

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...)

Feminism	The movement fighting <i>for</i> gender equality and <i>against</i> the patriarchal oppression of women.
Objectification	The action of degrading someone (usually women) to a mere (sexualised) object
Male gaze	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
Patriarchal ideology	The idea that men are superior to women
Patriarchal Stereotypes (Men)	Strong, dominant, confident, powerful, independent, aggressive, logical, decisive, unemotional, practical and are the providers or "breadwinners" (earn money for the household).
Patriarchal Stereotypes (Women)	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).
Patriarchy	A society or culture that is male dominated.
Reinforce (stereotypes)	When a media text repeats, uses or supports a stereotype
Stereotype	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.
Subvert (stereotypes)	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

Colonialism	The practice of nations settling in and controlling other countries to exploit them economically.
Colonial ideology	The racist idea—underpinning colonialism—that “inferior” nations & cultures should be ruled by “superior” ones.
Colonial stereotypes (white Europeans)	Wealthy, intelligent, civilized, saviours, sophisticated, law-abiding, superior and “normal” (an ethnocentric representation).
Colonial stereotypes (“other”/non-white cultures)	Poor, uneducated, uncivilized, helpless, primitive, criminal/violent/dangerous, inferior and different/unusual or “exotic”.
Encoding & decoding	Media producers encode messages and meanings in products that are decoded, or interpreted, by audiences.
Ethnocentric	A belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture.
Hegemony	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)
Ideology	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).
Masculinity	The perceived characteristics generally considered to define what it is to be a man. These can differ according to sociological variations and cultural changes.
Mediation	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.
Misrepresentation	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be represented in a way that is inappropriate and not based on reality.

Persona	The image or personality that someone, for example a celebrity, presents to the audience.
Political bias (left/right-wing bias)	Where a newspaper may show support for a political party (or ideas) through its choice of stories, style of coverage, cartoons, etc. Left-wing bias may be demonstrated through liberal ideas and support for the Labour party Right-wing bias may be demonstrated through traditional ideas and support for the Conservative party
Realism	A style of presentation that claims to portray 'real life' accurately and authentically.
Representation	The way in which key sections of society are presented by the media, e.g. gender, race, age, the family, etc.
Selection & combination	Media producers actively choose elements of media language and place them alongside others to create specific representations or versions of reality.
Sexual objectification	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.
Stereotype	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.
Underrepresentation	Certain social groups (usually minority groups) may be rarely represented or be completely absent from media products.
Viewpoints	Different perspectives in relation to values, attitudes, beliefs or ideologies.
'Window on the world'	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.