Your notes

GCSE Media Studies: revision notes

Media language

Contents

1. Codes and conventions
2. Denotation and connotation
3. Print layout terms
4. Key terms
5. Quick questions
6. What to do next

Codes and conventions

- **Media language** is how media products create meaning, using codes and conventions.
- **Technical codes**: camera shots (close-up, long shot), angles (high, low), movement, editing, lighting and sound.
- **Symbolic codes**: colour, costume, props, setting, body language and facial expression.
- Written codes: fonts, headlines, captions and slogans.
- Conventions are the expected features of a form or genre, such as a magazine's **masthead** or a trailer's voiceover.

Denotation and connotation

- **Denotation** is what we literally see or hear, such as a red rose.
- **Connotation** is what it suggests, such as love or passion. This idea is linked to semiotics and the theorist Roland Barthes.
- **Anchorage** is text that fixes the meaning of an image, such as a caption.

Print layout terms

- Magazine covers: **masthead** (the title), main image, cover lines, puff (a feature like "free gift"), strapline and a house style.
- Newspaper front pages: **masthead**, headline, the splash (the main story), standfirst, bylines and photographs.
- **Mode of address** is how a product speaks to its audience: direct (using "you") or indirect, formal or informal.

Key terms

Media language	How media products create meaning through codes and conventions.

Technical codes	Camera, editing, lighting and sound choices.
Symbolic codes	Objects, colours, costume and body language that carry meaning.
Denotation	The literal meaning of a sign.
Connotation	The associated meaning a sign suggests.
Anchorage	Text that fixes the meaning of an image.
Masthead	The title of a magazine or newspaper.
Mode of address	How a product speaks to its audience.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is connotation?
2. What is denotation?
3. Which is a technical code?
4. Which is a symbolic code?
5. What is anchorage?
6. What is the masthead?
7. What does a low-angle shot often suggest?
8. Which theorist is linked to semiotics?

Answers

1. What a sign suggests or is associated with
2. The literal meaning of a sign
3. A low-angle camera shot
4. A character's costume
5. Text that fixes the meaning of an image
6. The title of a magazine or newspaper
7. The subject is powerful
8. Roland Barthes

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

Your notes