

# [In ways to the viewers which therefore means](https://assignbuster.com/in-ways-to-the-viewers-which-therefore-means/)

In 2005 a brand new reality gameshow came onto UK screenscalled The Apprentice (BBC, Talkback, 2005 – current).

The show followed onfrom the popular series in America which debuted the year before to lots ofsuccess. The Apprentice is a business based gameshow where contestants competeagainst each other to try and win Lord Sugars investment into their company. Eventhough the show is a gameshow it focusses a lot on the reality aspect of theshow. The programme shows the reality aspect because we see the contestants intheir everyday life and not just when they are on task. This therefore means wesee what type of people they are when they are not in completion with eachother. This therefore helps the audience see the other sides of thecontestants, therefore it could possibly change the audience’s perception ofthe contestants.  One of the main points I will be analysing about TheApprentice is how gender is represented throughout the show. One of the mainthings I will be analysing is the circuit of culture (du Gay et al, 1997).

The circuit of culture is a frameworkwhich was created to show 5 different parts of cultural studies, which includesrepresentation, consumption, identity, production and regulation. For myinvestigation I will be selecting two parts of the circuit of culture toanalyse with my case study, The Apprentice. The two parts I have chosen arerepresentation and consumption and I will be using these to analyse how genderand different races are represented in the show. I will also be looking atconsumption and how the contestants are presented to the audience and this willlink to how the audience should be inspired by the contestants. For my investigation I will be looking into two specific partsof the circuit of culture (du Gay et al, 1997). This being representation and consumption. Representation will show how the contestantsin The Apprentice are shown to the audience.

For example they are portrayed indifferent ways to the viewers which therefore means the audience will havedifferent opinions on each contestant. Consumption will show how The Apprenticeis made and edited in a certain way so that the viewers only see certain partsof the task, therefore meaning that the contestants and shown in a certain wayin which they cannot change. One of the theories that I will be looking at is gendertheory. Gender theory shows how different genders and races are represented, inthis case how they are represented in TV shows such as The Apprentice, thistherefore means that gender theory links well with my investigation because itshows how the contestants are represented. Matthew Sung, of LancasterUniversity looked how gender in shown in American reality show, with one ofthese shows being The Apprentice USA.

He looks at how males are shown to be themore dominant gender. “ Jason shows a rather extreme case of using a masculinestyle in doing leadership” (Sung, 2012), this is therefore showing howmasculinity is shown a lot in The Apprentice as this fits the “ social norms”. This is because males in The Apprentice are represented as having power andauthority over the females. However in the first few episodes of The ApprenticeUK the teams are split equally between men and women.

This therefore shouldmean that the stereotypes of men being very masculine and the women arguingshould be avoided, however this was not the case. For example in episode 4(series 13) of The Apprentice the teams were mixed slightly, however team” Graphene” was made up of all females. In this episode they needed clear communicationbut when team leader Siobhan called the sub group, being run by Elizabeth, allthey did was shout over each other on the phone.

This was vital to the task butbecause there was too much arguing hey could not get the information theyneeded and subsequently went on to lose the task. These scene backs up howgender is represented perfectly, it shows how the women were unable to worktogether without their egos getting in the way. This therefore meets thestereotype of women who work in business, and this is meeting the expectationof how the audience would see these people.  One idea which links to consumption is Neoliberalism. NickCouldry looks at reality TV based on neoliberalism and weather the reality TVthat we see is real or if it is just trying to send a message to the audience.” Authenticity. Paradoxically, the necessity to perform (with an unseen audiencein mind) is neutralized by the argument that in the end your ” real” self mustcome out.

” (Couldry, 2008) In this extract Couldry is actually talking abouthow contestants act in Big Brother (C5, Columbia, 2000 – current), but thispoint can link very strongly to The Apprentice as well. This is because thecontestants on The Apprentice are all fighting to win and will not let anyoneget in there way so they are all very confident and cocky. They all think theyare the ideal person to be Lord Sugar’s business partner, therefore showingneoliberalism because they are all in it for themselves, they are only showingself-interest. Representation can be split into many different parts, onepart could be how race is represented in reality TV. This can also link toconsumption as the audience will connect more if there race isrepresented.

Mark P. Orbe, who discussesrace in representation says “ diverse viewers who passively watched how theywere represented on television could utilize the  opportunities of  reality  TV to  actively  participate in  representations  of self” (Orbe, 2008). This is supporting the point that the audience can relateto certain contestants for many different reasons with race being one of them. Another representation is how gender is represented, for example The Apprenticealways starts with an equal amount of men and women contestants.

This issomething which is very important to the audience because women and more likelyto favour the female candidates and men and more likely to favour the malecandidates. This is because consumption plays a big part of The Apprentice, because all viewers will have a favourite candidate, meaning how they arerepresented could decide how the audience feel about them. In the book how real is reality TV? (Escoffery, 2012) itsays that “ winning is everything”, is one of the most spoken lines in thehistory of The Apprentice. This is because the show features lots of cut awayinterviews with the contestants were they tell the audience at home how theyare the best contestant.

This therefore shows ideology to the audience. This isalso very blatant towards the audience and is not discrete. This is becausethere have a lot of interviews with the contestants were they talk directly tothe camera, this then becomes as if they are talking directly towards theaudience at home.  This could be seen asif they are motivating the audience at home to be like themselves. They areinspiring the audience to be hard work contestants and to put 100% effort intotheir jobs. This links to current culture in the UK, such as the currentunemployment levels in the UK. This means that the contestants are representinghow hard people should be working in their jobs, they are setting an examplefor the audience at home. The boardroom and the majority of the tasks on TheApprentice are set in London.

We also see a lot of establishing shots of theLondon skyline throughout the programme especially in the opening and closingscenes of each episode. Iain Macrury looks at how London is represented in TheApprentice. In the opening shots of each episode the London skyline is shownwith the sun rising behind it, Macrury says “ London’s never looked so good”(Macrury, 2008) , this means that The Apprentice is glorifying London to theaudience at home. This has been done as motivation for the UK public to go outand get a job, as unemployment is always rising in the UK. However TheApprentice is only showing the good side to London as well as the minority ofthe British public. Only a small percentage of people working in the UK work inbusiness in London. Therefore the show is not representing British culturefairly, it is only showing the glorified parts. One of the reasons this couldhave been done is for any international viewers as for viewers who do not livein the UK, the programme represents the UK in a very nice way and does not showthe high levels of unemployment in the UK.

The Apprentice also makes sure toonly show locations such as Canary Wharf, as this is the business hub ofLondon, it does not show the rough council estates in any of the opening shots. This is so that the UK is represented in a good way to all viewers.  In my investigation it is also important to look at thegenre of reality TV. This is because to the casual viewer The Apprentice wouldnot be considered a reality TV show. One of the main genres of The Apprenticeis a gameshow, which it is because it features contestants trying to stay inthe process to win a cash prize at the end and become Lord Sugar’s businesspartner. However the show has been running for 12 years and reality TV hasbecome more popular since the show debuted in 2005. The book Understandingreality television says “ over the last decade such a wide range of productionshave been categorized as reality TV that one wonders if the term it too generalto be helpful” (Holmes, 2004).

This supports the point that The Apprentice is considereda reality show because it features the daily life of the contestants and notjust the task. The Apprentice does not fit the norms of reality TV, theaudience expect reality shows to follow contestants and celebrities in theireveryday life, The Apprentice does this is some part as it follow thecandidates on the task but it then becomes a serious show when they enter theboardroom. However with The Apprentice being a reality show it means that theaudience can relate to the show more. Kristin M. Barton looked into howaudiences interacted with reality shows, they found that in a survey 80% ofviewers imagine themselves as contestants and 63% can relate to the contestantson the show (Barton, 2009).  These statsback up my points about how audiences consume reality programmes as well as howthey see themselves as the contestants. Reality shows have more activeaudiences compared to passive audiences because they are constantly thinking” what would I do in that situation?” This links very well to my analyse of mycase study because reality shows make the audience consider themselves as partof the process because they are imaging themselves as part of the show or theyare supporting particular candidates. As one of the main parts of my investigation I will belooking at how cultural regulation is shown in The Apprentice because thislinks well to consumption.

Cultural regulation is a theory that suggests thatthe audience are being told what to think. One way this could be shown is thatthe show is edited in a way to portray certain candidates in way so that theywill then appeal to the audience or not. While the candidates are completingthe task they are constantly being followed with cameras but on average we onlysee 40 minutes’ worth of footage from the task from each episode. This meansthat there is a lot of footage which the audience will not see. This thereforemeans that when editing the show the BBC can include only certain parts of thefootage if they wish. This means that they have control over how characters arerepresented. This makes me question the authenticity of the programme. Also thecandidates are constantly being followed by the cameras compared to somereality shows where the cameras are hidden, this then shows that they might notact genuine in front of the camera.

Annette Hill looked at TV audiences forreality shows, she says “ The viewers perception of hidden camera formats asmore true to life than formats where they’re acting to the camera” (Hill, 2005), this is supporting the fact that everything we see on The Apprentice might not beas genuine as it first appears to the viewers. This is also supported in thebook Reality TV by Hodder and Stoughton, they say that reality TV “ Formats onlyrequire malleable but forthright characters who could act naturally whilekeeping half an eye on the camera” (Hodder, 2002). This is supporting my pointthat the candidates might not be acting how they would normally on the task ifthe cameras were not there. This links well to my next point that they could beacting up to the camera just for entertainment purposes.  The Apprentice comes under the gameshow genre so it shouldbe genuine and unscripted however there is evidence that this is not the case. For example to even start the process there are many different stages ofinterviews and auditions to get onto the show.

Producers of the show should belooking for great business candidates, however they are looking for what willbring entertainment to the show.  Forexample in an article introducing the candidates, Jeff’s description says “ Jeffis a business analyst and semi-pro hip-hop dancer. Over the past 10 years hehas trained several times a week, even performing at the O2 Arena.” (Minn, 2017) This is a clear example how entertainment is prioritised in reality TV. The show should be strictly about the task and the candidates, but the showinstead using codes and conventions of reality TV shows.

For example we see thecandidates socialising in the house they all live in and we also see their reactionwhen candidates come home from the board room as well as how they act when noton task. This is very similar to other another reality show Big Brother. Wealso see a relaxed side to the candidates on the show The Apprentice: YourFired (BBC, Talkback, 2006 – current), on the show they laugh and joke with thepanel and host about what happened on the task when they should be taken itmore seriously as they have just been eliminated from the gameshow. Another concept which is shown in The Apprentice iscapitalism, this is especially represented through Alan Sugar.

He showscapitalism because he is now a very wealthy man who owns lots of property, butalso because he has worked his way up from the bottom to become rich. NickCouldry says that “ Luxury goods are emphasized as highly desirable, as the justdeserts and the rewards of each challenge. Contestants and viewers are invitedto admire objects, property and land owned by Sugar; we are, for example, reminded that ‘ he’s got his own fleet of executive jets and a Mayfair propertyportfolio” (Couldry, 2011), this supports my point that The Apprentice showsthemes of capitalism to the audience watching. They do not try to hide thiseither because Lord sugar often talks about how rich he is, especially in series13 when he decides he has enough money to hire both of the candidates at theend of the competition. The main part of my investigation is about gender and how itis represented to the audience at home. This is especially shown in the firstfew episodes of each series when the teams are split into men and women.

Matthew Sung says “ Clearly, the division of the contestants into two teamsbased on gender in The Apprentice is a prime example of reproducing the ‘ battleof the sexes’ discourse prevalent in popular culture”. (Sung, 2010) This showshow the audience now expect the men and women to go against each other at thestart of each series and the show is edited together especially so that theyshow the stereotype for men and women, for example showing women arguing andmen being over masculine. Katherine Kinnick talks about how confrontation ontask is set up in The Apprentice US: “ It should be noted that interpersonalskills were criticized only by competitors, rather than Trump”. (Kinnick, 2005)This shows how not everything we seen when the contestants are on task isgenuine and how The Apprentice sets up conflict and arguments on purpose forthe enjoyment of the audience. To sum up my findings I have found out that gender isrepresented in a very stereotypical way to the audience. This is because theshow purposely puts women and men against each other at the start of eachseries. To add to this they purposely set up conflict during the task as thiswill add to the women and men showing their stereotypes.

Thus showing the womenarguing and talking over each other and therefore not getting the task done orby showing the men trying to prove they are the alpha male in the team. Boththese stereotypes are shown to be very obvious, especially in the episodes whenthe men are against the women. This is because the audience expect them to actin this way based on how the candidates have been represented in previousseries. As well as this the candidates are also shown to have made incredibleachievements in their careers so far in life, and they talk about these everytime they have an interview with the camera. They make this obvious to theaudience because they are supposed to idolise the candidates. They are supposedto be setting a good example for the audience and make them want to go out andwork as hard as they are. I have also found that The Apprentice does notrepresent the current UK culture because it only shows the glorified side toLondon and it never mentions how unemployment rates are always rising.

OverallThe Apprentice is a very carefully constructed reality TV show which showstereotypical business candidates competing against each other to be declaredthe winner.