Your notes

GCSE Media Studies: revision notes

Narrative and genre

Contents

1. Narrative
2. Genre
3. Using these ideas
4. Key terms
5. Quick questions
6. What to do next

Narrative

- **Narrative** is how a story is structured and told. **Narratives** can be linear (in order) or non-linear (using flashbacks).
- Todorov's theory: an **equilibrium** (normal state) is disrupted, the disruption is recognised, there is an attempt to repair it, and a new **equilibrium** is reached.
- Barthes' codes: **enigma codes** create mysteries that make the audience want to find out more; **action codes** show that something is about to happen.
- **Binary oppositions** (linked to Lévi-Strauss): opposing ideas such as good and evil, or young and old, drive conflict.

Genre

- **Genre** is a type or category of media product, recognised by its codes and conventions (a repertoire of elements): characters, settings, plots, **iconography** and style.
- **Genres** help audiences choose products and help producers market them.
- **Genres** change over time, and a successful product often balances repetition and difference (an idea linked to Steve Neale).
- **Hybrid genres** mix conventions from more than one **genre**, such as a sci-fi horror.

Using these ideas

- Analyse how the opening of a TV programme sets up the **equilibrium**, and how **enigma codes** hook the audience.
- Analyse how a trailer uses **genre** conventions, such as a thriller's dark lighting, tense music and quick editing.

Key terms

Narrative	How a story is structured and told.

Equilibrium	The normal state at the start of a narrative.
Enigma code	A question or mystery that hooks the audience.
Action code	A sign that something is about to happen.
Binary opposition	Two opposing ideas, such as good and evil.
Genre	A category of media product with shared conventions.
Hybrid genre	A product that mixes conventions from more than one genre.
Iconography	Objects and images associated with a genre.

Your notes

Quick questions

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

1. What is the first stage of Todorov's narrative theory?
2. What is an enigma code?
3. What is a binary opposition?
4. What is a hybrid genre?
5. What is iconography?
6. Which theorist said genres balance repetition and difference?
7. What is a non-linear narrative?
8. What is an action code?

Answers

1. Equilibrium
2. A mystery that makes the audience want to know more
3. Two opposing ideas, such as good and evil
4. A product mixing conventions from more than one genre
5. Objects and images associated with a genre
6. Steve Neale
7. A story told out of order, such as with flashbacks
8. A sign that something is about to happen

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.