

Fundamentals of Communication 1506LHS

Assessment Item: Media Message Analysis

This 1000-word paper asks you to critically think through a media message. You will be interpreting it in terms of how this message is culturally influential.

Once you have written the paper **you will need to create a 3-minute “pitch”** (a very short oral presentation) of why this media message IS important. It is recommended that you read “Chapter 12: Speaking Out” by Hay, Bochner, Blacket & Dungey found in your digital readings on our Learning@Griffith site. Additionally, have a look at the marking rubric that will be used to evaluate your pitch, which is found in the “Media Message Analysis” folder in the Course Content section of the Learning@Griffith site. **The pitch will account for 50% of this mark, so please take some time to work on it. Organize & then practice it at home before you present.**

All papers will be submitted via Turnitin on Learning@Griffith by 11pm on **Monday, 18 April**. This is the Monday of Week 7.

Students will randomly draw for when they will present their pitch during week 3’s tutorial. The order of presentations will be arranged no later than Week 6.

How to get started:

1. Choose a media message. These messages include (but are not limited to): well-known songs or speeches, fictional work such as novels or poems, news stories, TV shows/broadcasts, films, music videos, YouTube clips, or memes. For instance, last year a student chose Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech while another examined the British, WWII-era “Carry On” slogan that recently has become a popular meme.
2. Choose a message/topic that really interests you: something you will want to take time to think about, read about, and write about! This is one reason why university IS AWESOME – *more choices* for you. We are not here to make all your choices for you. You left that behind with high school. Hooray for that!
3. Do some initial research online to see if your choice is viable. You will need to use a minimum of 2-4 sources as evidence for the premises in your paper. Searching the library database or Google Scholar for appropriate academic sources is best. While doing a random Google search may help you see if this message is influential or not, academic sources do not come directly from ordinary Google searches. **Important:** *Wikipedia is not a viable source for academic writing projects.* If you feel inexperienced conducting even the most basic research, which is what you will be doing here, please see our on-campus librarians for further assistance, speak with your tutor, or talk with your campus’s SSA.

The Paper (50% of the mark):

The following outline demonstrates what’s most important to include in this kind of paper. This can be used as a model for outlining/organizing your own paper:

1. Your **introduction** should do the following:
 - a. Describe your message: What kind of message is it (song, film, speech, TV broadcast, etc.)? What medium has transmitted this message?
 - b. Who created this message? Who is the “sender” of it?

- c. When did audiences (“receivers”) first encounter it? Was it automatically popular or did it become popular/legendary later?
2. Importantly, the introduction needs to state **a claim** for why this is a powerful media message. This is normally written in one sentence at the end of the introduction and is often called **a thesis statement**.
3. **The body** (or majority) of your paper should offer several **premises** that suggest the importance of this message. These premises, which support your claim, will be backed up by evidence (researched sources).
4. Some things to consider in the **body of the paper** when thinking about WHY this message is powerful:
 - a. Is this an “old” or historic media message that still receives attention today? If so, how does it still circulate in contemporary culture?
 - b. Is this a message that has crossed over into a different medium (say, a book that is now a film or TV show)?
 - c. Does this message have global/international appeal or interpretations?
 - d. Has this message been used for multiple purposes (i.e., has it had commercial value if it was not initially a commercial message)?
 - e. **[Insert your own idea here!]**
5. The conclusion should end with a strong summary of why this media message has been a powerful one. Well-structured conclusions restate the initial claim in some way and reconfirm why the points made in the body support the claim successfully. Finally, there should be an overall, deeper understanding shown than in the introduction.

ALSO SEE CHRISTINE’S OUTLINE EXAMPLE on Learning@Griffith for a specific version of the outline above.

The “Pitch” (50% of your mark):

The term “pitch” is often used in the advertising world where admen and women need to “sell” their idea to clients via a short & informative presentation. A pitch is incredibly important in convincing others that your idea is an excellent one. For this assignment, the pitch must persuade me and your classmates that this media message is a powerful one and has been culturally influential in some way. This is also your chance to be both a logical and creative thinker when you make your pitch. What words will BEST sum up the claims you have made in the paper while also being short, sweet, and to-the-point? Because you only have 3 minutes (*and you will be timed*), well-chosen language, which considers both **meaning** (convention, denotation, connotation) and **audience** is very important in constructing your pitch. *Practice* is extremely important, as you’ll only have once chance in class. Run through it several times (memorizing it will be best) and time yourself. And, remember, nonverbal communication matters, too. Consider your hand gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, vocal volume, and so on when practicing your pitch.

As a guide for structuring your paper:

“A Summary of the Requirements for Strong Argumentative [Paper]”

(All text below is taken from Week 4’s reading by Hay et. al., p. 111)

There are many ways to organize an argumentative [paper], but no matter what organisational approach you choose, you always need the following:

- **An introduction, usually about 20% of the [paper’s] total length that:**
 - Puts the topic into context
 - Explains why it’s worth discussing

- Sets out your claim or thesis statement
- Signals the areas you intend to cover
- **The body of the argument, approximately 60% of its total length, in separate paragraphs, that:**
 - Lists your supporting... premises and the evidence for each of them
 - *[I am not listing the point that tells you to address any counter arguments because you will not need to do that for this assignment]*
- **A conclusion that is approximately 20% of your [paper] and that:**
 - States or restates your major claim or thesis
 - Summarizes your major points
 - Goes further than your introduction to make a final overall judgement, summary, or comment on what you have said. It may emphasise your claim's implications or significance.