2 Language and mass communication

Chapter 3 The media

Key terms

Public opinion is the collection of opinions and beliefs held by the adult population of a nation.

Media literacy is the skill of analysing various texts in relation to the media in which they are published.

Objectives

By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- identify sensationalism, bias and newsworthiness
- understand how the Internet facilitates communication
- plan and write a part 2 written task 1.

In Part 1 you explored communication as a bottom-up process, looking at how ordinary people interact on a daily basis, socially and professionally, through personal letters and classified ads. In Part 2 you will be looking at language as a top-down process, focusing on how ideas and messages are disseminated to 'the masses' through various distribution channels. You will discover how **public opinion** is shaped through language.

Public opinion is like the pulse of a nation. It is the general consensus on issues such as who should be elected, which brands are trendy and how children should be educated. In this chapter you will be asking yourself how public opinion is managed through channels of mass communication, also known as the media. Understanding how language in the media is used as a tool to shape public opinion is part of **media literacy**.

The word *media* refers to the physical carriers of information, such as radios, televisions, T-shirts or posters. We frequently make an interesting 'mistake' when referring to the media. Have you ever heard someone say, 'The media *thinks* this' or 'The media *does* that'? Strictly speaking, this is grammatically incorrect, as the word *media* is the plural form of *medium*. It can be argued, therefore, that it should take the plural verbs *think* or *do*. However, *media* has come to be seen as a collective noun and it is therefore now acceptable in standard English to treat it as a singular noun, taking a singular verb.

When people refer to the media, especially to the concept of it as a single entity, they mean broadcasting networks (such as the BBC), publishing houses and syndications (such as *The Times*), or even well-known and influential television shows such as *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. As we develop a sense of media literacy, we should make a distinction between, on the one hand, the *devices* that carry the messages and, on the other, the *people* – i.e. networks, stations and syndications – responsible for bringing us them.

The Canadian philosopher and writer Marshall McLuhan once said, 'The medium is the message.' He was referring to how an actual medium or device, such as a radio, television or computer, can determine the nature of the message that it carries. Think of mass communication as a spectrum: at one end is the

Figure 3.1 The storyline of the film *Wag the Dog* suggests that the media have the power to shape public opinion (see page 70).

notion of the media consisting of corporate business people who sit around boardroom tables deciding what the public will watch, read or listen to; at the other end is the view of the media being something increasingly controlled by ordinary people who have access to distribution channels such as websites, podcasts and radio frequencies.

In this chapter you will develop media literacy skills by exploring both ends of this spectrum. In Unit 3.1 you will be focusing on journalism and the linguistic devices used by networks, stations and syndications in their attempts to consciously shape public opinion. In Unit 3.2 you will explore how a very powerful medium, the Internet, is changing the way in which we interact and disseminate messages. At the end of the chapter you will have the chance to look at a sample written task which demonstrates a student's understanding of many of the ideas discussed in this chapter.

Unit 3.1 Journalism

Having access to millions of viewers and listeners gives the media considerable power. Producers of television and radio programmes have a great responsibility, since their media can be highly influential on public opinion. In this unit you are going to explore several concepts, such as bias, newsworthiness and sensationalism, to help you understand the responsibility that news networks have.

Bias

Television producers, journalists and columnists have the ability to '**manufacture consent**'. This term, coined by the political scientist and linguist Noam Chomsky, is used to refer to the media's ability to create the impression that everyone agrees with a particular ideological position. The concept of manufactured consent can be understood in the context of the war in Iraq, which started in early 2003. Critics, such as Robert Greenwald, have argued that some American news networks actively helped shape opinion of Iraq in the USA in the build-up to the war. In Greenwald's documentary, *Outfoxed*, he claims that in late 2002 and early 2003 viewers of one particular network, Fox News, had a different view of the world from viewers of other American news networks. For example, 67% of Fox viewers felt there was a link between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, compared to only 16% of people who watched and listened to the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR). How do we account for this difference of opinion between the consumers of these different media? The figures suggest **bias** on the part of the Fox News network.

Activity 3.1

Defining *bias* can be challenging. As a class, create a spider diagram of all the synonyms that you associate with the word *bias*. Then discuss the diagram and the issues raised. This should help you to understand this abstract concept.

Key terms

Manufactured consent is a term coined by the political scientist and linguist Noam Chomsky. It describes the phenomenon that a small ruling elite can shape public opinion in their favour by controlling the media.

Bias is the skewed presentation of a story from a particular ideological position.

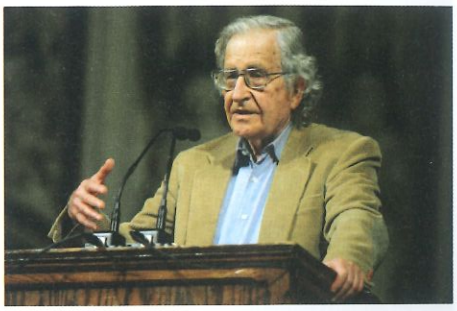

Figure 3.2 Noam Chomsky (1928–), often revered as one of the founders of modern linguistics, has published many books on the role of the media in shaping public opinion, including *Manufacturing Consent*.

Further resources

Robert Greenwald's documentary *Outfoxed* presents an interesting look behind the scenes at Fox News in the early 2000s. He argues that this news network was managed from the top down through the use of allegedly biased internal memos and unbalanced panels of guests on television programmes.

TOK

Some people refer to the media as the 'fourth estate'. This view draws on the traditional way of dividing power in countries into three main groups – the church and religious groups (the first estate), the nobility (the second estate) and the rest of the population (the third estate). When the term fourth estate is applied to the media, it usually means the press (i.e. newspapers).

The film *Wag the Dog* draws our attention to this phenomenon. In this film, the US president wants to distract the nation's attention away from his personal affairs so that he can win an election. To do this, he invents a war in a Balkan country and hires a studio to stage the war, film it and broadcast it. The title of the film alludes to the expression *the tail wagging the dog*. Normally it is the dog that uses its tail to reflect a feeling, or state, of contentment (by wagging its tail). Similarly, a nation normally uses the media to reflect the state of that nation. But what happens when the media become an entity that does not *reflect* the state of a nation but *determines* it, as in the film? If the tail is wagging the dog, then the roles have been reversed and the dog is being controlled by the situation. Do you think that the media can both reflect and determine public opinion? Can the media shape the future of a nation?

No journalist likes to be accused of being biased: a journalist's job is to present the news in the most objective and unbiased way possible. There are reasons, however, why this can be difficult to achieve.

- First of all, journalists are under pressure to be the first to break a story.
- Secondly, journalists are under pressure to write stories that sell.
- Finally, it can be tempting to tell the public what it is thought they want to hear instead of telling them just the facts, or what they need to hear.

Activity 3.2

In October 2010, two candidates from the state of Delaware for the American Senate, Chris Coons and Christine O'Donnell, held a debate. As the candidates discussed the role of religion in state education, O'Donnell questioned whether the US Constitution separates church and state, an issue which is addressed by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.

Below are five headlines (a–e) from newspapers and news networks that reported the debate.

a Christine O'Donnell stumbles on First Amendment, *San Francisco Chronicle.*
b In debate, O'Donnell gets a lesson on First Amendment, *The Seattle Times.*
c ABC News exclusive: Christine O'Donnell stands her ground on First Amendment statement, blames media for distortions, ABC News.
d O'Donnell questions separation of Church, State in Senate debate, Fox News.
e Christine O'Donnell blanks on First Amendment, CNN.

1 Rate each headline for bias from 1 to 5, where 1 = 'hardly biased' and 5 = 'extremely biased'.
2 Explain your ratings to the rest of your class by referring to specific use of language from the headlines.
3 You could then view the debate online in order to see the difference between reality and the portrayal of reality through the headlines.

Newsworthiness

As you study the issue of journalism you will discover how difficult it can be to report on events without putting someone in a good or bad light. The problem of bias does not always lie in the language used to report an event; it can also lie in the initial decision of whether to report the event at all. How do journalists and editors select the news?

There are three criteria for determining whether a story or event is newsworthy, or worthy of being covered in the media. For a story to be newsworthy, it has to be sensational, it has to be relevant, or it has to be extraordinary, or a combination of all three. We will apply all three criteria to several stories released by the WikiLeaks organisation in 2010.

In 2006, several journalists, dissidents and technologists launched the WikiLeaks website, offering diplomats, soldiers or anyone else a place to submit sensitive and secret documents anonymously. While the website's fame grew over the years, exposing corporate scandals and US military plans, it was not until the website published the US diplomatic cables leak in November 2010 that it really made headlines round the world. Among the documents released was evidence that the US government

had allegedly spied on the Secretary General of the United Nations, and there were other stories too that caused embarrassment, anger and damage to governments in many countries. What was the value of telling these secrets to the world? What made them newsworthy?

Sensationalism

First of all, **sensationalism** sells. There is an expression in the media world, *If it bleeds it leads*. This is to say, if there is murder, blood or controversy in a particular news story, then that story is put on the front page of the newspaper, the most prominent place for a story to attract attention. Bad news is good for circulation, as many readers tend to enjoy a story full of intrigue, plot and sensation (a 'juicy story', in other words).

Advertisers want a high circulation of the newspapers that they advertise in and advertising space in the most popular papers comes at a high price. Similarly, in television, if a programme is popular and has high ratings, the adjacent advertisement slots are very expensive. Advertisers provide much of the income for newspapers and other media networks, so journalists have to do a balancing act between reporting the truth on the one hand and considering both advertisers and sales on the other. In fact, many newspapers and broadcasting networks receive government subsidies in order to help them maintain high standards of fair and balanced journalism.

WikiLeaks, however, is not a conventional news provider, as its website is free of ads. It is run by volunteers, supported by sponsors and protected by fans. The website claims to be built on the ideals of freedom of speech and transparency and its supporters believe that US citizens have a right to know how their taxes are spent. If the leaks have embarrassed US officials, then the supporters claim it was not done with a profit motive in mind but in the interest of upholding ideals.

Nevertheless, the negative news of these leaks generated income for commercial newspapers and magazines around the world. Viewers, readers and listeners were intrigued by the US government's secrets and how they were leaked. The stories were as sensational as a James Bond film.

Relevance

Whenever we open a newspaper, watch the daily television news or browse news-providing websites, one question we often end up asking ourselves is *Why should I care?* In other words, what makes a particular story relevant to us and, from there, why is it newsworthy?

For example, not every plane crash will be reported in your national newspapers. Usually the story has to be relevant to a particular country, perhaps involving citizens of that country, for it to be reported there. If you browse through the documents on WikiLeaks, not all of them turn out to be sensational or relevant. This is not to say, however, that they are irrelevant for everyone. For a parent whose soldier son is killed in a war, details of the fighting in that war would be relevant.

Extraordinariness

Some stories simply lend themselves to sensational coverage because they are extraordinary. The story of a dog biting a man is rarely deemed newsworthy. However if a man were to bite a dog, you would read about it. This common phrase in the world of journalism, *Man bites dog*, explains how the extraordinary is newsworthy. In the case of WikiLeaks, little was disclosed that was not already suspected but what made it extraordinary was how it gave everyone with an Internet connection access to top-secret documents.

'Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper.'
George Orwell (1903–50)

'In journalism, there has always been a tension between getting it first and getting it right'
Ellen Goodman (1941–)

Figure 3.3 Julian Assange, the co-founder of the WikiLeaks website.

'It's all storytelling, you know. That's what journalism is all about.'
Tom Brokaw (1940–)

Key term

Sensationalism refers to a style of writing that is exaggerated, emotive or controversial.

'The news media are, for the most part, the bringers of bad news … and it's not entirely the media's fault, bad news gets higher ratings and sells more papers than good news.'
Peter McWilliams (1950–2000)

'I have always been firmly persuaded that our newspapers cannot be edited in the interests of the general public from the counting room.'
Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945)

Figure 3.4 This cartoon raises some basic, but important, questions about the nature of good journalism. What is the difference between rumours and news? Why might a news story contain lies? What does innuendo mean? Why does innuendo not belong in good investigative journalism?

TOK

Testing the authenticity of a primary source means exploring the four 'ways of knowing' (WOKs) of the TOK syllabus.

- *Perception* – if seeing is believing, you may want to go straight to the primary source. Looking at the original documents on the WikiLeaks website or a 'mirror site' may convince you of their authenticity.
- *Language* – what makes the WikiLeaks leaks so convincing is both the language of the original documents and the language of the reporting on them. We must be careful, nonetheless, especially of secondary sources, as they offer interpretations of the original.
- *Emotion* – many people do not bother with primary sources because they blindly trust secondary sources or have a 'gut feeling' that they are correct. Be wary of such intuitions, as they are not founded on fact. Some people's first response to the WikiLeaks affair was to say that the leaks had been 'planted' by the US government. Why might some people have such a gut feeling?
- *Reason* – before the leaked diplomatic cables were made public on the world's media, several major newspapers from around the world were asked to verify their authenticity. Many newspapers knew the WikiLeaks informants. Furthermore, the US government did not deny the authenticity of the documents. Nevertheless, you should ask yourself what this proves.

Journalism and linguistic devices

You have seen how journalism can be biased and sensational because of the constant pressure to provide newsworthy stories. Now let us turn to the linguistic devices that characterise sensationalism and bias.

Emotive language

The hallmark of sensationalism is **emotive language**. The headlines in the activity about the Christine O'Donnell story (Activity 3.2, page 70) included words and phrases such as *stumbles*, *gets a lesson* and *blanks*. These all contain emotive language: they have connotations which sound more extreme than blander, more basic vocabulary. They appeal to our emotions. The journalist could have said, for example, that O'Donnell *did not know* the First Amendment instead of *stumbles* or *blanks*; the straightforward *did not know* would have been less emotive, less 'loaded'.

Euphemisms

Some people refer to the media as 'the filter'. This is an interesting image that suggests our version of reality is really someone else's selection of reality. In more extreme terms, one could argue that our news is censored. While we may think of **censorship** as a device allowing governments to intervene and remove news stories, burn books or block radio frequencies, there is also the notion of censorship through language, which can be seen as a more devious sort of censorship.

Newspapers can filter the truth by the use of **euphemisms**. Euphemisms are words that make unpleasant things or ideas sound milder and less offensive. We use them to be less direct when talking about taboos or ideas that may be difficult to accept or embarrassing. Instead of saying that someone has *died*, for example, we say they have *passed away*. We often find euphemisms being used in reports about wars. Below are some examples of

euphemistic words and phrases used in reports about modern wars. Next to them is a more direct way of saying what they mean. The examples reveal how language can be used as a tool by governments and journalists to manufacture consent and, in this case, justify wars.

Euphemism	Meaning
collateral damage	death of civilians
to neutralise	to kill
friendly fire	accidental killing of soldiers on the same side
enhanced interrogation	torture
air campaign	bombing

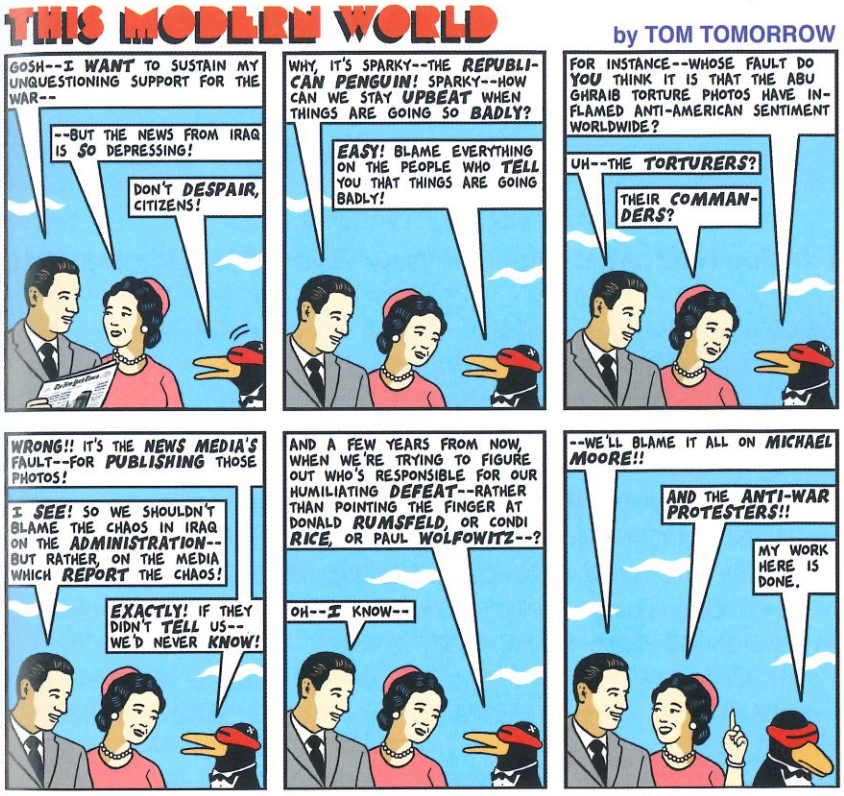

Figure 3.5 While Sparky the republican penguin seems comical, do you think he presents a case for censorship that many people subscribe to?

Vague language

Some words in the English language have very clear meanings, such as *chair* or *bachelor*. Others words, especially quantifiers, such as *a lot*, *frequently* or *far away*, are vaguer and may mean something different to one reader or another. Part of becoming more media literate is learning to spot vague language. Writers may use such devices to avoid honest reporting while readers can make false presumptions if they do not spot vague language.

In Text 3.3 you will be looking at the front page of a tabloid newspaper, *The Sun*. In one of the articles, we see vague language about a 'stunning model', who was the 'passion flower' of Jean Collin's husband. This husband planned to 'ditch' his soap-star wife, after stealing 'half her fortune' and running away with his lover. As critical readers we have to ask ourselves several questions about this vague language: How one can quantify this lover's good looks? What is a 'passion flower'? Was he 'ditching' his wife or was she divorcing him? How much exactly is 'half her fortune'? There is room for several interpretations to this text, which is why we should be wary of vague language.

Higher level

HL

In Activity 3.2 on bias on page 70, there was a list of headlines about Christine O'Donnell from different newspapers and news organisations about one story published on one day. In groups, look at how different newspapers report the same events. Choose a news story and find five different headlines on it. Compare and contrast the headlines. Is there bias in any of the headlines? How is language used to achieve certain effects?

'Freedom of expression – in particular, freedom of the press – guarantees popular participation in the decisions and actions of government, and popular participation is the essence of our democracy.'
Corazon Aquino (1933–2009)

Key terms

Emotive language is language that both reflects the emotional tone of the writer and instigates an emotional response from the reader. It is also known as loaded language.

Censorship is the intentional removal of information that the censor, be it a government or media agent, deems harmful, sensitive or controversial.

Euphemisms are words or phrases that are substitituted for more direct words or phrases in an attempt to make things easier to accept or less embarrassing.

'Political language … is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.'
George Orwell (1903–50)

Higher level

HL

Complete a comparative textual analysis of Texts 3.1 and 3.2 as if they are texts in the Paper 1 exam. Use the tools that you have developed in Chapters 1 and 2, looking at audience, purpose, theme, content, tone, mood, stylistic devices and structure.

discussion

1 Do you detect any bias in this article? Which words or phrases indicate possible bias?
2 What light does the text shed on Ugandan culture and politics?

Activity 3.3

Texts 3.1 and 3.2 are two newspaper articles which both report on political campaigns.

1 Read the two articles and find examples of emotive language, euphemisms and vague language in each article. Add to the examples that have been provided in the table below.
2 Copy and complete a table like the one below with the examples you have found.
3 Compare and contrast the linguistic devices used in the two texts. Look out for further examples in other texts you read.

	Emotive language	Euphemisms	Vague language
Text 3.1	The man was forced to take off his shirt.	People's president	… about 100 posters
Text 3.2	We deplore action of this kind in or out of politics.	The bugging incident	… the mystery deepens.

Text 3.1 'Inside Bitama's camp', *The New Vision*, 29th October 2010

The New Vision is a pro-government publication in Uganda. The president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, faced a presidential election in 2011. In the run-up to the election this article reported on an opposition candidate, Paddy Bitama, and how he arrived at the official nomination as an election candidate.

Comedian Paddy Bitama of Amarula Family got off the list of presidential candidates in a dust of light moments. Having set off from Chez Johnson, Nakulabye, Bitama got a suit, a C Class Mercedes Benz and a convoy of vehicles but forgot the campaign posters. When roadside cheerers reminded him, he sent DJ Messe to Nasser Road to print about 100 posters.

Among the supporters in the convoy was his colleague, Kapere, who was wearing an NRM[1] T-shirt. However, Kapere was forced to take off his shirt after colleagues noticed it.

On reaching Kisekka market, the convoy met a man who was having lunch by the roadside. Bitama grabbed an Irish potato from his plate saying as a people's president, he had to eat with them. The man just shook his head.

At Spear Motors, when the Police asked why his car had no sticker,[2] he claimed to have lost it adding that he was too busy to pick another one from the Electoral Commission.

Bitama also had sh2m[3] in cash but no one bothered to count it because he was supposed to have banked sh8m before going for nomination.

Meanwhile he had assured bodaboda[4] riders that he had a deal with a filling station in Lugogo to refund their fuel. However, when they reached Lugogo and the bodabodas demanded for their fuel, he told them they would get it after he has been sworn in as president.

[1] **NRM** the National Resistance Movement of President Yoweri Museveni
[2] **sticker** a licence granted by the police that must be displayed on a candidate's vehicle to show it is part of an election convoy
[3] **sh2m** 2 million Ugandan shillings
[4] **bodaboda** bicycle taxi

Text 3.2 'GOP security aide among 5 arrested in bugging affair', Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Washington Post*, 19th June 1972

In 1972 five men were caught breaking into the Watergate Hotel in Washington DC, where the Democratic Party were organising their presidential campaign. Investigative journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein discovered a link between the five burglars and the Republican President, Richard Nixon. Text 3.2 is the article that broke the story of Nixon's involvement in the bugging scandal which eventually led to his resignation.

One of the five men arrested early Saturday in the attempt to bug the Democratic National Committee headquarters is the salaried security coordinator for President Nixon's reelection committee.

The suspect, former CIA employee James W. McCord Jr., 53, also holds a separate contract to provide security services to the Republican National Committee, GOP[1] national chairman Bob Dole said yesterday.

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, head of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, said yesterday McCord was employed to help install that committee's own security system.

In a statement issued in Los Angeles, Mitchell said McCord and the other four men arrested at Democratic headquarters Saturday 'were not operating either in our behalf or with our consent' in the alleged bugging attempt.

Dole issued a similar statement, adding that 'we deplore action of this kind in or out of politics.' An aide to Dole said he was unsure at this time exactly what security services McCord was hired to perform by the National Committee.

Police sources said last night that they were seeking a sixth man in connection with the attempted bugging. The sources would give no other details.

Other sources close to the investigation said yesterday that there still was no explanation as to why the five suspects might have attempted to bug Democratic headquarters in the Watergate at 2600 Virginia Ave., NW, or if they were working for other individuals or organizations.

'We're baffled at this point … the mystery deepens,' a high Democratic Party source said.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien said the 'bugging incident … raised the ugliest questions about the integrity of the political process that I have encountered in a quarter century.

'No mere statement of innocence by Mr. Nixon's campaign manager will dispel these questions.'

The Democratic presidential candidates were not available for comment yesterday.

O'Brien, in his statement, called on Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst to order an immediate, 'searching professional investigation' of the entire matter by the FBI.

A spokesman for Kleindienst said yesterday, 'The FBI is already investigating. … Their investigative report will be turned over to the criminal division for appropriate action.'

The White House did not comment.

[1] **GOP** the Grand Old Party, or GOP, is a nickname for the Republican Party

Figure 3.6 Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward at *The Washington Post* in 1972.

discussion

1 After learning that this text eventually led to President Nixon's resignation, did you expect a more sensational story? How does the use of language in this report serve its purpose well?

2 Notice that Text 3.2 quotes a lot of people. Does the use of quotes make the reporting more or less biased? Compare the use of quotes in Text 3.2 with their use in Text 3.1.

Key terms

Tabloid in its literal sense refers to a newspaper that is smaller than a broadsheet; it is also used to refer to sensational or biased newspapers.

Broadsheet is a newspaper that is larger than a tabloid; the format is often associated with in-depth reporting and a balanced presentation of opinions.

A deconstructed tabloid news article

As you learn to become more media literate, it is important to recognise the structure of sensationalism. The format and layout of a newspaper can do a lot to determine the message that is conveyed. Over the years, a newspaper format known as the **tabloid** has come to be associated with sensationalism and emotive language. Tabloids are physically smaller than **broadsheets**, which have the reputation of more objective reporting and a more balanced presentation of opinions.

As you study Text 3.3, notice all the features of sensationalism it displays. The British newspaper the *Sun* is a good example of tabloid journalism and renowned for its sensationalist approach to news reporting.

Text 3.3 'Werewolf seized in Southend', *The Sun*, 24th July, 1987

discussion

1. Do you see evidence of emotive or vague language? What is the effect of the language of this text on the reader?
2. How does this text make use of the structural conventions of tabloid newspapers?

Masthead

Tabloid newspapers are often referred to as 'red tops' because of the red masthead background. In the masthead you often find the name of the newspaper, the date of publication and the price. White letters on a red background scream for attention.

Ears

In the upper corners of most newspapers, both tabloids and broadsheets, are little stories, also known as 'teasers', that make you want to open the newspaper and read on. Teasers in the top corners of the newspaper are known as 'ears'.

Copy

The main text of an article is called the 'copy'. Notice how the copy of this report is smaller than the image. In tabloid articles the copy may consist of only a few short paragraphs written in a style intended to grab the reader's attention. For this reason the language is usually sensational and loaded.

Image

Since sensationalism appeals to the senses, most tabloids make use of images, usually of people's faces, as these attract the most attention. Images, especially on the front page of tabloids, are usually large in relation to the copy or other articles. Images are almost always 'anchored' by a caption.

Headline

The choice of words in a headline is essential to setting the tone of an article. The headlines are often the only things that are read. The word 'werewolf' attracts one's attention. As one could read further in the article, this mythological creature turns out to be 'a 43-year-old married builder from Southend'. A headline such as 'Builder seized in Southend' would not have drawn the reader's attention, though.

Subheading

Good subheadings also entice the reader to read on. The subheading in this text expands on the implications of the heading. 'He fights cops on all fours' intrigues the reader as it appeals to the senses and elaborates on the concept of 'werewolf'.

Activity 3.4

Study the sample written task in Chapter 5 on page 134, a tabloid article by a student.

1. Find examples in her work of the defining characteristics of tabloids, as presented here.
2. Compare her use of images, ears, copy, headlines and subheadings with the use of these devices in Text 3.3. How well has the student adhered to the structural conventions of tabloid newspaper writing?

In the introduction to this chapter on page 68 was a quote from Marshall McLuhan, who said, 'The medium is the message.' In other words, content (the message) is influenced by form (the medium). In the past decades many broadsheet newspapers with fair and balanced reporting have switched to a smaller, tabloid format because their readers often read the newspapers in public spaces such as trains or cafés. With this shift, many readers have become concerned that less space for print translates into less depth of coverage. Concerns about a more superficial coverage of news increase as more and more people are turning away from traditional paper newspapers and are reading the news online. In the next unit, you will explore the 'new' medium of the Internet and you will be asking yourself whether it is changing the message.