

ANALYSIS POWER UP

GENERAL ADVICE

Analyse don't describe

Explain the **effects** of the media product on audiences - what emotions or ideas does the product produce for readers or viewers?

Explain the product's **representational effects** - what does the product suggest about gender, race or class?

Ditch GCSE descriptions

'The product catches the eye'

Use instead:

'The magazine convinces the audience to make an impulse buy by...'

'The product creates a visceral response through its use of...'

'The product immediately makes the audience feel...'

The word 'shows'

See below for alternatives

'The text is bold and colourful'

Use instead:

'The product uses a...colour palette'

'The product creates connotations of...'

'The product foregrounds the idea of...'

SHOWS SYNONYMS

Alludes to	Explains	Signifies
Clarifies	Exposes	Suggests
Confirms	Highlights	Typifies
Conveys	Illustrates	Explores
Denotes	Implies	Identifies
Depicts	Connotes	Imparts
Displays	Indicates	Indicates
Emphasizes	Portrays	Supports
Establishes	Represents	Constructs
Exemplifies	Reveals	Questions

SENTENCE TECHNIQUES

Use the sentence forms and techniques below to help you construct exam-winning analysis:

Describe effects

Create powerful analysis by describing media techniques. Use the descriptor boxes on this sheet to help.

Good: 'Tracking shots are used to maintain audience interest'

Better: 'Disorientating tracking shots are used to maintain audience interest'

Use list sentences

List sentences quickly provide **detailed** analysis. The technique is hugely useful in exams where time is limited.

Formula: 'The use of *technique 1*, *technique 2* and *technique 3* combine to make the audience feel...'

Example: Disorientating tracking shots, whip-pans and disconcerting hand-held camera movement combine to connote an impending sense of danger.'

Use effect contrast sentences

These sentence types detail product transformations.

Formula: 'Initially, audiences are presented with the use of *technique 1*, but that later changes to the use of *technique 2*. This creates an interesting juxtaposition and is used to signify...'

Example: 'In Riptide, audiences are initially presented with a series of idealised high-key lit shots, but later depictions are desaturated and lit in a low-key lighting style. This aesthetic contrast is used to signify the dehumanising effects of patriarchy on women.'

Binary opposition sentences

Diagnosis of binary oppositions in power sentences helps you include media theory in your analysis.

Formula: 'A Straussian binary opposition is offered via the use of *technique 1* and *technique 2*. The resulting conflict offered to the audience delineates a *value 1* versus *value 2* opposition in which *value X* is the privileged state. This constructs an ideological message, suggesting...'

Example: 'A Straussian stylistic opposition is offered through the use of closed and open framed shots in the opening sequence of the WaterAid advert in which the comfort and safety of the rain-soaked middle class world gives way to the uncertainty of Claudia's sun-drenched life. This constructs a view that privileges Western ideals/lifestyles as superior.'

CAMERA/IMAGE TECHNIQUES

Shot distance:

ECU, CU, MS, LMS, Wide shot, Establishing shot, aerial shot

Shot movement:

pan, track, dolly, zoom, crab, crane-up, crane-down, steadicam, hand-held

Shot composition:

open frame, closed frame, symmetrical composition, asymmetrical composition, tit up, tilt down, two shot, OTS, POV, high depth of field, low depth of field, 4th wall break

CAMERA/IMAGE DESCRIPTORS

Descending	Disorientating
Ascending	Simple
Empowering	Unsettling
Oppressive	Reassuring
Hand-held	Subdued
Static	Dynamic
Choppy	Frenetic
Drifting	Concentrated
Rapid	Engaging
Claustrophobic	Enigmatic
Liberating	Disconcerting
Left-to-right	Comforting
Right-to-left	Low-to-high
Energising	High-to-low
Sleepy	Revealing
Active	Suggestive
Passive	Explicit
Open	Sexualising
Closed	Candid
Tight	Posed
Loose	Controlled
Chaotic	Authentic
Ordered	Balanced

analysis exemplars for all set texts and for all exam boards available at:

Essentialmediatheory.com

BARTHES' FIVE CODE SYMPHONY

Hermeneutic codes (enigmas)

Are moments of mystery that intrigue the reader or viewer. Enigmas hook readers, compelling further reading or viewing to locate answers to the questions posed.

Proairetic codes (actions)

Offer moments in which meaning is conveyed through action or demonstration. Action provides explanation or excitement, sometimes working to resolve the enigmas that earlier narrative sequences might pose.

Semantic codes (connotative elements)

Are elements within media texts that produce a single connotative effect. Semantic codes might include: lighting, mise en scene or colour usage.

Symbolic codes

Perhaps one of the easiest ways to seek out the symbolic codes within a product is to search for repeated symbols that convey a deeper meaning.

Cultural codes (referential codes)

Refers to the inclusion of material that generates meaning from outside the product. Cultural codes might include the use of proverbs, sayings or idioms. Intertextual references can also be considered to be a form of cultural code

SOUND TECHNIQUES

Leitmotif	Volume
Ambience	Silence
Score	Parallel sound
Diegetic sound	Contrapuntal sound
Non-diegetic sound	Sound bridge
Dialogue	Rhythm
Room tone	Tempo
Instrumentation	Establishing sound
Timbre	Sound motif
Sound effects	

SOUND DESCRIPTORS

High-pitched	Subdued
Melodic	Dynamic
Loud	Frenetic
Soft	Ornate
Piercing	Discordant
Muted	Sudden
Mechanical	Gradual
Natural	Cacophonous
Artificial	Artificial
Visceral	Natural
Soothing	Mysterious
Sparse	Horrifying
Chaotic	Comedic
Repetitive	String
Minor key	Percussive
Major key	Irritating
Slow	Fragile
Bright	Melancholic

EDITING TECHNIQUES

Montage editing: Cross cut, Eye line match.	Editing transitions: straight cut, dissolve, graphic match, fade to white/black, fade through black/ white, wipe, J-cut, L-cut, Smash cut, Cross cut
Metric montage: editing to time codes	
Rhythmic montage: continuity editing	
Tonal montage: editing via emotional content	
Intellectual montage: cutting using symbols, shapes, ideas	Editing time: flash forward/back, stretched edit, scene edit, elliptical edit

EDITING DESCRIPTORS

Fast	Linear
Slow	Non-linear
Lethargic	Visceral
Energising	Disorientating
Active	Simple
Passive	Unsettling
Accelerating	Multiple
Decelerating	perspective
Chaotic	Single perspective
Ordered	Complicated

LIGHTING/COLOUR TECHNIQUES

Colourisation	Brightness
High-key light	Contrast
Low-key lighting	Ambient Light
Back lighting	Spot
Chiaroscuro lighting	Key light
Colour palette	Fill light
Vignetting	Focal point
Fill light	Shadow

LIGHTING/COLOUR DESCRIPTORS

High contrast	Organic
Low contrast	Subtle
Black and white	Exaggerated
Saturated	Diffused
Warm	Harsh
Cold	Exotic
Soft	Mundane
Hard	Pristine
Shadowy	Dirty
Ambient	Sepia
Artificial	Modern
Natural	Flood lit
Cheerless	Clarifying
Cheery	Obfuscating
Invitational	Primary
Rich	Understated
Lifeless	Exaggerated
Monotone	Overcast
Excited	Sunlit
Industrial	Abrasive

MISE EN SCENE/LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES

Costume	Lexical choice
Props	Semantic field
Setting	Emotive language
Make-up/Hair	Alliteration
Weather	Assonance
Performance	Imperatives
Body language	Interrogatives
Gesture codes	Exclamatives
Narrative voice (1st/2nd/3rd)	Enigmas
Ellipsis	Tone
Repetition	Tense
	Text-to-image ratio

MISE EN SCENE/LANGUAGE DESCRIPTORS

Dishevelled	Clumsy
Flawless	Genre compliant
Light	Subversive
Heavy	Passive
Casual	Active
Formal	Reflective
Disassembled	Engaged
Uniform	Emotive
Co-ordinated	Objective
Chaotic	Subjective
On trend	Passionless
Retro	Fricative
Discordant	Plosive
Complimentary	Cacophonous
Varnished	Euphonious
Raw	Sibilant
Ideal	Lyrical
Real	Contentious
Emotive	Reassuring
Intellectual	Enigmatic
Backgrounded	Explicit
Foregrounded	Dangerous
Sparse	Safe
Lush	Accusatory
Lifeless	Vilifying
Fertile	Sympathetic
Verdant	Detailed
Arid	Concise
Dry	Objectifying
Saturated	Humanising
Rain-soaked	Declarative
Sunlit	Exclamative
Summery	Imperative
Wintry	Command
Peaceful	Interrogative
Violent	Accusatory
Turbulent	Innocent
Feminine	Precise
Masculine	Vague
Alpha male	Rude
Stereotypical	Polite
Counter-typical	Intense
Closed	Calm
Open	Foreboding
Invitational	Invitational
Oppositional	Refined
Neat	Coarse