



Music Videos – Background

A history of MTV

MTV would change the way we consumed music and has led to some of the most significant moments in pop culture.

The history of MTV shows how it is a cultural institution and acts as the backbone of the 1980s.

It's when artists were able to really express and present themselves beyond just the music. Music videos created a new way that artists could connect with their fans and evolved into a brand new art form. A lot of times a good video could make up for a bad song. And a great song could become epic with the right music video.

Exposure to global audiences through MTV could help artists achieve stardom. Artists like Madonna and Duran Duran used the music video format effectively to promote themselves, using sophisticated effects and cinematography.

The purpose of music videos

- Promote the artist (singer/band)
- Promote the record company
- Promote the director and allows the director creative freedom to experiment
- Help music to reach a global audience
- Allow artists to project and reinvent an identity or persona e.g. Madonna
- Give songs a visual feel, making lyrics and melody more memorable.

3 types of music video

- performance
 - narrative
 - 'concept' – fantasy
- ➡ or a mix (hybrid) of two or three

Activity A : Draw a 'revision' hand and label it with the key points about the role of music videos

Activity B: Find examples of the 3 types of music video: narrative, performance, concept.

Activity C: Find an example of a hybrid music video - a mixture of 2 or 3 of the styles mentioned

Activity D: see if you can complete the 11 sentences below. Your teacher will help you.

1) MTV launched in	
2) MTV stands for	
3) struggled at first due to lack of	
4) 1985 MTV was purchased by	
5) Rather than just a music station, it became	
6) MTV helped to sell music that was not at first played on	
7) it broke radio's	
8) In the 1980s, Britain was producing more music videos than the US and so it helped to promote a	
9) MTV also helped black artists to break through into the mainstream especially after the phenomenal success of	
10) MTV is less important now due to the	
11) The MTV brand is defined by its distinctive, iconic	

Top music video directors

David Fincher
Melina Matsoukas
Spike Jonze
Michel Gondry

David Fincher

Best Music Videos: “Express Yourself”, Madonna (1989); “Vogue”, Madonna (1990); “Cradle Of Love”, Billy Idol (1990); “Freedom '90”, George Michael (1990); “Straight Up”, Paula Abdul (1998); “Janie’s Got A Gun”, Aerosmith (1994)

Best Movies: *Seven* (1995), *Fight Club* (1999), *Zodiac* (2007), *The Social Network* (2010)

Spike Jonze

Best Music Videos: “Buddy Holly”, Weezer (1994); “Sabotage”, Beastie Boys (1994); “Drop”, The Pharcyde (1996); “Sky’s The Limit”, The Notorious B.I.G. feat. 112 (1997); “Weapon Of Choice”, Fatboy Slim (2001); “Get Back”, Ludacris (2004); “Flashing Lights”, Kanye West (2008); “The Suburbs”, Arcade Fire (2010); “Otis”, Jay-Z & Kanye West (2011)

Best Movies: *Being John Malkovich* (1999), *Adaptation* (2002), *Where The Wild Things Are* (2009)

Melina Matsoukas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8R75cjKzcQ>

Beyoncé, Formation (2016); Rihanna, We found Love (2011); Lady Gaga, Just Dance (2008)

Directed TV comedy series Insecure (HBO)

Michel Gondry

Best Music Videos: Kylie Monogue, Come into my World (2002); White Stripes, Fell in Love with a Girl (2002); Bjork, Crystalline (2011); Chemical Brothers, Star Guitar (2001); Daft Punk, Around the World (1997)

Best Movies: *Eternal Sunshine*, *Be Kind Rewind*, *Science of Sleep*,

Activity E – Learn these answers to the sentences in Activity D

1) 1981	6) the radio
2) Music TV	7) monopoly
3) music videos and advertising	8) 'second British invasion' of UK music. e.g. Queen, Bowie, Elton John, Rolling Stones, Phil Collins, Boy George,
4) Viacom (a multimedia, international conglomerate)	9) Michael Jackson (Thriller first shown on MTV in Dec 1983)
5) more of a youth-oriented pop culture station with chat, game shows, documentaries and features	10) success of other digital platforms such as YouTube and the declining popularity of TV among younger audiences. + streaming platforms such as Spotify
	11) logo

Activity F – read the next section and then, without looking at the original, write complete sentences about the MTV logo using the following phrases

1 Graffiti art
2 Freedom & rebellion
3 Size and prominence of the letter 'M'
4 Colour scheme

5 Marketing tool
6 A lucrative business model
7 Impact
8 Iconic



MTV LOGO

From <http://blog.logomyway.com/the-history-of-mtv-and-their-logo/>

The design of the MTV logo looks much like the design elements we see in **graffiti art**. This resemblance to graffiti is no coincidence, as both MTV and graffiti tap into many of the same ideas of **freedom and rebellion and both are geared toward the same, young audience**.

Another significant design element of the MTV logo is the **size and prominence of the “M”** in the logo compared to the other two letters. In the beginning of MTV, the entire focus was on the music. In every way, the channel lived up to the name “Music Television”. It comes as no surprise, then, that the designers of the MTV logo chose to make the “M” in the logo much more prominent than the “TV”.

An interesting aspect of the MTV logo’s design is its **lack of dependency on a colour scheme**. The base logo is designed using only black text, though the channel has featured the logo in a variety of colours throughout the years in various promos. This ability to change the colour scheme of their logo at will has served as **a valuable marketing tool for the channel**, allowing them to stay as diverse as the music they spotlight.

MTV has long relied on their recognizable logo and the channel it represents to move music up the charts. However, there are also plenty of examples of the channel leveraging (using) **the popularity of their logo to move products as well**. The MTV logo has been featured on a wide variety of products, ranging from clothing to duffel bags to notebooks. MTV’s ability to launch product lines based almost entirely on the popularity of their logo is certainly not unusual; **creating product lines centred around a popular logo has been a lucrative (= profitable) business model for countless brands**.

Aside from appearing on products, though, the true testament to the popularity of the MTV logo is the **impact that it has left on the music world**. The MTV logo has been the standard for a channel that has been introducing us to new artists and breaking barriers since 1981. In this way, the MTV logo will forever be remembered as one of the most important, **iconic** and popular symbols in pop culture.

ACTIVITY G Choose **one** of the videos listed on page 2 + **one** of your own choice. Write an analysis of each one (at least 240 words on each). Divide into 3 sections: 1) 'language' (forms, codes & conventions) and representations, 2) ideologies, 3) narrative & genre.