Media language and representation

Set products

- *The Sun* 01 January 2021 - front page (see factsheet)
- *The Guardian* 18 January 2022 - front page (see factsheet)

Media language

How media language creates meanings in front pages, e.g. mastheads, headlines, images, captions, language, layout and design etc.

Messages and values	Intertextuality
Front pages reflect social values, ideologies, and priorities. Choices in stories/images communicate what matters to the newspaper. It can also promote certain viewpoints.	Newspapers often make references to other texts, films, celebrities, or news stories. This adds humour, depth, or familiarity for the audience. For example, a headline like "Mission Inaction" referencing Mission Impossible.
Codes and conventions of newspaper front pages	**Narrative theory**
• Big, bold masthead • Use of puns or alliteration • Main image as visual focus • Straplines, datelines, pull quotes • Headline with emotive/persuasive language • Organised in columns	Front pages use the roles of Propp's character types to simplify stories. For example: • hero: firefighter or activist • villain: criminal or corrupt politician • victim: communities in crisis or children in wartime.
Technology and media products	**Semiotics**
• Online = clickbait headlines, video, interactivity • Tech shapes how content is made and shared	Semiotics is the study of how signs make meaning including **denotations** (literal meaning) and **connotations** (associated meanings).

Representation

Media doesn't show reality exactly, it re-presents it through selection, construction, and mediation. Producers choose how to show people, events, and issues, often influenced by their purpose and audience. These choices shape meanings and can reflect or challenge values and beliefs. Media often uses stereotypes, leading to under- or misrepresentation, especially of gender, age, or ethnicity. Feminist theories highlight how women are often shown in limited or passive roles. Overall, representations carry social, cultural, and political significance, influencing how audiences see the world.