

# Media Key Terms

| Key Term                     | Definition  | Example Sentence   |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Media Representation</b>  | The way individuals, groups, events, or issues are presented in the media, often reflecting societal norms, stereotypes, and values.  | Media representation of women in advertising often reinforces traditional gender roles, as argued by sociologists like Tuchman.    |
| <b>Stereotype</b>            | A simplified and generalised belief or idea about a particular group or individual, often perpetuated by the media.                   | Tabloid newspapers frequently rely on stereotypes, such as portraying teenagers as irresponsible or criminal.                      |
| <b>Moral Panic</b>           | A heightened public concern or fear about an issue or group, exaggerated by the media (Cohen, 1972).                                  | The media's portrayal of young people involved in knife crime has created a moral panic, influencing public policy and perception. |
| <b>Agenda-Setting</b>        | The media's ability to determine which issues are important and should be discussed, shaping public opinion and political priorities. | Through agenda-setting, the media prioritised climate change after global protests gained attention.                               |
| <b>Symbolic Annihilation</b> | The underrepresentation or trivialisation of certain social groups in the media (Tuchman, 1978).                                      | Symbolic annihilation is evident in the lack of older women appearing in lead roles in British television dramas.                  |
| <b>Gatekeeping</b>           | The process by which editors, producers, and media owners decide which stories or information are                                     | Gatekeeping in newsrooms means that stories about marginalised groups are  |



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|                           | published and how they are presented.   | often filtered or excluded altogether.  |
| <b>Hegemony</b>           | A concept from Marxist theory, describing how dominant ideologies are maintained through consent rather than force, often perpetuated by the media. | The media promotes hegemony by normalising capitalist values in TV shows and advertisements.                              |
| <b>News Values</b>        | Criteria used by journalists and editors to decide which stories are newsworthy (Galtung and Ruge, 1965).   | News values explain why stories involving celebrities often dominate headlines over political issues.                     |
| <b>Cultivation Theory</b> | The idea that long-term exposure to media content shapes an individual's perceptions of reality (Gerbner and Gross, 1976).                          | According to cultivation theory, frequent exposure to crime dramas can make viewers perceive the world as more dangerous. |
| <b>Pluralism</b>          | A perspective suggesting that media content reflects diverse viewpoints rather than a single dominant ideology.                                     | Pluralism argues that social media platforms allow for greater representation of minority voices in public discourse.     |
| <b>Censorship</b>         | The control or suppression of content deemed inappropriate, harmful, or politically sensitive by governments, organisations, or media companies.    | Censorship laws vary globally, with some countries restricting political criticism in the media.                          |
| <b>Mass Media</b>         | Forms of communication that reach large audiences, such as television,  | The rise of digital platforms has shifted traditional mass media  |



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|  | newspapers, radio, and the internet.  | consumption patterns among young people.   |
| <b>Hyperreality</b>                      | A state where media representations are more real to audiences than reality itself (Baudrillard, 1981).   | Reality TV creates hyperreality by scripting events and portraying them as spontaneous.  |
| <b>Ideological State Apparatus (ISA)</b> | Institutions like the media that maintain the dominance of the ruling class through ideology rather than coercion (Althusser).                      | Advertisements act as an Ideological State Apparatus, promoting consumerism and reinforcing capitalist values.                 |
| <b>Propaganda Model</b>                  | A theory suggesting that media content serves the interests of powerful elites by controlling and filtering information (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). | The propaganda model suggests that corporate-owned media often avoids criticising large businesses or advertisers.             |
| <b>Audience Reception</b>                | The way audiences interpret and respond to media messages, which can vary based on cultural background, social class, or individual experiences.    | Hall's encoding/decoding model emphasises how audience reception can result in dominant, negotiated, or oppositional readings. |
| <b>Social Construction</b>               | The idea that our understanding of reality is shaped by social processes and cultural norms, often reinforced by media portrayals.                  | The media's portrayal of beauty standards is a clear example of the social construction of body image.                         |
| <b>Desensitisation</b>                   | A process where repeated exposure to violent or shocking media content reduces emotional sensitivity to such content.                               | Some argue that violent video games contribute to desensitisation, though evidence remains contested.                          |



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| <b>Mediation</b>            | The process through which media messages are shaped and altered before reaching audiences, often reflecting the producers' intentions or biases. | The mediation of news events means that audiences often only see a partial version of the story.                         |
| <b>Digital Divide</b>       | The gap between individuals or communities with access to digital technology and those without, often reflecting broader social inequalities.    | The digital divide affects how rural communities engage with online media compared to urban areas.                       |
| <b>Cultural Imperialism</b> | The dominance of one culture over others through the global spread of media, products, and values, often favouring Western ideologies.           | Hollywood films are often criticised for promoting cultural imperialism by overshadowing local film industries.          |
| <b>Convergence</b>          | The merging of different media platforms and technologies, such as accessing TV shows via smartphones or social media.                           | Media convergence allows audiences to stream their favourite TV shows on multiple devices anytime, anywhere.             |
| <b>Globalisation</b>        | The process by which the world becomes increasingly interconnected, often facilitated by the global reach of media and technology.               | The globalisation of social media has enabled people from different cultures to communicate and share content instantly. |
| <b>Spin</b>                 | A biased interpretation of events or information, often used by PR or media professionals to shape public perception.                            | Politicians often rely on spin doctors to ensure news coverage presents them in a favourable light.                      |



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| <b>Citizen Journalism</b>    | News content created and shared by ordinary individuals rather than professional journalists, often via social media platforms.       | Citizen journalism has grown rapidly due to the rise of smartphones and social media platforms like Twitter.                        |
| <b>Clickbait</b>             | Sensationalist or misleading headlines designed to attract clicks and drive web traffic.  | Many online articles use clickbait to increase their ad revenue, even if the content is not entirely accurate.                      |
| <b>Infotainment</b>          | The blending of informational content and entertainment in news or other media, often criticised for oversimplifying complex issues.  | Morning TV shows often use infotainment to discuss serious issues in a light-hearted and engaging way.                              |
| <b>Framing</b>               | The way media presents a story, shaping how audiences interpret it by emphasising certain aspects while ignoring others.              | The framing of protests as “riots” in some newspapers impacts public perception of the demonstrators.                               |
| <b>Participatory Culture</b> | A culture in which consumers actively engage with and contribute to media content rather than passively consuming it (Jenkins, 2006). | YouTube exemplifies participatory culture, where users create and share their own videos.   |
| <b>Polysemy</b>              | The idea that media texts can have multiple interpretations depending on the audience and their social context.                       | Soap operas often exhibit polysemy, allowing different viewers to take away different meanings based on their personal experiences. |



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| <b>Media Saturation</b>   | A situation where individuals are constantly exposed to a variety of media content due to the pervasive presence of digital technologies.           | The rise of smartphones has led to media saturation, where people are rarely disconnected from digital communication.        |
| <b>Web 2.0</b>            | A term used to describe the interactive and participatory nature of the internet, where users create and share content (e.g., social media, blogs). | Web 2.0 enabled users to shift from passive consumption to active participation through platforms like YouTube and Facebook. |
| <b>Digital Natives</b>    | A term coined by Prensky (2001) to describe individuals who have grown up in the digital age and are naturally familiar with technology.            | Digital natives are more likely to use social media as their primary source of news and information.                         |
| <b>Digital Immigrants</b> | People who were not born in the digital age but have adapted to using new technologies later in life.   | Digital immigrants may struggle to navigate social media platforms compared to younger digital natives.                      |
| <b>Filter Bubble</b>      | A phenomenon where algorithms personalise online content, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives or opposing viewpoints.                         | Social media users often experience filter bubbles, reinforcing their pre-existing beliefs and biases.                       |
| <b>Big Data</b>           | Large sets of data collected by companies, governments, and organisations, often used for media personalisation and targeted advertising.           | Big data allows streaming services like Netflix to recommend shows based on a user's viewing history.                        |



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| <b>Democratisation of Media</b> | The process by which new media technologies allow more individuals to create and share content, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. | YouTube has contributed to the democratisation of media, enabling anyone to upload videos and reach a global audience. |
| <b>Echo Chamber</b>             | An environment, often online, where individuals are exposed only to opinions and information that align with their own views.            | Social media algorithms can create echo chambers, reinforcing divisive political ideologies.                           |
| <b>Digital Activism</b>         | The use of digital media technologies to promote political or social change, often through campaigns or movements.                       | Hashtag campaigns like #MeToo highlight the power of digital activism to create global awareness and solidarity.       |
| <b>Cultural Homogenisation</b>  | The process by which local cultures become increasingly similar due to the dominance of global media and cultural products.              | The global success of Western fast-food chains and Hollywood films contributes to cultural homogenisation.             |
| <b>Prosumer</b>                 | A term combining "producer" and "consumer," referring to individuals who create and consume media content simultaneously.                | Social media influencers are prosumers, creating content while engaging with their audiences.                          |

