GCSE Media – Audiences

eduqas

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Mass audience: large group of people, not individualised.

Specialised audience: smaller/narrower group, defined by factors such as age, socio-economic group or interests.

Target audience: the specific group of people that a media product is aimed at.

Consumption: how a media product is used or experienced by an audience e.g. watched/ listened to/ played etc.

Response: how audiences react to a particular product.

Active audience: selects media to consume for a purpose, interprets/ responds to/ interacts with media products.

Passive audience: not active, e.g. accepts messages in media products without question.

KEY CONTENT:

How and why media products are aimed at a range of audiences, for example:

Small, specialised audiences: producers can target a very specific group to try to guarantee an audience for the product e.g. a specialist magazine might target people with an interest in gardening or heavy metal music.

Large, mass audiences: producers can reach more people, and possibly make more profit, by appealing to a mass audience. These products might include, for example, popular or 'universal' themes/ ideas, or include representations of different social groups to appeal to a wide range of people.

✏ *Apply it... identify which of the set products are aimed at a mass audience and which are more specialised.*

KEY CONTENT:

How media organisations categorise audiences:

Media producers categorise audiences in order to target their products more effectively. They often use a combination of demographic categories (e.g. age, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic group) and psychographic factors (e.g. interests, lifestyle and values).

The ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing:

Marketing is very important in appealing to and reaching the target audience for a product. Increasingly, digital technologies and social media platforms are used to target audiences. Media organisations might make **assumptions** about the target audience, e.g. that people in a certain age group and income bracket might share similar values/beliefs that are conveyed in the marketing.

✏ *Apply it... select one of the set products you have studied and research the marketing materials. Make notes on the ways in which these target the intended audience.*

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY AUDIENCES?

COMPONENT 1: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of audiences in one of the forms studied: newspapers, radio or video games.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 2 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, **audiences or** media contexts in relation to the television topic studied.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, **audiences or** media contexts in relation to the music videos and online media products studied.

COMPONENT 3

Learners need to apply knowledge and understanding by creating a media production for an intended audience.

KEY CONTENT:

The ways in which audiences may interpret the same media products very differently:

Media products are polysemic (communicate multiple meanings), so different people are likely to find different meanings in the same text.

These differences may reflect both social and individual differences, e.g. the time/ place in which a product is consumed; a person's age, upbringing, education, where they live, their values and beliefs etc. E.g. *audiences might have very different interpretations of the confrontation between Luther and Madsen in the set episode of Luther.*

✏ *Apply it... choose a set product and consider how different audiences (e.g. older and younger age groups, or people who live in different countries) might interpret it in different ways.*

KEY CONTENT:

The social, cultural and political significance of media products, including:

The themes or issues they address: media products often explore topics of current interest and importance, e.g. social issues relating to health or the environment, or political issues such as Brexit.

The fulfilment of needs and desires, e.g. for information, entertainment, artistic inspiration, sense of identity etc.

The functions they serve in everyday life and society:

The media fulfil many roles in society, e.g. reporting news/ factual information, discussing/ debating important issues, exploring aspects of human experience, providing entertainment and popular culture.

✏ *Apply it... identify the key themes and issues that are addressed in some of the set products you have studied. Think about how these themes reflect current social or political issues.*

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

Active and passive audiences:

In the past, audiences were assumed to be passive, with the potential to be negatively affected by media products (e.g. if the product contained violence). More recent theories argue that individuals actively choose, engage, respond to and interact with products.

Audience response and interpretation:

how audiences react to media products, e.g. they might respond in the way the producer intended (e.g. by agreeing with the viewpoints in a product), or question/ disagree with the intended meaning.

✏ *Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products you have studied, e.g. through examples of audience interaction or actual responses.*

Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory:

States that audiences actively select media products to fulfil particular needs, or pleasures:

Information: to find out about the world.

Entertainment: pleasure of diversion/ escapism.

Personal identity: they can relate to the characters/ situations/ values and beliefs in a product.

Social interaction: pleasure of discussing products with others.

✏ *Apply it... consider how the Uses and Gratifications theory applies to all the products you have studied.*

Other perspectives, e.g. Stuart Hall's Reception Theory (preferred, negotiated, oppositional readings) or the Effects Debate, may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How products reflect the context in which they were made in terms of audience consumption.

How audience responses to/ interpretations of media products may change over time.

APPLYING AUDIENCES: PRACTICAL TASKS

1. **Research task:** look at a range of magazine covers (e.g. online). Identify the target audience for each and make notes on the methods used to appeal to this group.

2. Imagine you are creating a **magazine** in a genre of your choice for a young adult audience. Think of a title, a strapline and a topic for a feature article that would appeal to this audience.
   Consider how you would need to change your ideas if you wanted to appeal to an older audience.

GCSE Media – Media Industries

eduqas

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Conglomerate: a very large organisation that owns different types of media company, e.g. Comcast or Newscorp.

Diversification: where a media company moves from producing one type of product to creating different media forms (e.g. a TV company moving into film production).

Vertical Integration: where one organisation owns more than one stage of the industrial process (production, distribution and circulation) of media product creation.

Convergence: making a product available across different platforms, in order to reach different audiences e.g. newspaper content is usually available in print form, on a website, via a digital app, on social media platforms etc.

Government funded: a product that is financed by government money, e.g. a public health campaign.

Not for profit: products that are made for a reason other than to make money e.g. the BBC is funded by the licence fee and its programmes need to fulfil a public service remit.

Commercial model: companies producing products in order to make a profit, often funded by advertising.

Regulation: the monitoring/ control of media industries by independent organisations such as Ofcom and IPSO.

KEY CONTENT:

The nature of media production, including by large organisations, and by individuals and groups:

Media products vary in the way they are produced, e.g. some are large scale productions (often high budget, mainstream) by large media organisations, while others are smaller productions (often lower budget, targeting specialised audiences) by independent companies or individuals.

☑ Apply it... identify the companies involved in producing the set products; consider which are large organisations and which are smaller, independent companies.

KEY CONTENT:

The effect of ownership and control of media organisations, including:

Conglomerate ownership: these organisations have huge financial resources and a lot of power, e.g. they can control the messages communicated in many areas of the media.

Diversification: companies branch into different types of media to increase their chances of success / audience reach.

Vertical integration: these companies can control every stage and ensure that their products reach the audience.

☑ Apply it... identify how one set product, produced by a media conglomerate, has been impacted by its ownership, e.g. in the budget/ production values or messages conveyed.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY MEDIA INDUSTRIES?

COMPONENT 1: Section B

Question 3 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries in one of the forms studied: newspapers, radio, film or video games

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 2 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences **or** media contexts in relation to the television topic studied.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 4 will assess knowledge and understanding of media industries, audiences **or** media contexts in relation to the music videos and online media products studied.

COMPONENT 3

Media industries are not assessed in Component 3.

KEY CONTENT:

The impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different platforms which enable organisations to construct/reinforce a brand identity and maximise audience reach e.g. a film marketing campaign including posters, trailers, social media/ viral content and a website, where all of the different elements converge (especially in established franchises such as Bond).

Different national settings:

Many organisations operate on a global scale, distributing their products in many different countries, although elements such as the marketing might vary in each country.

☑ Apply it... note examples of convergence in relation to the set products, e.g. how the products are made available on different platforms.

E.g. *The Spectre poster uses digital technology to construct an enigmatic layered main image in contrast to the montage of drawn images depicting narrative scenes in the historical poster.*

KEY CONTENT:

The functions and types of regulation of the media:

Regulation varies across different industries in the UK, but usually aims to protect people (especially children/ young people) from unsuitable, inaccurate or harmful media content.

Types of regulation include: establishing standards ('Code of Practice'); providing age ratings for a product and monitoring organisations to ensure they follow guidelines.

The challenges for media regulation presented by 'new' digital technologies:

The internet is very difficult to regulate as vast numbers of people can generate content. Some media products online are regulated by other industry bodies (e.g. the BBFC age rates some music videos). There is ongoing debate about how to regulate online and social media—but much of the internet remains unregulated.

☑ Apply it... identify references to other texts in the set products you have studied and think about how these communicate meanings.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How a product reflects the contexts in which it was made through aspects of its production, distribution, marketing, regulation, circulation and audience consumption.

E.g. *The contemporary music artists reflect current cultural contexts in terms of the use of digital platforms and social media to market and distribute their products.*

How a product reflects the political contexts in which it was made through aspects of its ownership and political viewpoints.

E.g. *Newspapers are likely to reflect the political leaning of the organisations that produce them, in terms of the way in which they construct representations of issues and events, and versions of reality.*

☑ Apply it... find examples of how the set products reflect their contexts in the ways they are produced, distributed and marketed.

KEY CONTENT:

The impact on the final product of:

Production processes: these will depend on the industry, but most involve content creation (filming, photography, written copy), editing etc. to construct the media product.

Personnel: the importance of key people; e.g. TV directors, journalists, designers, stars often have a signature 'style', or explore certain themes/ issues in their work. They might also attract an audience due to their past success/ status.

Technologies have a significant impact on media products and enable organisations to create exciting and cutting edge products that are likely to appeal to audiences e.g. CGI and special effects are important in many music videos and TV programmes, while video games use techniques such as augmented reality to engage users.

☑ Apply it... select two different set products (e.g. a newspaper and a music video) and find out how they were produced e.g. the production processes (such as where, when and how the content was created), the people involved in production and the technologies that were used.

GCSE Media – Media Language

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Denotation: actual/literal meaning e.g. a candle.

Connotation: deeper meanings e.g. a candle might connote hope or light, or have religious connotations.

Codes and conventions: the elements of media

language that usually occur in particular forms

(e.g. magazines or adverts) or genres (e.g. sitcom).

Narrative: how stories are structured and communicated.

Genre: the type or category of product (e.g. crime, sitcom).

Intertextuality: where a media product refers to another text to communicate meaning to the audience.

KEY CONTENT:

The various forms of media language used to create and communicate meanings in media products, for example:

Visual codes: elements that relate to the look of a product, e.g. mise-en-scène, colour palette, layout and design.

Technical codes: e.g. camera shots/ angles, editing.

Audio codes: e.g. non-diegetic music, effects, dialogue.

Language codes: written or spoken words.

☑ Apply it... analyse how these elements of media language are used in the set products e.g. *the red, white and black colour palette on the set GQ cover connotes masculine strength and power to appeal to the target audience*.

KEY CONTENT:

How choice (selection, combination and exclusion) of elements of media language influences meaning in media products, for example:

- How the selection and combination of camera shots **creates narrative** in the *set television episodes* or *music videos*.

- How the written text anchors meanings in the images on the *set newspaper front pages* to **portray aspects of reality**

- What has been excluded from the *set print advertisements*— and how the **point of view** might be different if alternative elements had been included.

- How the combination of design elements, images and cover lines **conveys messages and values** on the *set magazine front covers*.

☑ Apply it... analyse how the choices producers make about media language communicates meanings in the set products.

E.g. *the combination of images and headline on the front page of The Sun (for assessment from 2021) conveys patriotic values and communicates a point of view that MPs should vote for the Brexit Bill.* Give examples to support this point.

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY MEDIA LANGUAGE?

COMPONENT 1: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of one of the set products detailed on Page 11 of the Specification: magazine front covers , newspaper front pages, film posters and print adverts.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of media language or representation in an extract from the set television crime drama or sitcom.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 3 will require analysis of media language or representation **in the set music products detailed on page 19 of the Specification**: music videos and online media.

COMPONENT 3

Learners will be assessed on their ability to use media language to communicate meanings in the production work (Non-Exam Assessment).

KEY CONTENT:

Codes and conventions of media language: how they develop and become established as 'styles' or genres, for example:

How the conventions of a genre (e.g. crime drama or sitcom) have developed and solidified.

How they may vary over time, for example:

How the conventions of a form (e.g. print advertising) have changed, due to new technologies and changing social/ cultural contexts.

☑ Apply it... analyse how the contemporary set print advert, film poster, television programme and music videos show developments from the older/ historical set products you have studied.

E.g. *The Spectre poster uses digital technology to construct an enigmatic layered main image in contrast to the montage of drawn images depicting narrative scenes in the historical poster*.

KEY CONTENT:

Intertextuality, including how inter-relationships between media products can influence meaning:

Several set products use intertextuality, for example the set music videos by Katy Perry and Taylor Swift are constructed as 'mini-films' and show the influence of other texts.

☑ Apply it... identify references to other texts in the set products you have studied and think about how these communicate meanings.

E.g. *Roar includes intertextual references to the well known 1969 film, The Jungle Book, in the use of visual codes and elements of narrative. These familiar references can communicate meanings (e.g. about a human 'taming' the jungle) and create humour*.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

GENRE, including:

Principles of repetition and variation: products usually include typical genre conventions that audiences recognise, and also different elements to engage the audience/ keep the genre 'fresh'.

The dynamic nature of genre: genres are not 'set in stone', they change and develop over time.

Hybridity (combining elements of two or more genres in a product) and **intertextuality** provide further variation and offer something 'new' to engage audiences.

☑ Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products you have studied for Component 2.

NARRATIVE theories:

Propp's theory must be studied: the key character types (hero, villain, 'princess', father, donor, helper, dispatcher, false hero) and their role in the stages of the narrative.

☑ Apply it... consider how Propp's character types could apply to the set products you have studied.

Other theories, such as Todorov's theory (equilibrium, disruption, resolution), Levi-Strauss' Binary Oppositions or Barthes' Action and Enigma codes may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:

How the media language in the set products reflects the contexts of production in terms of:

- themes, values, messages, viewpoints

- genres, styles, technologies, media producers.

APPLYING MEDIA LANGUAGE: PRACTICAL TASKS

Art skills not important!

1. Choose a different song by Katy Perry or Taylor Swift: **storyboard 20 shots for a new music video**. Include some performance and narrative to reflect conventions. Think about the range of camera shots and the mise-en-scène to communicate the meanings in the lyrics to your audience.

2. **Design a front cover for a new magazine** in a genre of your choice. Sketch the layout and design, paying close attention to the colour palette, the font style and the main image.
   Write 5 cover lines, aiming to communicate messages and use language codes.

GCSE Media – Representation

eduqas

KEY TERMINOLOGY:

Representation: the way in which people, issues and events are depicted in media products.

Mediation: how media producers represent (rather than just present) the world to audiences.

Reality: 'real life', actual events, facts and truth - how aspects of reality and versions of reality are constructed.

Stereotype: an exaggerated, oversimplified representation, reducing a social group to a set of common characteristics e.g. grumpy older people or flat cap wearing northerners.

Feminist: supporting equal rights for women (society was traditionally male-dominated but there has been a move towards more equality, especially from the 1960s onwards).

KEY CONTENT:

The choices media producers make about how to represent:

Events: e.g. *how the set newspaper front pages combine images and text to convey information about the issues and events in the main splash (story).*

Social groups: categorised by age, gender and ethnicity.

Ideas: e.g. *how the set magazine front covers communicate ideas about gender/ identity in the use of media language.*

The ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers:

e.g. newspapers are informative and need to include factual detail, a sitcom might exaggerate/ subvert reality to entertain.

☑ **Apply it... select one set product and analyse how the representations of social groups (e.g. different ethnic groups, genders and/ or age groups) have been constructed.**

KEY CONTENT:

How and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented:

Media products often feature representations of powerful social groups (who have traditionally controlled the media). Certain groups (e.g. minority ethnic or LGBTQ people) may be absent, or under/misrepresented (e.g. stereotyped).

How representations convey: viewpoints, messages:

The choices about how to represent a social group will communicate a point of view, e.g. *the set Pride cover conveys positive messages about black female empowerment.*

Representations also convey **values & beliefs**, e.g. *about diversity and human rights in the set video for Freedom.*

☑ **Apply it... identify the key messages in one of the set products. Try to find examples from other media texts that reinforce the same point of view.**

WHERE WILL I NEED TO STUDY/ APPLY REPRESENTATION?

COMPONENT 1: Section A

Question 2b (extended response) will require comparison of the representations in one of the set products detailed on Page 11 of the Specification with an unseen resource in the same form.

COMPONENT 2: Section A

Question 1 will require analysis of media language **or representation** in an extract from the set television crime drama or sitcom.

COMPONENT 2: Section B

Question 3 will require analysis of media language **or representation** in the set music products detailed on page 19 of the Specification: music videos and online media.

COMPONENT 3

Learners will be assessed on their ability to use media language to construct representations in the production (Non-Exam Assessment).

KEY CONTENT:

The different functions and uses of stereotypes, e.g:

- to communicate meanings that audiences will easily recognise, e.g. products such as adverts need to convey a quick, clear message.
- to create humour, e.g. in the set episode of *The IT Crowd*.

Stereotypes become established when a social group (often a minority group) has been categorised repeatedly in the media and becomes recognised by a particular set of attributes.

How they may vary over time: stereotypes alter and develop over time, mainly due to changes in culture and society.

☑ **Apply it... identify examples of stereotypes in the set products and think about how and why they are used. Now, try to find examples of representations that challenge stereotypes and consider why the producers might have made this decision.**

KEY CONTENT:

How representations reflect the contexts in which they were produced, e.g:

Social: reflecting society at the time/place of production e.g. in terms of issues such as gender or racial equality, or economic prosperity.

Historical: the time/ period in which a product is created, e.g. the 1950s (*Quality Street*), the 1970s (*The Man With the Golden Gun*).

Cultural influences on a product, e.g. current trends or direct references (such as representations of *Countdown* in *The IT Crowd*).

☑ **Apply it... analyse how the representations in the set products reflect the time and place in which they were made.**

e.g. *the representation of the active female on the This Girl Can poster differs from the passive females in the historical Quality Street advert, as women now have more power and equality in society.*

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEXTS:

Representation, including processes of:

Selection: producers choose to include certain elements in a representation (and exclude others); this communicates meanings/ messages.

Construction: representations are 'built' by producers, using elements of media language.

Mediation: media producers construct their own 'version' of the world that is represented to audiences. We do not see the 'actual' world, but a producer's view of it.

☑ **Apply it... consider how these ideas apply to the set products; e.g. how representations are constructed to show a particular point of view.**

Gender and representation, including feminist approaches:

Media industries have traditionally been male-dominated, with fewer opportunities for women.

Women have often been under-represented in the media; they also tend to be 'passive' in the narrative, and portrayed as 'objects' (Mulvey's Male Gaze theory could also be studied here).

☑ **Apply it... find examples of passive/ objectified females in the set products, and of women who are active/ empowered. Consider why these representations have been constructed.**

Other perspectives on gender, such as hypermasculinity, may also be studied.

CONTEXTS: Historical, Social, Cultural, Political:
How these are reflected in terms of representations, themes, values, messages and viewpoints.

APPLYING REPRESENTATIONS: PRACTICAL TASK

Art skills not important!

1. Create profiles (written or drawn) for three characters from a new **TV programme** in a genre of your choice.

2. Create a **film poster** depicting 3 characters (hero, side kick and villain) for a new film in a genre of your choice. You could sketch or photograph your characters.

☑ **For each task: Consider how to construct representations using media language (e.g. dress codes, gesture codes and props) and what messages about age, gender and ethnicity to convey.**

THE IT CROWD CHANNEL 4

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- First released 3rd February 2006 on Channel 4
- Created by Graham Linehan and producer Ash Atalla
- Creator wrote Father Ted and Black Books
- Producer also worked on The Office
- Stars Chris O'Dowd, Richard Ayoade and Katherine Parkinson in the lead roles
- All relatively new to acting
- Ayoade had appeared in some alternate comedies
- Developed for Channel 4 on the back of the success of the previous original outcomes.
- Channel 4's rich comedy history includes Father Ted, Spaced, Peep Show and Green Wing

← Evidence of strong sitcom writer

← Evidence of strong production credentials

The IT Crowd CONTEXTS

FILM REFERENCES

The reference to The Matrix isn't the only film used as a reference point. Fight Club (1999) and A Clockwork Orange (1971) have references in the 8+ club. Heightening the geek cliché is seen through the character of Prime. His costume and appearance borrows directly from Laurence Fishburne's character in the 1999 film 'The Matrix'. Appearing out of nowhere, asking Moss to make a choice, and the wearing of dark glasses is contrasted to when he drops his character during Street Countdown and in the club; showing himself to be a true geek. The character is played by Benedict Wong, who was keen to develop the character further..

GEEK / NERD

The cliché/stereotype of a geek or a nerd is a regular feature of texts from all genres. The use of this character type is fluid throughout all seasons of the IT Crowd because of our 2 leads, but more exploited in this episode with the nightclub scene. The merging of stereotypes with attractive women, low key lighting and music clashes against the expectations we have about this societal group. The constant fluctuation of nerd/geek being positively used in social media is highly relevant for discussion..

MEDIA LANGUAGE & REPRESENTATION

MEDIA LANGUAGE: How The IT CROWD communicates with the audience using sound, camera, editing, mise en scene:

Sound & Music
- **Opening music:** Consider the connotations of this music. The music is like a computer game and this links to the title and jobs that the characters have.
- **Studio audience:** The IT Crowd is filmed in front of a live studio audience and there are regular instances where we can hear the laughter. This is known as 'canned laughter'.
- **Other uses of sound:** The Countdown clock at the start and then again after the battle outside along with the sound stings (snippets from the opening music) are used to signify the passing of time. The music at the 8+ event is rap music, suggesting style and coolness- juxtaposing how we see contestants of Countdown and geeks.
- **Diegetic:** The episode is primarily full of diegetic music, with just a few examples of non-diegetic samples from the opening sequence and the key scenes below.
- **Non-diegetic:** Roy attempts to remove the bike from his apartment (9.56 – 10.25), Moss enters the club with Roy (12.49 – 13.02), The Street Countdown battle (19.33- 20.18).

Cinematography & Framing
Each of the 3 main characters has a mini narrative arc running through the episode and we see the different challenges each of them face. It is quite typical of sitcoms to have their characters come up against a problem and look to resolve them over the course of the episode. Consider how each character is framed and how each shot is composed when they are away from the IT office (the central location). Consider carefully the multiple locations that both Roy and Moss go to within this episode.

Editing
The episode has a rich range of techniques that help progress the narrative very quickly in this 23-minute episode. Montage, invisible, continuity are used regularly. This sitcom does not use the typical 'fade' or 'dissolve' to connote a flashback and instead relies on mise-en-scène elements (colour and costume). Each of the 3 characters goes through their own narrative arc and each time they return to their base of the office before they head back again on their 'quest'.

Mise en scene
Costumes - Props - Setting - Lighting - Facial expressions - Body language
Analyse the Mise en Scene from the episode. Below is a costume analysis:

Consider what the character's costumes communicate to the audience.
- **Prime** looks like he is from 'The Matrix' (intertextuality), suggesting he is powerful and important.
- **Roy** is wearing a t-shirt with the phrase "I don't work here" which could tell the audience about how he feels about his job.
- **Moss** is wearing brown checked shirt and a tie with thick rimmed glasses, often associated with nerds. The brown is a boring colour, which could suggest he is boring.
- **Jen** is wearing formal and professional clothing, suggesting that she is bossy, professional, in control and powerful.
- **Douglas** is in work-out clothes, whilst at work. The colour and type of clothing is funny and not something expected from the boss of the company.
- **Negative One** is in a frog top and wearing 'bling' chains and glasses. This is also funny as it might show the audience that he is a character who is trying to be 'cool', wearing clothes associated with rappers.

REPRESENTATION: How THE IT CROWD constructs representations

Stereotypes and Audience Interpretation
Representations of Ethnicity

The IT Crowd has a more diverse representation of different ethnicities in this episode but does not make explicit reference to them.
- Moss is portrayed by Richard Ayoade who is mixed race and Prime's character is played by Benedict Wong, who is of Chinese descent.
- In Prime's first scene with Moss he appears inscrutable and potentially threatening, reinforcing some East Asian stereotypes familiar from action films, however as the episode progresses that image changes as he is revealed as another Countdown champion.
- The inclusion of these characters, however, does show and accept the multicultural nature of London where the programme is set.

Child-like Innocence
The adult characters of Moss and Roy play out their lives very much like young teenagers looking for validation in their lives from each other, Jen and friends around them.

1. **Quiz Show** – Moss' reaction to his acceptance on to the show Countdown is almost childlike as he celebrates and is (according to Jen) visibly shaking with joy.
2. **Roy's Flat** – Roy seems to be happy that he is independent and grown up in his flat, but still struggles to deal with social situations such as the window cleaners and Alastair.
3. **Drinks** – The asking for drinks in the club shows the innocent culture that these adults are in – even when Roy asks for a beer it brings about a complete silence.

Representation of Gender
- The producers challenge the typical sitcom expectations that UK audiences would be used to, and makes the female character the boss of the two male characters.
- The male characters do not fulfil any traditional 'heterosexual male' stereotypes and the writer Graham Linehan is particularly known for creating these diverse and comedic characters.
- The characters are pushed to the extremes of their representation for these offbeat comedy moments – especially seen through Douglas Reynholm.

The IT Crowd CONTEXTS continued...

FITTING IN
The idea of fitting in within each group is so important to all characters. Jen wants to fit in with Douglas, Moss wants to fit in with 8+, Roy wants to fit in with Alastair and ultimately, they all want to 'fit in' with regular society. While it is not the social norm to mock those who do not fit in, the humour that Linehan uses is done in a way that we feel the awkwardness of the character when they mock another person. Roy is the main example where he wants to fit in but rejects the window cleaners as he has expectations of what is the 'right' profession to fit into.

COUNTDOWN
Tapping into the synergy opportunities that Channel 4 provides, the episode features 3 regular faces from Countdown at the time of creation. Jeff Stelling, Rachel Riley and Gyles Brandreth are highly recognized as is the format of the programme Countdown. The programme, which has been on Channel 4 since the 1980s has an easily recognizable format that the IT Crowd writers can use for comedy purposes.

SITCOMS: GENRE, INTERTEXTUALITY & KEY TERMS

SITCOM: *A television or radio series in which the same set of characters are involved in various amusing situations The abbreviation sitcom is used.*

SITCOM GENRE CONVENTIONS

• 2-3 locations • Beliefs and learning about 'self'. • Romance • Family (and how important a strong one is) • Conflict/dilemma (that causes comedy)

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

Character archetypes are similar types of character that appear within a genre. For example: **Many horror films will have an innocent victim.**

• **The Fish Out of Water** is a character who does not fit into the mainstream this can result in comedy if they misunderstand a situation. *MOSS*
• **The Wise Cracker** is the character who makes fun of others in the group but not in a mean or offensive way. *CHANDLER*
• **The Trophy Wife** is a female character who is appreciated for appearance and maintaining a 'classy' outward appearance. Normally rich. *RACHEL*
• **The Charmer** is a character who is trying to make a love connection. Flirty and usually male. *JOEY*
• **The Bigmouth** is a loud and brash character, but not horrible. The Bigmouth is not as smart as they think and often end up causing comedy when they get things wrong.
• **The Sage** is an older and wise person within the show. This personally normally gives advice or has more understanding than other characters.
• **The Unruly Woman** is a woman that is NOT a typical motherly type, preferring career or other thigs over caring directly for her family. *JEN*
• **The Stick** is an uptight character that often is upset at change or a break in the rules. More laughed at than laughed with. *ROY*
• **The Bully** is not always horrible but attempts to dominate or be better than other characters.
• **The Goofball** is the zany, clumsy or unusual character. Very likable but does not fit in with most mainstream characters. *PHOEBE*
Nb. Sitcoms rely on stereotypes and often over-exaggerate these in order to cause comedy and make the audience laugh. Stereotypes are used as they are quickly recognised by the audience.

GENRE KEY TERMS

Repetition and Difference Theory (Steven Neale)
• Successful comedies will repeat codes and conventions of sitcoms that have come before them and then try and add new variations on the style. *F.R.I.E.N.D.S was different as a group of friends in NYC was replaced by the 'family' convention often seen in sitcoms. The IT Crowd has used work colleagues in the same way.*
Familiarity
• Audiences rely on the familiar structure, including the audience (or canned laughter) and even the studio camera set up. Audiences know what to expect.
F.R.I.E.N.D.S. and The IT Crowd both used canned laughter. Both sitcoms also work with a resolution of the narrative at the end of each episode.
Genre Cycles
• Genres often go on a cycle of popularity over time and even the format and structure can go out of fashion and then be revisited many years down the line. Think about The Big Band Theory and how this came after F.R.I.E.N.D.S with a similar situation - friends.
Genre hybridity
• Sitcoms often become hybrids as they look to tackle other genres in a comedic way. *F.R.I.E.N.D.S. borrows aspects from both 'Drama' and 'Romance' throughout their narratives, but mostly done in a comedic way. The IT Crowd is primarily comedy, but some of it is done in an 'off-beat' way.*

INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is an 'interrelationship between texts'. These references are made to influence the audience and add layers of depth to a product, based on the audiences' prior knowledge and understanding.
• The relationship between different media texts is very important and in sitcom it can be used in a variety of ways.
• Homage and parody are the most popular forms of intertextual references in sitcom.
• Intertextuality can be subtle, by slight reference to existing works of popular culture.
• It is really important to think of the context of each sitcom to understand how Intertextuality comes into effect.

Homage
• A homage may be a reference to a text, person or event that the writers, directors or even production company think highly of.
• In the Big Bang Theory the cast regularly refer to Marvel Comics and DC Universe through their costume and narrative. This is more because the organisation has a high regard for the films and is a great referential point to help with the representation of a *'geek' or 'nerd'.*

• THE IT CROWD - includes Channel 4's *Countdown* and *Fight Club (1999)* in Moss's plot and *The Matrix (1999)* in reference to the character, Prime.
• F.R.I.E.N.D.S. includes Phoebe singing 'Favourite Things' from The Sound of Music and the Spanish Soap Opera (telenovela) Tres Destinos (1993) being watched in the apartment

Parody
• A parody is normally a humorous retelling of a serious or complex issue. The creators of a sitcom may do this to simplify complicated issues or lighten darker aspects of the narrative.
• In a sitcom like The Simpsons or Family Guy they will refer to aspects of American politics or celebrity legal issues in a light-hearted way. This is an attempt to find a lighter side to more troubling issues.

• THE IT CROWD - Roy's unfortunate situation of being mistaken as a window cleaner, which has links to *social hierarchies of jobs and references to 'geek' and 'nerd'.*
• F.R.I.E.N.D.S.- Chandler referencing 'hump & hairpiece' – Notre Dame and Rachel likening her fiance to Mr Potato Head as to one of the reasons why she ran out of her wedding.

TODOROV NARRATIVE THEORY

There are three narratives running through the 23 minute episode. Consider how each applies to the theory:
1. A state of equilibrium (All is as it should be). **2.** A disruption of that order by an event. **3.** A recognition that the disorder has occurred. **4.** An attempt to repair the damage of the disruption. **5.** A return or restoration of a NEW equilibrium.

KEY TERMS

• **Hero**- the protagonist/main character in the narrative.
• **Villain**- the antagonist/character that is against the hero.
• **Hero's Journey** - the narrative of the hero
• **Enigma**- a puzzle/question in the narrative that the audience want to find out. *Will Moss win? Will Jen find out what she is missing? Will Roy ever prove to Alistair he is not a window cleaner?*
• **Linear**- a narrative that is in chronological/straight forward order.
• **Set-Up**- how the narrative is started
• **Conflict**- the problem the character (hero) must resolve
• **Resolution**- how and when the problem is fixed (usually by the hero)
• **Episodic**- each episode is seperate to the next.
• **Narrative Arc** - stories usually have a beginning, middle and end.
• **Flashback** - is an scene that takes the narrative back in time, often used to recount events that happened before the story's primary sequence of events to fill in crucial back-story.

PROPP CHARACTER THEORY

If we were to apply Propp's theory of Narrative to our two sitcoms we can see two very different readings that make for a considerably strong comparison.

THE IT CROWD
HERO(ES)
• We can see 3 heroes in Roy, Moss and Jen, by the programme being named after this small group of individuals, and that each of them have a mini narrative arc through this episode. We are clearly following their journeys. (heroes journey).
VILLAIN
• Negative One, the challenger to Moss in the 8+ group, is identified as the villain who challenges one our heroes. The villain is not evil or extreme like in some genres such as dramas and thrillers and he is used purely for humorous effect.
HELPER(S)
• The three characters; Roy, Moss and Jen change regularly within each narrative arc, taking on the role of helper(s), for each other to provide advice and motivation to their next action.
• Prime is a more obvious helper in his first interaction with Moss and then he quickly becomes the sidekick amazed by Moss' intelligence.
It becomes more complicated when we try and consider some of the other characters in the episode such as Barry the Window Cleaner, Alistair and Douglas and what roles they take in the episode.
Douglas, in other episodes of the programme, can be identified as the hero, villain, provider and helper depending on the arc of each storyline; however, in this episode he fulfils only a minor role of facilitating a narrative enigma.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S.
If we were now to try and apply Propp's theory to Friends, it becomes much harder.
HERO
• For this one episode we definitely have Rachel arrive to fulfil the hero position. Her 'journey' to discover life in the city after running away from her wedding will take up the majority of this episode
HELPER(S)
• The other 5 characters would therefore take on the role of the helper(s) all coming to Rachel's aide in different ways during the episode.
It would take a further and deeper reading of Friends as an entire series to understand that the roles are indeed interchangeable. All characters will eventually take on the role of the hero over the many episodes and many seasons. Friends is an ensemble comedy that is successful because it follows the stories of 6 different characters. The interchangeable nature of their narrative roles could suggest that it is more complex in Friends to apply the theory of Propp.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S.
Channel 4 – se01-ep01
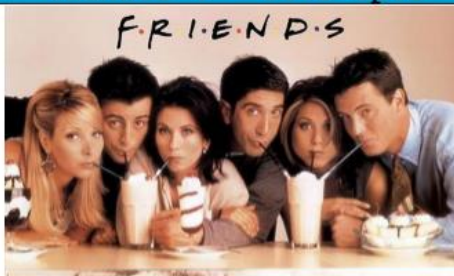
F R I E N D S

SITCOM: *A television or radio series in which the same set of characters are involved in various amusing situations The abbreviation sitcom is used.*

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- First released September 1994 in the US and April 1995 in the UK
- Created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman
- Writers of Dream On (a 6 season sitcom that ran in 1990)
- An ensemble of relatively new actors
- Developed for NBC in the pilot season as president of NBC wanted a sitcom based on "friends sharing memorable periods of their lives with surrogate family members"
- NBC would go on to make Friends their cornerstone of Thursday night comedy (replacing Cheers)
- Netflix's first release in the genre of Comedy

← Evidence of being newcomers

← No existing audiences

← Reflective of the social context of 90's America

UK Sitcoms
- Series of 6 episodes
- One or two writers
- Low budgets
- Often location based filmed with single-camera technology

US Sitcoms
- Series of 24 episodes
- Team of writers
- High budgets
- Often Studio based with live audiences watching the recording using multi-camera technology

MEDIA LANGUAGE & REPRESENTATION

MEDIA LANGUAGE: How F.R.I.E.N.D.S communicates with the audience using sound, camera, editing, mise en scene:

Sound & Music
- *Opening music*: The music over the montages is designed around the original opening song. Consider the connotations of this music. The lyrics "I'll be there for you" links to the theme and characters in the sitcom, based on a group of 6 friends.
- *Studio audience:* FRIENDS is filmed in front of a live studio audience and there are regular instances where we can hear the laughter. This is known as 'canned laughter'.
- *Comic timing,* the jokes are more obvious with strategic pauses, while The IT Crowd relies on offbeat humour and visual signals to generate laughs from the studio audience.

Cinematography & Framing
The various wide angles that are cut between close-ups allow lots of movement for cameras in the studio. There are lots of long shots with all the characters in the frame as well as close ups and mid shots to show the relationships between the characters.

Editing
The editing is very traditional and typical of a multi-camera production filmed in a studio. The sequence is comprised of many quick cuts, motivated cuts and continuity editing to make the scene seem very natural and realistic. There are more traditional dissolves and fades used between scenes to represent the passing of time or change of location.

Mise en scene (CLAMPS = Costumes - Lighting - Acting - Make-up - Props - Setting)
Analyse the Mise en Scene from the episode. Below is a brief example:

Costume- Rachel in wedding dress (unusual and funny) other characters in casual clothing
Lighting- natural and high key, connotes realism
Acting- facial expression of Rachel is frustration. Ross is worried.
Make-up- natural, connoting realism
Props- coffe cups, newspapers, phone creates realism
Setting- coffee shop, a relatable location to the audience.

F.R.I.E.N.D.S. CONTEXTS

TWIXTER GENERATION
- The young characters have a very care-free attitude to life and relationships. They model a very relaxed style of living in pre 9/11 America. References to popular culture such as TV, Film and Literature are frequent and accessible to a global audience.
- The 'twixter' generation in the 1990's America was the generation of young adults that seem permanently trapped between adolescence and adulthood. It could be said that it takes 10 seasons of Friends for them all to move on to adulthood.

AMERICAN DREAM / CITY OF DREAMS
Rachel's arrival in the city seems to represent the next young adult hoping to pursue a new life in the city. The short introductions to each character indicate that each of them are quite independently in the city away from parents and family and looking to live out their dreams in the big city. Even in 1990's there were plenty of films and television programmes about the American Dream and 'making it in the city'.

NEW-MAN / METEROSEXUAL
We are introduced to 3 characters in Friends that epitomise the term new-man. Talking about their emotions, supportive to each other and having positive relationships with women demonstrates a definite development of sitcoms that would focus on strong alpha males in charge of a household. This reflects the 'metrosexual man' a term first coined in 1994.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY
We meet 6 white middle-class characters enjoying luxury time in a spacious apartment and comfortable coffee shop. This is not truly reflective of the 1990's New York City and is actually quite a limited cross-section of culture.

REPRESENTATION: How F.R.I.E.N.D.S constructs representations

REPRESENTATION OF NEW YORK CITY
- NYC is represented as a 'place of adventurem , independence and opportunity as the 'city of dreams'. This is seen by Rachel running out on her wedding (and life) to go to the big city and pursue a different life, with opportunities. Friends living together and hanging out in a coffee shop also represents the city as somewhere that is slow-paced, relaxing and suited to young pre-married adults.
- New York is also known as 'The Big Apple' due to it's wide range of ethnicities that live in the city. However, having 6 characters that do not represent the ethnicities in NYC does not reflect the social context at the time or even now.

REPRESENTATION OF ETHNICITY
- We later realise in further episodes that Ross and Monica (who are brother and sister) are Jewish. Joey is from Italian decent, but nonetheless, the characters do not represent New York City.

REPRESENTATION OF GENDER
In Friends, we have a split balance of male to female characters. Each of the characters has their own personality type and this provides a sense of equality across the programme. It is clear though that each of the characters is further defined by their relationships with the other gender within the sequence.
- Traditionally, female characters should be looked after by their fathers before getting married and getting looked after by their husband. *However, this is challenged - Rachel walks out of her wedding, Rachel's father challenges her choices and Monica and her friends do not challenge her choice.*
- Traditionally, female characters should remain where they were brought up, around their family. *However, in Friends, Monica and Phoebe are independent women living away from where they grew up.*
- Traditionally, female characters should listen to male characters and what they say, including how they appear. *However, Rachel clashes with her father over belongings and what she should do next. Rachel listens to Monica's advice.*
- Traditionally, Male characters should run the household/property and be the superior figure. *However, Monica is in charge of their property and in the episode does not report to any male figures.*
Other characters to consider
- Rachel and her ex fiancé Barry and her father.
- Ross by his ex-wife
- Monica by Paul 'The Wine Guy'
- Phoebe by her past relationship
- Chandler by his mother
- Joey by his lust for women

FEMINSIT APPROACHES
Friends is particularly good for discussion when it comes to looking at Feminist approaches and how other female characters support each other. Rachel, through Monica, receives advice on how to be strong and independent- discussing their independence away from male control and what is expected in society.
As a historical sitcom, these society expectations are of course very out-of-date and the female representations in these episodes are much more developed from sitcom and television programmes in history.

INDUSTRY

SITCOM: F.R.I.E.N.D.S. & The IT Crowd
AUDIENCE AND INDUSTRY

AUDIENCES

INDUSTRY KEY TERMS

EXHIBITION
The broadcasting of a media product through the platform it has been designed for.
Friends was originally exhibited on television before being made available on VHS, DVD and later streamed online through Netflix.

STREAMING
A format of exhibiting a media text by the constant delivery of a digital multimedia product by the audience and from the provider.
The IT Crowd is streamed in the UK between Netflix UK or All4 and audience members who choose to watch it.

CONGLOMERATE
A multi-national company that is engaged in many different industries through the operations of the subsidaries that they own.
Comcast is a Global Communications company that owns NBC Universal, but also owns companies in the industries of Theme Parks and Sports Management.

PARENT COMPANY
A company within a conglomerate that has many smaller (subsidaries) working underneath them.
NBCUniversal is the parent company to NBC Television, DreamWorks Animation and Universal Pictures.

DISTRIBUTION
The sale of a media product through multiple platforms at a national and international level.
Channel 4 distributes The IT Crowd through their channel and then their online digital platform All4. All4 is made available on multiple smart technology devices so that the programme can be watched on the move.

PRODUCTION
The process of idea generation, recruiting the cast and crew and then making the media product.
Friends was produced by two companies: Bright/Kauffman/Crane Productions and Warner Bros. TV

SUBSIDARY
A company that is owned by a larger rganisation. They report to the parent company rather than the conglomerate that owns them.
NBC Television is a Subsidiary of NBCUniversal and is primarily involved in the production and exhibition of TV programmes.

SYNDICATE
The licensing or sale of material for broadcasting by several television channels.
Warner Bros TV. syndicated Friends to the channel TBS while it was still being broadcast by NBC in 2001. TBS were able to broadcast repeated episodes and NBC continued to broadcast new episodes.
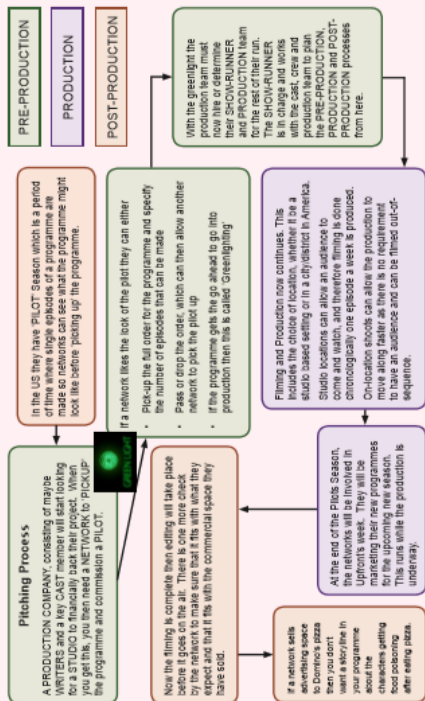
COMPANIES INVOLVED

The IT Crowd
Talkback Thames
Delightful industries
Netflix
Channel 4

F.R.I.E.N.D.S
Warner bros.
Bright/Kauffman/Crane
NBC Universal
NBC
Comedy Central
Netflix
Channel 4

PRODUCTION PROCESSES

The production process diagram is a very American example. The IT Crowd did not have to go through any piloting or green-light processes. Linehan was asked to write the sitcom for Channel 4 based on his previous success with Father Ted.

RELEASING SITCOMS TO THE AUDIENCE:
With both The IT Crowd and Friends being weekly broadcast programmes there is a specific audience that both Channel4 and NBC were trying to cater for. Since they have both stopped broadcasting they have now been released on streaming platforms. Friends is on Netflix and The IT Crowd is now on Netflix in the UK. The contract for Friends in the UK is currently held by Comedy Central UK and consistently play on their channels every day. Streaming gives audiences access to their content all at one go and therefore the audience accessing the content could be more fluid and less fixed by a schedule and commercial strategy. The IT Crowd would therefore still be picking up an audience many years after it completed broadcast.

TARGETING AUDIENCES
When a network is broadcasting a new television show it is important that they are aware of their **Target Audience**. This is so they can broadcast it at the right time, and so that it fits into the schedules alongside other shows. In the first instance they will make decisions based on the programme's **Primary Audience**, as this will be the first category that the production company originally made the programme for. Popular channels like NBC in the US will appeal to a **Mainstream** audience, meaning the largest number of people should be watching the programme. If the content of your programme appeals to a **Niche** audience, which means a very small, specific type of viewer it is more likely to be because of the content. Many Niche programmes can become Mainstream through good casting or picking up a large fan base through word-of-mouth. The more successful sitcoms in the past have become successful because they have picked up and expanded their **Secondary Audience** over time. An example of this is Friends still having a large fan base of teenagers now even though the programme is over 20 years old. The content of The IT Crowd is quite Niche (offbeat humour), but picks up a Mainstream audience through its writer, stars and availability on streaming platforms such as All 4 and Netflix.

TARGETING AUDIENCES - FRIENDS
Friends was broadcast in the US at 8.30pm on a Thursday evening between two other sitcoms.
- NBC wanted to pick up other sitcom viewing audiences.
- This was a key time to get young adults aged 16-25 viewing
The target audience is both genders in their early twenties who might relate to the characters
- This is the reason why they had 3 males and 3 females for the main characters.
When Friends was broadcast in the UK Channel 4 chose a similar timeslot as the US, but on a Friday night.
- Channel 4 is known for bringing new television to audiences, and this was a big selling point.
- Channel 4 was the ideal channel to appeal to the young 16-25 year old target audience.

TARGETING AUDIENCES - THE IT CROWD
Channel 4 broadcast the IT Crowd on Friday nights from 2006
- Friday nights is also when Channel 4 would broadcast Friends, Father Ted and Peep Show.
- IT Crowd was part of Channel 4's popular 'Friday Night Comedy' campaign.
The IT Crowd has 4 main characters; 3 men and 1 woman.
- The primary target audience will be men because of the 3 central male characters.
- The cast is made up of this gender mix as it represents the commonly accepted role of men and women in business during 2006.

AUDIENCE THEORY

To remember the U&G theory, think of P.I.E.S.
Personal identity
Information
Entertainment
Social interaction

Personal identity
(The need or satisfaction of relating to the media product, in the characters, locations, storylines etc)
- to compare lives to those of the characters.

Information
(The need or satisfaction of getting information from the media product)
- Learning about other people's way of llife e.g. in NYC
- Learning about the different themes

Entertainment
(The need or satisfaction of escaping from everyday lives and being entertained)
- Funny and enjoyable storylines

Social Interaction (The need or satisfaction of being able to interact with people about the media product- either in person "did you see the episode" or sharing on social media/being part of a communiity onloine)
- Fan community