Posters are used to advertise and promote new or upcoming video games. You have probably seen these posters online and in stores.

As advertisements they are designed to be impactful, and to impart as much information as possible in a limited time frame.

How to interpret a video game poster

Ask the following questions

1. What is your first impression or response to the poster? What emotions does it evoke, or how does it impact you as a viewer?
2. Look at any text on the poster. What message is the text trying to convey? Is the choice of font significant?
3. Look at all of the visual elements of the poster. See the Visual Elements list below.
4. Perform a close analysis of the visual elements, using some of the points under Close Analysis.
5. Critically analyse the author’s intentions. Why do you think this poster was made? What was the creator’s intention?
6. Always make a connection between visuals and text, and try to discover hidden or underlying meanings in a visual source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Elements</th>
<th>Close Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The title – what information does the title impart?</td>
<td>Facial expression, Non-verbal gestures and body language – can set the mood for a poster, or suggest something about character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagery: shape, line, colour, actions, eye paths and angles. How are these used?</td>
<td>Clothing – can be a descriptive element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting/Background – what story does the background tell?</td>
<td>Genre-specific elements – can indicate what to expect, also dealing with association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism and stereotypes – consider the associations of these elements.</td>
<td>Mood – What kind of mood or emotion does the combination of physical elements evoke?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera angle (e.g. high angle shot, low angle shot, bird’s eye view, worm’s eye view, eye-level shot, extreme long shot).</td>
<td>Lighting and Emphasis – what is the focal point?</td>
</tr>
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EXERCISE ONE – VISUAL FRAMING

The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings Poster

1. What is the camera angle of this image, and why do you think this angle was chosen?

2. Is it a close or long shot? What impact does the angle have on the image?

3. How are light and dark colours (contrast) used in this image? Is it effective? Why, or why not?

The Witcher III: Wild Hunt Release Poster

4. What similarities can you note between this image (The Witcher III) and the previous one (The Witcher II)? Comment on the figures in the image as well as the poster logos. (5 marks)

5. This image contains direct eye contact. Do you find yourself engaged by this? What impact does this have on you as a viewer? (2 marks)

6. What do the objects and attire on the individuals suggest about their occupation? (3 marks)

7. Aside from visual elements and a limited amount of text, this poster does not offer additional information. If someone was not familiar with video games would they understand the purpose of this poster? Explain. (2 marks)
Exercise Two – Close Analysis

Splinter Cell Conviction Poster

This poster advertises a co-op (multiplayer cooperative) shooter game called Splinter Cell Conviction.

8. Using the guideline on page one, provide a detailed interpretation of this image.

Consider the following:

The title, font choice, setting, symbolism and stereotypes, camera angle and the figures in the poster.

(10 Marks)

9. Is this effective in promoting a co-op game? Substantiate your answer by examining its visual elements.

(5 Marks)

10. If you could make any changes to this poster, what would they be? Explain your choice.

(3 Marks)

Consider the audience!

This poster is targeted at a specific audience, specifically people who play shooter games. Would this be accessible to a different audience?
Exercise Three – Combining Visual and Textual analysis

**Tome Raider Poster**

11. Examine the main figure. Who is being represented in this poster? What do you know about her based on the text and image?

   (3 Marks)

12. How is the figure presented? Examine elements such as her body language, facial expression and dress.

   (4 Marks)

13. What situation does the figure find herself in? Substantiate your answer with visual evidence from the setting.

   (2 Marks)

14. Where would this poster be most effectively displayed? Consider the target audience.

   (2 Marks)

15. Is a poster a powerful form of media? Why, or why not? Consider its strengths and limitations.

   (6 Marks)

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**Activity**

Based on what you have learnt about how posters are designed, create your own game poster. The poster must be visually appealing to draw viewers’ attention. Consider that your audience does not necessarily play games, and will not understand a poster in basic format. Provide additional information for their understanding.

**Remember**

The intention of a game poster is generally to sell games! Try to make your poster as interesting as possible.