

How does er make
use of the
conventions of a
hospital drama



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

E. R. is a highly popular hospital drama and as a highly popular hospital drama it makes use of conventions, which are the unwritten rules of a particular genre, in this case, a hospital drama such as E. R. E. R uses conventions constantly and effectively in the 48 minutes and 8 storylines that it has. The 8 storylines in 48 mins is the reason for it being mainly a fast-paced programme.

Although it's fast-paced there is still a lot of use of slow scenes, which in contrast make the fast even faster and vice versa. It's easily simple to tell when there's going to be a change of pace because usually it's shown by the beating of drums, or some other musical instrument. The camerawork also suggests/hints a change of pace by tracking much more quickly and by moving instantly to the place of action.

The reasons for E. R's popularity are numerous and are listed below:

- 1) In general it's a fast-paced drama with lots of action and intensity.
- 2) It's been running for approximately 9 yrs and watching it becomes a habit.
- 3) Its extensive use of well-developed emotional and moral dilemmas.
- 4) Heart-touching and breaking life and death situations.
- 5) The audience becomes emotionally involved with the characters and soon starts to care about them.
- 6) The use of special effects and expensive set pieces, which other hospital dramas probably couldn't afford.

There are even more reasons for E. R's popularity but these are the main ones.

Each episode of E. R is so similar yet so different. In the episode " The Friendly Fire", main storylines include:

1) A Hero saves two lives but was operating machinery whilst being stoned, therefore was probably the cause of the danger. This is an example of a moral dilemma.

2) Gerry accidentally shoots a gun at his van, which was filled with ammo. This is a very expensive scene of heightened realism; programmes such as casualty would probably not be able to afford to do this scene.

The main storylines in " Rampage" are:

1) Father of an abused child becomes a gunman when his son is taken away from him and put into foster care. The gunman destroys many innocent lives in order to find his son; this is another example of heightened realism.

2) There is conflict between Dr. Benton and his girl over the life/death of a HIV patient. There are two conventions for this storyline; one is the mixture of business and personal life and also an example of moral dilemma.

The same conventions are used in more than one episode, examples include:

High emotional impact in the friendly fire- Dr. Carter has to ask the husband of a dying woman for permission of her becoming an organ donor. In

Rampage - Dr. Green has to tell a young boy that his mother is dead.

Another convention regularly used is, moral dilemmas an example in the Friendly fire is when a hero saves lives but was operating machinery whilst being stoned and in Rampage, a HIV patient wanting to die because he's got cancer and will die anyway, and won't sign permission form for the operation.

Another regularly used convention is the mixture of home and professional life, examples are the argument between Dr. Benton and his wife over their baby's circumcision, and this is in the friendly fire. In Rampage, an example of this convention would be the conflict between Dr. Benton and his girl Cleo.

It's clear that E. R. make good use of the conventions of a hospital drama and do so effectively that its rarely noticed if the same convention has been used more times than one. So in conclusion, conventions are used to their advantage to end up with a hard-hitting and entertaining programme, called E. R!