

# Unit 1

## Methods of Cataloguing Written Response

# Glossary of Space and Time

## The Medium is the Message

### INTRODUCTION

The glossary categorises McLuhan's concepts of space and time from *The Medium is the Message* (McLuhan, Fiore and Agel, 1967) into three media ages: Oral, Print, and Electric. It pairs spatial and temporal ideas to reveal how communication technologies reshape perception and experience across ages. Through this structure, the glossary makes these paired transformations visible: acoustic space creates simultaneity, visual space produces linearity, and electric circuitry returns to instantaneity.

### REFERENCE

McLuhan, M., Fiore, Q. and Agel, J. (1967) *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Gingko Press.

## Acoustic Space

A boundless environment of oral cultures before the invention of writing.

Sound from speech, songs, and rituals surrounded people from all directions,  
creating a shared experience instead of a single fixed point of view.

Without writing to record ideas,  
knowledge existed only in spoken interaction.

Meaning emerged through rhythm, repetition,  
and call-and-response, helping communities  
remember, share, and interpret stories  
together in the same moment.

## Simultaneity

An experience of time in oral cultures, where events and meanings  
occur together instead of following one after another.

People understood the world as a whole pattern rather than  
a chain of separate causes and effects.

Through myths, songs, and rituals, all the senses  
(hearing, sight, touch, and smell)

worked together in shared moments  
of performance and memory.

Rhythm and repetition

kept this knowledge alive,

allowing the community to think and

feel together in the same present.



## Electric Circuitry

A dynamic field of connection created by electronic media, where information flows

**instantly and  
continuously**

across the globe. Television, radio, and other electronic systems collapse distance, linking people in shared, simultaneous experience.

This constant circulation of messages revives the qualities of acoustic space:

**immersion,  
simultaneity, and  
total involvement**

with others. These qualities are now expanded globally through electronic communication, forming what McLuhan called the Global Village.

## Instantaneity

An experience of time in the electronic age, where the sending and receiving of information happens at the same moment across the globe.

With television broadcasts, phone calls, and digital messages, delays are eliminated, creating a sense of

**immediacy and  
constant connection.**

Information flows in real time, bringing past and future into an ongoing present that connects people worldwide.