

9.1

'Goldilocks and the Three Conclusions'

Below are three versions of a conclusion for an assignment. Your job is to pick the best one out of the three. None of them is perfect, but one of them, we think, does the job of a conclusion better than the other two. Have a look at the three, decide which of them you think is best and why, and then scroll down to have a look at our thinking. The topic will probably be familiar to you now, from Shuffled Essay 1 and the introductions activity; this familiarity should help you to judge the effectiveness of the conclusion.

Here are some questions for judging a good conclusion:

- Is the conclusion an effective summary of the main points?
- Is it the right length for the assignment?
- Does it express your reasoned opinion, or indicate the significance of your argument?

Essay question: ‘Outline how and why audiences have been researched in terms of “effects” and “uses”.’

- 1 In conclusion, it is easy to see that there is a relationship between the media and the audience. There are, however, varying research methods used in terms of ‘effects’ and ‘uses’ when looking at the audience. The methods used in the research of media effects on the audience are often stringent and formal; the research by Bandura in a laboratory environment is a clear example of this and as a result can have a bearing on the results, as they are not in a more natural environment. On the other hand, the research methods used when investigating how the audience uses the media and how the media use the audience are more qualitative. Such research has tended to use interviews and observations made in a ‘real’ and natural environment and therefore the results are often more accurate and meaningful but harder to quantify. The research into the audience in terms of ‘effects’ and ‘uses’ can give an insight into audiences’ behaviour, daily lives and media influences. For instance, such research has considered the effect of violent videos on children’s behaviour or attitude. Contrasting research provides insights into how the audience uses the media in everyday life, in their routines and conversations, such as in Trinidad. Finally it can give an indication of how the audience can influence what the media produce, such as contemporary topics in *The Archers* in Afghanistan. This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of ‘effects’ and ‘uses’.
- 2 In conclusion, varying research methods used to research audience ‘effects’ and ‘uses’ clearly influence the outcomes. Stringent methods like Bandura’s work one way; qualitative investigation on audiences uses another. Case studies like the audience use of soaps in Trinidad and Afghanistan show clearly how audiences interact with the material they have, and influence the story lines and methods of telling. This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of ‘effects’ and ‘uses’.

- 3 In conclusion, by looking at research into audience 'uses' and 'effects', it is easy to see that there is a relationship between the media and the audience. Research methods vary and themselves have different effects. The methods used in the research of media effects on the audience are often stringent and formal, such as the laboratory research by Bandura, with the unnatural setting having a bearing on the results. On the other hand, the research methods used when investigating how the audience uses the media and how the media use the audience are more qualitative. Such research may use interviews and observations made in a 'real' and 'natural' environment and therefore the results are often more accurate and meaningful but harder to quantify. The research into the audience in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' can then give an insight into how the audience is affected. For instance, we see how consumption of certain media, such as violent videos, may affect children's behaviour or attitude. Contrastingly, we see also how the audience uses the media in everyday life, in their routines and conversations, such as in Trinidad. Finally, we can also see how the audience can affect what the media produce, such as the development of relevant and contemporary topics in *The Archers* in Afghanistan. *The Archers* has now become part of Afghan national life. The characters are so well-known that real public figures have been known to compare each other to them. When the Taliban controlled the country they allowed *New Home New Life* to continue – though a group did turn up at the studios in Kabul demanding to see what was going on (Thompson, 2010). This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses'.

Thompson, M. (2010) 'Nation Speaking Peace Unto Nation: The BBC's Global Mission' http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/16574_110510thompson.pdf (Accessed 5th Sept 2010).

The tutor's view

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| <p>1 In conclusion, it is easy to see that there is a relationship between the media and the audience. There are, however, varying research methods used in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' when looking at the audience. The methods used in the research of media effects on the audience are often stringent and formal; the research by Bandura in a laboratory environment is a clear example of this and as a result can have a bearing on the results, as they are not in a more natural environment. On the other hand, the research methods used when investigating how the audience uses the media and how the media use the audience are more qualitative. Such research has tended to use interviews and observations made in a 'real' and natural environment and therefore the results are often more accurate and meaningful but harder to quantify. The research into the audience in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' can give an insight into audiences' behaviour, daily lives and media influences. For instance, such research has considered the effect of violent videos on children's behaviour or attitude. Contrasting research provides insights into how the audience uses the media in everyday life, in their routines and conversations, such as in Trinidad. Finally it can give an indication of how the audience can influence what the media produce, such as contemporary topics in <i>The Archers</i> in Afghanistan. This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses'.</p> | <p>This discusses the key terms of the question, and summarizes the key points made in the assignment about the way they work. It doesn't, however, draw out what difference that makes to the results.</p> <p>Importantly, it doesn't address clearly the issue of 'why', which is a key part of the question.</p> <p>Although conclusion lengths are variable, at over 200 words, this is too long for a short essay.</p> <p>It is also loosely phrased, e.g. 'The methods used in the research of media effects on the audience are often stringent and formal; the research by Bandura in a laboratory environment is a clear example of this and as a result can have a bearing on the results' (42 words), could be 'Media effects research, such as Bandura's laboratory work, is often formal and controlled, which affects the result' (17 words).</p> <p>This is mummy bear porridge.</p> |
| <p>2 In conclusion, varying research methods used to research audience 'effects' and 'uses' clearly influence the outcomes. Stringent methods like Bandura's work one way; qualitative investigation on audiences uses another. Case studies like the audience use of soaps in Trinidad and Afghanistan show clearly how audiences interact with the material they have, and influence the story lines and methods of telling. This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses'.</p> | <p>This is concise. It sticks to the point. It summarizes the 'how' part of the question, outlines the answer to the 'why' part, and for added bonus gives an opinion as to which is the stronger.</p> <p>For a <i>short</i> essay, this porridge is just right.</p> |

3 In conclusion, by looking at research into audience 'uses' and 'effects', it is easy to see that there is a relationship between the media and the audience. Research methods vary and themselves have different effects. The methods used in the research of media effects on the audience are often stringent and formal, such as the laboratory research by Bandura, with the unnatural setting having a bearing on the results. On the other hand, the research methods used when investigating how the audience uses the media and how the media use the audience are more qualitative. Such research may use interviews and observations made in a 'real' and 'natural' environment and therefore the results are often more accurate and meaningful but harder to quantify. The research into the audience in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' can then give an insight into how the audience is affected. For instance, we see how consumption of certain media, such as violent videos, may affect children's behaviour or attitude. Contrastingly, we see also how the audience uses the media in everyday life, in their routines and conversations, such as in Trinidad. Finally, we can also see how the audience can affect what the media produce, such as the development of relevant and contemporary topics in *The Archers* in Afghanistan. *The Archers* has now become part of Afghan national life. The characters are so well-known that real public figures have been known to compare each other to them. When the Taliban controlled the country they allowed *New Home New Life* to continue – though a group did turn up at the studios in Kabul demanding to see what was going on (Thompson, 2010). This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses'.

This preserves all the material of the first effort, and adds some more besides. At the end it has committed the cardinal sin of adding new material. Although it is related to a previous discussion it has added more evidence about the way *New Home New Life* works which should have been in the main body of the essay.

In the end it fails to address the question. The final statement, 'This is how and why the audience is researched in terms of "effects" and "uses",' is not supported by the previous paragraph.

This is daddy bear porridge, wrongly focused, failing to answer the question, introducing new material, and flabby.