

WJEC GCSE Media Studies, Unit 1, Section A

Representations – Gender and advertising

Media Representations of gender

Refers to how media texts **represent** socially constructed gender identities – e.g. how men, women and non-binary people are represented. Gender representations are **constructions** rather than reflections of reality.

The media may **stereotype** particular genders – e.g. representing women as weak and objects of the male gaze. However, some media texts may challenge these traditional stereotypes.

Representations of gender **intersect** with representations of age, ethnicity and social class.

Representations may be **complex** and not as simple as either positive or negative.

“Stereotypes reflect deep-rooted ideas of femininity and masculinity. Negative, diminished conceptions of women and girls are one of the greatest barriers for gender equality and we need to tackle and change those images wherever they appear. Advertising is a particularly powerful driver to change perceptions and impact social norms.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

*Uses less current than
an ordinary light bulb!*

*You can see at a glance
- you can't match
FRIGIDAIRE!*



Look at it outside — then look inside! Look at the Hydrator for storing fruit and vegetables, the convenient Meat Tender compartment, the Super Freezer for frozen foods. And notice the Quickcube Ice Trays that slide out easily, release cubes instantly without melting.

Look at all the storage space — actually *more* storage space in *less* kitchen space — to give you food-saving protection in any weather. Space-saving design and top-to-bottom refrigeration make this possible. Compare the cost — the *cost per cubic foot* of storage space — with any other refrigerator on the market!

Every Frigidaire Refrigerator is powered by the economical Frigidaire “Meter-Miser” — the simplest cold-making mechanism ever built. It actually uses less current than an ordinary light bulb, and is backed by a 5-Year Warranty!



**Over 12 MILLION
built and sold!**

Model OMM-74 (7 cu. ft. capacity) £95.10.0 plus P.T. £24.1.0. Available from Authorized Frigidaire Dealers, Local Electricity Board Showrooms and major Departmental Stores. Hire Purchase Plans easily arranged.

You can't match FRIGIDAIRE

MADE IN BRITAIN BY FRIGIDAIRE DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS LIMITED
STAG LANE, KINGSBURY, LONDON, N.W.9. TELEPHONE: COLINDALE 6541

This UK print advert for a Frigidaire refrigerator appeared in *Ideal Home* magazine in May 1951. It represents women as housewives and mothers, a stereotype common in 1950s advertising for domestic goods.

Analysing gender representations. Consider:

- **who** is the **producer** of the media text? Consider the institution and ownership.
- **when** and **where** was the media text produced? A media text may reflect the dominant values and society at the time the text was produced.
- **how** is the media text **constructed**? In a print advert, consider use of images, colour and lighting, design, and written codes.
- **who** is the **target audience**? Adverts target specific demographics and values and lifestyles (e.g. affluent urban professional men). Think about how the advert is constructed to appeal to the target audience.



This is a UK print advert from the 2010s for a vegan beauty brand, *Love Beauty and Planet*. Think about how it may be an example of increasing visibility of women of colour in advertising, yet still confirms to conventional stereotypes of femininity.

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Representations – Gender and video games

Feminist Frequency are a non-profit organisation that “analyses modern media’s relationship to societal issues such as gender, race, and sexuality.” (*Feministfrequency.com*) They conduct statistical analysis of gender representations in video games. Look at their latest statistics below. What does this tell you about the representations of gender in video games?

Videogame Protagonists by Gender (2015 to 2019)

The number of games at E3 with female protagonists is lower this year than it has been in some previous years.

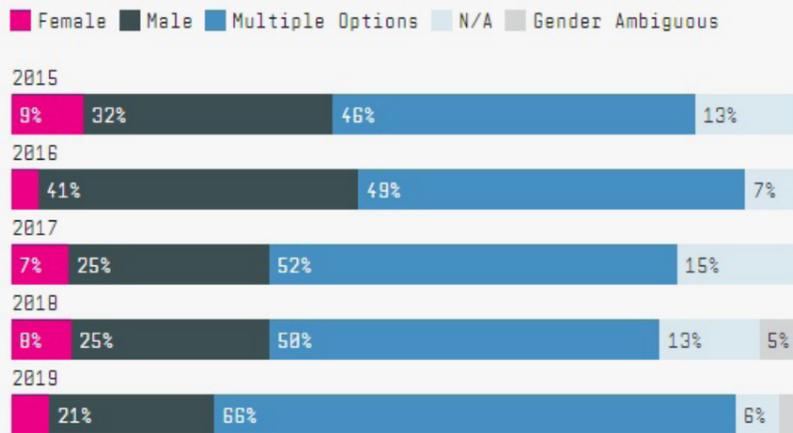


Chart: WIRED • Source: Feminist Frequency

Key term: Stereotypes

Generalisations about groups of people. Common stereotypes of women in video games include **damsels in distress** (e.g. *Princess Peach* in the *Mario* series) and **hypersexualised** women (e.g. *Quiet* in the *Metal Gear* series)

Video game cover analysis

Case study: Resident Evil 3 (2020)



The female character of Jill Valentine is not hypersexualised on the game cover. However, she still conforms to norms of the idealised thin, athletic female body. Her character design and costume was altered from previous incarnations as she now wears more practical clothing for combat.

Jill is the main character in the foreground, defying stereotypical representations of action heroes where the main characters are often male.

The male character, Carlos, conforms to stereotypical representations of masculinity. He looks like an action hero – he is muscular, stoic and holds a machine gun.

UKIE are a not-for profit group who help support the UK games industry.

In 2020, they released statistics about gender in the UK games industry and gamers. Look at the key findings:

Gamers:

- 50% are female
- 50% are male

“Among women who say they play most days, only a third (33%) would identify as a “gaming hobbyist” compared with 58% of men who play the same amount. This may be due to perceptions that only certain types of video games “count” as gaming.” (*UKIE online*)



Workers in the UK games industry:

- 70% are male
- 28% are female
- 2% are non-binary or another gender.