



The Guardian

(06 May 2025)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas

- Media contexts
- Representation
- Media language

The product

The Guardian is a British national daily newspaper with an estimated daily print circulation of approximately 88,779 in the UK (Hurst Media Company, 2020). Since September 2021, circulation numbers have been kept private but it is thought that the publication maintains high digital engagement with millions of global readers.

The Guardian newspaper targets a socially conscious, affluent, digitally-savvy, liberal audience. The demographic is 86% ABC1. 54% of *Guardian* readers are male and the average age of the print reader is 54. Originally, *The Guardian's* format was broadsheet, but for cost reasons and changing consumer needs, it is now printed in tabloid format.

Part 1: Starting points – media contexts

Social, cultural, historical and political context

The Guardian is described as having mainstream left political values. It does not have an affiliation with any political party but does lean towards the left and has a very liberal tradition. One reason for this is that *The Guardian* is owned by The Scott Trust, which reinvests all profits back into journalism rather than paying shareholders (the typical model of newspaper ownership); therefore, they believe that they can hold true to their core journalistic principles.

In 2025, the Labour party was in government. UK local elections were held on Thursday 1 May; Labour lost 187 council seats. In July 2024, the government restricted the Winter Fuel Payment (£200–300) to only those receiving Pension Credit or benefits; this reduced the number of recipients from 11.4 million to 1.5 million. In June 2025, the government reversed the most severe aspects of the cuts, which meant 9 million pensioners would receive the payment.

On 5 May 2025, the United Kingdom celebrated the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day with a bank holiday. Although World War Two was ongoing in the Pacific, 8 May 1945 saw the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany and the end of World War Two in Europe. VE Day continues to be marked with street parties and a major gathering outside Buckingham Palace. In 2025, the celebrations included a special flypast – a large formation of military



aircraft including the Red Arrows and a Lancaster Bomber. The cultural proximity, scale and historical significance of this event means that it is an obvious story for the front page of a national newspaper.

In a move designed to bring film production back to Hollywood, in May 2025, President Donald Trump announced on social media that he planned to impose 100% tariffs on movies produced outside of the USA. The UK serves as a major hub for US studio productions, accounting for approximately 5 billion pounds annually (UK Parliament, 2026). The proposed tariff (taxes) would lead to significant job losses and a drop in investment to the UK economy if it were to happen.

Blake Lively is a US A-list actress. In 2024, during the production and promotion of the film *It Ends With Us*, a highly publicised, ongoing legal and professional conflict began between her and the film's director/actor Justin Baldoni, including allegations of sexual harassment. The cultural and political significance of this story make it an appealing story for a Reformer readership who value social consciousness over entertainment.

Macmillan Cancer Support is a leading UK charity that provides specialist nurses, a free support line, information services and financial grants to those affected by cancer. On 5 May 2025, it announced it was cutting its £14m a year local welfare services, removing advisors operating across 70 Citizens Advice branches nationally. Macmillan being an elite institution combined with the fact that cancer affects a significant proportion of the UK population makes this a story of interest to *The Guardian* readership.

On Monday 5 May, Trent Alexander-Arnold, a leading men's footballer, announced on his social media that he was leaving Liverpool, his club of 20 years (he joined the academy aged 6) to join the team Real Madrid. Men's football is the biggest and most popular sport in England, dominating in both spectator numbers and participation. 40% of the population watch or follow the sport, so the newspaper editor would see this choice as an obvious one to attract readers to the paper (Harris Interactive, 2019).

Part 2: Starting points – media language

Consider how choice of elements of media language portrays aspects of reality and conveys messages and values

The dominant image is a wide shot of their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales with their children on the balcony at Buckingham Palace. They are dressed formally with Prince William in his RAF uniform and Catherine, the Princess of Wales, in a purple dress coat and hat. This formal wear reflects their role in the monarchy as symbols of British tradition and authority. It also reflects the importance of the day itself and the respect they have for the people and organisations involved.

The photograph is anchored with the caption, explaining when and where the photo was taken, which helps to explain why the family are all leaning to their left, in order to see the flypast clearly. The family's unity and interest make this a relatable photograph for mainstream audiences and the choice to use an image that captures an off-guard moment, rather than the formal poses of the day, reflects the paper's more liberal, relaxed attitude to the monarchy.

The main headline "No 10 to rethink fuel payment cut as local election losses alarm MPs" is typical of a broadsheet paper. It communicates the hard news of politics, combining two issues of interest to the ABC1 audience – local elections and fuel allowance cuts. Above the byline, it states the story is an "Exclusive", acting as a persuasive device for the audience to



buy the paper, whilst also suggesting that *The Guardian* has unique access to stories where other news sources do not, which gives them credibility and prestige. “No 10” is shorthand for the UK Government and, from a practical perspective, takes up less space in the headline. The choice of the word “rethink” points to the paper’s left-wing ideology; it is not explicitly critical of the government, as they share many of the same values, so it is a softer term than might be used in the right-wing press. It connotes time and consideration, rather than the panic and speed of the term ‘U-turn’. The use of the word “alarm”, however, suggests drama and conflict, intriguing the audience to read beyond the headline for more detail.

The use of dramatic terms continues in the off-lead stories, with the choice of “axe” and “risk”. Both words again subtly reveal *The Guardian*’s left-wing ideology. In the off-lead at the bottom of the page, the word “axe” suggests a brutality and finality to Macmillan’s choice to remove local services, placing *The Guardian* firmly on the side of the community who will feel the loss, who we hear from in the body copy.

Consider codes and conventions and how media language communicates meanings

The layout and design of the front page is typical of a broadsheet newspaper and fits with the house style of *The Guardian*. The distinctive deep sapphire blue provides newsstand visibility, as well as cross-platform brand cohesion (print, web, mobile). Every single design choice on the front page is purposeful and considered, from the three lines above the byline and the names in red, indicating that it is a news story, to the use of yellow for highlighting, which is only ever used for emphasis and hierarchy.

(<https://design.theguardian.com/#colour-palette-4>)

The font Guardian Titlepiece is used for section titling, including the brand logo and headlines. The font Guardian Egyptian is used in the body copy and was specifically engineered for high legibility at small sizes and to withstand the challenges of newspaper printing.

The skyline is given over to the G2 and Sport sections, which when displayed on newsstands may well be the sections people see first. These stories offer a lighter alternative to the hard-hitting news stories of the rest of the newspaper. Investigating news values and the choice of a pun could reveal some more useful insights on the audience the content is designed to appeal to.

Part 3: Starting points – representation

Consider the representation of gender

Although it doesn’t explicitly state an opinion in the style of tabloids (for example, emotive, provocative language), the choice of these main cover stories clearly conveys *The Guardian*’s British liberal ideology.

Feminism is a key element of this ideology and represented on the front cover are women in positions of power. The byline of the headline story represents two female journalists, Pippa Crerar and Jessica Elgot in positions of professional power. Blake Lively is denoted with a head shot in a black blazer, which connotes her professionalism; this is further anchored by the written codes which construct her as a “Hollywood actor”. The choice of image with direct address connotes her confidence and strength, which ensures that the use of the metaphor “lightning rod” doesn’t construct her as a victim of the far-right but leaves us under no illusion that she has come under attack. The Princess of Wales is represented in both her professional role as a monarch and in her personal role as a mother. The colour purple



signals her regality, whilst also ensuring she stands out for the crowds at Buckingham Palace. Both women have stereotypically feminine features, with long groomed hair and makeup.

Men are similarly represented in significant positions of power on this front page, particularly in the world of politics. Keir Starmer, Sadiq Khan and Donald Trump all feature in stories indicating that political society in the UK and USA is patriarchal. The men featured in the visual codes of the front page are also represented with stereotypical masculine features, including uniforms representing their professions (RAF and Liverpool FC). Alexander-Arnold is framed as a dynamic and successful sportsman, while Prince William is shown in an equal way to the Princess of Wales, in his professional role in the royal family and in his personal role as a father. This equal representation of the genders is indicative of *The Guardian's* ABC1 audience.

Consider the representation of age

A range of ages is represented in this front cover, including Millennials (Blake Lively, Prince William and Princess Catherine), Gen Z (Trent Alexander-Arnold) and Gen Alpha (George, Charlotte, Louis).

Young people on this front cover are represented through the royal children – Prince Louis (7), Princess Charlotte (9) and Prince George (10). They are actively participating in royal duties and, therefore, represent the future of the British monarchy, as they are being prepared for future service. VE Day itself places great importance on intergenerational remembrance, so the children are also acting as role models for the country's youth. Having the children on the balcony also provides symbolic continuity too, echoing the very first VE Day in 1945 where a young Queen Elizabeth II was pictured on the balcony celebrating the victory.

In the main image, younger and older generations are represented similarly, brought together by the event, showing curiosity, awe and engagement.

Possible areas for further investigation

It would be helpful to compare this cover with another from the tabloid right-wing press, such as *The Sun*, to see the methods used to represent the monarchy.

Acknowledgements

[Facts and figures](#) from Hurst Media Company (2020) *The Guardian – Profile*

[Facts and figures](#) from UK Parliament (2026) Culture, Media and Sport Committee: British film and high-end television: Government Response. Fourth Special Report of Session 2024–25 HC 1123. London: House of Commons.

[Information](#) from Harris Interactive (2019) Sports participation, viewing and fandom in the UK.