Your notes

GCSE Media Studies: revision notes

Media representations

Contents

1. What representation means
2. Stereotypes and alternatives
3. Theory and audience positioning
4. Key terms
5. Quick questions
6. What to do next

What representation means

- **Representation** is how the media re-present people, places, events and ideas. All **representations** are constructed through choices, not simply a reflection of reality.
- Producers select what to include and leave out, and choose how to show it (**mediation**).

Stereotypes and alternatives

- A **stereotype** is a simplified, generalised view of a group. **Stereotypes** can be positive or negative and are used because they are quick for audiences to understand.
- **Countertypes** challenge **stereotypes**, such as a woman shown as a scientist or a man shown as a carer.
- **Under-representation** means a group rarely appears; misrepresentation means a group is shown inaccurately.
- Groups often discussed: gender, ethnicity, age, disability, social class, and places (such as how an island like Guernsey is shown in tourism adverts).

Theory and audience positioning

- Stuart Hall argued that **representations** are shaped by power, and that **stereotypes** can reinforce inequality.
- David Gauntlett argued that audiences use media to construct their own identities, and that the media now offer more varied **representations**.
- Media products position the audience to accept a **preferred reading**, but audiences may negotiate or reject it.

Key terms

Representation	How the media re-present people, places, events and ideas.
Stereotype	A simplified, generalised view of a group of people.
Countertype	A representation that challenges a stereotype.
Under-representation	When a group rarely appears in the media.
Mediation	The process of shaping reality when it is shown in the media.
Preferred reading	The meaning the producer wants the audience to take.
Selection	Choosing what to include and leave out.

Quick questions

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

1. What is a stereotype?
2. What is a countertype?
3. What is under-representation?
4. Why are representations described as constructed?
5. What is the preferred reading?
6. Which theorist is linked to representation and power?
7. Which theorist said audiences use media to build their identities?
8. Why are stereotypes used?

Answers

1. A simplified, generalised view of a group
2. A representation that challenges a stereotype
3. When a group rarely appears in the media
4. They are shaped by the producer's choices
5. The meaning the producer wants the audience to take
6. Stuart Hall
7. David Gauntlett
8. They are quick for audiences to understand

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.

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