Contents

Unit 01

Media products and audiences

ABOUT THIS UNIT

The media products that you use and interact with every day are made by different media institutions that operate at local, national and international levels. The aim of this unit is for you to develop your understanding of how different media institutions operate in order to create products that will appeal to specific target audiences.

By studying this unit you will learn about the ownership of companies in different media industries, as well as how to analyse different media products within a specific sector. This will help you understand the fundamentals of how meaning is created for audiences. This unit will also help you recognise how audiences are categorised, researched and targeted by media producers, and how media institutions distribute and advertise their products to audiences across a variety of different platforms and technologies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The topics, activities and suggested reading in this chapter will help you to:

1 Understand the ownership models of media institutions
2 Understand how media products are advertised and distributed
3 Understand how meaning is created in media products
4 Understand the target audiences of media products
5 Be able to evaluate research data used by media institutions
6 Be able to evaluate legal, ethical and regulatory issues associated with media products

How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed through a two-hour examination that is marked out of 80.

In the exam there will be a mixture of short, medium and extended response questions. You will be expected to demonstrate your understanding through this series of questions, which require you to apply information and justify answers given from the case studies and key concepts that you have learnt while studying the unit. Your skills of critical analysis, evaluation and ability to debate your thoughts about how audiences use media products in contemporary society will also be tested.

LO1 Understand the ownership models of media institutions

1.1 The different types of contemporary media ownership

GETTING STARTED

(10 minutes)

For your examination you will be focusing on one media area and product, but you will also need an awareness of a range of media sectors and how they work together. Using an internet search engine, such as Google, and your own knowledge, research companies that operate within the different media sectors and the products they produce, in order to complete the following table.

Table 1.1 Companies and products by media sector

Media sector	Company	Product/brand
Film		
Television and radio		
Video games		
Print and publishing		
Web and online technologies		
Music		

The different types of media industries

Specialist providers operate within specific media sectors. The main media sectors are film, television, video games, print, publishing and also the internet. Here are examples of **production** companies that work within each sector and some of the successful products and technologies they produce.

🔑 KEY TERMS

Production – This is the making of a media product and includes the full production process from pre-production to post-production.

Specialist providers – These are media companies that produce and distribute products within a specific medium such as film, television and video games.

Film

This sector includes companies that produce all blockbuster and small-scale film productions that you see at the cinema, on the internet and on television.

For example, Warner Brothers – *Harry Potter* franchise

Television and radio

This sector includes all companies that work to produce and distribute television and radio programmes that are broadcast across digital television and radio channels, including the internet.

For example, BBC – *Strictly Come Dancing*

Video games

This sector includes all the games production companies, and the software and hardware development companies who produce the consoles that the games are played on.

For example, Ubisoft – *Assassin's Creed*

Print and publishing

This sector includes producers and distributors of books, newspapers and magazines.

For example, Hachette Publishing – *Twilight* series

Web and online technologies

This sector includes all internet- and app-based products and services that run using internet and communication technology.

For example, Facebook and Instagram

Music

This sector includes record labels that are part of conglomerate companies.

For example, Universal Music Publishing Group – Robbie Williams back catalogue

The different types of media companies

Conglomerates

A conglomerate is a large organisation that is made up of a number of different businesses. Many of the most well-known global companies are part of a larger media conglomerate. For example, while most of us will know that Sky is a large digital, multinational broadcaster, not everyone knows that it is actually a subsidiary of the broadcasting conglomerate 21st Century Fox, which was founded by media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

According to *Forbes* magazine, the top seven largest media conglomerates in 2014 were:

- Comcast (Universal Studios)
- 21st Century Fox (Fox, Sky)
- Walt Disney Company (Marvel, ABC TV)
- CBS (CBS Television Network, Simon & Schuster)
- Viacom (Paramount, MTV)
- Time Warner (Warner Bros. Studios, DC Comics)
- Sony (Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Group, Sony Music)

Even though parent companies such as Comcast, Viacom and CBS are not necessarily household names – owing to their **conglomerate structures** – they own the vast majority of the media that audiences use and consume every day.

The following diagram of Disney's company structure is a good example of the structure of a conglomerate.
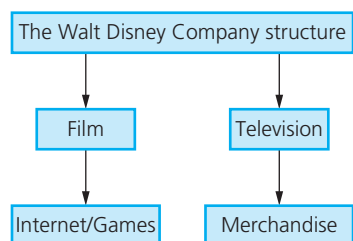
▲ **Figure 1.1** Conglomerate structure of Disney

The number of subsidiaries that a large cross-media conglomerate owns means that, in fact, the vast amount of media that audiences interact with every day are owned by just a handful of companies.

Independent companies

Independent companies, such as Warp Films and Calamity Productions, operate differently to conglomerate companies. They work with other companies on **joint venture** projects. Independent companies tend to be specialist providers of just one specific type of media. The main advantage of being an independent company is that you are responsible for, and have creative control over, what you produce. However, in terms of **distribution** to a mass audience, an independent company may require support from larger organisations, particularly in the fields of film, music and video gaming. As **Vickery and Hawkins** (2008) suggest, independent companies will often license their films to various distribution companies who will release them on their behalf.

KEY TERMS

Conglomerate structure – In a conglomerate, one overall parent company owns a number of smaller companies called subsidiaries. Each of a conglomerate's subsidiary businesses runs independently but supports the wider goals and objectives of the parent company (for example, conglomerates use their subsidiaries to promote and market a media product).

Independent companies – Companies that are free from the control of a conglomerate. Independent companies usually specialise in producing one type of media product or service.

Joint venture – This is when a media company works with another company on a project that is mutually beneficial for both parties.

Distribution – This includes two elements: firstly, how a product or brand reaches an audience (for example, via web, cinema, television, and so on) and secondly, its marketing and promotion.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY

(30 minutes)

The TV mini-series *This is England '90* (2015) was produced by Warp Films, and was a spin-off series from the original *This is England* (2006) film. However, because Warp Films are an independent company and not part of a conglomerate, they had to work with external broadcasters and film distributors. Subsequently, they worked as part of a joint venture with Channel 4 and Film Four to distribute the brand in the UK and licensed the original film to distributors such as Studio Canal (Universal) to achieve global reach.

Similarly, the film *Pride* (2014) was a successful independent production by Calamity Films, who needed to work with companies that were part of global conglomerates in order for the film to be successful.

To investigate some of these companies, use a search engine such as Google to research *Pride* and Calamity Films and answer these questions:

- Which company distributed *Pride* to America? Are they a household name?
- Which company distributed *Pride* to Europe? Are they linked to the distributor above?
- Why do you think working with these distributors will have been beneficial to Calamity Films?

Public service ownership

In the UK the largest **public service broadcaster** is the BBC. The BBC's original aim, as set out by the first Director General, Lord Reith, was to produce output that informs, educates and entertains, and that commitment still exists today. The BBC, however, is still a conglomerate and is in fact one of the largest **cross-media** organisations in Europe.

Other companies that operate in the UK and have a duty to provide some public service broadcasting output owing to their roots as traditional terrestrial broadcast channels are Channel 4 (which is a public corporation but is self-funded by advertising), Channel 3 (owned by ITV plc) and Channel 5 (owned by Viacom). Channel 3 and Channel 5 are fully commercial and funded by advertising.

Understanding how media companies operate

The diagram in Figure 1.2 demonstrates the basic structure of a **vertically** and **horizontally integrated** cross-media company.

Along the vertical axis are the conglomerate company's other companies that have the ability to plan and produce a media product, distribute and market the product, and facilitate the audience to access, download and watch the product.

Along the horizontal axis, there will be a number of subsidiary companies across various media sectors that will be utilised to ensure the product has maximum exposure to the public.

In regards to the film sector, **Lucy Küng** (2008) also calls vertical and horizontal integration the film **value chain**. Disney is clearly an example of a cross-media

film company that fully utilises different areas of its ownership to maximise the success of a product through the value chain or vertical integration. It has the ability to produce and distribute its own products using the subsidiary companies within its conglomerate structure. In the digital age, companies can also exhibit their films via online **video-on-demand** (VoD) services. In terms of Disney's ability to exhibit and broadcast its own content, Disney owns the Disney Channel (TV) and Disney Life (online VoD), with the latter in particular allowing it to compete against other providers such as Netflix. This means that Disney controls the whole production process, from planning and releasing a product, to the audience consumption of it.


🔑 KEY TERMS

Public service broadcaster – A company that delivers services beneficial to the public interest. This type of company will offer products to the audience that go beyond the purpose of entertainment, and many products are made specifically to inform, educate and widen participation.

Cross-Media – A conglomerate that produces more than one type of media.

Vertical integration – This is where a media company has the ability to control the production, distribution and, in some cases, the exchange of a product. It is sometimes also known as the **value chain**.

Horizontal integration – This is when a media company utilises the assets of its subsidiary companies to support the marketing process of a major product or brand.

Video on demand (VoD) – When TV programmes, films and other media such as video games are available for audiences to watch online via a service such as YouTube or Netflix.
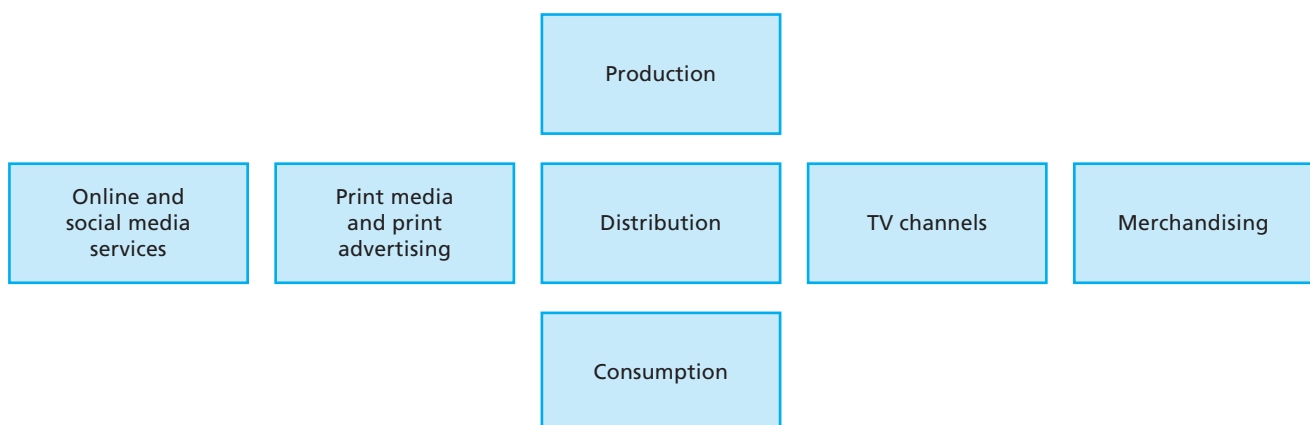
▲ **Figure 1.2** Basic structure of a vertically and horizontally integrated company
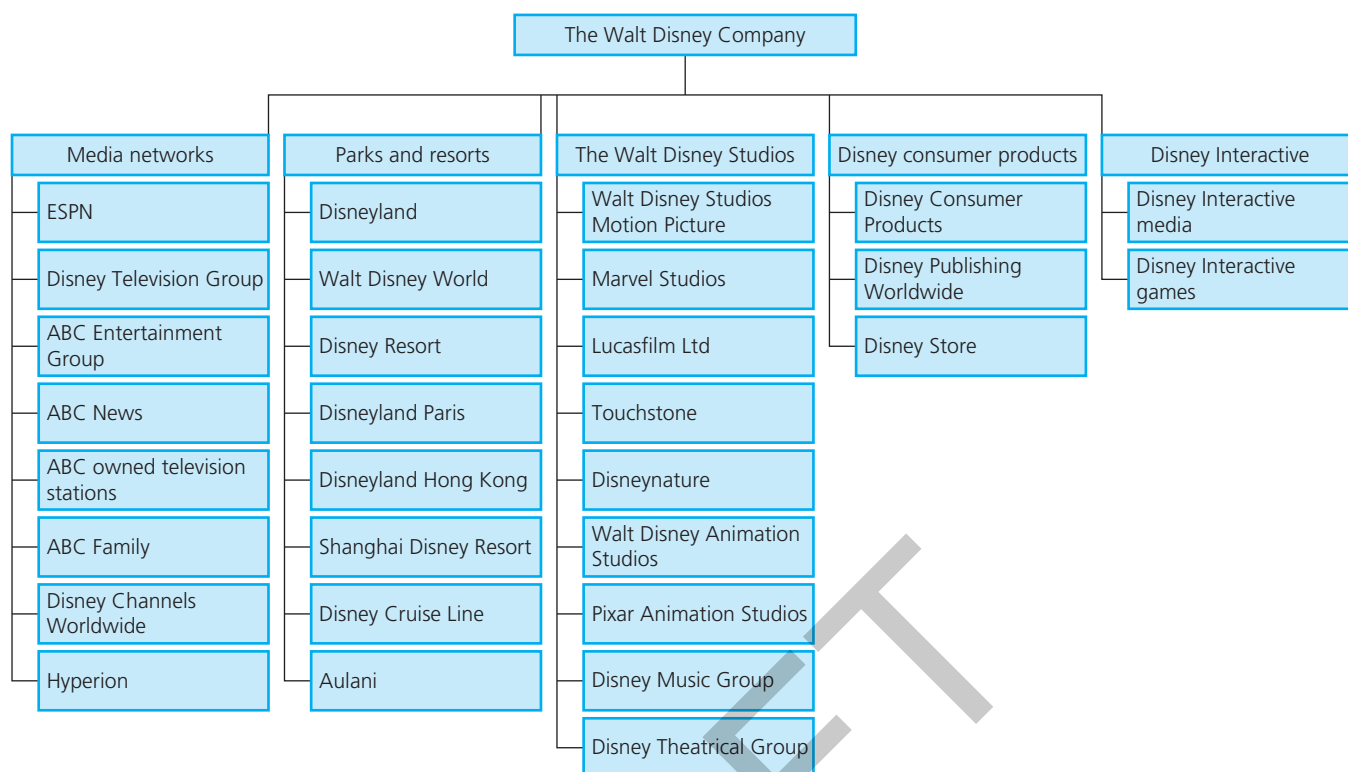
▲ **Figure 1.3** Examples of Disney's cross-media ownership

Synergy and cross-media promotion

Part of being a horizontally integrated company means that the opportunities for **synergy** are maximised.

For example, a conglomerate like 21st Century Fox works with its sister conglomerate, News Corporation, so that their films, such as *The Martian* (2015), are advertised during commercial breaks on Fox TV. These films are then also marketed in print media such as *The Sun*. So as you can see, 21st Century Fox uses

their **cross-media ownership** to create a horizontal structure. This will then maximise exposure to a product in ways that independent companies cannot do.

Disney has maximised opportunities for synergy in terms of merchandising by purchasing companies such as Marvel.

Like Marvel, Disney also has a tradition in merchandising, which is a big part of cross-media marketing and promotion of franchise products such as *Thor* (2011) or *The Avengers* (2012).

To expand on the concept of synergy, many media products are now known as cross-media products. This means that the original idea or concept of a product is adapted for other media. For example, the *Harry Potter* novels by J.K. Rowling were highly successful and were therefore adapted into films by Warner Brothers. The *Harry Potter* franchise subsequently became one of the most successful and marketable brands of the past twenty years.

Likewise in the UK, well-known brands such as Bauer Media's *Kerrang!* operate across the platforms of TV, radio, internet and print media.

> 🔑 **KEY TERMS**
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> **Synergy** – The increased efficiency and profit that occurs as a result of vertical and horizontal promotion. Conglomerates are formed to create synergy in order to cross-promote.
>
> **Cross-media ownership** – This is when a media institution owns two or more companies that specialise in different media sectors (for example, Sony is a conglomerate company that owns subsidiaries operating in many different sectors such as games production and film production).

Table 1.2 Media job roles and the production process

Job role	Pre-production	Production	Post-production

PAIRS ACTIVITY

Cross-media products (20 minutes)

Kerrang! is now known as one of the most successful commentators on indie rock music in the UK and as such sponsors venues and stages at festivals including Leeds, Reading and Download.

Research the *Kerrang!* brand using a search engine. Look specifically for the festivals that the brand sponsors.

1 What advantages to the *Kerrang!* brand might there be in sponsoring music festivals?
2 Think of ways in which *Kerrang!*'s presence at music festivals might be promoted across the media platforms it operates over. Use the *Kerrang!* website to help you.

Job roles in the media

No matter what media industry you are investigating, all products are made within the production process. The first stage of the production process of any media text or product cycle includes three main parts:

● **Pre-production** – This includes all the planning and drafting stages of a media product (for example, scheduling, funding, casting, designing, storyboarding, scriptwriting).
● **Production** – This includes all the actual making of a media product (for example, filming, photographing, writing, inking graphics, recording sound).
● **Post-production** – This includes any ways in which the media product is edited (for example, use of CGI and special effects, digital manipulation, sub-editing processes, audio editing techniques).

At each part of the production process, there are many different job roles that contribute to the final production of a media product in each sector. You are studying this course because you would like to work within one of the media sectors, so it is important that you have thought about which sector(s) you would like to work in.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY

Media job roles (30 minutes)

1 Choose a media industry of your choice and research at least five job roles within the sector.
2 Using the following table, tick which part of the production process each job role facilitates.

KNOW IT

1 Explain the difference between a conglomerate and an independent company.
2 Name two cross-media companies.
3 What are the three stages of the production process?

LO2 Understand how media products are advertised and distributed

2.1 Different types of advertising in media industries

GETTING STARTED

(10 minutes)

Choose a media product within a sector of your choice and write down as many ways as you can think of that the product is advertised to audiences.

Traditional methods of advertising a media product

Methods of **traditional advertising** have long been used to create awareness of a product, and throughout the twentieth century, advertising developed as a global industry in its own right. In particular, print media, radio and television technologies were used in combination to create international campaigns.

Print media

Print media advertising includes:

● Newspapers
● Magazines
● Billboards
● Flyers, brochures and leaflets

▲ **Figure 1.4** Examples of *Spectre* (2015) teaser and theatrical release film posters

Print media advertising is a form of advertising that uses physically printed media, such as billboards, magazines and newspapers. It is one of the oldest methods of advertising, and while there has been a decline in revenue in newspaper and magazine advertising, owing to advancements in technology, it is still one of the most successful and powerful **above-the-line** methods to reach a mass audience.

Marketing campaigns for global media products feature billboards that display high production values. Film posters such as those from the *James Bond* franchise are an essential part of the film's teaser trailers and marketing material.

Radio

Radio advertising includes:

- Local advertising on commercial channels
- Use of idents and jingles
- Sponsorship of a station or show

Placing an advertisement on local radio in the UK is still an effective way to reach an audience. Bauer Media Group cited that in 2015 over 9 million people listen to a Bauer-owned radio station every week. These include national brands such as *Heat*, *Kiss* and *Kerrang!*

🔑 **KEY TERMS**

Traditional advertising – Methods of advertising that have been used by media producers to promote products for many years before the digital age. These include print media advertising (for example, billboards, newspapers, magazines, flyers, direct mail marketing, television adverts and film trailers).

Above-the-line advertising – Where mass media is used to promote brands and reach out to the target consumers. These include conventional media such as television and radio advertising, print and the internet.

Television

Television advertising includes:

- Advertising in between programme commercial breaks
- Sponsorship of a primetime, flagship programme
- Use of product placement/star endorsement.

In the UK, advertising on television began in 1954. Since then, there have been many successful campaigns throughout the past six decades. In particular, with the rise of cable and satellite **narrowcast channels** in the 1980s and 1990s, there was a proliferation of glossy advertising that utilised emerging special effects technology. Indeed, as audiences become accustomed to viewing vastly expensive and sophisticated products in the palm of their hand, many contemporary television adverts boast extremely high production values and cinematic, animation and graphic sequences in order to attract attention.

Digital methods of advertising a media product

The invention of broadband technology allowed new media and **Web 2.0 technologies** with multimedia functions to be harnessed as ways to advertise products to audiences. The rise in digital media has therefore created new and innovative ways to market media products such as film and music in particular.

Pop-up adverts, web banners, official social media, viral memes and video-on-demand material are used as above-the-line techniques to reach mass audiences.

The personalised functions of social media, blogs and e-mail shots can be used to directly engage individuals by innovative **below-the-line** methods. For example, Facebook and Twitter's competition campaigns directly target the individual.

You will find more information about using social media as an advertising tool in Chapter 6.

▲ **Figure 1.5** Examples of below-the-line targeting

PAIRS ACTIVITY

Power of social media (20 minutes)

Read the following article by **Sonny Ganguly** for *Marketingland.com* (2015): www.marketingland.com/social-media-advertising-set-explode-next-3-years-121691

1 According to Ganguly, what three advantages does social media have over some traditional advertising methods?
2 Pick one media product you have watched or interacted with in the past month. In what way has the social media advertising for the product reached you? Create a mind map and give specific examples.

2.2 How media products are advertised to audiences

As we have seen, media products can be advertised to audiences both by traditional and digital methods, and they can be utilised together to create cross-media campaigns.

Advertising methods in a cross-media campaign

As we saw in Learning Outcome 1, media companies use synergy to promote products. As part of this it is important to look at the specific ways in which traditional and digital methods come together to create a campaign. Across every media sector, from film to video games, a variety of traditional and digital methods are used to promote a product. The following case scenario looks at how the video game *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* by Ubisoft was advertised to its target audiences using a full range of methods.

THINK ABOUT IT

Case scenario

Assassin's Creed: Syndicate

Ubisoft originally launched *Assassin's Creed* in 2007. Since then it has become a globally successful third person, historical, action adventure, role-play gaming franchise that, to date, has had eight sequels and several other spin-off titles. Ubisoft launched its ninth chapter, *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* in October 2015. Even though Ubisoft had a captive target market, the strategies they used to promote this new game included both above-the-line and below-the-line, and traditional and digital media technologies, to create hype and excitement around the game.
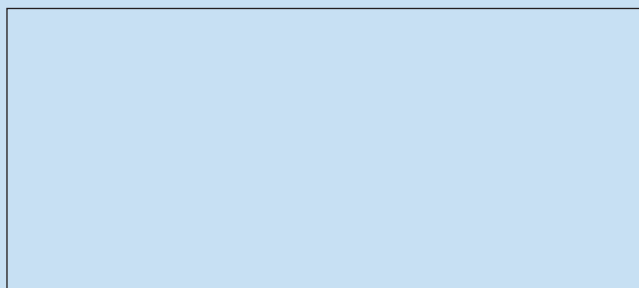
▲ **Figure 1.6** Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* box cover for Sony's PlayStation 4 console

As part of traditional methods, magazine reviews, spreads and interviews, television adverts, merchandising, media conferences and special collectible editions were used, and there was even the projection of the game logo onto a public building.

As part of digital and social media online marketing methods, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Steam forums and Instagram were all utilised to advertise the game. These techniques were used not only by Ubisoft and console companies such as Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox One, but also by gamers themselves in order to discuss narrative, potential gameplay and characters.

Now THINK ABOUT the following:

1 Why do you think that Ubisoft projected the game logo onto a public building?
2 Why might Ubisoft still think it is important that *Assassin's Creed: Syndicate* is featured on the front cover of *PlayStation* magazine?
3 In what ways might social media promote the traditional methods of advertising?

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY

Advertising across platforms (40 minutes)

Choose one media product of your choice that has been released recently.

1 Identify all the ways in which the product was advertised by traditional methods. Find web links to support your answer.
2 Write down all the ways in which the product was advertised by digital methods. Find web links to support your answer.
3 Explain how the two methods worked together to successfully promote the product.

2.3 Distributing media products to audiences

It is important to think about how audiences access media products. With new technologies, there are now many different ways in which products are able to reach and be distributed to audiences, and in this section we discuss the main ways.

Technological convergence

Traditional methods of distributing a media product still exist today. These include going to watch a film at the cinema, watching a programme on television in your living room, listening to the radio in the car and at home, and purchasing magazines, newspapers and music in shops.

However, broadband technology and the **technological convergence** of devices has meant that online distribution of media products has become commonplace in contemporary society.

KEY TERM

Technological convergence – The coming together of information and communication technologies in order to create new ways of producing and distributing products and services to media audiences.

▲ **Figure 1.7** *Wired* magazine's interpretation of smartphone convergence

As **Henry Jenkins** (2006) suggests, the arrival of Web 2.0 software, high-speed broadband and **black box** devices such as smartphones, tablets and smart TVs in the 2000s meant that media products could be bought and consumed without leaving the house.

programmes, specifically allowing you to search and pick outside of scheduling time. There are also audio streaming services and content management systems such as Spotify and iTunes that offer millions of songs from which you can build vast playlists.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Your media consumption (20 minutes)

1 In small groups, think of all of the media that you consume on a daily basis. This can include social media products, television programmes, films, video games and music. Write a list of the names of the products.

2 Next, identify how each product was distributed to you and how you consume it. The following prompt questions may help you:
- Did you buy the product? If so, where?
- Do you have to leave the house to access the product?
- What devices do you use to consume the product?

Impact of online distribution

We can now **download**, **stream** and **simulcast** films, music and television programmes at the click of a button. There are dedicated video-on-demand services such as YouTube, Amazon Prime Netflix and BBC iPlayer that allow us to access films and TV

Sonia Livingstone (2002) suggested that the new digital age would bring the era of 'death of the schedule'. In terms of television programmes, video on-demand services allow us to access programmes at any time, and even though programmes such as ITV's *X Factor* still draw in mass audiences at a specific, scheduled time, the broadcast is accompanied by targeted social media, or 'social TV' campaigns that encourage audience participation in the lead-up, during and after the programme. Behind-the-scenes extras and 'director's cuts' are also now available for audiences to access online, which have drastically changed the experience and relationship audiences have with media products.

KNOW IT

1 Name one above-the-line method of advertising.
2 Name one below-the-line method of advertising.
3 Give two ways that technological convergence has changed distribution of media products.

LO3 Understand how meaning is created in media products

3.1 The use and application of production techniques to create media products

GETTING STARTED

(10 minutes)

In pairs, pick one media sector (for example, gaming, print, film). Pick a specific form of text and genre (such as rock music magazine, horror blockbuster film) from the sector and make a list of all the codes and conventions that you would expect from each. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

Why codes and conventions are important

As mentioned at the start of this unit, while you are going to be studying one specific media sector in terms of the assessment requirements for this learning outcome, you will also need to ensure that you have an awareness of media within other sectors in order to appreciate the wider knowledge required for Learning Outcomes 1 and 2.

As part of this, you will be investigating specific **codes and conventions** that are used by media producers

when making different media products. You will not only need to be able to recognise these conventions, but you should also be able to explain why they are used and how preferred meanings are created because of the specific codes that have been chosen.

KEY TERMS

Codes and conventions – The familiar and predictable forms and techniques used by producers when creating media texts. These are used to communicate certain ideas or to convey a desired impression. There are two types of codes: the first are technical codes and these include production-specific production techniques such as camera angles, editing techniques, use of sound, text and image formatting, composition and framing; the second are symbolic codes and include the language, dress and actions of characters, or positioning of models.

Genre – A specific type of media text. There are also hybrid genres, which are a mixture of two or more main genres (*Shaun of the Dead* (2004) is often known as a 'ZomRomCom'), and sub-genres, which are genres within genres. Sub-genres share elements of the main genre (for example, 'slasher' and 'gothic' are sub-genres of horror).

Verisimilitude – How real the world of the story or narrative of a fictional media product appears to the audience (for example, is the world presented to the audience believable?)

Audio-visual media

Audio-visual media products include video games, animation, film, television programmes, music videos and advertisements. While all of these have many specific **genres** within them, all will utilise some or all of the established technical codes of cinema to communicate meaning to their audiences.

Mise-en-scène

Mise-en-scène choices help create **verisimilitude** for the audience. They are extremely important as they are the elements that we notice first. '*Mise-en-scène*' translated means 'everything in the frame'.

Mise-en-scène elements include:

● **Location and set design** – This is extremely important because it is primarily how the verisimilitude is created (what time period and where a production is set is initially created by set design).

- **Iconography** – This is where something can be encoded with meaning so that it represents something else. Specific iconography will be included as part of the set design to create a specific meaning for the audience. Iconography will include buildings, landmarks and background objects that help audiences identify time and place.
- **Properties** – Often shortened to 'props', any objects that are held or used by an actor in order to further the plot or storyline.
- **Costumes and make-up** – Wardrobe items chosen for the actors to wear that specifically represent them in a particular way.
- **Lighting** – The traditional three-point lighting system is used on set with the fill, the back and the key lights being put in place. High-key lighting is used to make the scenery appear natural or realistic. Low-key is dark, gloomy and the use of shadows is often used to connote a foreboding atmosphere.
- **Colour design** – Colour can be used to draw attention to things, to make them stand out or create mood.

🔑 KEY TERM

Diegetic world – The fictional world (time and place) of the narrative.

PAIRS ACTIVITY 👥

Mise-en-scène (20 minutes)

Search for a series trailer from HBO's *Deadwood* (2004–2006).

1 Which *mise-en-scène* elements have specifically helped to create the **diegetic** world of late nineteenth-century Dakota?
2 Give specific examples from the clip.

Camerawork

The way in which a scene is filmed helps determine who the characters are, the storyline, and contributes to the overall verisimilitude and atmosphere of the production.

Camera shot types include: close-up, medium shot, long shot, two-shot, crowd shot, extreme close-up, medium long shot, aerial shot, over-the-shoulder shot, subjective point of view shot.

GROUP ACTIVITY 👥

Shot types (10 minutes)

Using the list of camera shot types to help you, work in pairs to label the correct shot types shown in Figure 1.8. Discuss your conclusions with the rest of the class.

INSERT FIG.1.08

▲ **Figure 1.8** Different camera shot types

Camera image composition includes: framing, rule of thirds, deep depth of field, shallow depth of field, pull focus.

Camera angles include: high angle, low angle, Dutch angle, level shot.

Camera movements include: tilt, pan, tracking shot, zoom in/out, dolly zoom, crane movement, arc.

Editing techniques

At its most basic, editing is the organisation and **juxtaposition** of shots to create meaning and is the process by which footage/animation/graphics are shaped into a coherent order. According to **Bordwell and Thompson** (1989), continuity editing is a system of cutting to maintain continuous and clear narrative action.

Continuity visual editing techniques include: use of master shot, shot reverse shot, eyeline match, action match, insert shot, ellipsis, cross cutting. Figure 1.9 shows a range of continuity editing techniques.

Non-continuity visual editing techniques include: graphic match, flashback, flash forward, time lapse.

Transitions include: dissolve, wipe, fade in/out.

Transitions are a vital part of the audio-visual editing process, but are sometimes tricky to identify and analyse. The table on the next page demonstrates how you can link production technique, definition and connotation together. (Connotation is defined on page 14.)

> **🔑 KEY TERM**
>
> **Juxtaposition** – The placing of one element next to another to create a specific meaning.
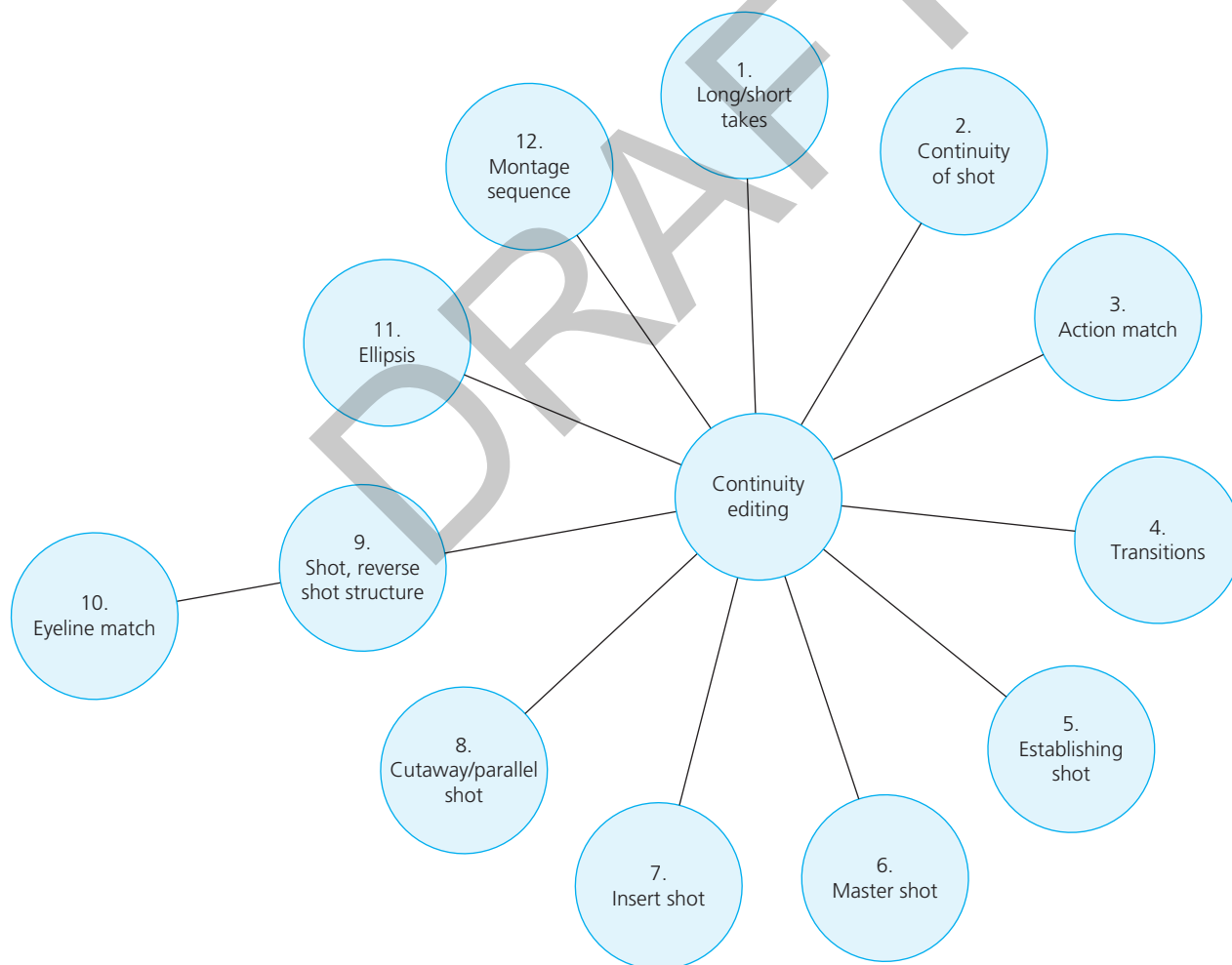
▲ **Figure 1.9** Continuity editing techniques

Table 1.3 Definitions and uses of transition types

Transition/Denotation	Definition	Use/Connotation
Dissolve	A new shot fades in while the previous shot fades out.	Connotes the passage of time (featuring an ellipsis) or a change of location.
Wipe	A new shot 'wipes' the previous one off screen.	Connotes the passage of time (featuring an ellipsis) or a change of location.
Fade in/out	A new shot starts as black and gradually appears. A shot gradually gets darker until it disappears.	Used to connote the beginning or end of a scene or time of day and therefore can connote the passage of time – possibly featuring an ellipsis.

Diegetic sound includes: dialogue (for example, accent, dialect and **mode of address**), sound effects, wild tracks, ambient sound, off-screen sounds.

Non-diegetic sound includes: sound track, incidental music, sound motifs.

Sound editing includes: dubbing, noise print, sonic bridge.

🔑 KEY TERM

Mode of address – The way in which a media product speaks to or attracts its audience.

👥 GROUP ACTIVITY

Use of sound (30 minutes)

Using the internet, search for a clip from the BBC production *Life on Mars* (2006). In this production, a variety of sound has been used to create meaning for the audience. The dubbing demonstrates the high production values of the programme and is an excellent example of how skilled manipulation of sound can significantly contribute to the narrative and audience understanding of the film or TV programme.

Answer the following questions:

1 What is the most prominent sound you can hear?
2 What diegetic sound effects can you identify?
3 What non-diegetic sounds can you identify?
4 How has the dubbing successfully combined the use of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds and how does this help the audience understand what might be happening?

Denotation/connotation

In 1977, **Roland Barthes** wrote 'The Rhetoric of the Image' and through a considered analysis of advertising, argued that there are two levels to any sign or visual representation. He suggested that **denotation** tends to be described as the definitional, literal, obvious or common-sense meaning of what is seen. **Connotation**, however, is when the audience brings the established or naturalised meaning to what they see. Barthes conducted many semiotic analyses of advertising in order to demonstrate how products were sold and how ideologies become naturalised.

This theory must be applied when analysing the technical codes of any media product. If we take the sound example from the last group activity, then the off-screen, denotative noise of an ambulance siren will connote danger or disruption for the character.

We can apply this idea to basic *mise-en-scène* elements such as colour. Red is often believed to connote danger and pink often symbolises love.

🔑 KEY TERMS

Denotation – The literal meaning of a code, sign or generic convention of a media text or product.

Connotations – The suggested, possible meanings of any given denotation.

Masthead – The title of a publication as it appears on the front cover, and associated design elements that make it recognisable.

Anchorage – Pinning down the meaning of a media text by use of words and sound. A front cover of a magazine, for example, will have cover lines to tell the audience who the main image is depicting.

Print and web-based media

Although print media has seen an overall decline in terms of physical purchase, the codes and conventions that inform the production of products has not changed and many print products are now available as downloadable electronic editions, or e-zines. While the publishing industry is vast, many products such as brochures, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers share similar basic conventions. All print and web products have a very specific mode of address to their target audiences and the use of language will differ according to the purpose of the magazine, genre and topic. For example, a magazine and its accompanying website, such as DC Thomson's *Shout* magazine, aimed at teenage girls, will often 'act' as an older friend, who wants to share gossip about celebrities and fashion tips.

INSERT FIG.1.10
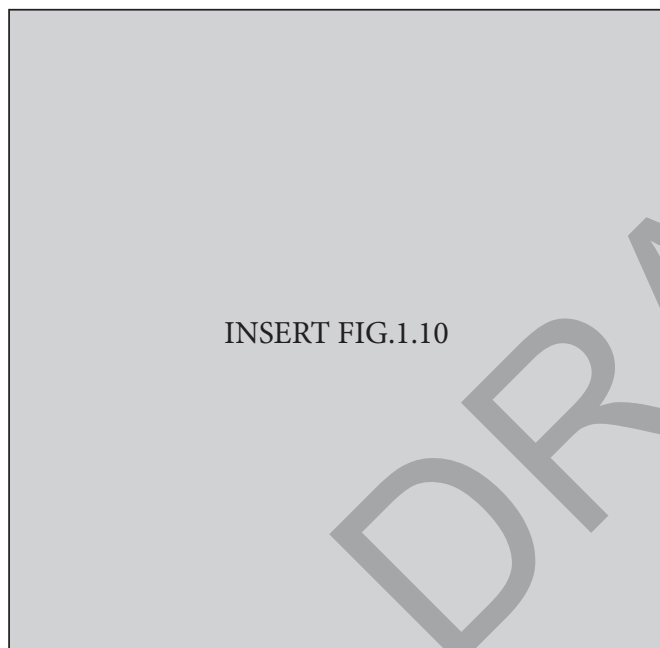
▲ **Figure 1.10** *Shout* magazine

The basic conventions of print production

The following list gives the basic conventions of print production you will need to consider when analysing and producing print and web-based media:

- **Layout** – This is how the elements on the page are presented. If you think about the juxtaposition of elements on a page, what is the first thing you notice? For magazines and newspapers, it is the main image and **masthead**.

- **House style and colour scheme** – These are important elements because they give the product a brand identity. The fonts, colours and style of text layout will remain similar across all marketing material.
- **Photography techniques** – This is important in particular for advertising and magazine design. Close-ups and medium close-ups, for example, are used on magazine covers to denote the main cover star.
- **Captions** – These are used to **anchor** the meaning of a product. Captions are used on newspaper and magazine photographs to tell the audience what the image is about and who it is of.

Audio

The conventions of audio media vary greatly across the different types of products. In this chapter we have looked briefly at the audio you will produce for film, television and video game narratives. However, for radio products, particularly live broadcasts, you will encounter the following:

Jingles and sound motifs – These are used to help create a brand identity for a radio station or programme, or can be used as part of a radio advertisement. Jingles include slogans and memorable tunes. The company Wise Buddah creates jingles for radio stations all over the country.

Presenters and mode of address – Whilst accent, dialect and tone all need to be considered when thinking about audio products such as news reports or audio books, presenters are vital to any radio show because they provide familiarity and become part of the brand. Local radio presenters, such as Hallam FM's John Harrison of the flagship morning show *Big John at Breakfast*, interact with the audience as much as the editorial team do in a teen or lifestyle magazine. This is a peer-to-peer mode of address style.

3.2 Critical and theoretical analysis of media texts

Once you have identified both the technical and symbolic micro-elements within media texts, the next stage is to understand *why* they have been used in relation to creating wider macro meanings for the audience.

As a direct link to your own media production work on this course, you will need to be able to fully explain why you have made certain choices at the stages of pre-production, production and post-production. To do this, and to understand the wider messages and role that media products have on culture and society, we can look at theories of **representation**, **narrative** and **genre**.

> ### 🔑 KEY TERMS
>
> **Representation** – How different groups of people, ideas and ideologies are portrayed by the media.
>
> **Narrative theory** – Theory about the ways in which stories are structured in order to create meaning for the audience.
>
> **Genre theory** – A critical tool that helps us study texts and audience responses to texts by dividing them into categories based on common elements. Genre theory discusses why and how both audience and institutions use and recognise genres.
>
> **Stereotypes** – A generalised, oversimplified version of a group of people. They are used by the media in order to target audiences and to enable audiences to identify and understand the content of products. **Richard Dyer** (1977) suggested that stereotypes are always associated with 'out groups' as a way to marginalise them. As **Tessa Perkins** (1979) noted, however, stereotypes are not always negative and are instead ways in which we view the world (for example, 'the French are typically good cooks').

Theories of representation

For representation to be meaningful to audiences, there needs to be a shared recognition of people, situations, ideas and so on, such as **stereotypes** (**Walter Lippmann**, 1922). All representations therefore have ideologies behind them. This means that the representations stand for a wider set of ideas, beliefs or principles.

Laura Mulvey (1975) – Objectification of women in the media

Mulvey suggested that women are presented as sex objects in all media texts, but she focused her research on film in particular. She believed that women are positioned so that the female body is objectified in order to provide erotic pleasure for heterosexual men and this is known as the 'male gaze'. Mulvey suggested that women also accept the male gaze owing to the fact that it is constantly reinforced across media texts. **Judith Williamson** (1978) also investigated gender roles and stereotyping, but instead focused on advertising.

INSERT FIG.1.11

▲ **Figure 1.11** Lynx Excite advertisement

Narrative theories

Narrative theory is concerned with analysing the ways in which stories are put together and how audiences understand them.

Tzvetan Todorov (1969) – 5-step narrative formula

Tzvetan Todorov suggested that all films follow the same five-stage narrative pattern:

1 A story begins with the state of equilibrium (all is as it should be/state of affairs is normal).
2 There is a disruption of that equilibrium by an event (this is a negative event that will impact on the main characters in the story).
3 A recognition that the disorder has occurred (the main characters realise that their lives are in a state of disruption).
4 There is a recognised attempt to repair the damage of the disruption (the characters fight to 'save the day', usually in a battle).
5 A return or restoration of a new equilibrium (normality will return but the main characters will have changed in some way).

This is a simple way of thinking about narrative but it can be applied to virtually all stories in film, television and radio drama programmes, and video games. It is an important one to consider when you are planning your work for this course because you will need to think about how it will be filmed and the continuity or non-continuity editing techniques you may use at the stage of post-production.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958) – Binary opposition

Claude Lévi-Strauss was a cultural anthropologist and structuralist, and part of his work investigated why there were so many similarities within the stories that are told within different cultures. In his book *Structural Anthropology* (1958), he discovered that one of the most common means of structuring a story was through binary opposition, which are elements embedded in narrative and *mise-en-scène*, such as good and evil, white and black or old and young.

It is important to think about how you can convey, for example, who is the protagonist or antagonist. At the planning stages for your own production work you will think about *mise-en-scène* elements such as costume, location and props, and how these can be used to clearly identify character and role in the production you are creating. When analysing existing media texts, thinking about Lévi-Strauss' ideas is extremely useful because it will give you the opportunity to think about what is happening in the story, and how it has literally been encoded to give you a specific meaning.

PAIRS ACTIVITY

Applying Todorov and Lévi-Strauss (30 minutes)

Research any battle scene from HBO's *Game of Thrones*.

In small groups discuss and answer the following:

1 What narrative stage from Todorov's formula do you think the scene represents?
2 Choose three continuity editing techniques that can be used to justify your answer.
3 Explain how Lévi-Strauss' ideas about narrative might be applied to the scene.
4 Describe how you think *mise-en-scène* has contributed to this.

Genre theories

Genre theory analyses the ways in which genre is used by institutions and why audiences enjoy different genres.

Rick Altman (1999) – Audience pleasures

Rick Altman argues that genre offers audiences 'a set of pleasures', such as:

1 **Emotional pleasures**: does the text make the audience happy, sad, nostalgic, and so on?
2 **Visceral pleasures**: 'gut' responses, such as excitement, fear, laughter.
3 **Intellectual puzzles**: Does the text make the audience think?

Altman's theory suggests that many of the texts we use every day have a specific set of codes and conventions that not only provide us with familiarity but also fulfil a specific need as a result of interacting with the product. If you think about a genre such as horror, this will offer audiences visceral pleasure of both excitement and fear, whereas crime or thrillers may offer an intellectual puzzle.

KNOW IT

1 Name three elements of *mise-en-scène*.
2 Write down one genre theorist.
3 Summarise Todorov's basic theory of narrative structure.

LO4 Understand the target audiences of media products

4.1 Classifying audiences

GETTING STARTED

(20 minutes)

Using Bauer Media's website at www.bauermedia.co.uk as a starting point, find one magazine that you believe has a mainstream target audience and one magazine you believe has a niche audience.

Pick at least five reasons from the content of each magazine to justify your answers.

Mainstream audiences

If a media product is said to have a **mainstream** or mass audience it will appeal to a wide range of people.

KEY TERM

Mainstream audience – An audience that consumes a product that appeals to a wide range of age groups and cultures.

Blockbuster films and video games produced and distributed by some of the large media conglomerates discussed previously in Learning Outcome 1 of this unit, will generally make a large profit, and primetime television programmes will command large viewing figures.

Niche audiences

Niche audiences or markets are often small and they are targeted very much on specialist interests, skills or beliefs. Products like Bauer Media's *Trout and Salmon* magazine might not be well known but it has been in publication since 1955 and therefore its loyal following means that it is still profitable enough to print every month. It is also clearly valued by fishing companies as a way to reach their ideal audience in terms of advertising their products.

INSERT FIG.1.12

▲ **Figure 1.12** Bauer Media's *Trout and Salmon* magazine

> 🔑 **KEY TERM**
>
> **Niche audience** – The audience of a specialist interest media product that may only appeal to a small number of people or those that fall within a specific demographic profile (for example, ethnicity or age).

4.2 Demographic profiles

NRS social grades

The **NRS (National Readership Survey) social grades** are categorised A–E and as Table 1.4 demonstrates, they are based on different job roles. Although it first developed over 50 years ago, the classification still provides the UK publishing and print industry with a means of classifying audiences in a way understood by the vast majority of potential advertisers.

Table 1.4 NRS social grades

INSERT Table 1.4

Profiling audiences

Media companies have used market research to continually monitor the audiences of their products. Surveys are undertaken by companies such as the NRS, **RAJAR** and **BARB** for media organisations that provide vital information about the **demographic** profile of the average audience that is of great use when selling that audience to potential advertisers.

While the purchasing of physical print media is in decline, subscriptions to e-zine and other electronic print media are stabilising and the medium of the web itself has provided the opportunity for producers of traditional media to reach audiences. Two of the biggest publishers, Bauer Media and Time Inc., see themselves as cross-media digital providers.

One of the more interesting ways that Bauer display demographic information for their specific brands is through infographics. **John Hartley** (1985) suggested that media producers create 'invisible fictions', which is similar to **Ien Ang**'s (1991) ideas about the creation of an '**imaginary entity**'. Bauer Media do something quite creative in terms of selling their audience to advertisers by creating a written, engaging profile, as seen from the 2013 *Kerrang!* press pack in Figure 1.13.

▲ **Figure 1.13** Bauer Media's *Kerrang!* audience profile

Before their takeover by Time Inc., IPC Media also used interesting visual methods that included profiles accompanied by imagery and 'mood board' collages, created as part of their press pack information for flagship magazines such as *NME* and *Uncut*. See, for example, Figure 1.14. These used official ABC1 age and gender data analysis gained from NRS research, and also utilised ideas around **psychographics** to visually communicate audience lifestyle choices to potential advertisers.

▲ **Figure 1.14** IPC Media's *NME* reader profile

🔑 **KEY TERMS**

NRS social grades – A method of classifying demographics based on occupation and income, developed by the **National Readership Survey** (www.nrs.co.uk).

RAJAR – The acronym for **Radio Joint Audience Research**, which collates listening figures for over 300 radio stations across the UK (www.rajar.co.uk).

BARB – The acronym for the **Broadcasters' Audience Research Board**, which collates viewing figures for all the major UK broadcasters such as BBC, ITV and Sky (www.barb.co.uk).

Demographics – When media producers study the breakdown of their target audiences based on variables in age, ethnicity, gender, economic status or class, level of education, hobbies and interests, and lifestyle choices.

Imaginary entity – A term that suggests media producers have a specific audience member or demographic in mind before they plan a media product.

Psychographics – Profiling of audience members based on their personal beliefs, values, interests and lifestyle.

THINK ABOUT IT

Case scenario

Creating an audience profile

Small Machines is a toy company based in Sheffield and they specialise in the production of wooden and handmade, engineered toys. They currently have a contract with the Leeds Royal Armoury Museum to reproduce Middle Ages battle equipment and are therefore quite specialist.

The owner of Small Machines has asked you to make them a website. As part of this, the owner has asked you to think about the different target audiences that might be interested in the product, beyond collectors and museum outlets.

They have therefore asked you to create a profile of the average audience member that takes into account ideas about profiling from **geodemographics** and psychographics.

1 Think about who might buy the toys from Small Machines.
2 Using the *Kerrang!* **audience profile** in Figure 1.13 as a style guide, write about a creative 'imaginary entity' audience member.
3 Using the *NME* press pack from Figure 1.14 as a model, create a collage which demonstrates that you have considered the age, gender, interests and NRS classifications of the average audience member.

KEY TERMS

Audience profile – The specific demographic variables of an average target audience member for a given media product based on age, gender, income, ethnicity and interests, that makes them desirable to advertisers and commercial companies.

Geodemographics – A profile of audience members based on the area where they live and how much they earn.

4.3 How products fulfil audience needs

Uses and gratifications

While research can be undertaken to ask audiences whether they feel that they have enjoyed interacting with and using a media product or brand (market research methods will be discussed in Learning Outcome 5), why audiences use media products can be looked at from a theoretical point of view.

Denis McQuail (1987) identified four categories under the broader heading 'uses and gratifications' that offer an insight into why audiences use and interact with certain media products.

The categories are:

1 **Escapism** – People use media products to get away from reality.
2 **Surveillance** – People use media products to find out information.
3 **Personal relationships** – People use media products as talking points.
4 **Personal identity** – People use media products as a means of shaping their own 'subcultural identities' (**Dick Hebdige**, 1979).

Reality TV shows and soap operas are often cited as being escapist texts and, as we have previously seen, primetime shows such as *The X Factor* pull in large viewing figures. Social media and online forums have also contributed to such shows acting as talking points, with Facebook, Digital Spy and Twitter acting as ways in which people can communicate their thoughts and views. Music artists and celebrities/actors on TV programmes and films act as 'ideal selves' (**Carl Rogers**, 1980) and opinion leaders or fashion icons. Indeed, magazines such as *Heat* and *Now* often feature spreads based on 'copying' the look of a celebrity.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Applying the uses and gratifications model (30 minutes)

Go to *The X Factor*'s official YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/TheXFactorUK and watch at least five clips from the programme. Look at who is presenting it and the marketing material on the channel.

Using Table 1.5 as a starting point, identify how the programme might fit the uses and gratifications model in relation to a mainstream target audience.

Table 1.5 Applying the uses and gratifications model

Uses and gratifications	Example	Relationship to audience
Escapism		
Surveillance		
Personal relationships		
Personal identity		

KNOW IT

1 Who are RAJAR?
2 Write down what the NRS do.
3 Name McQuail's four 'uses and gratifications' categories.

LO5 Be able to evaluate research data used by media institutions

GETTING STARTED

(20 minutes)

You have been asked to launch a new fashion magazine aimed at young females in the 16 to 24 age bracket.

What primary methods might you use to gain information about possible content for the magazine? Give reasons for your answer.

5.1 Research methods

Primary research methods

There are many methods of **primary research** and the most appropriate will depend on what, as a media producer, you want to find out. One of the main ways in which primary research is used is for producers of products to find out about their target audience. The following are widely used methods of primary research:

- **Questionnaires** – These consist of a series of questions that are tailored to gather specific information from audiences and they are an integral part of **market research**. Open and closed questions are used:
  - Open questions allow the audience to write extended responses acting as **qualitative data** that can help identify specific likes, dislikes and trends.
  - Closed questions are often those that answer in a 'yes', 'no' or ranking style (such as the Likert scale) and provide **quantitative data** that can be easily translated into percentages or graph formats.
- **Focus groups** – A group of people assembled to participate in a discussion about a product before it is launched, or to provide feedback on a political campaign, television series, and so on.
- **Interviews** – These are a standard part of qualitative research. They are also used in journalism and media reporting and, like questionnaires, are integral to market research.
- **Online surveys** – These are questionnaires that the target audience can complete over the internet. Online survey services such as SurveyMonkey make them quick and easy to create.

KEY TERMS

Primary research – Research that has been undertaken by you personally in order to gain new data. This is also known as first-hand research.

Market research – The activity of gathering information about audience needs and preferences, conducted by a media producer or institution.

Qualitative data – Typically descriptive data, useful for studies at the individual level, and to find out, in depth, the ways in which people think about a product.

Quantitative data –Data that can be measured numerically. Things that can be measured precisely, such as the number of people who listen to a radio station or who have purchased a video game online.

Secondary research – The use of data or findings from research that has already been undertaken.

Secondary research methods

Use of **secondary research** is commonplace when gathering information about audiences. Most of the time, we use the internet to quickly access data that we need or to find out basic information. However, when we are conducting structured projects we need to use other people's research to inform our understanding. For example, using theorists' ideas about presentation can give us a key insight into the content we put into our own media products on this course. Here are some forms of secondary research:

- **Internet research** – This is when internet search engines are utilised and data, personal opinions, news articles and academic research are gathered on a particular topic.
- **Books and journals** – Textbooks and their digital editions can still provide a valid way of gaining information and ideas. Academic journals that can be accessed online are also a good way of gaining up-to-date information about a particular topic.
- **Magazines and newspapers** – Can provide a wealth of information. Very often, articles have been written by professional journalists who have used primary research methods, such as interviews, to gather information about a particular subject.
- **Television** – Documentaries, news and factual advice programmes can provide a lot of information. The use of audio-visual media is a visual aid and whilst some documentaries (such as historical documentaries) may have a particular bias, they can condense vast amounts of information into short, manageable chunks.

You will find more information on research methodologies in Chapter 2.

5.2 Purpose of research

Product reach

Media institutions expect that mass media products have a large potential product or audience reach. This means that the product is likely to be successful and will make profit through sales numbers or advertising revenue. However, one of the main reasons that media institutions conduct research is to find out how many people actually consume the product within any given potential reach. Organisations such as BARB and RAJAR conduct this for companies operating within the TV and radio industries respectively, and the NRS collects **circulation** and **readership** data for publishing and print media companies.

Audience feedback

This is a vital part of gaining awareness about a product or potential **gap in the market**. Media institutions use online methods to identify pros and cons about products and for advertising campaigns. Very often social media is also used by audience members to give their personal opinion direct to the producer as part of **audience feedback** methods. An advantage of using social media as a tool to gain both qualitative and quantitative feedback is that it is cheap and, on the whole, easier to administer. Online surveys are also cheap and many institutions will ask you to complete a questionnaire about their experiences with you, which is distributed to smartphones as a pop-up advert once a user has clicked on a product website. In terms of identifying a gap in the market for a special product or service, producers will need to have completed qualitative research before they launch a brand.

Competitors

Research is undertaken by media producers to find out what audiences think about the products and brands owned by direct **competitors**. BBC and ITV are constantly using online technologies to conduct focus groups about what viewers thought about major storylines such as *EastEnders Live* week (2015) and *Coronation Street*'s 'Who killed Tina?' storyline (2014). Again, social media is used to elicit opinions, and forums on services such as Hearst UK's Digital Spy give producers a direct link to viewers' thoughts about competitor content.

INSERT FIG.1.15
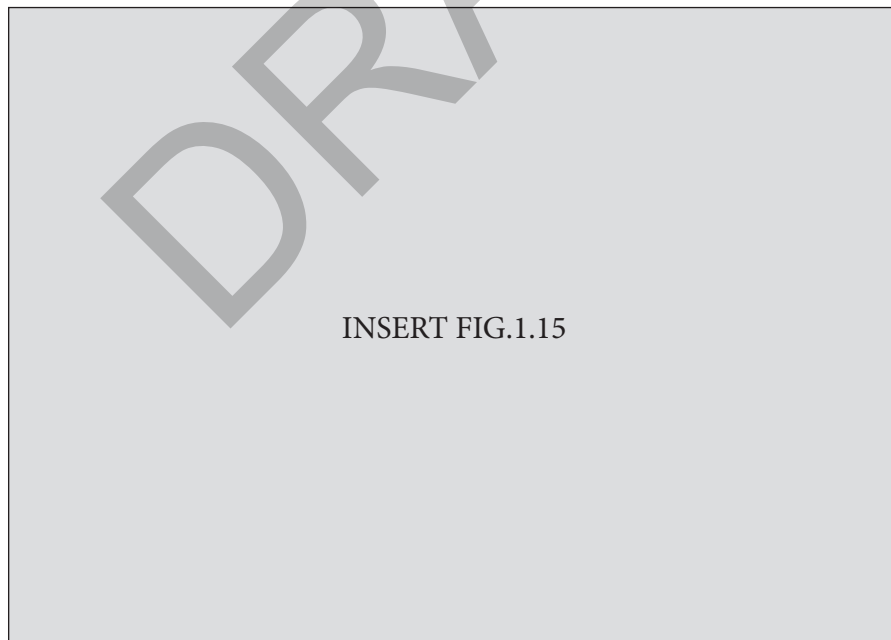
▲ **Figure 1.15** An example of Hearst's Digital Spy 'soap' forum content

🔑 KEY TERMS

Circulation – The number of people who purchase a print product.

Readership – The number of people who read a print product as part of second-hand consumption.

Gap in the market – The identification of a group of potential customers who are not yet purchasing a product, or the realisation by an institution that there is a need for a new type of product or brand.

Audience feedback – When the audience provide a media producer with feedback about a product or brand. This is done through market research instigated by the producer or by the audience members themselves giving feedback via Web 2.0 technologies.

Competitors – Media institutions, products or brands which are direct rivals against each other (for example, Global Media's Capital Yorkshire and Bauer Media's Hallam FM stations).

Market possibilities – The ways in which institutions believe their brand or product can expand into another medium as a cross-media product or spin-off.

5.3 Analysing audience research

Market possibilities

In terms of **market possibilities** the most successful products will often have spin-offs and sequels. However, this will only be based on audience feedback. Using the example of the *Assassin's Creed* video game franchise, which was discussed in Learning Outcome 2, Ubisoft, and console companies such as Sony and Microsoft, clearly believed there was a potential for the brand.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY 👤

Spin-offs (30 minutes)

Go to the official *Assassin's Creed* website at http://assassinscreed.ubi.com/en-gb/home. Now identify three ways you believe Ubisoft have:

1 Involved video game fans in the production process.
2 Created the climate for a sequel and spin-offs through narrative, characters and gameplay.

Analysing data

It is important that you can interpret the data that is presented to you about the ways in which audiences consume products. If you are, for example, a researcher for a television company or radio station, then you will need to be able to interpret that data.
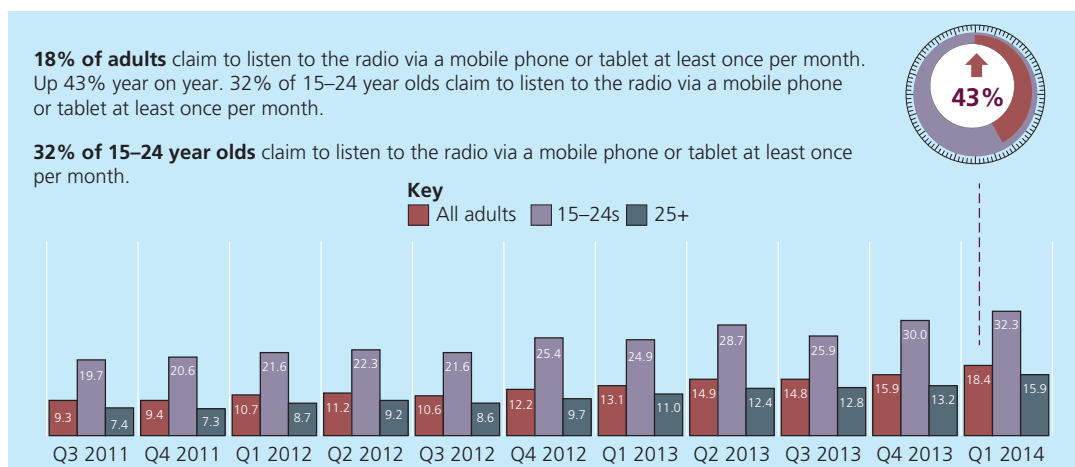
Look at the following example of data from RAJAR in Figure 1.16 about how many people are listening to radio via a smartphone or a tablet device. We can see the number of 15 to 24 year olds consuming radio in this format is increasing year after year and that in general the overall number of people listening to radio is going up. As you can see, the raw listening figures collated by RAJAR have been analysed by demographics and in this case, age.

As a rule, age and gender are good places to start when analysing data in terms of finding out exactly who is consuming what and why. Very often it will give institutions a starting point for tailoring products as trends can be easily identified year on year. In terms of the RAJAR example, it is clear that any radio institution looking at the data might want to ensure that their flagship station has an app, streaming and podcast services, as well as full social media integration as a part of their package if they want to target youth audiences.

18% of adults claim to listen to the radio via a mobile phone or tablet at least once per month. Up 43% year on year. 32% of 15–24 year olds claim to listen to the radio via a mobile phone or tablet at least once per month.

32% of 15–24 year olds claim to listen to the radio via a mobile phone or tablet at least once per month.

43%

Key
- All adults
- 15–24s
- 25+

	Q3 2011	Q4 2011	Q1 2012	Q2 2012	Q3 2012	Q4 2012	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	Q1 2014
All adults	9.3	9.4	10.7	11.2	10.6	12.2	13.1	14.9	14.8	15.9	18.4
15–24s	19.7	20.6	21.6	22.3	21.6	25.4	24.9	28.7	25.9	30.0	32.3
25+	7.4	7.3	8.7	9.2	8.6	9.7	11.0	12.4	12.8	13.2	15.9

▲ **Figure 1.16** RAJAR's data analysis of radio consumption via smartphone and tablet device

Infographics like the example in Figure 1.16 are a really good way of displaying figures, and media companies use data from institutions such as RAJAR, BARB and the NRS to present information. You can view research online to see how these organisations present this data to the institutions they serve, for example: www.rajar.co.uk/docs/news/RAJAR_DataRelease_InfographicQ12014.pdf.

LO6 Be able to evaluate legal, ethical and regulatory issues associated with media products

6.1 Impact of media products on their audiences

GETTING STARTED 🧍

(20 minutes)

● Working in pairs, make a list of at least five films that you consider to include violent content.
● Research each of these films online and find the age certification.
● Write a sentence that describes whether you think the age certificate is appropriate or not. Explain why you think this.
● Feed back to the class.

The media effects debate

There has long been a debate about the impact that media products have on their audiences and this is commonly known as the '**media effects debate**'. Building on ideas that derived from the 1930s Hypodermic Syringe model, **Vance Packard** (1957) discussed the negative impact of mass media products with reference to persuasive advertising across print and broadcast media.

The **passive audience theory**, which references Packard's idea of the mass media being able to inject ideas into people's heads like a 'hypodermic syringe', reinforces the idea that audiences have limited resistance to media messages. Main concerns were about the idea of 'copycat' effects, and this assumes the audience will copy whatever they see on screen. Ideas about copycat behaviour also stem from **Gerbner and Gross**' (1978) cultivation theory, which suggests that over time, repetition of viewing violent acts allows certain ideas and values to become normalised. By repetitive viewing of violent images, for example in TV, film and video games the audience may become immune towards negative and/or violent representations, as per ideas about **desensitisation**.

🔑 **KEY TERMS**

Media effects debate – The academic and social debate as to whether media has a negative impact on audience members. The many academic viewpoints and theories regarding the effects of the media on audiences can be divided into two main arguments: passive audience theory and active audience theory.

Passive audience theory – A collection of academic viewpoints that stress that audiences are unable to reject media messages and are subject to negative effects from the media they consume.

Desensitisation – The idea that prolonged exposure to violent images numbs the effect of them. The more you become accustomed to violent images, the less likely they are to have an impact on the audience.

Moral panic – An instance of public concern or 'panic' in response to a media product that is regarded as threatening to certain groups or debasing agreed moral standards within society.

Active audience theory – The argument that media audiences do not just receive information passively but are actively involved, often unconsciously, in making sense of the message within their personal and social contexts.

Moral panic

Stanley Cohen's (1972) theory has been revisited many times since his original work on how the press created a **moral panic** about the subcultures of mods and rockers and the way that the music and fashion of both had a negative impact on the teenagers that followed their fashion and lifestyle.

However, since then, films, teen magazines, video games and, more recently, social media and online technologies have been blamed for causing problems in society. The main concern and focus has been the negative impact

or effect that watching or using such media has on vulnerable members of society, such as children.

Some of the more famous case studies include the following:

- The 1987 Hungerford massacre, which was blamed on the film *Rambo*.
- In 1992, the murder of two-year-old James Bulger by two 10-year-old boys was blamed on their exposure to the film *Child's Play 3*.
- In 1999, the Columbine High School massacre was blamed on the video games *Doom* and *3D Wolfenstein*.
- In 2007, the video game *Manhunt* was banned owing to the fact that it was likely to incite violent behaviour in teenagers.
- In 2014, the video game *Hatred* was banned from the Steam service for its violent and pornographic content.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Do video games make you violent? (10 minutes)

Watch an extract from BBC's *Gameswipe* that discusses the media effects debate on violent video games: www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIb8JdoWF00.

1 What is Charlie Brooker's point of view?
2 Do you agree? Why?

Active audiences

The 'effects debate' has long been criticised for being out-dated. Commentators such as **Gauntlett** (2004) suggest that there are major problems with the way that the effects model treats not only audience members, such as children, as inadequate but also sees the media texts as the root cause of the problem without taking sociological or psychological factors into account. Such ideas can be placed within **active audience theory**.

6.2 Legal and regulatory issues
Media regulators

The media industries are subject to regulators of various types. Some are government-appointed (state regulation or statutory regulation). This means that the media can be controlled by laws set out in parliament. Much of the content we see is therefore **regulated** and **censored** by the following organisations:

- **BBFC** – The British Board of Film Classification are one of the oldest regulators of media content and they classify films that are distributed in the UK (www.bbfc.co.uk).
- **IPSO** – The Independent Press Standards Organisation was introduced in 2014, replacing the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). IPSO regulate the content of all press and magazine copy (www.ipso.co.uk).
- **ASA** –The Advertising Standards Authority regulate all broadcast and non-broadcast advertising output (www.asa.org.uk).
- **Ofcom** – Since 2004, the Office of Communications have regulated all broadcast content across UK television channels (www.ofcom.org.uk).
- **PEGI** – Pan European Game Information. Since 2012, PEGI have classified all video game content in the UK, taking over from the BBFC (www.pegi.info).

KEY TERMS

Media regulation – The control or guidance of media content by governments and other bodies. This means media production and consumption are monitored.

Censorship – Keeping material from an audience. Such material includes graphic images, speech or ideas which may be considered harmful, sensitive or offensive to audience members. Such material and levels of censorship are determined by governments, media outlets and regulatory bodies.

Classification – The decision made about the suitability of a media text for a particular age range after the content has been viewed by regulators. The classification will be in the form of an age certificate (film and video games), warning signs (music, video games) or broadcast time (TV, film).

It is important that you are familiar with the codes and **classifications** set out by each of the regulators, owing to the fact that when you are creating your own media productions on the course you will be required to think carefully about how it complies with the codes set out by the regulatory bodies. The age classifications set by BBFC are shown in Table 1.6 on the next page.

Table 1.6 Age classifications set by BBFC

U	Can be watched by all age groups
PG	Can be viewed by children under supervision or guidance of a parent
12A	Children under 12 years old can watch, if accompanied by an adult
12	Suitable for children of 12 years old to watch
15	Suitable for children of 15 years old to watch. There are some images of violence
18	Not suitable to be viewed by those under 18 years of age, owing to violent/sexual content

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CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

BBFC and controversies (20 minutes)

In 2008, *The Dark Knight* was given an age rating of 12A. This decision became an extremely controversial one owing to the number of scenes in the film that many deemed to be too violent for children to view.

Read the following articles about this controversy and watch the clip:

- www.bbfc.co.uk/case-studies/dark-knight
- www.theguardian.com/politics/2008/aug/05/politicsandthearts
- www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/7540292.stm
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dl32LaOls

In pairs, discuss whether you believe the age rating was appropriate or too low. Share your thoughts with your class.

Copyright and use of intellectual property

As part of this course you will continually be asked to evaluate the use of intellectual property. You will look at copyright laws as a means of regulating creative content. Much of the content that you will watch and create will be **user-generated content** (UGC**)** or uploads of content to VoD sites such as YouTube and Vimeo. Many of these videos feature mash-ups of other people's work; for example, covers of songs, and parodies such as this cover of Carly Rae Jepsen's much-parodied *Call Me Maybe*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7zdr-82WAo.

The use of other people's work is regulated under copyright law and in this technological age it can be difficult to understand where the boundaries lie. In 2014, the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) amended copyright law so that the parody of material is allowed as long as it is not produced to compete with original work.

These are the questions that are now asked in queries of copyright:

- Did the piece of media have copyright attached?
- Was the copyright holder contacted?
- If not, did you know how to contact the copyright holder?

PAIRS ACTIVITY

Discussing copyright law (30 minutes)

It is important that you understand how to apply this issue to your own work. You may be questioned on your understanding of the processes to go through to obey copyright law in your examination on this unit.

Working in pairs, read articles from *Wired* and the BBC on the use of music on YouTube:

- www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2012-05/03/cover-song-licensing-on-youtube
- www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-28418449
1 What arguments does *Wired* use to give its opinion on copyright laws?
2 Do you think UGC artists covering songs should be subjected to copyright law?
3 Why is the video maker being sued?
4 Why do you think the opinions of the artist and the record label differ?

KNOW IT

1 Name the two theoretical viewpoints when analysing media effects.
2 Define the term 'moral panic'.
3 Name at least three media regulators.

KEY TERM

User-generated content – Content created by non-professionals who then distribute their work online.

Assessment practice questions

Section A

In Section A you will be tested on Learning Outcomes 4 and 5.

Practice question 1

State what the acronym 'NRS' stands for. (1 mark)

Practice question 2

Explain what the role of the NRS is. (4 marks)

Practice question 3

The October 2015 NRS reported that 944,900 women visit the *Daily Mail* app from a mobile or tablet every month. How might this information help the *Daily Mail* plan its advertising strategy? (5 marks)

Section B

In Section B you will be tested on Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 6.

Think of the case studies you have studied in class. For practice questions 2 and 3, make sure you give at least four examples.

Practice question 1

State the name of a cross–media company. (1 mark)

Practice question 2

Explain two ways that products are advertised to audiences in the digital age. Use examples to support your answer. (4 marks)

Practice question 3

Explain how the company you identified in the previous question uses synergy. Use examples to support your answer. (4 marks)

Practice question 4

Think of a main media sector you have studied. Make sure you discuss the key regulator for the sector and give examples of products for extra marks.

Discuss the need for media regulation in a media industry you have studied. (8 marks)

Practice question 5

Think of a media product you have studied within a specific sector. You will be tested on how you can apply theory to a production.

Analyse the concepts of 'narrative' in a media product you have studied. (12 marks)

TOP TIPS

- ✔ Use case studies that show how a conglomerate company uses cross-media ownership to help you understand concepts such as synergy.
- ✔ Use ideas about online technologies to show your understanding about how distribution has changed.
- ✔ Remember it is important to understand the audience's motivation behind using media products as this can help institutions target audiences.

Read about it

Barthes, Roland (1993) *Image, Music, Text*, Fontana Press

Bertrand, I. and Hughes, P. (2004) *Media Research Methods: Audiences, Institutions, Texts*, Palgrave Macmillan

Bordwell, D and Thompson, K (2016) *Film Art: An Introduction* (11th edition), McGraw-Hill Education

Cohen, Stanley (2011) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Routledge Classics), Routledge

Gauntlett, D. (2005) *Moving Experiences: Media Effects and Beyond* (2nd edition), John Libby Publishing

Küng, Lucy (2008) *Strategic Management in the Media: Theory to Practice*, Sage

Lacey, N. (2002) *Media, Institutions and Audiences*, Palgrave Macmillan

Mulvey, L. (2009) *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Language, Discourse, Society), Palgrave Macmillan

Williamson, J. (2010) *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyars