Media Studies | Audiences

How do media producers categorise audiences?

Producers can categorise/classify a target audience/**demographic** by their **AGE**, **GENDER**, **INCOME/CLASS**, **VIEWING HABITS** as well as their **INTERESTS** or the **SIZE** of the audience.

How do media producers target specific audiences?

They can use **CHARACTERS** and **CELEBRITIES** the audience like/look up to/relate to/find attractive;
GENRE CODES (to appeal to **fans** of that genre);
INTERTEXTUALITY (refer to other media texts the audience likes);
a **COLOUR SCHEME** (e.g. bright pink for young girls/green for environmentalists etc.).
Also consider: **general content; word choice; platform/distribution method** (e.g. Radio 4/newspapers for older audiences)**; TV scheduling** (e.g. the 9pm **watershed** for adults).

Why do audiences consume different media? (Uses and Gratifications)

According to **BLUMLER & KATZ'S USES AND GRATIFICATIONS** theory, the audience may consume a text for:
INFORMATION & SURVEILLANCE (to learn/find out about…);
PERSONAL IDENTITY (to relate to…/aspire to be more like…);
SOCIAL INTERACTION (to help connect with others);
ENTERTAINMENT & ESCAPISM (to provide distraction/emotional release/cultural enjoyment).

How do producers/media texts position audiences?

What is the text **positioning** audiences to:
THINK (e.g. "that James Bond is strong" or "exercise is good for you") or
FEEL (e.g. "excited/sad/scared")?

How (and why) may audiences read (or respond to) the same text differently?

According to **STUART HALL'S RECEPTION THEORY,** media texts are **polysemic** (have many possible meanings)
A **PREFERRED READING** is where audiences read the text in the way it was intended
A **NEGOTIATED READING** is where audiences modify the text's intended message
An **OPPOSITIONAL READING** is where audiences completely disagree & reject the text's message

How have changes in technology affected audiences?

Technology has helped:
INCREASE audience interactivity & collaboration (prosumers) & variety/choice (what/where/when) and
DECREASE sales (e.g. of print news), privacy as well as split/segmented audiences

Term	Definition
ABC1	According to NRS social grades, ABC1 are the audiences with the highest incomes.
Active audience	The idea that audiences are more likely to engage with ideas they see in the media, even disagreeing with them.
Audience interactivity	The idea that audiences are increasingly interactive (e.g. sharing content on social media, writing reviews/blog posts etc.)
C2DE	According to NRS social grades, C2DE are the audiences with the lowest incomes.
Demographic	A particular section of the population (e.g. men/women/teenagers etc.).
Mass/Mainstream audience	Large, typical audiences (e.g. fans of action films).
Niche/Alternative audience	Small, specialised audiences (e.g. fans of anime in the UK).
Passive audience	The outdated theory that audiences are easily influenced by media.
Prosumer	"Producers" and "consumers", suggesting audiences are often *creators* of media (e.g. YouTube videos or Insta posts).
Reception theory	The theory (by Stuart Hall) that suggests that media encode messages in media texts but that audiences actively decode these messages in different ways—either taking a preferred, negotiated or oppositional reading (see left).
Target audience	The group(s) who a product/media text is aimed at and created for.
Uses and Gratifications	Theory (by Blumler & Katz), suggesting active audiences seek out and use different media texts in order to satisfy a need and experience different pleasures.

Demographics | Appeal | Responses

Media Audiences Glossary

FROM EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES GLOSSARY OF TERMS
TERMS MARKED WITH ASTERIX (*) ONLY REQUIRED AT A-LEVEL

Term	Definition
Active audience	Audiences who actively engage in selecting media products to consume and interpret their meanings.
Appeal	The way in which products attract and interest an audience
Aspirational	Encourages the audience to want more money, up market consumer items and a higher social position.
Attract	How media producers appeal to audiences to encourage them to consume the product.
Audience categorisation	How media producers group audiences (e.g. by age, gender, ethnicity) to target their products.
Audience consumption	The way in which audiences engage with media products (e.g. viewing a TV programme, playing a video game).
Audience interpretation	The way in which audiences 'read' the meanings in, and make sense of, media products.
Audience response	How audiences react to media products e.g. by accepting the intended meanings (preferred reading).
Audience segmentation	Where a target audience is divided up due to the diversity and range of programmes and channels, making it difficult for one programme to attract a large target audience.
Cultural capital	The media tastes and preferences of an audience, traditionally linked to social class/background.
Fan	An enthusiast or aficionado of a particular media form or product.
Four Cs	This stands for Cross Cultural Consumer Characteristics, categorising consumers into groups: Mainstreamers, Aspirers, Explorers, Succeeders and Reformers.
Global	Worldwide - e.g. a media product with global reach is a product that is distributed around the world.
Hypodermic needle model	An out of date media effects theory which suggests media injects ideas into the mind of a passive audiences who will all respond in the same way.
Intertextual	Where one media text makes reference to aspects of another media text.
Ludology	The study of (video) games and those who play them.
Mainstream	These are media products that are the most popular at the time and tend to be the most conventional.
Mass audience	Traditional idea of audience as a large, homogenous group.
Niche audience	A relatively small audience with specialised interests, tastes, and backgrounds.
Opinion leaders	People in society who may affect the way in which others interpret a particular media text – e.g. influencers.
Passive audience	The idea (now widely regarded as outdated) that audiences do not actively engage with media products, but consume and accept the messages that producers communicate.
Persona	The image or personality that someone, for example a celebrity, presents to the audience.
Personal identity	This means your ability to relate to something that happens in a text because it has happened to you.
Pick and mix theory	Theory by David Gauntlett, arguing that audiences select aspects of the media texts that best suit their needs and ignore the rest (a form of selection bias). .
Privileged spectator position	Where the camera places the audience in a superior position within the narrative, who can then anticipate what will follow.
Specialised audience	A non-mass, or niche, audience that may be defined by a particular social group (for example young, aspirational females) or by a specific interest (for example skydiving).
Strip programming	A technique used in radio and television whereby a certain programme is broadcast at the same time every day, helping people fit it into their daily routine, for example driving home from work.
Subject-specific lexis	The specific language and vocabulary used to engage the audience, used to make the reader feel part of the group who belong to the world of that magazine.
Target audience	The people at whom the media text is aimed.
Textual poaching	The way in which audiences or fans may take particular texts and interpret or reinvent them in different ways e.g. by creating fan fiction.
Viral marketing	Where the awareness of the product or the advertising campaign is rapidly spread through social networks and the Internet like a biological virus.