***GLEE REVISION KEY POINTS:***

**Essay Structure:**

1. **Describe the Media Product**
2. **Describe the Target Audience**
3. **Describe aspect one- explain how this aspect connects to the target audience**
4. **Describe aspect two- explain how this aspect connects to the target audience**
5. **Explain the implications of Glee on the target audience and the entertainment industry as a whole.**

**DESCRIBE THE MEDIA PRODUCT**

* ***Glee*** is an American musical comedy-drama series.
* It was released on American television in 2009 and is now in its fourth season.
* *Glee* is set at the fictional William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio.
* It focuses on the high school glee club *New Directions* competing on the show choir competition circuit, while its members deal with relationships, sexuality and social issues.
* Producer Ryan Murphy intended to make a family show to appeal to adults as well as children.

**DESCRIBE THE TARGET AUDIENCE**

* As television programmes are created for a commercial purpose they are not valued for their artistic value but rather for their sale-ability or viability in terms of generating ratings.
* To achieve these ratings media products are often designed with a target audience in mind. The more a media producer can know about an audience, the better that audience can be targeted.
* The target audience for *Glee* is young men and women, between the ages of 10 and 39.
* More specifically the show is aimed towards high school students, teachers, young couples or families, and music lovers.
* This can be seen by the way Gleeuses internal appeal techniques such as humour, characters (ensemble cast), special guests, music, and also in the types of issues raised in each episode.
* Glee’s target audience has changed over time as it has become evident that the show is largely more popular with the teen age group rather than adults.
* It is important that media products reflect their target audience in some manner in order for that target audience to be able to identify with, enjoy and find benefit from that media product.

**ASPECT 1: CHARACTERS**

* Glee is a prime example of how an ensemble cast is used to build a relationship with its target audience. This kind of casting is popular in television series because it allows flexibility for writers to focus on different characters and issues in different episodes.
* A range of characters is also important as it gives audiences a number of characters and personalities to identify with and relate to in some way.
* These characters are important as audiences will recognise aspects of their own personalities within these characters. Audiences can also then identify with some of the experiences and struggles those characters face.
* This forms an **emotional connection** between the audience and the media product. Once this connection is formed it is likely the viewer will continue watching the show as they have become emotionally invested in the fate of the characters they have best identified with.
* *Glee* has a **stereotypical demographic** of the students in high schools and does a good job showcasing main characters from different race/ethnic, health, sexual orientation, and disability backgrounds. Glee has a diverse cast which contains stereotyped characters such as the gay, geek, popular cheerleader, jock and bad boy rebel. Kurt, Rachel, Quinn and Finn are examples of these stereotypes

**ASPECT 2: MUSIC**

* Writer Ryan Murphy wanted to maintain a balance between chart hits and show tunes: *“I want there to be something for everybody in every episode”.*
* In using a range of songs from different decades and genres the show ensures they will appeal to a wide range of people, generate high ratings and be profitable.
* In later seasons the music chosen changed to include a greater number of chart hits in order to further appeal to a younger demographic.
* Many musicians saw the show as an opportunity to revive their careers and sales “They loved that this show was about optimism and young kids, for the most part, reinterpreting their classics for a new audience."
* Composer and musician Billy Joel offered many of his songs for use on the show, and other artists have offered use of their songs for free.
* A series of *Glee* soundtrack albums have been released through Columbia Records.
* Songs featured on the show are available for digital download through iTunes up to two weeks before new episodes air, and through other digital outlets and mobile carriers a week later.
* For the second season, the creators were offered listens of upcoming songs in advance by publishers and record labels, with production occurring even before song rights are cleared.
* Glee has become a successful marketing platform for music companies wanting to launch new music. It has successfully sold millions of their own cover albums, making Glee an important player in the music industry.

**ASPECT 3: ISSUES**

* By dealing with issues and interests in the lives of their target audiences, media producers reflect their attitudes, needs, wants, and beliefs.
* This will encourage the target to tune into the programme on a regular basis, as they see a ‘reflection’ of their own lives and experiences on-screen.
* The audience will identify with issues the characters face and tune in to see *how* they deal with their issues, possibly for reassurance that the issue can be dealt with, security in knowing that not only they are facing that issue or to gain advice about how to deal with that issue themselves.
* Issues in Glee also change from season to season to reflect the aging of the target audience and the type of issues they face at different stages of their lives. The characters themselves age at the same rate as the target audience.
* Issues range from relationship problems, bullying, teen pregnancy, suicide, identity and acceptance to finding a place in the world, relationship breakdowns, cheating, growing apart or being left behind when friends/partners leave school.

**IMPLICATIONS**

* Media products such as ‘Glee’ have the ability of shaping the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of their target audience. The television programme ‘Glee’ has created many implications for the audience and also the music industry and media industry as a whole.
* ‘Glee’ clubs have been created in schools in New Zealand,
* Songs which feature on ‘Glee’ have risen in charts and increased in sales. Rihanna’s “Take a Bow” increased in sales by 189% after featuring on the show.
* Glee has evolved from being simply a form of entertainment to an avenue for music promotion and advertising. Music which appears on the show is almost guaranteed to be successful.
* Musicians are now using Glee to promote new unreleased singles to a mass audience. Glee is helping bands remain successful and reach a widespread audience.
* Glee has become a source of identification for its audience. Fans of ‘Glee’ have created a portmanteau of the words “glee” and “geek.” They refer to themselves as “gleeks.”
* Glee has opened up the television and entertainment industry up to a new genre of musical-drama. It has made this genre acceptable and popular but also safe for producers as there is now an established audience.
* Glee has inspired the creation of other musical television dramas such as SMASH – based on a the production of a musical about Marilyn Munroe.
* Glee has also inspired the creation of musical films such as recently released Pitch Perfect about an all-female a capella group. This is clearly aimed at the high school musical, Glee generation.