

O Level Sociology (2251) Unit 8: The Mass Media

Recommended Prior Knowledge

A basic knowledge of the main structures of the media in modern industrial societies would be helpful here.

Context

This unit builds on the knowledge gained in other units of the influences of social class, gender and ethnicity. It also has close links with the study of political processes and the study of crime and deviance.

Outline

This unit examines contemporary culture and communication through reference to the influence of the mass media.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
8.1	Recognise the various forms of the mass media.	Provide the class with a list of the different types of media, e.g. newspapers, broadcasting, television and radio, magazines etc.	Blundell J, pp287 - 320 P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 188 – 193
	Understand the process of mass communication.	Outline the main trends in the organisation and control of the different types of media.	Blundell J, pp 294 & 295 for Who owns the mass media. P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 208 – 213 for patterns in ownership within the press.
	Discuss the ownership and control of the mass media.	Outline some of the legal limits of the media. Discuss state control and censorship. Describe different forms of ownership of the media, including state ownership, multi-national companies, cooperatives, and private individuals/families.	Blundell J, pp 294 & 295 for Who owns the mass media. P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 208 – 213 for patterns in ownership within the press
	Identify media cultures.	Provide definitions and examples of the different forms of culture.	Kirby M et al, Sociology in Perspective, pp 177 – 185 for high culture, mass

	Recognise the patterns of media use, for example social class, age and gender.	Class Activity Invite students to suggest examples of how mass media usage differs according to age, gender and social class.	culture and popular culture P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 218 – 221 Gender and ethnicity and how it is represented in the media.
	Distinguish between freedom and censorship in the media.	Outline the concept of 'freedom' within the media and the ways in which governments and owners may use censorship in the media.	Blundell J, pp306 & 307 for Freedom, censorship and bias. Browne K, pp145 – 150 for controls on the media.
	Distinguish between different forms of cultural expression: 'high culture', 'mass culture', 'popular culture', etc	Provide definitions and examples of the different forms of culture.	Kirby M et al, Sociology in Perspective, pp 177 – 185 for high culture, mass culture and popular culture.
	Distinguish between Pluralist and Marxist perspectives on the nature and role of the media.	Outline the differences between Pluralist and Marxist views of the functions and processes of the media.	P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 210 & 211 for pluralist approach and pp 212 & 213 for Marxist/conflict approach to the mass media.
	Recognise the role of advertising.	Invite students to suggest some of the factors which influence the content and impact of advertising and provide examples.	Blundell J, pp304 - 305
8.2	The impact and influence of the mass media.	Class activity Divide students into small groups and ask them to give a brief presentation of the following approaches; The 'hypodermic syringe' approach, the uses and gratifications approach or the cultural effects approach.	P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 200 – 203 for effects of the mass media. Blundell J, pp 302 & 303.
	Describe the process of communication and the media's role in shaping values, attitudes and behaviour with reference to, for example, television and violence, political beliefs and voting; patterns of	Using studies such as Bandura et al demonstrate the links between television and violence. Using relevant official statistics demonstrate the relationship between values/beliefs and voting behaviour.	P Wilson & A Kidd : pp 226-227 for Media exposure and violence. P Wilson & A Kidd, pp 206 & 207 for the media and political socialisation.

consumption.

Bandura et al (1961) in Psychology for OCR F Lintern, L Williams & Pp 50 – 55. Heinemann

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Recognise the media's role in labelling and creating moral panics, agenda setting and creating images and stereotypes.

Class activity

Provide definitions of labelling, moral panic, agenda setting and stereotyping. In small groups ask students to research an example of a moral panic. Feedback to rest of class.

P Wilson & A Kidd, pp224 -225 Explains the terms moral panics and deviancy amplification.

Discuss the issues of selection, distortion, sensationalism and bias in the media.

Define the various terms i.e. selection, distortion, bias and sensationalism and provide examples of them within the different forms of media.

Browne K, pp153 – 158 covers agenda setting, gate keeping and moral panics. Browne K, pp168 & 169 for bias in the media

Discuss the idea of repressive and manipulative forms of communication: indoctrination and propaganda.

Define terms and provide examples, using media sources, of the repression of ideas, manipulative forms of communication (bias & distortion), indoctrination and propaganda. Ask students to look for examples of these in their own society.

Blundell J, pp 306 & 307 for Freedom, censorship and bias.

Browne K, p 153 for The mass media, public opinion and social control.