

How to

RECOGNIZE PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

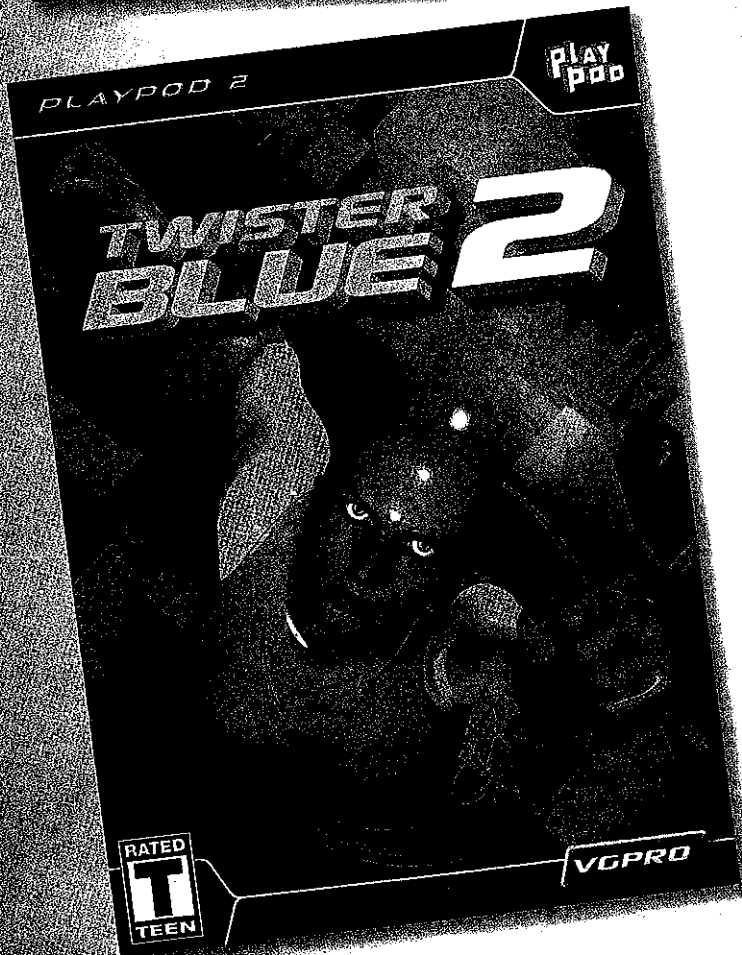
A media text is any product communicated through a medium (such as radio, TV, Internet, newspapers, and so on). Music and commercials are media texts. So are video games, reality TV shows, and comic strips. What type of media text do you enjoy most?

Every **media text** has a **purpose** and intended **audience**. To analyze a media text, you need to understand both its purpose and its audience.

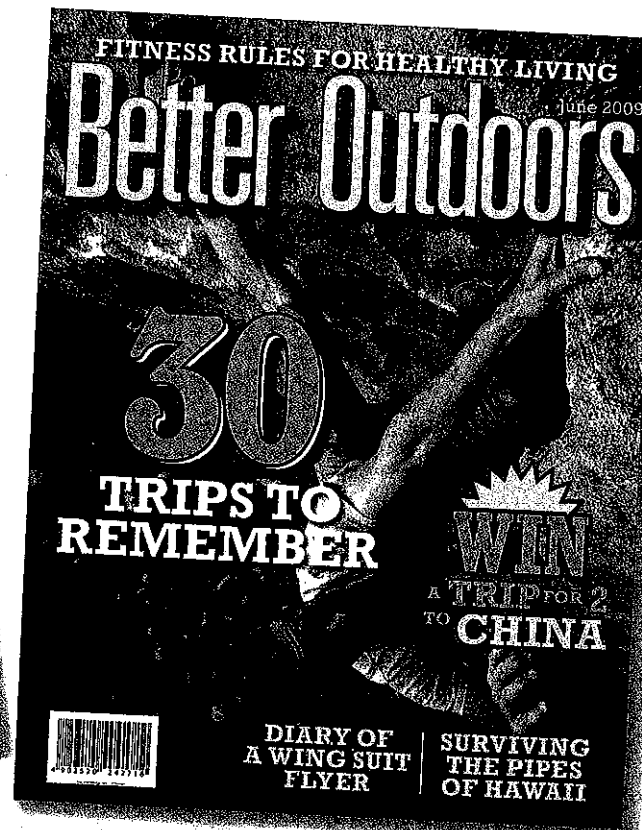
Purpose: the purpose is the reason the text has been created. Generally, media texts are created for three main purposes:

- to entertain
- to inform
- to sell or persuade

Audience: the audience is the people who view, listen to, or read a media text. Creators of media texts always have a very specific audience in mind.




You see a new video game. The image on the cover implies that the game is really exciting. But you've read a review of the game that explicitly says it's boring. How does understanding the purpose of each text help you to decide which message to believe?



Looking at each cover on a magazine rack, you can guess some of the characteristics of the intended audience, such as age group, lifestyle, interests, or gender. When you look at a media text and think "Wow!" you're probably part of the intended audience.

When you're identifying a media text's purpose and audience, consider these questions:

- Does the media text have an **explicit** message? (The text directly tries to convince you to purchase or believe something.)
- Does the media text have any **implicit** messages? (The text has hidden messages; for example, in a car ad, all the actors are young people wearing expensive clothes.)
- What are the **demographics** of the people in the media text? Consider the performers' ages and genders, and look for clues about wealth and interests.
- What elements of popular culture are included in the media text? Look for fashion, music, and celebrities that would appeal to specific audiences.
- What is the medium (TV, radio, and so on)? Knowing something about the purpose and audience for that medium can help you understand the purpose and audience of the text.



Demographics: Advertisers use the term *demographics* to describe their audiences. Demographics can cover physical qualities such as age, race, and gender, and social qualities such as occupation, education, and hobbies.



No More Poppies

LOOKING AT WAR THROUGH
THE EYES OF CHILDREN

documentary by
students from
Afghanistan Academy

Remember, understanding purpose and audience will also help you create effective media texts. For example, imagine that you're creating a short documentary to honour Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan. Your intention is that most of your audience will be veterans of the war and their families. What could you do to help your audience understand your purpose?

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Writing: How can being clear about your purpose and intended audience help you to write more clearly?

Careers: Why would the design team working on a new video game need to have a very clear idea about the audience for the game?

ANALYZE MEDIA ELEMENTS

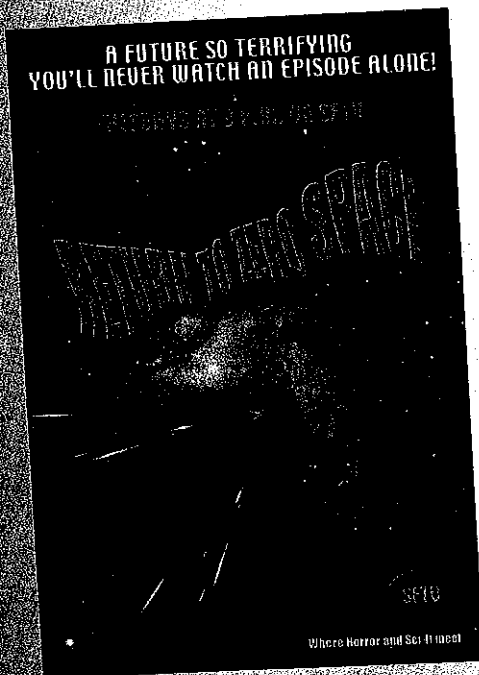
Media is all around you. It is part of your life at home, in school, and just about everywhere else. There are several different media forms.

Artist Tanya Vlach replaces missing eye with web cam

By [unreadable]

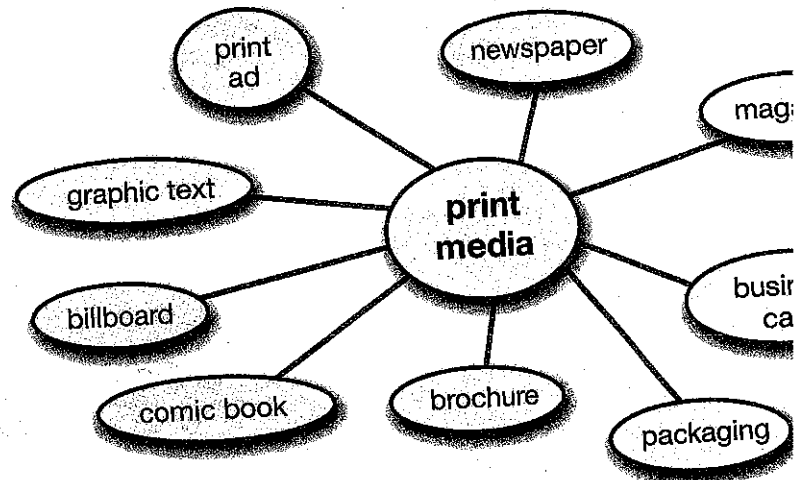
[Faded text from the article]

Newspaper editors carefully construct headlines to grab the attention of readers.



This poster is an example of a print form. It uses elements, such as words, logos, colours, and images, to convey a strong message.

MEDIA FORM	EXAMPLES OF THAT FORM
print	magazines, newspapers, ads, posters, billboards, book covers
oral	radio programs, music, interviews
visual	paintings, photos, photo essays
electronic	websites, podcasts, TV shows, text messages, pop-up ads



To construct effective media texts, producers combine a variety of elements that they hope will appeal to their audience. For example, a newspaper has a variety of elements such as headlines, captions, and photos. These elements are used in particular ways. The way these elements are used is known as *techniques*, such as using larger fonts for more important headlines, placing captions under photos, or cropping photos. Some elements have come to be associated with certain media texts. For example, a slogan is almost always used in a print ad.

Let's look more closely at the elements used in *some* print media texts.

PRINT MEDIA TEXT	SOME COMMON ELEMENTS AND HOW THEY'RE USED
magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cover features the title as a large logo, short subheadings that list content, strong and attention-grabbing copy • organized into sections • lines and bullet points of articles capture attention • subheadings placed in centre of article or margin highlight interesting parts of an article • graphics (such as photos, diagrams, maps, charts, and graphs) support the text
newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organized into sections • content may include articles, editorials, letters, ads, notices, comic strips, images, obituaries, birth notices, and classified ads • headlines capture story ideas and readers' attention • eye-catching photos or other visuals support the text
graphic novel (comic books and comic strips often use these techniques also)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cells or panels are read left to right and top to bottom (if not, illustrator uses arrows or symbols to point the way) • text bubbles represent dialogue • caption at the bottom or top of a box explains setting or other information • color and shading create atmosphere
poster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong visual sends a message • short text supports visual • text may be arranged in interesting ways or use interesting fonts and font sizes • color and tone may be used

Follow these steps to analyze the effectiveness of a media text and its use of elements:

1. Consider the **purpose** of the media text. How is each element used to achieve that purpose?
2. Consider the intended **audience**. Will the elements appeal to the intended audience?
3. Evaluate how effectively the individual **elements work together**. How will the audience respond to the media text? Is that the response the media producers desired?

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Creating Media: When you're creating media, it's important to know about the elements and techniques associated with a media text. If you were creating a magazine article about an innovative vehicle, how would you use graphics or photos to grab the readers' attention?

Writing: Writing forms also have elements and techniques. For example, the flashback in a short story is a technique. How effectively do you think you use writing techniques—for example, when you're writing a short story?