Breaking the 180 degree rule (Crossing the Line)** – Where, during a conversation or a scene between two people, the camera does NOT stick to one side of the line (see above) and crosses over at some point. This disorientates the viewer as we are unable to work out the position of the characters within the room. It makes the scene seem odd or strange and may reflect the feeling of the characters.

# EDITING TERMINOLOGY

**Action match:** A shot that cuts that features some sort of action that cuts to another shot where the action is continued smoothly so it helps make the cut invisible to the audience. For example we might see someone shoot a gun, and the editor would perform an action match so we then see the bullet hit someone else and they fit together seamlessly so we see both people's perspectives. Is often used to make the scene feel more real.

**Colourising –** The process of changing the colour of an image or video shot. For example, making the shot seem warmer, making it sepia etc**..**

**Cropping –** removing unwanted areas of a photo or video clip to focus the viewer on something important

**Cross cutting (also known as Parallel editing)** – Where an editor cuts between two separate scenes happening in two separate locations at the same time. This serves to illustrate a contrast or a link between them. For example, cross cutting between adults having a quiet drink in a pub, and a wild teenage party will contrast the two age groups. Another example is in the Godfather where the editor cut back and forth between the christening of a child in a catholic church, and the violent killing of several men. The cross cutting in this sequence emphasises the violence as we see it juxtaposed against childlike innocence and religion.

**Cut** – The move from one shot to another which can tell us lots of things. For example, it can draw our attention to things. If a woman is day dreaming at her desk and the editor cuts to a scene of a man, we might assume that she may be dreaming about him.

**Cutaway:** a brief shot that is not totally necessary but is cut into a scene showing a related action, object or person, not necessarily part of the main scene, before cutting back to the original shot. For example a couple may be having an argument which is the main scene but the editor may choose to include a cutaway shot of their child crying before cutting back to the couple arguing. This emphasises the child's emotions and helps the audience to understand that we are to disapprove of these people's argument.

**Dissolve** - A dissolve is when the first shot is on screen and the $2^{nd}$ shot starts appearing on top of it more and more until all you can see is the $2^{nd}$ shot. Often used to link two scenes or two people together. Sometimes used to show time moving on etc.. If the 1st shot never disappears and stays on screen with the $2^{nd}$ shot this is called super-imposition.

**Ellipsis**: the removal or shortening of scenes in a narrative to speed up the action. For example an editor might use ellipsis in a sequence about a young man taking a drink by cutting straight to him lying in the street, drunk. The editor has missed out the story in the middle to speed up the action and show us how quick this man's night has passed.

**Eyeline Match**: a type of editing that maintains the eyeline or level when cutting from a character to what's the character sees. The effect of the edit is to create a sense that what the camera sees is what the character sees. It puts us in the position of the characters and helps us feel empathy for them.

**Fade:** a type of moving image editing where the image gradually fades and disappears, leaving a white or black screen. A fade to black often suggests that time has passed or a situation has ended. A fade to white often suggests a dream sequence.

**Graphic match** – A cut from one shot to another that look visually the same (possibly linked by a similar shape, a similar colour etc. They are there to show us a clear link between two scenes. Often this is making a comment on the issue. For example, a young girl playing with a red doll then is cut together using a graphic match with a woman holding a baby dressed in red. This might suggest that the young girl has grown up into the woman. Or it might emphasise the gender stereotype of women looking after babies.
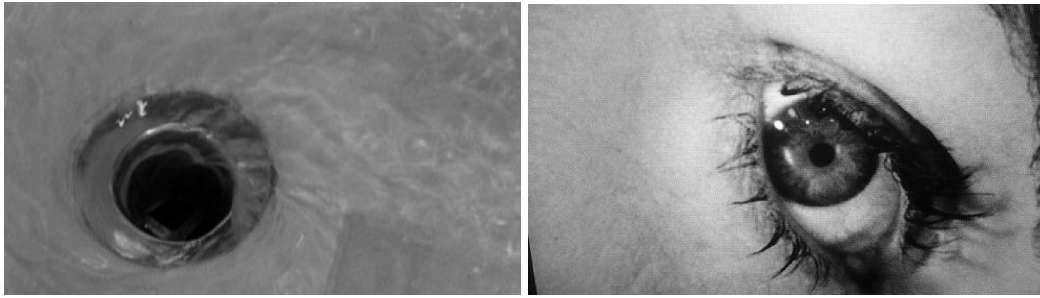
**Jump Cuts** – a cut that moves to a very similar part of the same scene but missing a VERY small piece of action out (eg a character is on the top step of the stairs and then it cuts to him being down a few steps without us having seen him do that bit of walking). They are often used to disorientate the viewer, or show how disorientated a character is. For example, if a party of young people was being shown and included lots of jump cuts, it would represent the young people as disorientated, implying they were drunk and wild.

**Long take**: each time a shot is recorded it is called a take. A long take is one that is allowed to remain on screen for a long duration before it is cut. Long takes are often used to slow the pace of the scene down, making it calmer and more peaceful . Alternatively if a REALLY long take is used, it can make the audience feel uncomfortable as we are forced to watch a scene with nothing to break it up.

**Montage** – a montage is a series of shots edited together to show time passing and something happening in that time. It is a popular way of speeding up the narrative and showing us a lot of narrative in a short period of time. Famous examples are in Rocky where we see a montage of shots of Rocky training and getting better and better before his fight.

**Non Continuity Editing** – Where the editor shows the story in a strange order. For example we might see the end of the scene, and then cut back to the beginning of the narrative to explain how it all happened. This stops the clip feeling like "real life" for the viewer.

**Short take:** a short take is one that is allowed to remain on screen for a short time before the editor cuts to something else. Short takes are often used to speed the pace of the action up, making it more dramatic and exciting.

**Shot / Reverse Shot** – cutting between two people having a conversation (rather than including them both in one static mid shot) can help to contrast them and make them seem different. It highlights their differences and also allows us to see the reactions of characters.

**Slow motion**: used in the editing process to slow down the action for emotional or comic effect. Often makes something seem more romantic or special or dramatic.



**Split Screen**: an editing technique which involves the cinema screen being split into two or more parts to allow the showing of events that are taking place at the same time.

**Superimposition**: the appearance of writing/symbols or images on top of an image so that both are visible at once, increasing the amount of information the viewer has in one shot and sometimes to suggest the two scenes are happing at the same time.

**Visual effects** – any special effects such as lightning, explosions, colour changes, magical effects, CGI etc, .. Often it depends on what the character's reactions to these special effects are. For example, a man who has no reaction to a massive fiery explosion will seem brave and masculine. Graphics on screen (eg numbers and facts as seen in CSI, may represent someone as intelligent or competent in their work. Showing someone in colour when the rest of the image is in black and white emphasises them and draws the audience's attention to them as important.






**Wipe**: a moving image editing technique that involves one image wiping another off the screen. This suggests that whatever scene / character pushes the other one off the screen, is more important or powerful. Sometimes if suggests the two scenes are happening at relatively the same time. It often makes the scene seem light hearted or comical. Wipes can go left or right, up or down and even be in shapes like stars!

# SOUND TERMINOLOGY

**Accent** – the way a person pronounces their words.  Their accent can often tell you where someone is from, how educated they are, what class they fall in to.  The accent you hear might give you a clue as to who the target audience is.

 **Ambient sound  -**  The natural sounds of the location eg water noises near a river, cows mooing in a farm, cars beeping their horns in the street etc.  They tell us what kind of place we are in and if we see how characters react to these sounds it tells us a lot. Noisy cars, horns, people, traffic represent a region as being busy and urban and not very homely.

**Asynchronous sound –**Where the sound is either out of sync with the visuals.  Sound that is just out of sync would make the viewer feel disorientated and would make the characters and scene seem strange.

**Contrapuntal sound** –This is where sound or music has a different mood / atmosphere to what we are seeing on screen.  For example in the film the Shining, during beautiful scenes of winding roads and countryside on a sunny day, we hear quite scary ominous music to foreshadow the scary events that are to come.  For a second example, in the Godfather film, we see scary scenes of a man murdering people in cold blood, but hear the friendly, calm sounds of a priest christening a baby.  This contrast emphasises the loss of innocent life.

**Dialogue** – the words the characters say.  What do the characters actually say? Do they reveal their beliefs, or their attitudes / values? How do they say it?  If someone's voice sounds nervous and wobbly it tells us a lot about their character.  If they speak softly it implies they are weak or emotional.  If they have a deep booming voice it makes them seem more masculine.  Don't forget accents as they tell us where someone is from and emphasise their differences from others.  Pay attention to slang, swearing, sophisticated and simple language etc.

**Diegetic Sound:** sound that you could hear if YOU were one of the characters inside the scene.  This include words the characters say, background noises like traffic, weather and crowd noise and even music IF it is heard by the characters eg at a club, on a television etc  Diegetic sound can set the mood of the piece, tell us how a character is feeling, and help the viewer to see a scene as realistic etc.



**Direct address (also known as Breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> Wall)** – Where the character talks to the audience directly.
Don't confuse this with a point of view shot.  It is very unusual and breaks the reality for the audience, but also helps us to see that character as an equal, a friend, as someone to sympathise with.  Often seen in shows like Scrubs and Malcolm in the Middle.

**Non Diegetic Sound** – Other sound that the characters in the scene could not hear.  For example, a musical soundtrack, a voice over etc.  Non diegetic music sets the scene and time period as well as atmosphere.  A voice over allows the audience to hear someone's thoughts and empathise with them.  Different instruments have different effects.  Violins can be both romantic and frightening, saxophones sound sultry and sexy, drums can seem military-like and woodwind instruments seem sad.

**Pitch** – Low pitch described a sound / music that is deep and low (eg Thunder) and often sounds menacing or threatening.  High pitch describes a sound that is higher and lighter (eg a phone ringing) and is often more light-hearted.

**Rhythm** – Describes the beat of the music, whether it is fast or slow.  Sound or music with a fast rhythm is often used to increase a sense of urgency or threat.  Sound or music with a slow rhythm is often used to depict

calmness and peace.  Sound or music with an irregular rhythm is used to confuse the audience and make them feel uncomfortable.

**Score:**  Describes any non-diegetic music in a scene.  Think about the beat and instruments used.  For example a high energy dance track with loud crashing tones will emphasise someone's youth.. a girly soft piano music might help us to see a woman as stereotypically delicate and feminine.

**Sound motif –** Hard to spot in a short clip.  But this is a sound which normally represents or accompanies a certain character.  For example the Da DA of the shark in the film Jaws.  We associate that music with them.  Some institutions have sound motifs associated with them eg in adverts for Intel Pentium computer products there is a recognisable sound motif for the company in every one.

**Tone Of Voice** – Describes the way a person's voice sounds.  For example, firm, dismissive, patronising, nervous, apologetic, and aggressive.  Their tone will tell you a lot about their feelings.

**Voice over**:  A piece of speech played over a scene, showing us the inner feelings of a character or explaining the story via a narrator.  It allows the audience to see inside the head of a character, helping us to empathise with them.

# MISE-EN-SCENE TERMINOLOGY

**Body Language** – the way a character's body looks and the way they hold their body eg confident, slumping down, cowering from someone etc  It tells us what type of person they are and how they feel about others or the product / company they are advertising.



**Chiaroscuro Lighting** – a scene lit with VERY low key lighting, often extreme lighting, lots of shadows, some very bright parts.  See the effects of low key lighting.  Also used to make a location or character seem very dramatic and unusual

**Colour**  – Colours in a scene often represent things.  Red can represent anger, passion, danger, love.  Blue can seem calm and peaceful, sometimes sad.  You must pick the most appropriate meaning for the scene.

**Costumes** – clothes a character is wearing.  You could comment on the style, shape, choice of item, colour, etc.  They can tell us lots about a character, what type of person they are, how they are feeling etc.  For example a floaty dress might represent someone as being traditionally girly.  A policeman's uniform might represent someone as having authority and power.  Baggy, shapeless clothes might suggest someone is shy, where as tight clothing might suggest they are confident and flirtatious.

**De-saturated** – When a shot has had the colour drained out of it so it is either totally colourless (black and white) or very nearly colourless

**Facial Features and Expression** – the way a character's face looks and shows emotion.  For example a shocked expression, sadness, a look of love.  You can also comment on the way they look such as a interesting features such as bad teeth, small, squinty eyes etc  It tells us what type of person they are and how they feel about others.

**Hair & Make Up** – the appearance of the hair of a character and the cosmetics a character might be wearing such as lipstick, a skin head etc.  They tell us things about the character.  For example a woman wearing very little make up might be seen as being very naive and innocent.



**High Key Lighting** – A bright and well lit scene with very few shadows.  Often used to make a location or character seem friendly, happy, safe.

**Lighting (general)** – can be used to highlight important characters or focus the audience's attention on a specific element

**Location** – A place where the scene is set. A location can tell us lots about the people in it. For example a dirty, bloodstained basement could signify that a character was a villain or up to no good. A messy bedroom might signify that the character who owned it was disorganised. Don't forget to look out for how a character reacts to their location as well (eg if they are comfortable there or not)



**Low key Lighting** – a dimly lit scene with lots of shadows. Often used to make a location or character seem shady, untrustworthy, dangerous, unsafe.

**Props** – Items a character possesses or picks up eg a gun or a bunch of flowers etc.. They can tell us lots about what type of person someone is

**Saturated** – When a shot has had the colour enhanced to make it even more colourful than it was in real life

# AUDIENCE TERMINOLOGY

**Active Audience –** An audience who doesn't just sit back and watch something or read something. They have their own thoughts and opinions. They don't just accept what they see. They might even react to the text or interact with it

**Catharsis –** Letting all your pent up feelings go, to create a more relaxed feeling. Some products provide audiences with the opportunity for catharsis.

**Demographic** – The factual statistics of the audience. For example their gender, age, class, ethnicity etc. The demographic of the audience for Top Gear is mainly male, white, aged 20-40.

**Empathy / Empathise** – A feeling of understanding the emotions and feelings of a particular character. For example, a director might encourage an audience to empathise with a particular character by placing the camera at eye level with her so we can see all her emotions and reactions during the scene.

**Engagement** – How much an audience reacts to a product Audience engagement can be affected by a number of factors such as the content, the way they consume it etc..

**Expectations** – What an audience expects from a media product. Media products should fulfil audience expectations to stay popular.

**Mainstream** – Something that is aimed at the masses, at a large target audience. The X-Factor is considered to be a mainstream programme.

**Moral Panic** – When the media repeats dramatic stories about a particular group / situation to the point where they drum up a sense of panic in the audience about that group / situation. The media encourages the audience to all be terrified of this group / situation. Moral Panic is a phrase coined by a theorist called Stanley Cohen who thought that the media created a "moral panic" about punks in the 1980's.

**Negotiated Reading** – When an audience partially accepts what they are seeing in the text as true / accurate.

**Niche** – Something that is aimed at a very small, alternate target audience, not at the mainstream

**Oppositional Reading** – When an audience rejects the messages in a media product and does not accept them as true or accurate.

**Passive Audience –** An audience which does not really interact with a product or question it. Instead they sit back and just accept what they see or read as real / true etc..

**Positioning** – how the audience are encouraged to interpret a particular situation. For example, "the audience are positioned to sympathise with the female character."

**Preferred Reading** – When an audience accepts the messages embedded in a text as being true / accurate and does not question them

**Primary Audience** – The main audience that consumes a text. The primary audience for Skins is teenagers who enjoy a party lifestyle.

**Schadenfreude** – Getting pleasure from the misfortunes of others

**Secondary audience –** Another audience that consumes a text, apart from the primary / intended audience. The secondary audience for Skins is middle class adults aged 25-35 who did NOT live like the teenagers in the programme and enjoy watching people who were able to have wild lifestyles.

**Sympathy / Sympathise** – A feeling of "feeling sorry" for or "siding with" a particular character. For example a director might encourage the audience to sympathise with a particular character by showing them in a high angle shot making them look weak and powerless.

**Voyeurism** – Enjoying looking at people, often when the people don't know they are being looked at. Music videos and horror films often encourage the audience to take part in voyeurism.

**Word Of Mouth** – The process of an audience spreading information about a text simply by talking about it with their friends. It is considered one of the best forms of advertising.

# REPRESENTATION TERMINOLOGY

**Colonialist –** something which represents western people / places as being superior to non western people / places. Often quite offensive towards ethnic minorities.

**Dominant Ideology** – A set of beliefs that are widely accepted as being the most normal. For example, the dominant ideology of men is that they are strong, brave and work to provide money for their families.

**Dystopian –** a representation of something that is as pessimistic and negative as possible

**Emasculation / Emasculated** – Describes a situation where a man has his masculinity taken away from him, normally against his will. For example a man may be forced to be weak, to obey someone, to give up his power and hence he has been emasculated.

**Heterogeneous** - A situation where everyone is very different and diverse. This could be in terms of their power, their appearance, beliefs etc. For example the men in the scene have been represented in a heterogeneous way through the diverse use of costume, their assorted reactions to the explosion and the huge variety of beliefs they have about women.

**Homogenous –** A situation where everyone is very similar / the same.  This could be the same in terms of their power, their appearance, beliefs etc.  For example, the children have been represented as homogenous as they are all wearing the same clothes and they all react in the same way to the explosion**.**

**Homophobia** / **Homophobic**- Actions, behaviours, feelings or words which seem to discriminate against people because of their sexuality.  This is normally because the person who is being homophobic believes there is a difference between sexualities and thinks that one sexuality is better than the other.

**Hyperbolic Bodies** – exaggerated "perfect" physical features eg very muscly men, very slender, perfect bodies for women etc

**Male Gaze** – A theory by a lady called Laura Mulvey which suggests that all media products encourage the characters and audience to "leer" at and "look" at women as though the audience were make.  For example, "the camera angle looking down Sarah's cleavage encourages the audience to take a 'male gaze' over the female character"

**Matriarchy / Matriarchal society –** A type of society where women are dominant over men.  It can also be used to specify "older women" being powerful in society

**Misogynistic** – A belief that women are lesser beings than men.  That women are somehow in need of being controlled by men.  Music Videos are often said to be misogynistic as they portray women as objects.

**Patriarchy** / **Patriarchal society**– A type of society where men are dominant over women.  Many feminists believe that we live in a patriarchal society where women are forced to be weaker and subservient.  It can also be used to specify "older men" being powerful in society.

**Racism** – Actions, behaviour, feelings or words which seem to discriminate against people because of their skin colour.  This is normally because the person who is racist believes that there is a difference between people who have different skin colours and they believe one skin colour to be better than another.

**Sexism / Sexist**– Actions, behaviours, feelings or words which seem to discriminate against people because of their gender.  This is normally because the person who is being sexist believes there is a difference between the two genders and that one gender is better than the other.

**Stereotype** – An overly exaggerated representation of a type of person that is normally negative.  For example a stereotypical teenager would be a hoodie wearing, knife carrying, criminal who hated school.

**Utopian** – a representation of a something which is as positive and perfect as it can be

**Xenophobia** / **Xenophobic**- Actions, behaviours, feelings or words which seem to discriminate against people because of their country of origin.  This is normally because the person who is being xenophobic believes there is a difference between the countries and that one country is better than the other.  Normally xenophobic people discriminate against anyone from a foreign country.

**Voyeurism** – finding pleasure in the process of looking and watching other people, particularly their bodies, particularly in secret.

# INDUSTRIES / IDEOLOGIES / VALUES TERMINOLOGY

**Agenda** – A plan or belief system within a group, normally hidden from others.  For example there is a belief that the BNP have a racist agenda.  ITV's agenda is to make money.

**Brand Values** – The things which a company / brand seem to consider important.  For example the brand values of John Lewis tends to be quality, commitment, family etc..

**Censorship –** The process of making changes to a media text to make it suitable for a particular audience.  For example a film might have some censorship applied to it by taking out violent scenes and bad language**.**

**Commercial –** Something that is popular and aimed at a mainstream audience.  Something that will make a large profit

**Distribution –** The way a product is moved from the institution that made it, to the audience.  This might include actually sending it from the factory to the shops, it might include the process of getting it into the cinema, the uploading of content to a website etc..

**Diversification –** When a company makes other products in a totally different area to their main area.  Eg Virgin not only does TV, but also holidays, clothes, make up etc

**Globalisation –** The continued development of the world whereby it is more easy to communicate and interact with countries around the world.  Globalisation often has an impact on media products as they have to try and appeal to a much wider audience.

**Horizontal Integration –** Where a company buys out or takes over another similar company in attempt to become one of the biggest companies in a particular industry.

**Ideologies** – A set of beliefs

**Institution –** A company

**Media Franchise –** Where the copyright / license to a product is sold, normally leading to a long series of products based around the same concept, along with merchandise such as toys / games etc.  A good example would be the Spiderman franchise

**Monopoly –** Where one company dominates the market in a particular industry.  For example, CocaCola is said to hold a monopoly over the drinks market.

**Oligopoly –** Where several companies dominate the market in a particular industry.  Hearst, IPC Media and Bauer are said to be part of the oligopoly in the magazine industry.

**Ownership –** Who owns a company.  The people or group that owns a company or product might influence the production in some way

**Publisher –** The person or company that prints the magazine / newspaper or website

**Regulation –** The process by which the media is controlled by specific rules / laws / regulations telling them what they can and can't show.  Different companies are responsible for different platforms.  Ofcom is responsible for TV & Radio, The British Board of Film Classification is responsible for film, The Press Complaints Commission is responsible for newspapers

**Synergistic Products –** Products that all relate to each other but which are on different media platforms.  For example a film, a film's video game, a film's website, a film's blog, a film's app etc..

**Technological Convergence –** The process by which all technologies seem to be evolving and combining so that we can do everything on one gadget.  Eg on the iphone you can text / call / email / blog / shop / read / take photos / video / etc

**Values –** Qualities or behaviours / traits which are made to see important by a media product.  For example, the John lewis adverts promote values of quality, financial security, family etc..

**Vertical Integration –** The process by which a company buys or starts another company so it can complete more than one stage of the production process itself.  Eg a film company might buy a cinema chain so it can avoid paying distribution costs and can show their films in a lot of cinemas for free.

# FORMS AND CONVENTIONS TERMINOLOGY

**Anachronic Modular Narrative** – a type of narrative / story which uses lots of flashback and flashforwards but also often shows scenes more than once, from different characters' perspectives.  For example, in Pulp Fiction, we see the diner scene several times from the perspective of different characters

**Cliffhanger –** A dramatic narrative device where the narrative is left unresolved at the end of an episode or clip to keep the audience engaged.

**Closed Narrative –** A type of narrative / story where we see the beginning, middle and the end, and the ending is clear and doesn't leave anything unexplained.

**Conventional** – Something that is seen to be "normal".  So a conventional female character would be quite weak, girly, and may be a mother or a housewife.

**Foreshadowing –** The process of hinting at something to come in a symbolic way.  For example, in a film you might see someone sharpening a knife at the start, which foreshadows the violence we see later on in the narrative

**Forking Path Narrative** – a type of narrative / story where the story splits into two or more paths and we get to see what could have happened if something had been done differently.  For example, in Groundhog Day, the story "forks" and we see what happens if he saves boy / does not save the boy, what happens if he flirts with a woman, what happens if he learns piano etc..  We see several different endings.

**Genre** – The "type" of media product something is.  So film genres include horror, action, sci-fi etc..

**Hybrid Genre** – The combination of one or more genres eg a romantic comedy

**Intertextuality** – When a media product makes reference to another media product, often to engage an audience and to make a point.  For example, in the Simpsons there is a scene where they make an intertextual reference to the Indiana Jones film, where Bart is escaping from Homer who is rolled into a ball like a boulder.  This is almost identical to a scene in the Indiana Jones film and would appeal to an audience as a) it is comical but also because b) many of them would recognise the reference and would feel clever for recognising it.

**Juxtaposition** – Two different things placed next to each other to create meaning.  For example a shot of a baby may be juxtaposed with a shot of a funeral to emphasise the circle of life.

**Linear Narrative** –  A narrative or story that is all told in chronological order from beginning to end

**Media Language** – Simply means the combination of technical elements such as camera shots, camera movement, editing, sound and mise-en-scene, layout, conventions etc

**Medium** – The type of media product it is.  Eg Film, Tv, Web, Gaming etc

**Mode Of Address –** The way something "speaks" to an audience.  Eg the tone of the language, how they address people, the attitude etc.  Mode of Address might be formal, informal, comedic, sarcastic etc..

**Multi Strand Narrative –** A type of narrative / story where there are several storylines running throughout the media product.  For example Coronation Street features a multi strand narrative as we might see one story with Dev and Sunita, and then cut to another story with Steve and Tracey, and then to the Rover's Return, and then back to Dev and Sunita etc..

**Narrative –** The way the story is told eg the order or the structure of a story etc

**Narrative Conflict –** Any event that adds drama to the story.  This could be conflict between characters, places etc..

**Narrative Enigma –** Anything which is mysterious or unexplained at first, which will hook in an audience into watching / buying the product.  For example, in a film trailer we might experience narrative enigma such as

"who is the man in the mask?", "why is he killing people?", "will she get away?" etc.. These enigma codes were explained by Roland Barthes.

**Non Linear Narrative** - A narrative or story that is not told in chronological order and instead it might start with the end and go back to the beginning, or it might jump back and forwards within the story.

**Open Narrative –** A type of narrative / story where the ending does not explain all that happened, and leaves it open to another episode or sequel etc..

**Platform –** There are 3 main media platforms, Moving Image / Print / E-media

**Realist / Realism –** A style of TV show / film which attempts to be as "realistic" as possible. For example, "Shameless is considered a realist programme." Being a "realist" programme doesn't necessarily mean the show IS completely realistic or accurate.

**Split Screen narrative –** A type of narrative / story where the screen is literally split into two or more parts and we see different parts of the story in each part. For example in the John lewis advert we see a woman from the 1920's on one side living her life and a man from modern day living on the other side. This happens a lot in the series 24 as well.

**Three Part Narrative Structure –** A type of narrative made popular by Todorov, which starts with balance, then a disruption happens, and then it ends with balance again.

**Unconventional –** Something which is seen to not be "normal." For example an unconventional female character might be powerful, the boss of a company, and very dominant over other male characters.

**Unique Selling Point –** Something which makes the product seem special in comparison to others

**Verisimilitude –** A feeling of reality / real life created by particular elements. For example, "The series Outnumbered creates a feeling of verisimilitude for the audience by using a real house, every day storylines that would affect an average family, and improvised dialogue."

# OTHER GENERAL TERMINOLOGY

**Antagonist –** The leading villain in the show (or the one the protagonist has to go up against)

**Archetype –** A easily recognised type of character that can be found in many stories. For example, the hero, the princess, the damsel in distress, the loyal friend, the villain, the temptress.

**Binary Opposites –** Two contrasting characters or scenes that are seen in one show, that are clearly meant to be total opposites. For example there may be a sweet innocent girl who is scared and weak, paired against an evil powerful man. They would be binary opposite characters. Binary opposites could be concepts such as good/evil, light/dark, male/female, old/young

**Connotation –** Hidden Meaning. For example, "the connotation of the main female character wearing black is that she might be evil and have a dark side."

**Hyper-reality –** A postmodern idea which says that there is a situation where the boundary between real life and the media has become blurred

**Protagonist –** The leading character in the show, normally a good character

**Repertoire of Elements –** a collection of common conventions from which the creators of the text make a selection for their product

# THEORIES

Below is a list of theories which you might use at AS & A2 level. You will be taught about some of these in lessons. However, it would be very useful for you to also do your own independent research into these theories so that you can use them when relevant.

| Theorist / Theory | Explanation |
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| Blumler & Katz's Uses & Gratifications Theory | A theory which suggests that audiences USE the media for different reasons. They think audiences are active and that the media plays a "function" for audiences. They think the main functions of the media are:<br>● Escape<br>● Entertainment<br>● Education & Information<br>● Social Interaction<br>● Identification |
| Richard Dyer's Utopian Solutions Theory | A theory which suggests that audiences use the media to experience perfection which they can't get from their real lives. The theory suggests that products which offer these "utopian solutions" to audience's problems will be the most successful. Below are the main problems and solutions that Dyer mentions in his theory<br><br>Isolation – Social Interaction<br>Confusion – Clarity<br>Boredom - Excitement |
| Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs | A theory which suggests there are main needs that every human has.<br><br> |
| Young and Rubicam's Audience Classification System | An advertising agency which suggests that audiences can all be classified by their different personalities and behaviours. They have several main categories that help them target audiences in different specific ways:<br><br>**Explorer** – needs new experiences and liked discovery<br>**Aspirer** – materialistic, worries about what other people think of their superficial qualities<br>**Succeeder** – enjoys control and prestige brands<br>**Reformer** – anti-materialistic and intellectual<br>**Mainstream** – enjoy family values, and value for money. Enjoy security<br>**Struggler** – enjoy junk food / alcohol / gambling and need escape from their own lives<br>**Resigned** – enjoy tradition, nostalgia and survival |
| Two Step Theory | A theory which suggests there are two stages to an audience reacting to a text. The first stage involves the product being seen by powerful audiences called "opinion leaders". These could be celebrities, or respected people or just people who are leaders among their friends. Once these people decide on how they feel about the product, the second stage |

| | occurs which is where everyone else, decides to follow the opinions of these people. |
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| Structuralist theory eg Roland Barthes' Semantic Codes | A theory which suggests that audiences are able to interpret meaning of a text by looking for and recognising signs and the connotations of those signs. For example,a dove might signify peace. The colour red might signify passion and love. This is a structuralist theory. |
| Post Structuralism | A theory which disagrees with Structuralism (see above) and suggests that it is very difficult for audiences to deconstruct the "hidden meaning" of a text because there are so many possible interpretations of all the different elements that the true meaning is hard to find. |
| Claude Levi Strauss's theory of Binary Opposites | A theory which suggests that a good story revolves around conflict between binary opposites (two things represented as totally different to one another). Examples of binary opposites include good vs evil, men vs women, young vs old, Britain vs Germany etc.. |
| Roland Barthes Code theory | Barthes believes that media texts contain certain codes which audiences can interpret to help them better understand the narrative. He has several different codes that he considers but these are the main two:<br><br>Enigma Codes – These are elements of mystery in the plot, unanswered questions that the audience can only know the answers to if they continue to watch. Enigma Codes draw in an audience and keep us engaged. Enigma codes such a hooded figure lead to us asking ourselves questions such as who is the killer? What is he doing? Who will he kill next? Etc<br><br>Action Codes – These are actions carried out in the plot which help the audience work out what is going to happen next in the narrative. For example, an action code might be a man with a gun. The code helps the audience predict that in the future he might pursue someone with the gun and someone may be shot. They help the audience understand the narrative.<br><br>Semantic Codes – These are elements of a text which can be deconstructed and analysed to add meaning to a text. For example, a character wearing a bright red dress might be able to be seen as passionate, or evil, or dangerous. |
| Tzvetlan Todorov's Narrative Structure theory | A theory which suggests that all stories follow a very similar structure.<br>● Equilibrium<br>● Disruption<br>● Battle for Resolution<br>● New Equilibrium |
| Vladimir Propp's character types theory | A theory which suggests that all stories feature very similar character types who all play specific roles in developing the narrative. He thinks the characters make it easy for an audience to understand the story. His character types include<br>● Hero<br>● Villain<br>● Dispatcher<br>● Donor<br>● Helper<br>● Princess / Prize |
| Steve Neale's Genre Theory | A theory which suggests two things about genre.<br>1) Audiences enjoy specific texts because of "repetition and difference" of the repertoires of genre elements used. For example an audience might enjoy a film because it is a typical action film which uses all the normal action conventions. They might also enjoy a film specifically because it AVOIDS the usual conventions of the genre and does something a bit different. |

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| | 2) Genre is not something static, as it is always evolving. He thinks there is a cycle consisting of the following stages:<br>- Form Finds Itself eg Psycho<br>- Classic eg Halloween<br>- Pushes The Boundaries eg Nightmare On Elm Street<br>- Homage eg Scream<br>- Parody eg Scary Movie |
| Robert Stam's Genre Theory | A theorist who suggests that genre is hard to define as all too often, media products cross over between 2 or 3 or even more genres. He believes that the concept of genre does not exist, and it is a concept made up by film theorists and institutions to make it easier to classify products as this makes it easier to market and sell them, |
| Rick Altman's Genre Theory | A theorist who suggests that genre is constructed by 2 different elements:<br>1) Semantic Elements - these are visual, easy to identify elements such as guns for action, blood for horror, flowers for romance films etc..<br>2) Syntactic Elements – these are emotional theme elements such as love, revenge, grief etc..<br><br>Depending on the film it might be easier to use either semantic or syntactic elements to identify the genre. He argues that if we only use one of these elements to identify the genre, confusion could occur. For example if we merely used semantic elements, we might classify Texas Chainsaw Massacre and Scary Movie as the same horror genre. However if we take into consideration the themes / emotions involved, it becomes clearer that Scary Movie is more comedic and light-hearted taking it out of the horror genre. |
| Frankfurt School's Hypodermic Needle Theory | A group of Marxist theorists who believe that audiences are passive and are controlled by the media. They believe that institutions exert hegemonic control over audiences by directly injecting them with social messages via the media. Their theory has been widely discredited for being too simplistic and assuming audiences are too gullible. |
| Other Marxist Media Theories | Marxists believe that audiences are controlled by the media. Antonio Gramsci coined the term of "hegemony". He believes that the ruling classes use their hegemonic control to manipulate the working classes.<br><br>They believe that the media is used to pacify the working classes and keep them under control. They believe that audiences are kept in a state of "false consciousness" where they are convinced their lives are normal, and that they will succeed if they just work hard. Marxists believe this is in the interest of the middle / upper classes as it will stop the working classes from rebelling against them. They would like to see the working classes rise up against the middle / upper class media institutions.<br><br>Adorno is one Marxist who particularly believes that the media has led to something called "commodity fetishism" which is where people are delighted by items now, not because of their quality, but because of how much they cost. He thinks we now place too much importance on owning expensive things as it makes us feel better about our lives. |
| Pluralists / Pluralism | A view point which believes that:<br><br>● The media encourages a wide range of diverse ideas and content<br><br>● The media industry operates on a supply and demand basis where institutions only product what audiences actually want. They believe audiences are in control over institutions<br><br>● Media institutions are run by fair, trustworthy people who do not have sinister motives or political agendas |

| Stuart Hall's Preferred, Negotiated and Oppositional readings theory | Hall is a Neo Marxist (new Marxist) who believes that although the media TRY and control audiences, depending on the audiences' background, they might react in different ways. He thinks audiences might take a: <br> • Preferred reading – where they accept the messages in the product <br> • Oppositional Reading – where they reject the messages in the product <br> • Negotiated Reading – where they partially accept and partially reject the messages in the text <br><br> He also believes that the more a specific representation is repeated in the media, the more it begins to feel naturalised and "realistic". |
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| Baudrillard's postmodern theory of Hypereality | Baudrillard is a postmodernist theorist who believes that we are now so surrounded by media products that audiences are unable to tell the difference between reality and media. He thinks this has led to situations of "hyperreality" where the lines of reality are blurred and audiences actually accept and prefer the media representation to real life. For example in games like Call Of Duty, gamers are so immersed in the world of war created by the company, that many presume this is a realistic representation of the country and of war itself. They actually enjoy spending time in the fake gaming world more than spending time in reality. |
| Stanley Cohen's Moral panics Theory | A theory which suggests the media has the power to create a sense of panic in audiences about particular situations / people. He originally investigated the panic the newspapers caused when reporting about teenage punks in the 1980's. But his theory could be applied to the representation of Muslims after 9/11 or the representation of teenagers in the London Riots as well as many others. He thinks the media can stir up hatred and panic in an audience by repeatedly reporting and exaggerating stories and he theorises that the reason they do this is to maintain hegemonic control over society |
| Laura Mulvey's Feminist Theories | Laura Mulvey is a feminist theorist who believes that women in the media are treated as objects. She thinks there are only two main roles for women in the media and she calls this the "Virgin / Whore Dichotomy". These are the two roles she thinks women are offered in media products: <br> Virgin – represented as innocent, weak, subservient to men, sweet, virginal, an object to be cared for etc.. <br> Whore – represented as sexually promiscuous, sexually strong, provocative, a sex object etc |
| Angela McRobbie's Gender theories | McRobbie is a feminist theorist who believes that women are manipulated by the media into believing they should act a certain way. She believes that the media try and socialise women into particular gender roles. For example, when she examined women's magazines she found that most of the stories were about finding a boyfriend, shopping, looking beautiful etc. Men's magazines portrayed the ideal man as being strong, powerful, aggressive, misogynistic towards women etc <br><br> She also believes that some women's magazines do portray more positive role models for women. For example some articles showed women as being powerful, dominant and strong. |
| Alvorado's Four key Racial Themes | Alvorado believes there are only 4 main roles for ethnic minorities in the media and these are: <br><br> • Exotic <br> • Humourous <br> • Dangerous <br> • Pitied |
| Colonialist Theory | Colonialism is a theory which suggests that media companies tend to represent people and places through the eyes of western people. So |

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| | western people / places will be represented as more positive / strong / education / heroic / good than non western people / places. |
| Andrew Wernwick | He coined the phrase the "vortex of publicity" when talking about how products are promoted.  He thinks that a good campaign "sucks in" the audience forcing them to buy the product buy constantly spinning them from one advertising ploy to another.  For example a website might refer to a trailer.  At the end of the trailer there is a link to their Facebook page.  On the Facebook page they advertise their app etc.. |