Test Bank for Media & Culture An Introduction to Mass Communication 12th Campbell

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Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

Chapter 01: Fill-in-the-Blank

1. The five major phases in communication history include the _____, written, print, electronic, and digital periods.
ANSWER: oral

2. The telegraph was the first media development to break the connection between transportation and _____.
ANSWER: communication

3. _____ refers to images, texts, and sounds that are converted into electronic signals that are later reassembled as a precise reproduction of the original image, text, or sound.
ANSWER: Digital communication

4. The phenomenon whereby audiences seek messages and meanings that correspond to their preexisting beliefs and values is called _____.
ANSWER: selective exposure

5. The stages in the development of most new mass communication industries are called the emergence (or novelty) stage, the _____ stage, the mass medium stage, and the convergence stage.
ANSWER: entrepreneurial

6. _____ is the technological merging of content in different media channels.
ANSWER: Media convergence

7. The common denominator that makes both our entertainment and our information cultures compelling is _____.
ANSWER: narrative

8. According to the textbook, one attains _____ by following a five-step critical process: description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and engagement.
ANSWER: media literacy

9. _____ is the second step in the critical process. It involves discovering significant patterns that emerge from the description stage.
ANSWER: Analysis

10. The final step in the critical process, _____, occurs when citizens actively work to create a media world that helps serve democracy.
ANSWER: engagement

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Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

1. According to the textbook, the mass media are industries that produce and distribute cultural products to large numbers of people.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

2. No media existed prior to the coming of the electronic era in the nineteenth century.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: b

3. Gutenberg played an active role in the transition from oral to written culture.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: b

4. The manuscript culture that existed between 1000 BCE and the mid-fifteenth century primarily served the ruling classes.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

5. With the coming of the printing press, the printed newspaper became the first mass-marketed product in history.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: b

6. Gutenberg's invention of movable type allowed the book to become the first mass-marketed communication product in history.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

7. The printing press fostered the rise of tribal communities.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: b

8. The computer was the first electronic medium.
   a. True
   b. False

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

ANSWER: b

9. The telegraph and newspapers transformed news into a salable commodity.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

10. In the linear model of mass communication, gatekeepers are the authors, producers, and organizations that create the message.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: b

11. The senders of messages often have little control over how their messages will be received.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

12. The meaning of a message can be affected by a recipient's gender, age, educational level, ethnicity, and occupation.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

13. Mass media audiences generally seek out messages that correspond to their cultural beliefs and values.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

14. Google is the most profitable company of the digital age so far.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

15. Although the way we consume media today focuses on individual interests on mobile devices, a positive result of the digital age is that family and friends gather to binge-watch programs on weekends or during holidays.
   a. True
   b. False

ANSWER: a

16. The classical view of art is that it should aim to instruct and uplift.
   a. True

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

b. False

ANSWER: a

17. According to the textbook, the high–low model of culture limits the way we look at and discuss culture today.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: a

18. Most forms of culture demonstrate multiple tendencies; for example, a film could be both conventional and innovative.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: a

19. Lassie went off the air because children got tired of seeing the same plot every week.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: b

20. A high–low vertical hierarchy is a more multidimensional way of looking at culture than viewing culture as a map.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: b

21. James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* challenges readers to decode its complex narrative.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: a

22. Efficiency and individualism are both values of the modern period.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: a

23. Modern artists such as Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*) and Charlie Chaplin (*Modern Times*) predicted a future in which technology would lead to less oppression and more individual freedom.

a. True

b. False

ANSWER: b

24. Populism tries to appeal to elite people by highlighting the differences between them and ordinary people.

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

a. True
b. False

ANSWER: b

25. Critics contend that postmodern style borrows too heavily from other eras and devalues originality.
a. True
b. False

ANSWER: a

26. Postmodern culture questions the value of scientific reasoning and rational thought for solving society's problems.
a. True
b. False

ANSWER: a

27. The textbook contends that many forms of media and culture cannot accurately be described using binary terms such as *liberal* and *conservative* or *high* and *low*.
a. True
b. False

ANSWER: a

28. _____ are the cultural industries that produce and distribute cultural products to large numbers of people.
a. Modern technologies
b. Oral communications
c. Illuminated manuscripts
d. Mass media

ANSWER: d

29. According to the textbook, the mass media have passed through which five historical stages?
a. voice, pen, press, telegraph, computer
b. speech, manuscript, book, image, information
c. face-to-face, local, regional, national, global
d. oral, written, print, electronic, digital

ANSWER: d

30. Which of the following is the best way to characterize the transitions between the print, electronic, and digital eras?
a. The exact lines between each era are clear.
b. As new technology was invented, the older forms of technology were rapidly discarded.
c. Each wave of newer technology came at the same time as an increasing number of people moved from urban areas to rural areas.
d. In practice, the eras overlapped as newer technologies disrupted and modified older technologies.

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

ANSWER: d

31. Plato wanted to banish which group from ancient Greece because he thought they would undermine oral storytelling?
    a. printers
    b. poets
    c. Persians
    d. prophets

ANSWER: b

32. Which of the following does the textbook identify as a result of the printing press?
    a. the emergence of the style of communication known as the Socratic method
    b. a separation of communication from transportation
    c. the emergence of more centralized nation-states, given that leaders could more easily distribute information
    d. the emergence of tribal communities

ANSWER: c

33. Which of the following is NOT considered a consequence of the printing press?
    a. the rise of the middle class
    b. an increased sense of community and mutual cooperation
    c. a decline of religious authority
    d. an increase in literacy rates

ANSWER: b

34. The transformation from an industrial, print-based society to one grounded in the Information Age began with the development of the
    a. sound recording.
    b. printing press.
    c. telegraph.
    d. magazine.

ANSWER: c

35. Which of the following is a contribution of the telegraph?
    a. the transformation of information into a commodity
    b. the concept of nationalism
    c. the rise of the middle class
    d. the development of newspapers

ANSWER: a

36. The key development that allowed for the transition to the digital age was
    a. the ability to convert images, text, and sounds into binary code.

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

b. the telegraph.
c. the ability to broadcast voices, music, and other sounds via the radio.
d. television.

ANSWER: a

37. The linear communication model can be criticized on the grounds that it
a. assumes that culture is hierarchical.
b. asserts that audiences create their own meanings from messages sent.
c. does not move smoothly from sender to receiver.
d. is flexible enough to describe the way consumers use the Internet.

ANSWER: c

38. A cultural approach to media recognizes
a. the industry's lack of concern with control and distribution of production.
b. that the audience has lost the love of story.
c. how audiences are unifying in one meaning on the available media.
d. that individuals bring diverse meanings to messages.

ANSWER: d

39. A cultural approach to understanding mass communication
a. is easier to understand because it outlines a linear flow of information from sender to receiver.
b. argues that gatekeepers decide which information and messages flow to the audience.
c. argues that diverse audiences interpret the same information differently.
d. argues that diverse audiences interpret information in the same way.

ANSWER: c

40. Selective exposure
a. refers to the process of media gatekeepers selecting information to which an audience will be exposed.
b. deals with how much time audiences choose to spend with any media.
c. refers to the fact that people tend to seek out messages that agree with what they already believe.
d. refers to early film development techniques.

ANSWER: c

41. As described in the textbook, which of the following is one of the four stages a media innovation goes through?
a. invention stage
b. testing stage
c. entrepreneurial stage
d. obsolete stage

ANSWER: c

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

42. Which of the following is one of the two definitions given in the textbook for the term *media convergence*?
    a. the consolidation of different mass media holdings under one corporate umbrella
    b. the appropriation of American products by foreign advertisers
    c. the gathering of multiple press figures at a media event, such as a press conference
    d. a concentrated and organized stream of Internet traffic to one site for the purpose of crashing it

ANSWER: a

43. Which of the following statements about cross-platform media convergence is FALSE?
    a. A primary goal is to maximize profits.
    b. A common result of this kind of convergence is using fewer employees to generate content for multiple outlets.
    c. It can involve a single company owning various media holdings, such as radio and television stations, Internet service providers, and cable television systems.
    d. A primary goal is to offer more choice to media consumers.

ANSWER: d

44. Which of the following statements about Google is FALSE?
    a. Google makes most of its money by generating original content.
    b. Google is an example of a successful digital age media company.
    c. Google makes most of its money from shopping-related searches.
    d. Google has expanded far beyond being a search engine by offering e-mail, mapping, and numerous other services.

ANSWER: a

45. Which of the following statements best describes media convergence?
    a. It only happened because of the Internet.
    b. It makes older forms of mass communication obsolete and leads to their disuse.
    c. It allows older forms of mass communication to find new life with new technology.
    d. It creates new forms of media unlike anything we've seen before.

ANSWER: c

46. What is one concern identified in the textbook about the future of news content available through Internet news search sites like Google?
    a. People aren't interested in reading the news online.
    b. There is a proliferation of too much fake news.
    c. It seems likely that newspapers will block their material from search engines.
    d. Newspapers, radio stations, and television stations don't like the Internet.

ANSWER: b

47. As writer Joan Didion once put it, "We tell ourselves stories in order to live." Narratives are the main way we make sense and meaning of life experiences. What is an example of a narrative used by media?

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

a. a post on a blog
b. a tweet by Donald Trump
c. a funny television commercial
d. All of the options are correct

ANSWER: d

48. Concerns about how young people might be negatively influenced by messages in popular or "low" cultural forms
a. didn't happen until the appearance of rock-and-roll music in the 1950s.
b. were addressed by Plato, the philosopher who developed the classical view of art.
c. have been around at least since the time of the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates.
d. have always been about important moral values and never a cover for racism or bigotry.

ANSWER: b

49. Elvis Presley was filmed only from the waist up in his third appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* because
a. his left leg was in a cast.
b. some critics considered his hip movements lascivious.
c. another singer complained that Presley had stolen his dance routine.
d. the public demanded to see Presley's face close up.

ANSWER: b

50. According to the textbook, a major concern of critics of contemporary culture is
a. dull and boring television.
b. making sure networks have enough money to continue making programs.
c. overly restrained talk shows that are too polite to discuss difficult topics.
d. children being bombarded by too many television commercials.

ANSWER: d

51. Which of the following statements best describes how the textbook characterizes the interaction of media and society?
a. Media are definitely the cause of society's problems.
b. Media are just a mirror that reflects what is already in society.
c. Violent movies and song lyrics cause school violence, not media.
d. How much media really shape society is unknown.

ANSWER: d

52. Critics developed at least five areas of concern about so called low art. Which is NOT one of them?
a. depreciation of fine art
b. exploitation of high culture
c. decline of high culture
d. the enrichment of our cultural taste buds

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

ANSWER: d

53. Which of the following statements does NOT represent part of the traditional "high" culture critique against popular culture?
    a. Popular culture is formulaic and repetitive.
    b. Popular culture simply exploits and recycles high culture to lesser effect.
    c. Popular culture debases our taste for finer culture.
    d. Popular culture creates a greater appetite for high culture, making high culture less elite.

ANSWER: d

54. Critics who view culture as a map
    a. see the map as rigidly structured.
    b. acknowledge that the familiar and unknown often coexist in the same song, movie, or other cultural artifact.
    c. feel that culture was more meaningful in the "good old days" of the mid-twentieth century.
    d. see popular culture as more innovative than high culture.

ANSWER: b

55. In the nineteenth century, critics felt which of the following might create havoc?
    a. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Gothic novel *Frankenstein*
    b. a rise in populism
    c. rising literacy rates among the working class
    d. increased access to technology

ANSWER: c

56. Which statement reflects modernization involving the captains of industry?
    a. New technology should be used to make manufacturing more efficient, thereby providing inexpensive products for everyday life.
    b. There was a cultural shift from functional to the ornate and decorative to the functional.
    c. It provoked praise about the impact on the collective society, such as in the book *Brave New World* and the movie *Modern Times*.
    d. Modern journalism embraces decorative adjectives and adverbs for "just the facts."

ANSWER: a

57. Which of the following is NOT a value the textbook associates with postmodern culture?
    a. resistance to ideas such as "high" and "low" culture that set hierarchies of taste
    b. an emphasis on the fragmentation and mixing of cultural styles
    c. increased faith in science owing to technological and scientific advances
    d. a willingness to accept paradox

ANSWER: c

58. Celebrating populism in postmodern culture can result in

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

a. political leaders talking about their love of expensive wine, fancy French cheese, country club memberships, and an Ivy League education.
b. political leaders telling stories that are meant to resonate with the middle-class.
c. political leaders talking about well-respected and peer-reviewed scientific studies.
d. political leaders openly supporting big corporations.

ANSWER: b

59. Local culture is most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
a. premodern (before 1800s)
b. modern (1800s–1950s)
c. postmodern (since 1950s)
d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: a

60. Factories are most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
a. premodern (before 1800s)
b. modern (1800s–1950s)
c. postmodern (since 1950s)
d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: b

61. The "virtual office" is most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
a. premodern (before 1800s)
b. modern (1800s–1950s)
c. postmodern (since 1950s)
d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: c

62. Quill pens are most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
a. premodern (before 1800s)
b. modern (1800s–1950s)
c. postmodern (since 1950s)
d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: a

63. The typewriter is most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
a. premodern (before 1800s)
b. modern (1800s–1950s)
c. postmodern (since 1950s)
d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: b

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

64. Global culture is most closely identified with which of the following historical periods?
    a. premodern (before 1800s)
    b. modern (1800s–1950s)
    c. postmodern (since 1950s)
    d. integral (since 2000)

ANSWER: c

65. Postmodern values include which of the following?
    a. a belief in rational order
    b. working efficiently
    c. diversity and fragmentation of cultural styles
    d. rejecting tradition

ANSWER: c

66. Which of the following is an aspect of postmodern culture?
    a. the idea that populist themes devalue the notion of "art"
    b. acknowledging paradoxes such as having both a nostalgia for the past and an appetite for new technology
    c. never mixing fact with fiction, preferring only to "stick to the facts"
    d. believing that rational thought is the answer to every social problem

ANSWER: b

67. Which of the following does the textbook associate with postmodern culture?
    a. HBO's *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*
    b. the *New York Times*
    c. the Gutenberg Bible
    d. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

ANSWER: a

68. Which stage in developing a critical perspective best corresponds to identifying central characters, conflicts, topics, and themes?
    a. description
    b. analysis
    c. interpretation
    d. evaluation

ANSWER: a

69. Which stage in developing a critical perspective BEST corresponds to making an informed judgment?
    a. analysis
    b. interpretation

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Chapter 01: Multiple Choice

c. evaluation
d. engagement

ANSWER: c

70. Which stage in developing a critical perspective BEST corresponds to answering the "So what?" question?
a. description
b. analysis
c. interpretation
d. evaluation

ANSWER: c

71. During which stage of developing a critical perspective do you look for patterns?
a. description
b. analysis
c. interpretation
d. engagement

ANSWER: b

72. During which stage in developing a critical perspective would you take action as a citizen?
a. description
b. analysis
c. evaluation
d. engagement

ANSWER: d

73. In the interpretation stage of the critical process, an answer must be found to which of the following questions?
a. When?
b. How many?
c. Who?
d. So what?

ANSWER: d

74. What does the textbook suggest is the best way to approach media literacy and media criticism?
a. Learn as much as you can so you can sit on the sidelines and criticize effectively.
b. Understand the various types of media so you can participate in the process of helping them live up to their democratic potential.
c. Examine mass media through a careful critical process.
d. Replace cynical perception of the media with genuine criticism.

ANSWER: d

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Name:_____ Class:_____ Date:_____

Chapter 01: Essay

1. Explain how the printing press helped books become the first mass medium.

ANSWER: While paper and block printing developed in China around 100 CE and 1045, respectively, what we recognize as modern printing did not emerge until the middle of the fifteenth century. At that time in Germany, Johannes Gutenberg's invention of movable metallic type and the printing press ushered in the modern print era. Printing presses and publications spread rapidly across Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Early on, the size and expense of books limited their audience to the wealthy and powerful, but as printers reduced their size and cost, books became available and affordable to more people. Books eventually became the first mass-marketed products in history because of the way the printing press combined three necessary elements: First, machine duplication replaced the tedious system in which scribes hand-copied texts. Second, duplication could occur rapidly, so large quantities of the same book could be reproduced easily. Third, the faster production of multiple copies brought down the cost of each unit, making books more affordable to less-affluent people.

2. What is the importance of the telegraph in media history?

ANSWER: The gradual transformation from an industrial, print-based society to one grounded in the Information Age began with the development of the telegraph in the 1840s. Featuring dot-dash electronic signals, the telegraph made four key contributions to communication. First, it separated communication from transportation, making media messages instantaneous—unencumbered by stagecoaches, ships, or the pony express. Second, in combination with the rise of mass-marketed newspapers, the telegraph transformed information into a commodity that could be sold. By the time of the Civil War, news had become a valuable product. Third, the telegraph made it easier for military, business, and political leaders to coordinate commercial and military operations, especially after the installation of the transatlantic cable in the late 1860s. Fourth, the telegraph led to future technological developments, such as wireless telegraphy (later named radio), the fax machine, and the cell phone, which ironically resulted in the telegraph's demise: In 2006, Western Union telegraph offices sent their final messages.

3. Explain the two meanings of the term *media convergence*.

ANSWER: Developments in the electronic and digital eras enabled and ushered in this latest stage in the development of media—convergence—a term that media critics and analysts use when describing all the changes that have occurred over the past decade, and are still occurring, in media content and within media companies. The term actually has two meanings—one referring to technology and one to business—and describes changes that have a huge impact on how media companies are charting a course for the future.

The first meaning of media convergence involves the technological merging of content across different media channels—the magazine articles, radio programs, songs, TV shows, video games, and movies now available on the Internet through laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

A second meaning of media convergence—sometimes called cross platform by media marketers—describes a business model that involves consolidating various media holdings, such as cable connections, phone services, television transmissions, and Internet access, under one corporate umbrella. The goal is not necessarily to offer consumers more choice in their media options but to better manage resources and maximize profits. For example, a company that owns TV stations, radio outlets, and newspapers in multiple markets—as well as in the same cities—can deploy a reporter or producer to create three or four versions of the same story for various media outlets. So

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rather than having each radio station, TV station, newspaper, and online news site generate diverse and independent stories about an important issue or a significant event, a media corporation employing the convergence model can use fewer employees to generate multiple versions of the same story.

4. Using an example, explain the four stages in the development of a new mass medium.

ANSWER: Media innovations typically go through four stages. First is the emergence, or novelty, stage, in which inventors and technicians try to solve a particular problem, such as making pictures move, transmitting messages from ship to shore, or sending mail electronically. Second is the entrepreneurial stage, in which inventors and investors determine a practical and marketable use for the new device. For example, the Internet had its roots in the ideas of military leaders, who wanted a communication system that was decentralized and distributed widely enough to survive nuclear war or natural disasters.

The third phase in a medium's development involves a breakthrough to the mass medium stage. At this point, businesses figure out how to market the new device or medium as a consumer product. Although the Pentagon and government researchers helped develop early prototypes for the Internet, commercial interests and individual entrepreneurs extended the Internet's global reach and business potential.

Finally, the fourth and newest phase in a medium's evolution is the convergence stage. This is the stage in which older media are reconfigured in various forms into newer media. However, this does not necessarily mean that these older forms cease to exist. For example, you can still get the *New York Times* in print, but it's also now accessible on laptops and smartphones. During this stage, we see the merging of many different media forms onto online platforms, but we also see the fragmenting of large audiences into smaller niche markets. With new technologies allowing access to more media options than ever before, mass audiences are morphing into audience subsets that consume and chase particular products, lifestyles, politics, hobbies, and forms of entertainment.

5. Describe the linear model of mass communication, and give at least one critique of the model.

ANSWER: The digital era also brought about a shift in the models that media researchers have used over the years to explain how media messages and meanings are constructed and communicated in everyday life. One older and outdated explanation of how media operate viewed mass communication as a linear process of producing and delivering messages to large audiences. According to this model, senders (authors, producers, and organizations) transmitted messages (programs, texts, images, sounds, and ads) through a mass media channel (newspapers, books, magazines, radio, television, or the Internet) to large groups of receivers (readers, viewers, and consumers). In the process, gatekeepers (news editors, executive producers, and other media managers) functioned as message filters. Media gatekeepers made decisions about what messages actually got produced for particular receivers. The process also allowed for feedback, in which citizens and consumers, if they chose, returned messages to senders or gatekeepers through phone calls, e-mail, web postings, talk shows, or letters to the editor.

But the problem with the linear model was that in reality, media messages—especially in the digital era—do not usually move smoothly from a sender at point A to a receiver at point Z. Words and images are more likely to spill into one another, crisscrossing in the daily media deluge of product ads, TV shows, news reports, social media, smartphone apps, and everyday conversation. Media messages and stories are encoded and sent in written and visual forms, but senders often have very little control over how their intended messages are decoded or whether the messages are ignored or misread by readers and viewers.

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Chapter 01: Essay

6. Name the ways in which both "high" culture and "low" culture are identified.

ANSWER: High culture, identified with "good taste" and higher education and supported by wealthy patrons and corporate donors, is associated with fine art, which is available primarily in libraries, theaters, and museums. In contrast, low or popular culture is aligned with the "questionable" tastes of the masses, who enjoy the commercial "junk" circulated by the mass media. Whether or not we agree with this cultural skyscraper model, the high–low hierarchy often determines or limits the way we view and discuss culture today. Using this model, critics have developed at least five areas of concern about so-called low culture: the depreciation of fine art, the exploitation of high culture, the disposability of popular culture, the decline of high culture, and the deadening of our cultural taste buds.

7. Explain why thinking of culture as a map rather than as a skyscraper or hierarchy is more inclusive. Use your own example(s) to illustrate your answer.

ANSWER: While the skyscraper model is one way to view culture, another way to view it is as a map. Here, culture is an ongoing and complicated process—rather than a high–low vertical hierarchy—that allows us to better account for our diverse and individual tastes. In the map model, we judge forms of culture as good or bad based on a combination of personal taste and the aesthetic judgments a society makes at particular historical times. Because such tastes and evaluations are "all over the map," a cultural map suggests that we can pursue many connections across various media choices and can appreciate a range of cultural experiences without simply ranking them from high to low. Our attraction to and choice of cultural phenomena—such as the stories we read in books or watch at the movies—represent how we make our lives meaningful. Culture offers plenty of places to go that are conventional, familiar, and comforting. Yet at the same time, our culture's narrative storehouse contains other stories that tend toward the innovative, unfamiliar, and challenging. Most forms of culture, however, demonstrate multiple tendencies. We may use online social networks because they are both comforting (an easy way to keep up with friends) and innovative (new tools or apps that engage us). The map offered in the text is based on a subway grid. Each station represents tendencies or elements related to why a person would be attracted to particular cultural products. More popular culture forms congregate in certain areas of the map, while less popular cultural forms are outliers. This multidirectional, antihierarchical model serves as a more flexible, multidimensional, and inclusive way of imagining how culture actually works.

8. Describe the five-step critical process for developing media literacy.

ANSWER: Developing a media-literate critical perspective involves mastering five overlapping stages that build on one another.

A. Description: paying close attention, taking notes, and researching the subject under study
B. Analysis: discovering and focusing on significant patterns that emerge from the description stage
C. Interpretation: asking and answering "What does that mean?" and "So what?" questions about one's findings
D. Evaluation: arriving at a judgment about whether something is good, bad, or mediocre, which involves subordinating one's personal taste to the critical "bigger picture" resulting from the first three stages
E. Engagement: taking some action that connects our critical perspective with our role as citizens and watchdogs to question our media institutions, adding our voice to the process of shaping the cultural environment

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Chapter 01: Essay

9. Using your own favorite or familiar example from popular media (a hip-hop or an alternative rock song, a TV show, a magazine), explain how it works as culture (a term you will need to define).

ANSWER: One way to understand the impact of the media on our lives is to explore the cultural context in which the media operate. Often, culture is narrowly associated with art, the unique forms of creative expression that give pleasure and set standards about what is true, good, and beautiful. Culture, however, can be viewed more broadly as the ways in which people live and represent themselves at particular historical times. This idea of culture encompasses fashion, sports, literature, architecture, education, religion, and science, as well as mass media. Although we can study discrete cultural products, such as novels or songs from various historical periods, culture itself is always changing. It includes a society's art, beliefs, customs, games, technologies, traditions, and institutions. It also encompasses a society's modes of communication: the creation and use of symbol systems that convey information and meaning (e.g., languages, Morse code, motion pictures, and binary computer codes).

Culture is made up of both the products that a society fashions and, perhaps more importantly, the processes that forge those products and reflect a culture's diverse values. Thus, culture may be defined as the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their values. According to this definition, when we listen to music, read a book, watch television, or scan the Internet, we are not usually asking "Is this art?" but are instead trying to identify or connect with something or someone. In other words, we are assigning meaning to the song, book, TV program, or website. Culture, therefore, is a process that delivers the values of a society through products or other meaning-making forms. For example, the American ideal of "rugged individualism"—depicting heroic characters overcoming villains or corruption—has been portrayed on television for decades through a tradition of detective stories and police procedurals, such as PBS's *Sherlock* and *Endeavor* and CBS's *Elementary* and various incarnations of *NCIS*.

Culture links individuals to their society by providing both shared and contested values, and the mass media help circulate those values. The mass media are the cultural industries—the channels of communication—that produce and distribute songs, novels, TV shows, newspapers, movies, video games, Internet services, and other cultural products to large numbers of people. The historical development of media and communication can be traced through several overlapping phases or eras in which newer forms of technology disrupted and modified older forms—a process that many critics and media professionals began calling convergence with the arrival of the Internet.

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