The Role of Media in Society

Exemplar of Analysis

The following example provides a detailed answer using ‘The Guardian’ Newspaper from 15/05/14. To analyse this text as an example of the role of media, you will need to complete the following steps.

**Meeting Needs**

Step 1: Identify the need that the text is attempting to meet.

The producers of ‘The Guardian’ newspaper are attempting to inform society as to the important occurrences going on in the world today.

Step 2: Identify the content that the producer has included in an attempt to meet the need of society and explain how it meets those needs.

The newspaper has placed stories on the front page that they believe are the most significant items of interest. This means that people will be able to read the most important information first rather than having to search throughout the paper.

The newspaper provides a blurb towards the top of the newspaper that contains information about an article on Jane Campion, the director. This allows the reader to understand what information is available inside the newspaper. This, in conjunction with references to political, sporting and world news, means that there is a wide variety of information that is being made available to society.

Step 3: Evaluate how effective the producer has been in meeting the need of society.

The text is effective in fulfilling the need of society to be informed, as there is a good selection of information included and in such a way that it is easy to find. The selection includes topics that cover the target audience for ‘The Guardian’, which is liberal, further educated, 20s-40s Britons.

**Achieving Purposes**

Step 1: Identify the purpose of producing the text.

The producers of the text are attempting to make a profit through sales of the newspaper, whilst providing a public service by meeting the need to inform.

Step 2: Identify what the producer has included in an attempt to achieve its purpose and explain how it achieves this purpose.

The producers include large, bold headlines that attract a potential reader’s attention in the hopes that they will be interested enough in the content to buy the newspaper. They include a colour photograph of Manchester City players holding up the Premier League trophy as another way of attracting potential buyers, as football is a popular sport. By including articles on domestic political issues, such as ‘free schools budget[s]’ and international issues, such as the ‘Syrian war’ they are providing information about events and places that people would be both familiar and unfamiliar with; therefore, they will be better informed about what is going on in the world.

Step 3: Evaluate how effective the producer has been in achieving this purpose.

The producers of the newspaper have been effective as they have created a product that would appeal to its target audience, whilst also having a broad enough appeal to those outside of the target audience. Therefore, the possible readership is maximised to ensure the largest profit possible through advertising and cover charge. Also, they manage to provide information on a wide range of areas in an attractive manner, which will make the information more likely to be acknowledge and read.

**Influencing Attitudes and Behaviour**

Step 1: Identify what attitude/behaviour has been influenced.

The producers of the newspaper are attempting to make people question the information given out in official statements from governments. They are also trying to continue the idea that having a higher level of education is important.

Step 2: Identify what the producer has included in an attempt to influence this attitude/behaviour and explain how it does this.

The producers include a news story with the highlighted quote “I don’t trust the UK not to detain me”. This suggests that we should not simply trust in our government to do the right thing. It also starts another article with the words, “Michael Gove has been warned”. Michael Gove is the Secretary of State for Education and the suggestion is being made that he is not acting in a way that is suitable. The inclusion of topics that require an interest in politics, finance, the arts (all of which are most commonly followed by those with a further degree of education) rather than celebrities and human interest stories means that the producers of the newspaper are supporting the attitude that a higher degree of education is thought to be superior.

Step 3: Evaluate how effective the producer has been in influencing the attitude/behaviour.

The producers of the text have been effective as they have been successful in influencing their readers to question the legitimacy of official statements because they do this consistently throughout the newspaper and the target audience will be expecting this from them. It is not clear as to whether or not they have influenced attitudes, as the readership of the newspaper would most likely have this attitude in the first place.

**You are now going to complete your own analysis of two separate texts. You must try and include at least two different elements that have been included in stage two for each role.**

**Remember that stage two will include some of the skills you have developed when looking at the Content based Key Aspects (Categories, Narrative, Language and Representation).**

**Also, remember that stage three will include some of the skills you have developed when looking at the Context based Key Aspects (Audience, Institutions and Society).**