Year 11 Transition Pack: Media Studies

The Media Studies course covers eight different text types:
- Newspaper and online news
- Music Videos
- Advertising and Marketing
- Magazines
- Long Form Television Drama
- Radio
- Computer Games
- Film

For each of these areas, you study them in relation to up to four theoretical areas:
- Language
- Representation
- Industry
- Audience

Finally, you will also explore specific text's context that covers five areas:
- Political
- Historical
- Social
- Cultural
- Economic

One of the most important aspects of the course is that you are familiar with a wide range of media texts across the areas. Therefore, in your course you will explore a much wider range of texts than just those set by the examination board.

For your first transition task we would like you to produce an in-depth report, exploring a media text, taking into consideration the theoretical and contextual areas. This will introduce you to the skills required and allow you to understand how we will explore the texts within the course.

There are four sections to complete and within each section there are numerous tasks to guide you through the specific area. Within each area there will be some subject specific terminology to attempt to engage with, but mainly it is the analysis and application of knowledge that will is the key skill to consider.

There are then some further optional tasks to explore to develop your understanding.

If you have any further questions about any aspect of the course or this task, please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Mr Williams or Miss Routledge.

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The Text

You are free to choose the text that you wish you explore for your project but there are the following requirements that we ask you bear in mind when choosing, as it will make it easier for you:

- Firstly, it must be a **Long Form Television Drama (LFTVD)** or a **film** or a **series of films** that are linked such as The Avengers or Frozen 1 and 2.
    - For it to be considered a LFTVD it will be a show that has a series of episodes which form a cohesive season of media of, on average, around ten episodes. They usually, but not always, will be more than just one series and most will have a consistent cast and narrative across all episodes. The narrative within a series usually concludes or reaches its climax in the final episode, with some questions possibly being left to be answered in the following series. Some examples are 'Games of Thrones' or 'Breaking Bad'.

- Secondly, you should choose a successful text. This will make it easier for you to find out about the text when doing your research into it for your project.

- Thirdly, choose a text that you are already familiar with and you can access easily. If you cannot watch the drama or the film then you will not be able to complete your project.

- Fourthly, it does not have to be English speaking. There are a plethora of excellent foreign films and LFTVDs.

- Please do not choose Stranger Things, Homeland, House of Cards or Mr Robot.

- Finally, choose a text that you enjoy. This will make the whole process even more enjoyable.

Once you have chosen your text you are ready to start you project. If there is a section or part of a section that you cannot find out much information for or cannot complete, this does not mean you need to change your text, just try your best.

You may present your project in whatever way you feel appropriate. Here are some possible options:
- Booklet
- Powerpoint
- Knowledge Organiser

Media Language

It is important to understand exactly what is meant by Media Language. This is how the media, through their forms, codes, conventions, and techniques, communicate meanings.

When looking at LFTVDs and films this means you are considering how they use things like the conventions of genre, camera angles and editing to create effect.

When exploring the Media Language of a text we look at the text as a whole exploring genre and narrative, and then more precisely, analysing key scenes. That is what you shall do for your project.

Please complete the following tasks to consider some aspects of Media Language for your chosen text.

Task One

Neale argues that genre is a *process* by which generic codes and conventions are shared by producers and audiences through repetition in media products.

This means that genes are not fixed, but constantly evolve with each new addition to the generic corpus (the body of products in a genre), often playing with genre codes and conventions or becoming hybrids with other genres.

With this in mind, explore the use of genre of your text by completing the following steps:
1. What is the main genre of your text?
2. Research the codes and conventions of this genre. These are the common repetitive elements. For example, a convention of sci-fi would that often the antagonist is non-human or part human. A code would be they often use dark, low key lighting. What are codes and conventions of your text's genre?
3. Once you have found the codes and conventions, which do your text use within it? Not all codes and conventions from the genre will be used.
4. Finally, consider what hybrid elements are used within your text. This means, what codes and conventions from other genres have been used?

Task Two

A key aspect of exploring a text's narrative (plot) is Todorov's study about Narratology, in this case, of narrative structure – how the parts fit together to make a whole.

All narratives can be seen as a move from one state of equilibrium (where nothing need occur) to another, new equilibrium. The disruption to the equilibrium is what drives the narrative towards a new equilibrium.
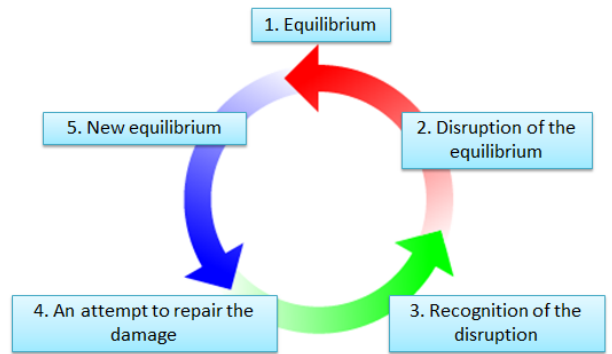
Key Term

Equilibrium – In Media terms, this means how everything is balanced at the start of a text.

He believes this was a five-stage process:
1. Narratives begin with a state of equilibrium.
2. This equilibrium is usually disrupted by an event to create disequilibrium.
3. There is then recognition of the disruption by the central character.
4. The central character(s) goes on a quest to overcome and restore the disruption.
5. This quest is successful, there is a happy ending and a return to a (changed) normality or a new equilibrium.

To explore how well your text fits with this theory apply the theory to your text by exploring the following questions. For those who have chosen an LFTVD, apply it to both a single episode and the series as a whole:
- What is the equilibrium established?
- Is there anything that challenges this or causes disruption?
- Do the protagonists return to normality or find a new 'equilibrium' at the end of the episode/series/film?

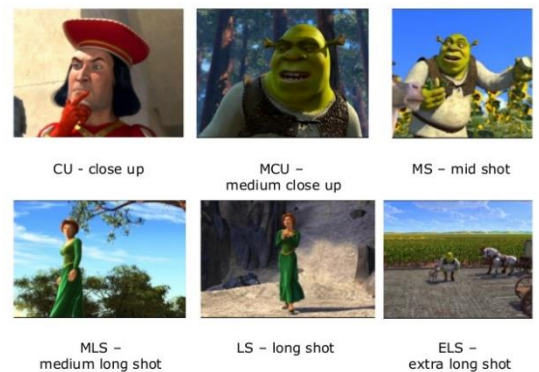Do not worry if your text does not fit; not all texts do.

Task Three

To conclude our exploration of Media Language we were going to analyse the use of techniques within your text more closely to consider how the text creates effect.

Follow the steps to complete your analysis:

1. Choose a key moment within the text. This could be the climax of the episode/film or a key moment within the narrative's development. You will need to watch this part at least three or four times. Ensure you have identified the effect of this moment, for example to create fear/tension/happiness etc.

2. First viewing you need to explore the mise-en-scene. This translate to 'placed on stage' and is key when analysing a text and covers numerous areas. I would like you to concentrate on just a few aspects regarding how they create effect:
   - Where is the scene taking place?
   - The lighting of the scene – is it light/dark? How was this created?
   - How has the scene been dressed with props, colours etc?

3. Second viewing you need to look at the use of camera. Again, concentrate on these aspects and how they create effect:
   - What are the main shot types? Are they close ups? Medium shots? Long shots?
   - Does the camera stay still or does it move? If so, how does it move?
   - What is the angle of the camera? Is it straight on or from below or above?

CU - close up   MCU – medium close up   MS – mid shot
MLS – medium long shot   LS – long shot   ELS – extra long shot

4. Third viewing is to concentrate on how the scene is edited and the use of sound. Think about the effect of these aspects:
   - How quickly does a shot remain fixed on a specific person or object etc? Do the shots switch between things quickly or slowly?
   - Are there any special effects that have been added?
   - Has there been any background sound added, other than the sounds that you expect to hear within the scene?

Congratulations, you have completed your first exploration of Media Language within a task. Do not worry if you haven't been able to complete all of the parts; well done for attempting them.

Media Representations

Representation is the action of presenting an individual, social group, social identity, event, issue or object in a certain way and from a particular point of view.
It is *RE-presenting*.
The representation of anything will always depend on the viewpoint and intention of the maker of the representation thus reflecting their ideas and values as a result.

Therefore, representations of the same event or social groups can differ as the political values and social position of the producer, and what they want to say, can be different.

Task One – Social Groups

A key focus of representation is on social groups. Social groupings are a way in which society collectively groups people who share similar biological characteristics, lifestyle preferences, choices, or values. They are a way in which people can be grouped by demographic or psychographic values. For example, some different social groups often represented in the media can be categorised in terms of the following groupings:

- age
- gender
- class and social status
- ethnicity
- sexuality
- regional Identity
- ability
- appearances
- lifestyle interests or preferences
- political values
- professions

What social groups are presented within your text?
Have they been represented positively or negatively?

Task Two - Stereotypes

Stereotypes are widely used in the media industry. They are quickly understood by audiences, whether they agree or disagree with the stereotype presented, and become shortcuts for introducing characters, groups of people or ideas about groups of people. This helps the producer of a media product to represent individuals, social groups, social identities, or events in stereotypical ways and in doing so, further repeating generalised ideas about people within our society and associated prejudices.

A stereotype is a characterisation of a person or social group who has/have a certain characteristic or feature that they share.

Stereotypes attach specific values or ideas about that group of people, which are very generalised and often inaccurate, but they become accepted in wider society due to the frequency with which they are used.

Although stereotypes can be positive, they tend to be very negative and work to undermine and undervalue those who are the minority or who have less power in our society. In contrast, they can also work to support and reinforce the power of majority groups in our society. Some common stereotypes include:

- teenagers are rebellious and up to no good
- businessmen are clever, intelligent white men
- teachers are boring

What stereotypes can you find within your text?
Are they positive or negative?

Task Three - Realism

Realism relates to the representation of reality. Realism is the 'presentation' of something as if it were real life and what we would expect to see in real life.

Realism is a difficult idea in Media. Watching a soap opera like Eastenders or a drama like Stranger Things reflects real life. However, what we see isn't 'real life' as it happens (reality) but a version of reality (it looks like it could be real) to entertain or inform us. We accept it as real because it looks very close to what we know and experience as reality.

What elements of your text do you believe would be classed as 'realism'?

Media Audiences

Throughout our exploration of Media Audiences, we discover how media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them and how members of audiences become producers themselves.

An audience is one of the most important features of any piece of media. Without an audience the film or tv show cannot be watch, and therefore cannot create a fan base and make money.

Audiences can be categorised in numerous ways:
- How a group are categorised in an industry.
- How producers target, attract, reach, address and construct media through their content and marketing.
- The relationship between consumer and creator.
- Different interpretations reflect social and cultural circumstances.
- Demographic, identity, and culture definitions.
- The different needs of mass and specialised groups.
- The significance of media consumers.
- How people can be reached through different technologies and platforms.

Questions about audience

Using the film or LFTVD you have chosen to answer the following questions:

1)   Who is the target audience of this film/tv show? How can you tell?
2)   How may a film/tv producer attract this target audience to watch the show/film?
3)   How may the features of the text's genre encourage a certain type of audience to watch their show/film?
4)   How important is a fan base with this programme/ film?
5)   Can you research any websites/ forums/ Instagram accounts/ twitter accounts etc that encourage fans to interact with this programme/ film?
6)   How may negative/ positive comments online effect the way a film/tv show is created and filmed?
7)   How may altering the target audience alter the content of the film/ tv show?
8)   What is the age rating of your chosen film/ tv show?

Media Industries

The film/ tv are huge, billion-dollar industries. The require a complex and strong relationship with a technology, audiences, producers, and consumers. Within the course we explore how the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms. This is through a range of aspects:

- How media is produced, distributed, and circulated
- The ownership and control of media
- How they work to maintain audiences nationally and globally
- The impact of technological changes, converting to different media platforms
- The role of regulations
- The impact of technological advances
- The effects of producers on the media form

Questions about industry

Using the film or LFTVD you have chosen to answer the following questions:

1) What company produced your film/ tv show (e.g.20th Century FOX)
2) Research and list 3 other films or tv shows this company has also produced.
3) Research the producer's logo. Have you ever heard of this company before? When do you usually see this logo?
4) How has technology impacted the film/ tv you have chosen. E.g. special effects/ live audience?
5) How has this company advertised the film/ tv show you have chosen?
6) How may technological advances effect your chosen film/ tv show? (Could this have been made 50 years ago? Why?)

Extra Tasks:

1. Movie Trivia. Using the image below see if you can list as many films as possible from the scene below:

2. Fake news is everywhere within the media and it has a huge impact across the public domain. It's definition is, 'false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.'

Below is a news report with the headline, 'Girl's lung collapsed after screaming at One Direction'.

- Produce a written response outlining the steps you would take to explore whether or not this news report is fake news. You need to read the news article closely to help guide you.
- You then to write an evidenced conclusion as to whether or not you think the article is fake news.

Girl's lung collapsed after screaming at One Direction

By Katie Silver, Health reporter

A 16-year-old fan's 'lung collapsed' after she screamed too much at a One Direction concert, an emergency doctor told the BBC.

The girl became short of breath during the concert but continued cheering "because she was a super fan".

When she attended the hospital straight afterwards, they found air had leaked into three different anatomical spaces.

Published in the Journal of Emergency Medicine, it's the first time a case of this kind has been documented.

Dr J Mack Slaughter treated the girl, (who remains anonymous) at the Children's Medical Centre in Dallas: "Her oxygen levels were fine. She didn't look like she was seriously ill," he said.

"But instead of breathing a normal 12-16 times a minute, she was breathing 22 times a minute. So we knew something was a little off by that."

In a physical exam, Dr Slaughter also noted she had crepitus, "a crunchy sound - like the sound Rice Krispies make - when you press on certain parts of the body."

This showed him that a "small amount of air had made its way out of the respiratory track into soft tissue."

"Never seen before"

He found a tear in the lung had caused air to escape in three places: between the lung and the chest wall, into the chest cavity and behind the pharynx.

The combination of these three diagnoses hadn't been seen before, Dr Slaughter said.

He said this leakage of air is "typically caused by an inciting event", such as during an asthma attack, heavy weightlifting, diving or military flying, due to the sudden changes in air pressure.

Screaming or singing causing it is so rare, that Dr Slaughter could only find two other case reports. One was a drill sergeant while the other was an opera singer.

While it's possible the condition was pre-existing, he said this is very unlikely.

The team performed a CT scan to make sure it wasn't something specific to her anatomy: "The scan gave us more detail as to where the air was and how much. But it didn't help us determine why this happened to her and not the other 19,000 girls in the audience!"

With a history of type 1 diabetes, the team also tested her to ensure this wasn't causing her fast breathing rate.

When this was ruled out, she was kept overnight. X-rays were taken again to make sure the air wasn't advancing: "It was stable and safe to send her home," Dr Slaughter said.

The body typically reabsorbs the air and the tear can repair itself, he said.

Dr Slaughter treated the patient three years ago and said: "I never saw her again. I told her she'd be famous and get to go on the Jimmy Fallon show and meet One Direction but she was too embarrassed," he said.

3. Your own media consumption

Over the two years we shall be exploring the following areas:

- Long Form Television Drama
- Radio
- Video Games
- Film
- Magazines
- Advertising and Marketing
- Newspapers and their online content
- Music Videos

Keep a log in which you consider your engagement with each area.

- Explain whether it is a media form that you consume regularly, and if so, explain more specifically the texts you engage with.
- Comment on if you have never engaged with an area. If you have not engaged with an area it is vital you begin to do so.

4. There is a huge range of subject specific language attached to the course. Below is a selection. Give yourself a head-start by exploring some of the terms.

Camera:

- Establishing shot
- Long shot
- Mid-shot
- Close up
- Extreme close up
- Tracking shot
- Panning shot
- Overhead shot
- Low angle shot
- High angle shot
- Dutch angle shot

Non-camera:

- Diegetic sound
- Non-diegetic sound
- Direct sound
- Studio sound
- Selective sound
- Parallel (synchronous) sound
- Contrapuntal sound
- Sound bridge
- Dubbing
- Folley

Representation Terms:

- Ideological discourse
- Culturally marked
- Heteronormative
- Progressive/ regress
- Marginalised
- Value judgement
- Trivialised
- Preferred reading
- Verisimilitude
- Ideologically destabilising
- Dominant ideology
- Social myth
- Deviating/ conforming/ subverting

Newspapers and online media:

- Masthead/title piece
- Skyline
- Editions
- Headline
- Standfirst
- Byline
- Copy
- Body text
- Caption
- Sidebar
- Package
- Crosshead
- Pull quote
- Imprint
- Centrespread
- Anchorage
- Serif font
- Sans serif font
- Splash
- Banner
- Text to image ratio
- Typography
- Broadsheet
- Tabloid
- Folio
- Page furniture