

# Media Studies | Representation

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY HOW THE GROUP, ISSUE OR EVENT HAS BEEN REPRESENTED

Is it a **positive** or **negative** representation?

*(Does the person, issue or group look good or bad in the text?)*

Is the representation **empowering** or **disempowering**?

*(Does the person, issue or group appear strong/powerful or weak/vulnerable?)*

Does it **reinforce** or **subvert** specific **stereotypes**?

*(See list of common gender and racial stereotypes on the right)*

Has any group been **over-represented** or **under-represented**?

*(Is the text dominated by a certain group? Has a group been excluded/left-out/ignored?)*

Does it **misrepresent** (deceive), **objectify** (for the **male gaze**) or present a group as **different** / "other"?

## STEP 2: SUPPORT EACH POINT WITH EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT

**How** has this representation been **constructed** (by the producers)?

What elements of **media language** have been **selected** to **encode** these meanings?

(What do these elements **connote** or **signify**?)

## STEP 3: DEVELOP YOUR POINTS, WHERE POSSIBLE

Does the representation **support** or **challenge** a specific **message** or **ideology**?

*(E.g. ... challenging patriarchal ideology / supporting feminist ideology)*

Does it help **construct** a **narrative** or **story**?

*(E.g. This constructs her as the strong, powerful **hero** in the narrative)*

Does it **appeal** to a certain **audience** (e.g. by using certain role models)?

*(E.g. This has been constructed to appeal to its female target audience, who may look up to...)*

<b>Feminism</b>	The movement fighting <i>for</i> gender equality and <i>against</i> the patriarchal oppression of women.
<b>Objectification</b>	The action of degrading someone (usually women) to a mere (sexualised) object
<b>Male gaze</b>	The idea that most media texts are constructed from the point-of-view of (and appeal to) men—often by sexualising women for a male audience
<b>Patriarchal ideology</b>	The idea that men are superior to women
<b>Patriarchal Stereotypes (Men)</b>	Strong, dominant, confident, powerful, independent, aggressive, logical, decisive, unemotional, practical and are the providers or "breadwinners" (earn money for the household).
<b>Patriarchal Stereotypes (Women)</b>	Weak, submissive, vulnerable, domestic (do the housework/look after the children), emotional, indecisive and that their worth is dependent on their physical beauty or appearance (often objectified for the pleasure of the male gaze).
<b>Patriarchy</b>	A society or culture that is male dominated.
<b>Reinforce (stereotypes)</b>	When a media text repeats, uses or supports a stereotype
<b>Stereotype</b>	An exaggerated representation of someone or something. It is also where a certain group are associated with a certain set of characteristics, e.g. blondes are dumb, etc. Stereotypes can be quick ways of communicating information as they are easily recognisable to audiences.
<b>Subvert (stereotypes)</b>	When a media text goes against, challenges or opposes a stereotype.

## Representation Glossary

### FROM EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERMS MARKED WITH ASTERIX (\*) ONLY REQUIRED AT A-LEVEL

<b>Colonialism</b>	The practice of nations settling in and controlling other countries to exploit them economically.
<b>Colonial ideology</b>	The racist idea—underpinning colonialism—that “inferior” nations & cultures should be ruled by “superior” ones.
<b>Colonial stereotypes (white Europeans)</b>	Wealthy, intelligent, civilized, saviours, sophisticated, law-abiding, superior and “normal” (an ethnocentric representation).
<b>Colonial stereotypes (“other”/non-white cultures)</b>	Poor, uneducated, uncivilized, helpless, primitive, criminal/violent/dangerous, inferior and different/unusual or “exotic”.
<b>Encoding &amp; decoding</b>	Media producers encode messages and meanings in products that are decoded, or interpreted, by audiences.
<b>*Ethnocentric*</b>	A belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture.
<b>*Hegemony*</b>	This derives from the theory of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony is the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas (e.g. hegemonic masculinity)
<b>*Ideology*</b>	A set of messages, values and beliefs that may be encoded into media products. (Essentially, a way of thinking about politics or society, shared by a group).
<b>Masculinity</b>	The perceived characteristics generally considered to define what it is to be a man. These can differ according to sociological variations and cultural changes.
<b>Mediation</b>	The way in which a media text is constructed in order to represent the producer of the text's version of reality; constructed through selection, organisation and focus.
<b>Misrepresentation</b>	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be represented in a way that is inappropriate and not based on reality.

<b>Persona</b>	The image or personality that someone, for example a celebrity, presents to the audience.
<b>Political bias (left/right-wing bias)</b>	Where a newspaper may show support for a political party (or ideas) through its choice of stories, style of coverage, cartoons, etc. <b>Left-wing bias</b> may be demonstrated through liberal ideas and support for the Labour party <b>Right-wing bias</b> may be demonstrated through traditional ideas and support for the Conservative party
<b>Realism</b>	A style of presentation that claims to portray 'real life' accurately and authentically.
<b>Representation</b>	The way in which key sections of society are presented by the media, e.g. gender, race, age, the family, etc.
<b>Selection &amp; combination</b>	Media producers actively choose elements of media language and place them alongside others to create specific representations or versions of reality.
<b>Sexual objectification</b>	The practice of regarding a person as an object to be viewed only in terms of their sexual appeal and with no consideration of any other aspect of their character or personality.
<b>Stereotype</b>	An exaggerated representation of someone or something. It is also where a certain group are associated with a certain set of characteristics, for example ‘all Scotsmen are mean’, ‘blondes are dumb’, etc. Stereotypes can be quick ways of communicating information in adverts and dramas (e.g. the rebellious teenager in a soap opera), as they are easily recognisable to audiences.
<b>Underrepresentation</b>	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be rarely represented or be completely absent from media products.
<b>Viewpoints</b>	Different perspectives in relation to values, attitudes, beliefs or ideologies.
<b>*'Window on the world'*</b>	The idea that media texts, particularly those that present aspects of reality, for example news programmes, are showing the audience the 'real' world as it happens.