This view implies that audiences are **passive** and behave in a **mass, conformist** manner. It was more relevant in the early days of media when there was less choice and audiences could perhaps be more easily influenced.

It applies to advertising and propaganda. Both aim to **persuade, manipulate or seduce** audiences. The aim of advertising is to persuade us to buy products and to be aware of certain brands and what these brands represent. (Producers create a **brand image** or **brand identity**).

**Propaganda** (government controlled information) also aims to shape or influence the way audiences think. It tries to influence our attitudes and opinions.

It is easy to dismiss this theory as old-fashioned or irrelevant. But it is still very important, especially in terms of advertising.
Hypodermic Needle Theory

The origins of this media effects model are with the Frankfurt School, a group of academics who saw the way the media was used for propaganda in Nazi Germany. They later saw similarities with the US entertainment industries and concluded that capitalism also used the media persuade audiences to follow trends, to conform and to consume. The theory is strongly linked to behaviourist psychology – the idea that people can be triggered into certain types of behaviour as a result of giving them a certain stimulus. Links also to the idea of indoctrination – forcing people into believing a certain idea by ceaseless repetition over a period of time. The other side to this theory is the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler & Katz).

1) Think about a game you have played or film/ series you have watched recently – could it influence behaviour or the way people think about the world?
2) Give examples of how you think the Hypodermic Needle Theory works today. Is it still relevant? Think about adverts, social media, government messages.

War of The Worlds 1938 Radio Drama
Gerbner’s Cultivation theory, Mean World Syndrome
Bandura’s Media Effects Theory

https://youtu.be/a-toj0weAEM