English I – Unit 7: Mass Media

Review

Mass media is just about everywhere. At the bus stop, on the car radio, in the newspaper, on the signs at school, and in the mall are mass media messages. These messages can have a major impact on our lives. They can shape what we think is important. They can change our thoughts, feelings, and actions. They can influence the way we think of others and even play a role in how we define ourselves. Taking a closer look at some of the types of mass media and tools used by the mass media, we can become better at evaluating messages. This will help us to make better decisions, from figuring out what type of computer to buy to determining which causes and charities are worthy of your time.

- Define the term *mass media* and assess its subject, occasion, audience and purpose.
- Determine the subject, occasion, audience, and purpose of various types of news stories.
- Determine the subject, occasion, audience, and purpose of advertisements.
- Identify the elements of visual design.
- Describe and evaluate advertisers' use of the elements of design.
- Assess the relationship between a media source's agenda and its messages.
- Identify the criteria for evaluating media.
- Compare the pros and cons of mainstream vs. independent media.
- Define propaganda and identify bias in the media.
- Identify the use of logos, ethos, and pathos and their effect on the reliability of media.
- Identify the fallacies most commonly used in the media.
- Evaluate media based on its credibility, coverage, objectivity, and accuracy.

Vocabulary

agenda	the goals or motives of an individual or group	
analogous colors	colors on the same side of the color wheel	
appeal	an attempt to interest or attract	
♦ blog	short for Web log, a type of online journal that is frequently updated by its author	
bias	showing favoritism or personal judgments	
◆ censorship	forbidding information from going public or restricting information that goes public	
complementary colors	colors opposite of one another on the color wheel	
condemnation	a statement that paints a product or service in a negative light	
corporate	having to do with a business set up to make a profit	
corporation	a business set up to make a profit	
diversity	representing a variety of view points	
dominant	of greater importance	
endorsement	a statement that paints a product or service in a positive light	
entity	a thing that is thought to exist independently	
ethos	an appeal to the author/speaker's credibility or image	
∮ fallacy	an appeal that relies on incorrect inferences	

hierarchy	a visual design principle that orders items based on their importance	
inference	a conclusion made from the interpretation of evidence	
♦ logos	an appeal to the audience's logic or intellect	
mass media	media (such as radio, television, text, etc.) created by the few for consumption by the many	
pathos	an appeal to the audience's emotions	
persuasion	the art of influencing the thoughts, beliefs, or actions of another person	
propaganda	persuasion designed to further one's cause or agenda	
rhetoric	the art of using appeals to persuade	
subordinate	of less importance	
texture	a quality sensed by feeling or touching	

- Vocabulocity
- Flash Cards
- Spelling Bee

What is Mass Media?

Mass media is media created by the few for use by the many. The first step to analyzing mass media is to determine its subject, occasion, audience, and purpose (SOAP). You've studied two main types of mass media: news and advertisement.

News for the Masses

There are two main types of news: headline news and special features. Headline news is of general interest. It answers the following questions about events for its readers:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- How?

this might help

Imagine there's an earthquake or tornado. In the aftermath of it, a newspaper might do a story about a group that takes meals to the people affected by the event. This would be a human interest story.

Special features are targeted toward a smaller, more specific audience. Special features are used in sections like the sports page or the arts and entertainment page of the newspaper or cooking segments on news shows. Human interest stories are also a big part of special features. Human interest stories are often referred to as the "story behind the story" of headline news. Human interest stories typically focus on a person or small group of people and their feelings about an event.

Print news is typically delivered either daily or periodically. Magazines are examples of periodicals. Newspapers are examples of dailies. Most cities and towns have their own newspapers and television news stations. Stations that cover mostly national or world news are usually based in big cities.

Advertising for the Masses

Advertisements are designed to persuade people to use a service or buy a product. They are included in print media and show up on television in the form of commercials. They generate money so that newspapers and news stations (which are usually low-cost or free) can stay in business. Ads come in two forms or as combinations of the two forms:

- endorsements, which promote a product or service
- condemnations, which list the negatives of a product or service

Visual Elements in the Media

Visual media is very popular. It's a good idea to take note of some of the principles of design used to create visual media. These include things like colors, textures, and sizes of images. Hierarchy is the main principle of visual design. It lets the viewer know which parts of a visual messages are important. Colors, shapes, and sizes are used to create hierarchy.

Analyzing Media

Agendas. There are various purposes for which a piece of media is created. We must consider the goals of the person or group who created the media. Do they want to make money or promote a cause? In other words, what's on their to-do list? We can use the answers to these questions to group media into two categories: mainstream media and independent media. Typically, the goal of mainstream media is to make a profit while providing information as objectively as possible. The goal of independent media is typically to further a cause. Making a profit may also be a goal.

Independent Media

Pros	Cons		
Bias easier to pick out	Not regulated		
Provides clear, close coverage	Less consequence for misreporting		
Censorship less likely	Less funding in general		
Easy to access	More personal bias		
Quick, can be updated more often	News may take backseat to author's comments		
Mainstream Media			
Pros	Cons		
Regulations			
Clear consequence for misreporting	Corporate bias can be difficult to check		
Less personal bias	Slightly removed from subject because reporter not a part of the story		
Easy to check for facts			

Censorship can cause important details to be lost

Updating, editing take longer

Reporters are educated

interviews, etc.

More funding leads to better fact-checking,

Bias. Bias is simply favoritism or judgment. There are various types of bias that you may find in the media. Here is a list:

- bias in layout
- bias in headlines
- bias in point of view
- bias in photographs

For more information about bias, review Lesson 8.

Appeal and fallacies. The media may appeal to one's sense of logic (*logos*) or emotion (*pathos*). The media may also make appeals to the credibility and authority of its speakers or writers. This is called *ethos*. Fallacies are closely related to appeals to *logos*. Fallacies are appeals which rely on incorrect inferences. Inferences are conclusions drawn from interpreting evidence. Review Lesson 9 for more information about fallacies.

Evaluating media. In order to evaluate media properly, you must consider SOAP, visual elements, agendas, bias, methods of appeal, and fallacies. When you evaluate media based on the following, you can be sure you're taking into account all of these items.

- credibility
- objectivity
- accuracy
- coverage