The media product we are studying this year is ***Glee***. ***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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lima,_Ohio). It focuses on the high school [glee club](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_club) New Directions competing on the show choir competition circuit, while its members deal with relationships, sexuality and social issues. The initial main cast encompassed club director and Spanish teacher Will Schuster, cheerleading coach [Sue Sylvester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sue_Sylvester), guidance counselor [Emma Pillsbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Pillsbury), Will's wife [Terri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terri_Schuester), and eight club members. Murphy has said that he intended the show to be a form of escapism. "There's so much on the air right now about people with guns, or sci-fi, or lawyers running around. This is a different genre, there's nothing like it on the air at the networks and cable. Everything's so dark in the world right now". Murphy intended to make a family show to appeal to adults as well as children, with adult characters starring equally alongside the teenage leads

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. Advertisers and media producers believe that consumers can be sorted into groups with common characteristics. The way audiences are identified and grouped according to isolating characteristics is known as demographics. This includes aspects such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, occupation, religious views and education. ACNielson, which is the largest market research company for media in New Zealand, uses the Target Audience Grouping System (TAGS) to categorise audiences into demographic segments. The area which the *Glee* audience seems to fit best is ‘*Next Generation’*. This accounts for the 10-14 age group who have active lifestyles. They are active consumers and have a high television-dominated media usage. There are also elements of the *‘Struggling Young Families’* grouping where lifestyle is centred on family and kids and parents are extremely budget conscious.

* 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 humour, characters (ensemble cast), special guests, music, and also in the types of issues raised in each episode. This 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.
* Media texts produced on a commercial basis will use such information to shape their product in a way that appeals to that target audience. 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. The larger the target audience the higher the ratings will be and subsequently the earning capability of the show. *An audience is important for a media product because they influence the purpose, income and appeal of that media product. Individuals engage with different media texts because of different likes/dislikes, values/morals. For these reasons it is important for creators to identify a specific audience for their media texts and use internal/external appeals to attract them.*
* Just as with characters, the issues dealt with in specific television programmes need to reflect important issues and interests in the lives of the target audience. This is relevant for both fictional and non-fiction programmes.
* By dealing with issues and interests in the lives of their target audiences, media producers reflect their attitudes, needs, wants, beliefs and other demographics. 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 production design and style of a television programme can have a huge influence on how well a programme appeals to its target audience.
* Production style in relation to audience includes both diegetic elements (such as setting, costume and the language used by characters) and non-diegetic elements (such as music), and the overall style of filming used in the production of the programme.
* It is important that these elements either reflect or a reflective of the behaviours, attitudes and tastes of the target audience in order to be successful.
* 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. Music is one of the internal appeal techniques used to create this connection. Writer Ryan Murphy is responsible for selecting all of the songs used in Glee. He has said that he strives to maintain a balance between chart hits and show tunes: *“I want there to be something for everybody in every episode”.* In the first two episodes of season one this can be exemplified through the use of chart songs such as Amy Winehouse’s *Rehab*, Kanye West’s *Gold Digger* and 80’s band Journey’s *Don’t Stop Believing*. These songs were also chosen to reflect important issues in the episodes such as materialism and learning not to forget your dreams. For example Will Schuester considers leaving teaching and becoming an accountant. This is largely as he is concerned with making enough money to buy the expensive house his wife Terry is determined to own. In using a range of songs from different decades the show ensures they will appeal to a wide range of people, generate high ratings and therefore 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.
* “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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_Records). Songs featured on the show are available for [digital download](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_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 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. Characters are important in television programmes as a means to capture the attention and interest of the target audience.
* People are more likely to watch television programmes that feature characters, main characters in particular, with whom they can identify in some way – indeed the main characters of a television programme usually provide a clear indication of the target audience.

*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. On the surface Glee is meant to seem progressive but it still perpetuates age old stereotypes. *Glee* features fifteen main roles: [Will Schuester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Will_Schuester), McKinley High's Spanish teacher who becomes director of the glee club, hoping to restore it to its former glory. [Sue Sylvester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sue_Sylvester), head coach of the "Cheerios" cheerleading squad, and the Glee Club's arch-nemesis. [Emma Pillsbury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Pillsbury), the school's [mysophobic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysophobia) [guidance counselor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guidance_counselor) who has feelings for Will. [Terri Schuester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terri_Schuester) is Will's wife whom he eventually divorces after five years of marriage—they separate when he discovers she has faked being pregnant. [Rachel Berry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rachel_Berry) is the talented star of the glee club who is often bullied by the Cheerios and football players. [Finn Hudson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finn_Hudson)is the star quarterback of the school's football team who risks alienation by his friends after joining the glee club.

* Also in the club are [Mercedes Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercedes_Jones), a fashion-conscious diva who initially resents having to sing back-up; [Kurt Hummel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Hummel), a gay male [countertenor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Countertenor); [Artie Abrams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artie_Abrams), a guitar player and paraplegic; and [Tina Cohen-Chang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tina_Cohen-Chang), an Asian American student with a fake [speech impediment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech_impediment). [Quinn Fabray](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinn_Fabray) is Finn's cheerleader girlfriend, who later joins the glee club to keep an eye on him. [Noah "Puck" Puckerman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puck_(Glee)), a good friend of Finn's is on the football team and at first disapproves of Finn joining the glee club, but later joins the glee club himself.
* 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.
* Characters who appear in Glee include… Bullying, Identity and belonging / Self Image, Teen pregnancy, Relationship issues / rejection / first loves, Marital problems / Adultery, Divorce, Money worries / Buying a first home, Sexual identity, Uncertainty of the future / Goals and aspirations, Parent-child relationships, Teen suicide
* Highly successful media products have the power to then shape the attitudes, needs, wants and beliefs of their target audience. This is particularly true if the media product becomes a source of identification for a specific group in society through language, behaviour and beliefs. This relates to the influence of a media product on its target audience and the converse influence of the target audience on a media product. A media product may have obvious effects on its target audience in terms of influencing/inspiring people to talk/act/dress/behave in a certain manner. Other, less visible effects may include the influence of media product on the things the target audience believes or values.
* A range of *techniques* are used by *media broadcasters* to assist a particular programme appeal to its target audience(s). These are known as *External Targeting/Appeal Techniques*.
* A range of *techniques* are used *within television programmes* to appeal to their target audience(s). These are known as *Internal Targeting/Appeal Techniques*.

Fans of *Glee* are commonly referred to as "gleeks",a [portmanteau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portmanteau) of "glee" and "geek". [Fox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fox_Broadcasting_Company) ran a "Biggest GLEEK" competition, measuring fans' *Glee*-related activity on social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace, and found that the growth of the fanbase outpaced the network's science-fiction shows. The cast's [Hot Topic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_Topic) tour was titled "The Gleek Tour".*Glee* is one of the most [tweeted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter)-about TV shows. Fans have recreated many of its musical numbers in tribute to the show, sharing them on YouTube. Based on this trend, show producers included instrumental versions of some songs on the show's soundtracks.

The show's musical performances have been a commercial success, with over thirty-six million copies of *Glee* cast single releases purchased digitally, and over eleven million albums purchased worldwide through October 2011. In 2009, the *Glee* cast had 25 singles chart on the [*Billboard* Hot 100](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billboard_Hot_100), the most by any artist since [The Beatles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beatles) had 31 songs in the chart in 1964; in 2010, it placed 80 singles on the *Billboard* Hot 100, far outstripping the previous record. In February 2011, Glee surpassed Elvis as the artist with the most songs placed on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, though fewer than one-fourth of them have charted for more than one week. The cast performance of "[Don't Stop Believin'](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_Stop_Believin%27)" was certified [gold](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_recording_sales_certification) on October 13, 2009, achieving over 500,000 digital sales, and on March 16, 2011, received platinum certification for having sales of over a million. The series' cover versions had a positive effect on sales of [Rihanna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rihanna)'s "[Take a Bow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take_a_Bow_(Rihanna_song))" increasing by 189 percent after the song was covered in the *Glee* episode "Showmance".

During the second season, [Rob Sheffield](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rob_Sheffield) for [*Rolling Stone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_Stone) noted the [Britney Spears](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britney_Spears) and [*Rocky Horror*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rocky_Horror_Show) tribute episodes as examples when he lauded *Glee* and its choice of music. He praised Murphy for his selection and resurrection of "forgotten" pop songs and compared the show's uniqueness to "MTV in its prime" as the embodiment of [popular culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_culture). [Little, Brown Books](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little,_Brown_and_Company) is in the process of publishing five *Glee*–related [young adult novels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young-adult_fiction), which are being developed in collaboration with the show's producers and writers. The first three novels have been written by Sophia Lowell; the first, *Glee: The Beginning*, was released in August 2010 and serves as a prequel to the events of the television series. [*Glee: The 3D Concert Movie*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee:_The_3D_Concert_Movie), a [concert film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concert_film) based on the four-week North American segment of the 2011 [Glee Live! In Concert!](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_Live!_In_Concert!) tour and featuring the student cast of the series in performance and backstage, was released in the United States on August 12, 2011

In January 2010, it was announced that open auditions would be held for three new roles to be introduced in *Glee*'s second season. They were open to amateurs and professionals aged 16 to 26, and were intended to be the subject of a multi-part television special, set to air in the lead-in to the second season premiere in fall 2010, with the new cast members revealed in the first episode.[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_(TV_series)#cite_note-pickup-57) Murphy commented: "Anybody and everybody now has a chance to be on a show about talented underdogs. We want to be the first interactive musical comedy on television." On June 22, 2010, Josef Adalian of [*New York*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_(magazine)) magazine revealed that the reality show would not go ahead, due to Murphy's desire to concentrate on the main series, and fear that the distraction of the reality show may damage *Glee*. Adalian reported that the production team would still choose several winners from the entrants and invite them to appear on *Glee* for at least one episode.[[158]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_(TV_series)#cite_note-157) In June 2010, it was announced that [Oxygen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxygen_(TV_channel)) would host a [reality series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reality_television) set to air in June 2011, featuring performers competing for a spot on *Glee*. [*The Glee Project*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Glee_Project) started airing on June 12, 2011, and the final episode was broadcast on August 21, 2011.[[161]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glee_(TV_series)#cite_note-160) The winning prize was a seven-episode guest-starring role in *Glee*'s third season, which was awarded to two contestants, with a two-episode role given to two other finalists.

On June 7, 2010, UK broadcaster [Channel 4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel_4) aired *Gleeful: The Real Show Choirs of America* on its [E4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E4_(channel)) station. The documentary explored the American [show choir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Show_choir) phenomenon which inspired *Glee*. Narrated by [Nick Grimshaw](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Grimshaw), it went behind the scenes with real-life glee clubs and detailed celebrity show choir alumni including [Lance Bass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lance_Bass), [Ashton Kutcher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashton_Kutcher), [Blake Lively](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blake_Lively) and [Anne Hathaway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_Hathaway_(actress)). It was selected as recommended viewing by [*The Guardian*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Guardian), with the comment: "it's a fascinating look at the real-life New Directions, and it's equally as crackers as its TV champion. The newspaper's Lucy Mangan reviewed the documentary positively, writing: "It will, one way or another, fill your heart to bursting", and commenting that: "*Glee*, it turns out, is not a gloriously ridiculous, highly polished piece of escapism. It is cinéma vérité." It was watched by 411,000 viewers, a 2.3% audience share.

In summer 2010, [Channel 5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel_5_(UK)) in the United Kingdom aired [*Don't Stop Believing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don%27t_Stop_Believing), a reality talent show inspired by *Glee*'s success. The series featured live shows in which established and new musical performance groups competed against each other, performing well-known songs in new arrangements, with viewers voting on the winner. Solo singers were also sought to join a group to represent the United Kingdom on the American glee club circuit. Five's controller [Richard Woolfe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Woolfe) stated: "There's an explosion in musical performance groups and *Don't Stop Believing* will tap into that exciting groundswell." The show was hosted by [Emma Bunton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Bunton), who told [*The Belfast Telegraph*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Belfast_Telegraph) that she is a "huge fan" of *Glee*. The show's judges were former [*EastEnders*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EastEnders) actress [Tamsin Outhwaite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamsin_Outhwaite), [Blue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_(group)) member [Duncan James](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duncan_James), singer [Anastacia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anastacia) and [*High School Musical*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_School_Musical) choreographer [Charles "Chucky" Klapow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Klapow).