

Advanced Cultural Studies: Factual Inquiry

Cultural Studies · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. Which foundational concept, primarily developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, posits that signs derive their meaning not from inherent qualities but from their relationship to other signs within a system?

- A) Symbolic Capital
- B) Interpellation

C) Arbitrariness of the Sign

- D) Hegemony

2. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model of communication suggests that audiences actively interpret media messages, with the possibility of three distinct positions. Which of these is NOT one of those positions?

- A) Dominant-Hegemonic
- B) Negotiated

C) Oppositionally Resonant

- D) Preferred

3. The theoretical framework of 'post-structuralism,' influential in Cultural Studies, challenges the notion of stable, universal meanings. Which thinker is most closely associated with the deconstruction of binary oppositions and the instability of language?

- A) Michel Foucault

B) Jacques Derrida

- C) Julia Kristeva
- D) Gilles Deleuze

4. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' refers to the non-financial social assets that promote social mobility beyond economic means. Which of the following best exemplifies cultural capital in its embodied state?

- A) A collection of rare books

B) Knowledge of classical music

- C) A prestigious university degree
- D) Ownership of a valuable painting

5. The Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, a key origin point for the discipline, is renowned for its work on subcultures. Dick Hebdige's seminal work 'Subculture: The Meaning of Style' (1979) analyzes how subcultures utilize 'bricolage.' What does this term refer to in this context?

- A) The creation of entirely new symbols
- B) The appropriation and re-signification of existing cultural objects**
- C) The rejection of all mass-produced goods
- D) The adoption of dominant cultural trends

6. Michel Foucault's theories on power emphasize its dispersed, relational nature rather than its solely repressive function. His concept of 'discipline' is primarily concerned with:

- A) State-sanctioned censorship
- B) The formation of docile and useful bodies through surveillance and normalization**
- C) Open political dissent
- D) The accumulation of wealth by elites

7. Semiotics, a crucial tool in Cultural Studies, analyzes signs and symbols. In Saussurean semiology, the 'signified' refers to:

- A) The physical form of the sign (e.g., a word, an image)
- B) The abstract concept or meaning that the signifier represents**
- C) The relationship between different signs
- D) The context in which the sign is used

8. The concept of 'ideology,' as theorized by Louis Althusser, suggests that it functions through 'ideological state apparatuses' (ISAs). Which of the following is an example of an ISA?

- A) The police force
- B) The judiciary
- C) The education system**
- D) The military

9. Postcolonial theory, a significant branch within Cultural Studies, critiques the cultural legacies of colonialism. Homi K. Bhabha's work introduces the concept of 'hybridity.' This refers to:

- A) The complete assimilation of colonizing cultures
- B) The creation of new, distinct cultural forms through the mixing of colonizer and colonized**
- C) The re-establishment of pre-colonial cultural purity
- D) The adoption of the colonizer's language without alteration

10. The concept of 'performativity,' particularly in relation to gender and identity, is strongly associated with Judith Butler. Her work argues that gender is not a biological fact but is:

- A) A fixed, innate characteristic
- B) A social construct rigidly dictated by biology
- C) Produced through repeated, stylized actions and social performances**
- D) Solely determined by individual choice

11. In the context of media studies within Cultural Studies, the 'agenda-setting theory' posits that the media:

- A) Tells people what to think
- B) Does not influence public opinion
- C) Tells people what to think about**
- D) Has no power over social issues

12. Raymond Williams' concept of 'cultural materialism' emphasizes the importance of material conditions in shaping culture. He argued against idealism, asserting that culture is:

- A) An independent realm of ideas
- B) A product of economic base, but with its own specific social processes**
- C) Solely determined by individual consciousness
- D) An immutable force

13. The analysis of 'representation' in Cultural Studies is concerned with how groups, identities, and social phenomena are portrayed in media and discourse. Which of the following is a key concern regarding misrepresentation?

- A) The accurate depiction of all social classes
- B) The perpetuation of stereotypes that marginalize certain groups**
- C) The positive portrayal of minority characters
- D) The equal distribution of media attention

14. The theoretical concept of 'interpellation,' coined by Louis Althusser, describes how individuals are 'hailed' or addressed by ideological systems, thereby recognizing themselves as subjects. This process is fundamental to:

- A) The formation of individual resistance
- B) The establishment of new economic orders
- C) The production of subjectivity and ideology**
- D) The dismantling of state power

15. Which of the following represents a core methodological shift in Cultural Studies from earlier forms of literary or media analysis, focusing on the active role of the audience and the social construction of meaning?

- A) Textual positivism
- B) Reader-response criticism
- C) Ideological critique of meaning-making processes**
- D) Formalism