**Analyse and Respond (500 - 700 words - written essay)**

Analyse the opening three-five minutes of a TV Drama. How does the TV Drama attract the interest of its audience?

**Awkward**  is a sitcom which was premiered on MTV at 10.00 pm in July 2011. From this channel and time slot, we can already see that it will be heavily targeted at an older teen and young adult audience.

The use of Media Language confirms this. Locations are established early with wide shots of a school hall. Iconography associated with school life is evident; halls, school clothing, the harsh lighting associated with school halls. These locations are clearly going to create a sense of personal identity for a high-school age audience or those slightly older.

The characters’ appearance is very realistic. They are not unrealistically glamorous or heavily made-up or lit. Particularly when we see the school dance, we see that many characters (grouped believably into ‘the nerds’ and ‘the rest of us’) are overweight, or wearing glasses or unattractively dressed. Even the ‘popular’ characters like Matty and Sadie are represented unflatteringly – Matty is shown sniffing his armpits and Sadie is very overweight. These representations, being more realistic than the dominant representations shown on mainstream American television, might appeal to an audience and create a stronger sense of personal identity.

In terms of cinematography and editing, again we are striving to create verisimilitude. We are clearly supposed to identify with the main character, Jenna. The show opens with a close-up slo-mo POV of the back of her head and there is a non-diegetic voiceover mixed above the diegetic sound of the other students in the hall. In narrative terms, this will create enigma as we try to figure out who this girl is. When we see she has her arm broken, of course, this sense of enigma is heightened. The cinematography and editing is very conventional; primarily, the show – typically for a sitcom – is a series of conversations, so each scene starts with an establishing shot, usually a wide shot, and then becomes a series of shot/ reverse shot sequences. This will serve to involve the audience in the narrative since shot / reverse shot puts us in the middle of these conversations. In terms of sound, apart from the VO and diegetic sound, music plays throughout, it is used for comic purposes – for example, the ‘romantic’ soul music juxtaposed with the very unromantic visuals in the sex scene. It is telling that the music played at the dance and after the sex scene is actually from the eighties – an example of synergy which will both promote these artistes from the eighties (for example, **Berlin**) and serve to promote the show to an older audience – the parents, perhaps, of the older teens who will be watching.

The primary audience is obviously an older teen or early-twenties audience. They are attracted through diversion – primarily, the showing of the comic situations Jenna ends up in (the broken arm, the sex scene with Matty) and this is emphasised through the close-ups and comically inappropriate music. The various narrative arcs – Jenna’s relationship with her parents and with her ‘boyfriend’ Matty, as well as with her friends and schoolmates – will obviously create a sense of personal identity for people of school age. They will also be targeted through the use of language- Jenna talks slightly inappropriately about having ‘porn tits’ and even the title of the show, ‘Awkward’ is popular teen slang.

The narrative will also attract the audience. There is enigma, as already mentioned; also, there is much binary opposition. The ‘normal’ kids are opposed to the ‘nerds’; there is conflict between Jenna and her parents and even between males and females. We see the equilibrium – Jenna is underconfident – and then the disequilibrium – she sleeps with Matty and causes confusion. This very fast-moving narrative will serve to keep the audience interested.

The show is basically about Jenna’s efforts to become popular. This might appeal via two-step flow to a ‘cool’ audience who value popularity. However, the ‘popular’ kids are seen to be quite foolish so at another, ideological. Level, the show transmits a positive message that popularity is not actually very important. This deeper level of meaning might appeal to a more mature audience who might also relate to Jenna’s parents (a successful middle-class couple in demographic group a/b surrounded by the iconography of financial success.)