



GCE AS Examiners' Report

Media Studies
AS
Summer 2024

Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners and Principal Moderators after the completion of marking and moderation, and details how candidates have performed in each component.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	Eduqas offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.eduqas.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each component that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results and Grade Boundaries and PRS (eduqas.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	Eduqas provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.edugas.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the Eduqas subject page.
Become an examiner with WJEC.	We are always looking to recruit new examiners or moderators. These opportunities can provide you with valuable insight into the assessment process, enhance your skill set, increase your understanding of your subject and inform your teaching.	Become an Examiner Eduqas

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Executive Summary

In Component 1: Investigating the Media, candidates generally demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding, both regarding the set products and the relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. Candidates evidenced a clear understanding of what was required in the different elements of the paper, particularly with both the Media Language response and Representation extended response, showing that they had been well prepared for the demands of this component. Most candidates attempted all questions and there were only a few incomplete papers. The newspaper response proved problematic for some candidates, particularly with audience interpretation. This has suggested that candidates need to develop their awareness of newspapers by exploring one complete print edition of the Daily Mirror (chosen by the centre) in addition to the set edition pages. Key pages from the Daily Mirror website should be explored as well including the home page and at least one other page.

In Component 2: Investigating Media Forms and Products, candidates responded to the demands of the exam positively, with centres embracing the new texts in Section A. Many candidates demonstrated their engagement with the theoretical framework and the set products they had studied. There were a significant number of candidates who struggled to address the separate elements of the questions set, often responding with what appeared to be pre-rehearsed answers or 'knowledge dump' that failed to meet appropriate analysis, knowledge, and understanding requirements. Candidates seemed most comfortable answering the question in Section A, engaging with media representations with a greater degree of confidence than was exhibited elsewhere in the exam. The least secure engagement was evidenced across Section C, where candidates struggled to explain the significance of digital technologies on media regulation relative to the set products they had studied.

In Component 3: Media Production, candidates responded positively to the briefs and were able to produce work that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of media forms and genre conventions framed by theoretical framework. The most popular briefs were the print-based options, especially the magazine and film marketing briefs. Mostly, there was parity in the assessment across the briefs, however assessment should consider how effectively the audience has been engaged and positioned and how industry and genre conventions are used. Candidates would benefit from further guidance on genre/industry/mode of address as some candidates did not always clearly comply with the requirements of the brief in terms of utilising genre conventions or engaging with industry requirements.

Areas for improvement	Classroom resources	Brief description of resource
Theories and theorists	Resource (eduqas.co.uk)	A set of resources to support the teaching of theories and theorists in the Eduqas AS and A level Media Studies specifications.
Teaching Media Contexts	Resource (eduqas.co.uk)	A resource to support the teaching of media contexts for the new Eduqas AS/A level Media Studies specification.
Eduqas AS Media Studies Guidance for Teaching	Eduqas AS Media Studies Guidance for Teaching	The Guidance for Teaching is intended support teachers in the delivery of the WJEC Eduqas AS Media Studies specification, including a breakdown of the command words for exam components (page 59).
Media Industries	Resource (eduqas.co.uk)	A set of resources to support the teaching of media industries in the Eduqas A level Media Studies specifications.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE Advanced Subsidiary

Summer 2024

COMPONENT 1: INVESTIGATING THE MEDIA

Overview of the Component

Like the previous summer series, it was pleasing to see how centres and candidates had taken on board feedback, particularly with Section A. Candidates generally demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding, both regarding the set products and the relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. Candidates evidenced a clear understanding of what was required in the different elements of the paper, particularly with both the Media Language response and Representation extended response, showing that they had been well prepared for the demands of this component. Most candidates attempted all questions and there were only a few incomplete papers.

The newspaper response proved problematic for some candidates, particularly with audience interpretation. This has suggested that candidates need to develop their awareness of newspapers by exploring one complete print edition of the *Daily Mirror* (chosen by the centre) in addition to the set edition pages. Key pages from the *Daily Mirror* website should be explored as well including the home page and at least one other page.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Q.10 Explore how the combination of elements of media language communicates meaning in the advertisement. [10]

Assessment Objectives:

AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories

The unseen product selected for this question was an advertisement for *Miss Dior, The New Fragrance* (2021), which featured Natalie Portman. This proved to be a very accessible text for the majority of candidates who had prepared well through their study of advertisement products. It was encouraging to see that candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the text in detail through various media terminology and contexts. Candidates achieving higher bands clearly addressed the question exploring the combination of elements of media language that influenced meaning including:

- shot type, angles and movement
- lighting techniques
- sound techniques
- editing techniques
- mise-en-scene elements including colour, settings, clothing, character expression /movement and props
- mode of address.

Candidates accessing marks in the higher bands were confident in discussing the combination of visual and technical elements used by the producers and linked this appropriately to the purpose of the advertisement. These responses were logically structured and would remain focused to the question and discussing advertising techniques and brand identity that the producers used to appeal to their target audience. The unseen product allowed candidates to approach their response from a range of different starting points. There was some excellent, detailed analysis demonstrating understanding of the theoretical framework and application of relevant theory such as Stuart Hall's Stereotypes and George Gerbner's Cultivation theory. More sophisticated responses applied the language of semiotics and/or binary oppositions appropriately to develop their analysis further which is to be encouraged.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often identified media element techniques and their associated connotations but either did not explore them in enough detail or steered into detail with typically more visual techniques such as clothing and colour rather than the combination and therefore lost focus of the question. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the advertisement but tended not to cover a broad range of points. It should be noted that without exploring the combination of elements of media language, candidates could not access the higher bands.

As the unseen is always taken from one of the forms studied for Section A, the expectation is that the candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form. Pleasingly, there were very few candidates awarded marks in the lower bands as most responses were focused to the question suggesting advice from the last summer series was acknowledged. The few candidates awarded in the lower bands would download inappropriate theory such as that of Stuart Hall's Reception theory or would over-elaborate gender representation theory at the expense of the combination of elements of media language analysis and the purpose of the advertisement. There were only a few purely descriptive answers which would offer basic application of knowledge and understanding to analyse the product. In this case, the limited/undeveloped understanding made it difficult to award higher than Band 2.

Q.20 Compare how representations convey values about the world. [25]

In your answer you must consider:

- the similarities and differences in the representations
- how far the representations relate to relevant media contexts.

Assessment Objectives:

AO2 1 and 2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to:

- analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

This is an extended response question in which candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response including the ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

In this response the bullet points were included to help the candidates structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. Both bullet points must be covered but not in the same amount of detail. Stronger responses were able to address the focus of the question and to analyse both products making relevant comparisons. It was essential in this response that candidates demonstrated effective essay writing skills and could employ subject specific terminology.

The question invited a variety of representation explorations which many candidates managed effectively including insightful reference to gender, ethnicity and issues.

Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework. These candidates were able to explore more detailed aspects of representation and demonstrated clear engagement with the processes of selection and combination in relation to relevant contexts such as issues with inequality between gender and ethnicity challenging patriarchal ideologies and marginalisation. Many candidates referred to the oxymoron and binary opposition of the title of *The Woman King* which led to some exceptionally detailed analysis of the text shaped by its contemporary contexts. Candidates had clearly studied the set *Tide* advertisement to a heightened level as the analytical and contextual references to it were very pleasing. There was excellent and relevant application of theory from the likes of Liesbet van Zoonen, Stuart Hall, bell hooks and Paul Gilroy. Candidates awarded in the higher bands explored both products in detail referring to visual, technical and written elements of media language highlighting both the similarities and differences. To be placed in these bands, comparing the two products in detail was essential. It was warming to see how candidates at this level engaged with ideologies and complex aspects of representation in an informed way. Candidates in the higher bands made perceptive judgements and conclusions about the relevant media contexts supported by specific examples from the products and were able to effectively relate these to the construction of gender and ethnicity within the zeitgeist.

Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation. For example, the use of clothing or the use of colour. There were a few responses in this band that tended to focus more on one product than the other. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses were generally straightforward and/or satisfactory.

Very few candidates were underprepared for this response. However, with responses awarded in the lower bands, there was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products and judgements and conclusions related to contexts were absent, brief and/or undeveloped. Some candidates awarded in the lower bands tended to have contextual comparison imbalance with more engagement of *Tide* and limited (if not any) engagement with context of *The Woman King*. It is important that the theoretical perspective chosen is valid, relevant and can be used to support the points the candidate wishes to make about the product. There were several examples of candidates who tried to drop in theories which were at worst, irrelevant and at best, not applied appropriately such as Stuart Hall's Reception theory. Some candidates got confused with their application of the term *afrofuturism* in relation to *The Woman King*.

Q.31: Name the regulatory body for video games in the U.K. [1]

AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media.

Responses largely referred to VSC (using the PEGI rating system). PEGI or GRA were also common answers and acceptable. Some candidates said Ubisoft, OFCOM or IPSO, which were not credible.

Q.32: Explain why video games are regulated.

[4]

AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

Overall, most candidates offered valid and holistic explanations which would allow access to the higher bands. Popular responses included, '... to protect vulnerable audiences (particularly children) from harmful content', '... to avoid causing offence' and '... to allow audiences to make suitable choices for themselves or dependents.' The explanations were often linked to examples from *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*. Many candidates supported their response with appropriate application of theory from Albert Bandura or Livingston and Lunt. However, the theory was not essential to achieve the high bands, particularly as Livingston and Lunt is on the A-level specification. Some candidates identified reasons why video games are regulated but did not fully explain them or lacked clarity and therefore did not fully answer the question. There were a few candidates that repeated their first point and so could not access the full marks.

Q.33: Explain how social and cultural contexts influence video game production. Refer to **at least one game** from the *Assassin's Creed* franchise to support your points. [10]

AO1 2a and 2b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contexts of media and their influence on media products and processes.

In this question, candidates were rewarded for drawing together knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts. Many candidates struggled with this question, largely because they were either too general with their reference to the *Assassin's Creed* franchise rather than focusing on the command words of the question i.e. reference to **at least one game** from the franchise or offered limited reference to social and cultural contexts to aid their response.

Candidates in the higher bands tended to lead with social and cultural contexts related to the video game industry and were aware of how these would influence the production of *Assassin's Creed* games. They would then offer detailed examples from *Assassin's Creed* games to support their points. Stronger responses referred to detailed examples from *Assassin's Creed Valhalla*, *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*, *Assassin's Creed Infinity* or *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*. Most candidates referred to the latter. There was pleasing engagement with examples from *Odyssey* and/or *Valhalla* where audiences were given a chance to choose the gender of their characters and likewise their character's choices in the game reflecting Ubisoft's response to attitudes towards gender/ethnicity inequality.

Candidates in the middle band tended to have an imbalanced response. They offered satisfactory context and some (but not always) appropriate reference to examples from the video games within the franchise. Some candidates in this band tended to have more focus on one over the other (i.e. high band context but appropriate/limited low band reference to video game) hence lacked in development. Middle band responses would at times offer appropriate reference to video game content such as *Assassin's Creed III's* African/French protagonist Aveline or contexts such as cultural technological trends but in such cases didn't develop in enough detail to meet the higher bands.

Many candidates in the lower bands tended to offer limited reference to *Assassin's Creed* video games and their contexts to answer the question. Some candidates in the lower bands tended to write an audience response with little industry focus.

Like the last summer series, there was surprisingly limited industry theory applied to responses with a tendency to apply more audience theory instead including Hall's Reception theory or Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory. The latter was used effectively with some candidates though i.e. audiences building identity with the protagonist. Stronger responses were able to incorporate industry theory and theoretical perspectives including Curran and Seaton. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their analysis of the video game industry. Lower band responses tended to be quite brief which limited exploration, suggesting time efficiency in the exam needed to be worked on.

Q.41: Identify **two** audiences targeted by the *Daily Mirror*. [2]

AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media

Like Q32, this question led to a variety of diverse responses. Many candidates identified appropriate target audiences such as women/men aged over 35, Labour supporters, those with left wing leaning allegiance, those from C2DE social economic group, the working class, individuals with lower academic literacy, strugglers and reformers. However, some responses were generalised or not specific enough with answers including young/old people, people going to work, sports fans, northerners, Tory-haters, etc., and therefore could not be credited. Stating just demographics or psychographics was not specific enough and so was also not credible. There were some general inaccuracies including those from the ABC1 social economic group, Conservative supporters and nationalists which were also not credible.

Q.42: Explain why audiences interpret newspapers in different ways. Refer to the *Daily Mirror* to support your points. [8]

AO1 1a and b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media

This question required the candidates to refer to the set newspaper *Daily Mirror* and why audiences may interpret their newspapers in different ways. It was warming to see how some candidates referred to examples from a separate print edition they had studied or examples from *Daily Mirror* online rather than being over reliant on the set edition. This allowed for a more heightened engagement on how newspaper content could be interpreted in different ways based on the audiences that have accessed it.

As per the specification guidelines, in order to develop awareness, learners should consider **one complete print edition** of the newspaper chosen by the centre and **selected key pages from the newspaper's website**, including the **homepage** and **at least one other page**. It is the teacher's responsibility to monitor the content of these products and to ensure it is appropriate for their learners.

Candidates did not have to refer to an additional edition to access the higher bands, but it should be encouraged in the future for a deeper understanding of the newspaper industry and their audience.

Candidates in the higher band would apply Hall's Reception theory confidentially particularly in relation to the dominant / hegemonic reading intended by the producer for the audience targeted and the oppositional reading by those the newspaper did not target such as Conservative Party supporters.

Some candidates were overtly analytical at the expense of applying audience interpretation/response language and generally would have been awarded in the lower bands.

Some responses in the lower bands were descriptive and/or lacked reference to the set newspaper. Some candidates in these bands downloaded Stuart Hall's Reception theory without applying it which must be avoided. A few candidates referred to the newspaper as the *Daily Mail* with right-wing conservative associations. Such inaccuracies led to limited credibility.

Like the last summer series, it was pleasing to see most responses had been much lengthier than papers of the past, suggesting candidates had prepared well for the demands of this question and the paper overall. However, it was the case with some candidates that they had not balanced their time appropriately between Section A and B with the latter being detrimentally impacted by this.

Summary of key points

- Centres should prepare candidates so that they are able to answer questions from across the full range of specification content. Candidates should be able to engage with questions that test all bullet points outlined in the specification knowledge grids.
- When theory is used in a response, it should be relevant, applied effectively and should be a helpful tool for analysis or discussion of the set products. Candidates are not credited for downloading theory, trying to 'shoehorn' irrelevant theory into a response or simply naming theorists, often in brackets.
- Candidates must study media contexts and their influence on media products and processes, and they need to be able to analyse set products in relation to their contexts. They should consider leading with the contexts to strengthen their focus particularly with the Section B extended response. More preparation is needed in this area.
- Candidates must study a full separate edition of the *Daily Mirror* along with their website and its homepage and another page to have more to refer to in Section B, developing a heightened awareness of the newspaper industry and its audience.

MEDIA STUDIES
GCE Advanced Subsidiary
Summer 2024

COMPONENT 2: INVESTIGATING MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS

Overview of the Component

Overall, candidates responded to the demands of the exam positively, with centres embracing the new texts in Section A. There was some good material produced, and it was heartening to see many candidates showing engagement with the theoretical framework of the subject and the set products they had studied. There were, however, a significant number of candidates that struggled to address the separate elements of the questions set, often responding with what appeared to be pre-rehearsed answers or 'knowledge dump' that failed to meet appropriate analysis, knowledge, and understanding requirements. It was noticeable that some candidates did not recognise the requirements of certain command words, and how they are linked to specific assessment objectives. Consequently, some candidates did not engage fully with the questions set, immediately limiting responses to the lower bands.

With all new products in Section A, *Peaky Blinders* was the most popular choice, followed by *Black Mirror*, with very few centres choosing *Killing Eve*. In Section B, *Vogue* was again the most popular option, followed by *Woman's Realm* and *Woman*. In Section C, *Zoella*, much like previous years, was by far the most popular choice with a minority of centres choosing to study *JJ Olatunji/KSI*. Candidates seemed most comfortable answering the question in Section A, engaging with media representations with a greater degree of confidence than was exhibited elsewhere in the exam. The least secure engagement was evidenced across Section C, where candidates struggled to explain the significance of digital technologies on media regulation relative to the set products they had studied.

Across the paper, the best responses provided detailed analysis and knowledge of the set products, and detailed knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. In contrast, weaker responses failed to answer the questions, and often struggled to refer to specific aspects of the set products, using generalised commentary that often lacked the use of appropriate subject specialist terminology, or, in some cases, included inaccurate knowledge. Although it was pleasing to note a continued reduction in the number of responses that tagged theorists' names in parentheses e.g., 'stereotypes (Hall)', some candidates demonstrated their knowledge of theory with little relevance to the questions set.

Comments on individual questions/sections

SECTION A: TELEVISION

Questions 11, 12 and 13

To what extent do social and cultural contexts affect representations in television programmes? Explore examples from *Peaky Blinders*/*Black Mirror*/*Killing Eve* to support your answer. [20]

Assessment Objectives

AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.

AO2 2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.

The 'explore' stem invited candidates to engage with the assessment criteria AO2, with an emphasis on set product analysis. The 'to what extent' stem also asked candidates to make judgements and draw conclusions.

Responses in the highest band paid close attention to both requirements of the question posed, providing a detailed analysis and discussion that carefully explored the influence of social and cultural contexts on the representations within the set products, as well as considering the extent to which those representations were shaped by contextual forces.

Most candidates focused on representations of gender and ethnicity across all three products, and historical social and cultural contexts within *Peaky Blinders*. However, responses in the lower bands described the social, cultural, and/or production contexts with limited analytical evidence, thus failing to formulate a sustained argument or address the extent to which contexts were influential.

Some responses in the lower bands chose to consider the influence of genre and narrative choices on representations without considering the social and cultural contexts. While challenging the notion that social and cultural contexts are influential is appropriate, this approach must be within the context of the question and provide the opportunity for a balanced discussion, not simply an opportunity to explore conventions of genre and narrative.

Peaky Blinders

In the higher bands, responses considered the influence of the social and cultural issues of the time-period of the set episode, with detailed analytical evidence of the influence of the feminist movement, and the effect war on the representation of characters. The best responses also considered the effects of contemporary social forces, and significant cultural influences on framing representations, in addition to the set time-period of the narrative, with detailed discussion of gender evidenced in the representations of characters.

In the lower bands, candidates were able to provide the context of production and describe social and/or cultural contexts but not apply these elements to detailed analysis of representations within the set episode. Some candidates explored the representations of nation and regional programming but were unable to provide analytical evidence to support their arguments.

Black Mirror

In the higher bands, responses considered the influence of the social and cultural issues such as the impact of AI, and the greater tolerance and visibility of relationships that challenge heteronormative representations, as well as the me-too movement and growing social awareness of toxic masculinity. In the lower bands, candidates tended to describe the narrative and characters without exploring the influence of contexts or providing analytical evidence from the text.

Killing Eve

Most candidates focused on representations of sexuality and ethnicity, exploring the influence of more liberal attitudes in society to minority groups. Where this question was executed well, candidates were able to combine close textual analysis with a keen understanding of representations and how they are influenced by progressive social and cultural contexts. However, some responses engaged with the concept of social and cultural contexts but failed to provide detailed analytical evidence to support their discussion. In the lower bands, candidates tended to describe the narrative and characters without exploring the influence of contexts or providing analytical evidence from the text.

SECTION B: MAGAZINES

Questions 21, 23 and 25

Briefly explain the terms 'denotation' and 'connotation'. Provide one example from the set edition of *Woman/Woman's Realm/Vogue* to illustrate your answer. [5]

Assessment Objectives

AO1 and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

It was pleasing to see that most candidates were able to accurately define both terms, with the highest marks awarded to responses that were clearly exemplified from the set products. Some candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the terms but muddled the definitions of both. The weaker responses failed to exemplify accurately defined terms, and/or failed to define the terms that were accurately exemplified.

Questions 22, 24 and 26

Explore how magazines communicate multiple meanings. Use one article or advertisement from the set edition of *Woman/Woman's Realm/Vogue* to support your response. [15]

Assessment Objectives

AO2 1: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.

Candidates were expected to consider the use of media language to position audiences and to explore how set products convey multiple values, attitudes, and beliefs. The 'explore' stem invited candidates to engage with the assessment criteria AO2, with an emphasis on media language and product analysis. However, a surprising number of candidates failed to engage with the 'multiple' aspect of meanings communicated, and many chose to analyse the front cover of the set magazine, rather than an article or advertisement as specified in the question. This had a limiting effect on the marks available.

Responses in the highest bands provided detailed analysis of one article or advertisement, in relation to the historical context and changing audience beliefs over time. Some responses discussed the notion that meanings are reinforced or influenced by contextual hegemonic beliefs regarding, gender, ethnicity, and class, and thus meaning is dependent on audience reception.

Candidates in the middle bands were able to demonstrate some analysis supported with reference to aspects of the set magazine. While there were responses that contained accurate media language analysis, many candidates explored several pages of the set product, including the front cover. This limited the opportunities for detailed analysis, or consideration of the historical and contemporary contexts, and therefore the polysemic nature of the text.

Candidates in the lower bands often provided limited analysis of media language and failed to explore why there may be multiple meanings communicated, or indeed, why the text may not be of a polysemic nature.

SECTION C: ONLINE MEDIA

Questions 31, and 32

Explain the impact of digital technologies on media regulation. Refer in detail to *JJ Olatunji/KSI/Zoe Sugg* to support your answer. [20]

Assessment Objectives

AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media.

The 'explain' question stem required candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the scope and impact of the digital revolution in terms of media regulation. However, most candidates undertook textual analysis of *JJ Olatunji/KSI* or *Zoe Sugg's* online presence, which was not being assessed here. As this question was assessing AO1, candidates were asked to 'explain'. This is one of the keywords which acts as a 'signpost' for candidates and indicates that textual or semiotic analysis is not the focus of the question.

Responses in the highest bands provided a detailed engagement with the question, offering an extensive understanding of a range of regulatory issues and processes. Candidates identified a range of regulatory methods both enabled and disabled by digital technology, such as the volume of online content, demonetisation, and prosumer impact on online media producers, and were able to exemplify the wider issues with reference to the set products.

In the lower bands, candidates struggled to include sufficient detail of the impact of digital technologies, often resorting to descriptive responses which were quite simplistic at times. Candidates in these bands demonstrated very little knowledge and understanding of media regulation or online industries. There was a limited sense of the 'impact' technologies or of media regulation in general, and examples from the set products were often limited to descriptions of content rather than application or absence of regulation. Some responses lacked a sustained focus on the question focusing on the content of the set products rather than focusing specifically on methods or online media regulation or lack thereof.

However, most candidates were able to offer a basic explanation of the use of digital technologies in the production and distribution of digital media, identifying convergence, and the use of social media and ease sharing as being an issue for regulation.

Summary of key points

- Centres should ensure that candidates understand the difference between the requirements of AO1 and AO2 – and the ‘signpost’/command words for these assessment objectives, drawing particular attention to the specific requirements of questions.
- Candidates should always ensure that they explicitly address the specific requirements of the question. For example, in a question that requires a focus on a specific element of a magazine, such as an article or advertisement, it is important that candidates explicitly discuss this as they are being assessed on their ability to identify multiple meanings within one page of the set product. Using the key terms from the question consistently throughout the answer can help in this regard.
- Centres should ensure that candidates study the set number of magazine pages, not just the front covers.
- Centres should encourage more detailed readings of magazine story copy that diagnose media language effects, structuring techniques and content selection decisions.
- Candidates should ensure that they support the points they make by referring to specific aspects of their set products rather than simply discussing their products in very general terms.
- In ‘to what extent’ questions, it is important that candidates understand that they are being assessed on their ability to use their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to make judgements and draw conclusions.
- Centres should ensure that media industry is covered in a similar level of detail to the other areas of the theoretical framework.
- Centres should encourage candidates to practice extended writing tasks to develop the extended response.
- Media terminology should be used appropriately in responses.
- As the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the influence of contexts on media products and processes is one of the key assessment objectives that is addressed in Component 2, candidates should ensure that they consider the influence of relevant contexts (e.g., social, cultural, historical, economic) on the set products and their reception as part of their studies. They should be able to make links between the set products and the wider contexts in which they are produced and consumed.
- Candidates should take care over their handwriting, ensuring that their answers are clearly legible, and centres should ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in places for candidates whose handwriting is likely to pose an issue for examiners.

MEDIA STUDIES
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Summer 2024
COMPONENT 3: MEDIA PRODUCTION

Overview of the Component

The vast majority of centres and candidates submitted full productions as detailed in the briefs and work reflected the range of briefs, however tended to favour and focus on the print-based options. The most popular briefs were the print-based options, especially the magazine and film marketing briefs. Pleasingly, most candidates were encouraged to work within the genres of their choice although centres are reminded that candidates should be given guidance on the how appropriate certain genres are and whether or not the conventions are either suitable or advisable. Some centres offered a range of briefs; however, in the main, centres tended to follow one or two briefs. Mostly, there was parity in the assessment across the briefs. Candidates responded positively to the briefs and were able to produce work that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of media forms and genre conventions framed by theoretical framework. It was clear that most centres had set appropriate tasks in order for candidates to meet the requirements of the brief and the need for the assessment to be independently developed and produced. All centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

The administrative procedures prescribed by WJEC are designed to facilitate an effective moderation process and ensure that candidates' work is viewed and moderated appropriately. Most centres adhered to these procedures and uploaded work in advance or on the deadline, using appropriate file formats. It is very helpful where centres have labelled work with the name of the candidate and title of the document, as this allows moderators to identify quickly and easily who the work belongs to and view each part of the production efficiently. Once again, it is important to point out to centres that it is crucial that productions, such as DVD covers or double page spreads, are uploaded as one accurately sized document, rather than the back, front and spine or each page being submitted as separate documents. This enables the moderators to see the artefacts to the candidates' best advantage. It should be noted that it is important to ensure the file types are those that have been authorised for submission, rather than files such as .pub or .psd, as these require specialist software to view and therefore are not appropriate for submitting candidates' work. Files which ask the moderator to pay for the privilege of opening them are certainly not appropriate.

Coversheets

A majority of the coversheets were completed appropriately, including signatures of candidates and teachers and dates to authenticate the work. Most candidates identified research undertaken to inform their production and link to the brief. Most candidates completed the Statement of Aims and Intentions in Section B of the coversheet as required. It is essential candidates include a word count on this sheet and adhere to the word limit of 350 words. A large number of candidates significantly exceeded the word limit, and, in such cases, teachers should cease assessment of the Statement once the upper threshold has been reached and the allocation of marks should reflect this. The Statement of Aims and Intentions must be completed after the research stage of planning, before the production begins. The Statement therefore should be written in future tense. Some candidates wrote in the past tense suggesting that they had written the Statement of Aims and Intentions after completing the production, which should not be the case. Centres should ensure they are giving clear guidance with regards to this, and the Statement of Aims and Intentions should be signed off by the candidate and teacher prior to the production commencing and be a guide to candidates as they work on the productions.

Centres are advised that there is a revised coversheet that should be used for submissions in 2025. The revisions include a statement about the use of AI in the candidate and teacher/assessor declaration, and a reminder that candidates who do not submit a production must be awarded zero marks for the Statement of Aims.

Assessment Objectives

AO3: Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning.

Create media products for an intended audience, by applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to communicate meaning. Candidates must respond to the set brief for the year of assessment. Briefs are released annually, on 1st September in the year prior to assessment. Most candidates met the requirements of their chosen brief and were able to apply suitable knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to their production work. In a few cases candidates did deviate from the specific stipulations of their brief with regards to industry or audience. This should be reflected in the assessment of the work.

Most candidates adhered to the more detailed requirements of the brief in terms of length and features. However, centres should be reminded that simply meeting the requirements of the brief is not enough to place the work into the higher bands for Column 2. The first bullet point of column two of the marking grid does require a consideration of how conventions are used relevant to the chosen form, genre and industry context of the set brief. In some cases, this was not considered and consequentially, some candidates were over-rewarded for meeting the requirements of the brief. The production should adhere to the codes and conventions of the chosen form and be recognisable as such. Candidates should use their research findings to inform their own decisions about their production work. For example, magazine work should have a clear house style, with layout and design features reflecting typical industry conventions. Some candidates' magazine productions did not feature consistent use of fonts, columns, and colour to demonstrate the brand identity of the product, and in some cases were lacking industry features such as price and barcode. It was difficult to work out which magazine was the special edition in some cases. Equally, the film marketing production brief saw some productions missing institutional information on the DVD cover or appropriate age rating certification or guidance that conventionally and industry standards would expect to see.

Statement of Aims and Intentions

It is essential that candidates have undertaken appropriate research into similar media products before writing the Statement of Aims and Intentions. Candidates should reference their research to explain how they will apply this knowledge and understanding to the creation of their own productions. There was some evidence of standardised or formulaic Statements of Aims and Intentions, whereby candidates had clearly been directed to mention particular theorists. This does not necessarily meet the requirements of the brief as the theorists were, at times, name dropped without displaying any theoretical understanding nor explanation of how the theories would help to develop the productions. Research into similar products is essential and should enable candidates to explain their decision-making process when putting their own productions together.

Production

As mentioned, a majority of candidates followed print briefs (magazine or film marketing), with a very small number following the music marketing online brief. A variety of genres were produced and a majority of these were assessed appropriately. However, a number of centres had assessed work generously, with some centres not applying assessment consistently for all candidates, resulting in the rank order not being agreed. It is essential that centres apply the assessment criteria accurately across all briefs and candidates' work to ensure fairness of the assessment process.

Brief 1: Television

No candidates from the samples completed this brief.

Brief 2: Magazines

Most submissions for this brief were print based this year, with few candidates or centres attempting to create an online website for a magazine.

A wide range of genres were engaged with, and it was mostly evident that candidates had researched their genre and developed their knowledge and understanding of the conventions of magazines and the genre. There was evidence, however, of candidates and centres not engaging or fully understanding the appropriate codes and conventions of magazines. In particular it was evident some magazines did not follow a conventional layout in terms of use of columns for the double page spread or front pages, and where key information such as page numbers, barcodes, prices were not included. A number of candidates either wrote articles right into the middle of the page where the staples would be or across the whole page which breaks conventions. The magazine brief was commonly over-rewarded in light of the above-mentioned issues.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

A number of candidates completed the film marketing campaign, and only a few of these completed the online option. Responses for both options commonly demonstrated appropriate genre signifiers and understanding of conventions by candidates. The horror and thriller genres in particular were very popular. Most candidates were able to engage with the focusing on 'nurturing and developing new talent' aspect of the brief.

Some candidates did not conform to recognised elements of DVD/BluRay covers, whereby candidates did not conform to the layout, use of thumbnails, blurbs or age ratings. It should be noted DVD or BluRay covers should be uploaded to the correct scale / size and as one document rather than separate documents for the spine, front and the back. Not all the online offerings had the requisite 250 words on the webpage or the full 45 seconds of audio-visual material related to the topic. This should be considered in the assessment.

Brief 4: Music Marketing

A small number of candidates submitted music videos but there were no music marketing websites in the sample. The music videos were generally of a high standard although not all reached the 3 minutes and 30 seconds requirement, and this should have been noted in the assessment and marked suitably as this is self-penalising. Most candidates engaged with the requirement to construct a representation of at least one specific social group.

Summary of key points

- Centres should guide candidates to complete appropriate research with a focus on the brief to ensure candidates are engaging with appropriate case studies and especially industry context. This is particularly relevant when considering industry context as this was the weakest element within the Statement of Aims and Intentions. Researching appropriately will support the candidate to ensure a clear understanding of genre, style, tone, and industry is developed prior to developing the production. It was evident that a number of candidates paid little attention to Condé Nast or Hearst as major publishers.
- It is vital that this research is undertaken before writing the Statement of Aims and Intentions so that centres can support candidates in realising suitable productions which fulfil the brief.
- Candidates should be guided to adhere to the word count for the Statement of Aims and Intentions or the centre should mark the work up to the top of the word limit. Some Statements were significantly over the word count, and this led to considerable over rewarding for some candidates. Writing succinctly and focusing on the key areas of the theoretical framework supported by the candidate's research is key to the success of this element of the NEA.
- Centres should ensure that candidates are appropriately rewarded for both column 2 and 3 on the assessment grid. Assessment should consider how effectively the audience has been engaged and positioned and how industry and genre conventions are used (column 2), and how effectively media language has created appropriate connotations and representations (column 3). If, for example, the genre is unclear, lacks noticeable genre conventions or fails to follow accepted codes and conventions, the work would be unlikely to reach the higher bands of the mark scheme.
- Candidates would benefit from further guidance on genre/industry/mode of address (column 2 on the mark scheme) as some candidates did not clearly comply with the requirements of the brief in terms of utilising genre conventions or engaging with industry requirements. Again, further research in the first place may enable candidates to fully engage with the briefs.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 029 2240 4308

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