**Media create reality through the use of recognized codes and conventions.** The credibility of a media text depends on whether or not the audience identifies with what is being portrayed.

**CODES**

There are **three categories of codes that** may be used to **send meanings in media** messages:

1. **technical codes**, which include camera techniques, framing, lighting and exposure and juxtaposition (comparing and contrasting things)
2. **symbolic codes**, which refer to objects, setting, body language, clothing and colour
3. **written/audio codes** in the form of headlines, captions, speech bubbles and language style.

**CONVENTIONS**

**The majority of media products are created in established and repeated (CONVENTIONAL) ways.** For example, TV programmes and films have lengthy introductory and closing credit sequences. Sitcoms and soap operas are roughly half-hour shows. **Magazines and newspapers** come in a limited range of formats with recognisable, **repeated layout features**. Images in magazines are **highly stylized to be aesthetically pleasing**. Billboards utilize large, bold text, simple phrasing, and eye catching images. Film and **TV genre products are governed by certain predictable narrative features, dress codes** (Western/War films), **lighting effects** (Film Noir), **special effects** and explosions (Sci/fi and Action), **and modes of presentation**: think about how weather forecasts are usually presented, about news broadcasts to camera by serious, middle-aged, upper middle class people in suits, mostly seated behind a desk and reading off an autocue.

The media text produces meaning by using conventions which are widely recognized ways of doing something.

• the systems of codes that make up the convention can be clumped together under three broad headings - technical, symbolic, written/audio.

• audiences produce meaning from the interaction of the conventional material in the text, and their understanding of conventions

• conventions are not natural but are cultural - they have culturally specific - they are now somewhat universal



