

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LANGUAGES



MEDIA

LANGUAGES

Codes, conventions, formats, symbols, and narrative structures that indicate the meaning of media messages to an audience. It is the way in which a text is constructed **to create meaning for a reader or viewer.** Media codes and conventions are like the building blocks of all the media around us.

Media codes generally have an **agreed meaning, or connotation,** to their audience.

There are three types of media codes: **symbolic codes, technical codes, and written codes.**

CONVENTIONS

Are expected ways in which **codes are organized in a product.** These are accepted ways of using media codes. Conventions are closely connected to the audience expectations of a media product.

01

SYMBOLIC CODES

Settings, Mise en scene, acting, color

02

TECHNICAL

Camera work, editing, audio, lighting

03

WRITTEN CODES

printed language and spoken language

A. SYMBOLIC CODES

Symbolic codes include the **language, dress or actions of characters**, or iconic symbols that are easily understood. Symbolic codes are social in nature. For instance, if you saw somebody receive a red rose in a film, you would assume there is a romantic relationship between 2 characters.

SETTINGS

It is the **time and place** of the narrative. When discussing setting, you can describe the setting of the whole story or just a specific scene. The setting of a narrative is the **environment** in which the narrative takes place.

ACTORS

Actors **portray characters** in media products and contribute to character development, creating tension or advancing the narrative. The actor portrays a character through, facial expression, body language, vocal qualities, movement, and body contact.

MISE EN SCENE

It is a French term that means "**everything within the frame**". In media terms it has become to mean the description of all the objects within a frame of the media product and how they have been arranged. An analysis of mise en scene includes, Set Design, Costume, Props, Staging and Composition. The study of mise en scene often involves pausing a media product and analyzing how the elements of the frame combine to create meaning for the audience.

COLOR SYMBOLISM

Media producers use **color** to specifically connect connotations to specific scenes, characters, or objects. **Red**, for instance, is typically seen as a **color of passion, danger, romance, or violence**. **Green** is connected with **nature or sickness**, **blue** with **calm or depression**. **Yellow** is warm and inviting or a warning. **Purple** is seen to be connected with **royalty or other-worldly**.

B. TECHNICAL CODES

These include sound, camera angles, types of shots and lighting. They may also have ominous music to communicate danger. Technical codes are **specific to a media form** and **do not live outside of them**. For instance, our understanding of different camera shots and their connotations make sense when we look at films and photographs but mean nothing to us outside of those forms.

CAMERAWORK

This refers to **how the camera is operated, positioned, and moved** for specific effects.

Aspects of camerawork include: **Positioning, Movement, Framing, Exposure and Lens choice.**

EDITING

This the process of **choosing, manipulating, and arranging images and sound**. Editing is generally done for four different reasons: Graphic edits, Rhythmic edits, Spatial edits, and Temporal edits.

AUDIO

This is the expressive or naturalistic **use of sound**. Audio can be diegetic or non-diegetic. The three aspects of audio are **dialogue, sound effects, and music.**

LIGHTING

It is the **manipulation of natural or artificial light** to selectively highlight specific elements of the scene. Elements of lighting include: Quality, Direction, Source and Color.

C. WRITTEN CODES

Written codes are the **formal written language** used in a media product. Just like technical and symbolic codes, written codes can be used to advance a narrative, communicate information about a character or issues and themes in the media product.

TWO KINDS OF WRITTEN CODES

Written codes include **printed language** which is text you can see within the frame and how it is presented, and also **spoken language**, which includes dialogue and song lyrics.