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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**MEDIA STUDIES  
GCSE**

**SUMMER 2022**

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# EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES

## GCSE

Summer 2022

### COMPONENT 1: EXPLORING THE MEDIA

#### General Comments

As this was only the second full Component 1 examination since 2019, it was encouraging to see how positively candidates engaged with the paper and how centres had responded to the demands of the specification. There was a good engagement with the theoretical framework and candidates were able to engage well with the set products and relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. A very large majority of candidates attempted every question on the paper, which demonstrated that centres had prepared them for the demands of the component, and how to manage their time within the examination.

#### Comments on individual questions/sections

**Q.1 Explore how the print advertisement for *This Girl Can* uses media language to create meanings:**

- (a) text/written language [5]
- (b) visual codes [10]

#### **Assessment Objective:**

**AO2 1a Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media**

It was encouraging that candidates across the mark range were able to access this question with confidence and had a secure understanding of the *This Girl Can* product. The allocation of marks for each part-question is reflective of the scope for analysis of the different aspects of media language within this set product and delivers an appropriate amount of variety in comparison to previous papers that assessed three separate areas of media language. The question steer for part (b) was beneficial for many candidates as they used this as a tool for structuring their response.

For part (a), a large number of candidates were able to analyse the linguistic features of the poster and look for both connotative meanings and inferences to the campaign's rationale. Discussions of the two similes 'like a...', the connotations of a pig as a juxtaposition to those of a fox, were frequent throughout the majority of responses.

The best candidates stretched into discussions of zoomorphism, the polysemics of comparing women to animals and the detailed lexical choices of the words 'girl' and 'can' and how this underpinned the campaign as a whole. A few responses referenced the hashtag as an opportunity to spread the word through convergence.

A number of candidates attempted to analyse typography and font style, including colour and placement, and this is not what the question asked for. Some candidates delivered an analysis of both style and layout. It is strongly recommended that centres help candidates to distinguish between analysis of text/language/written features and analysis of typography, layout and design, for future questions that assess this aspect of AO2.

For part (b) the steer of the question, suggesting lighting and costume, for example, really helped candidates break up their answers and structure the response accordingly. Candidates were therefore able to work through their analysis and develop discussions of meaning and connotations in relation to the set product.

Some candidates lapsed into a descriptive style that just recorded what they were seeing, and this left many responses limited to discussing colour connotations of the costume and identifying the colour of the lighting. Stronger responses were able to explore the connotations of various aspects, including depth of field/focus, gesture codes and body language. They were then able to make informed connections to the aims and rationale of the *This Girl Can* advert, bringing in discussions of female empowerment and the challenging or subverting of stereotypes of appearance during exercise.

It should be noted that there were a significant number of candidates who relabelled their questions in the answer booklet, indicating that they had not acknowledged the difference between parts (a) and (b). It is suggested centres work on exam technique and practice to prepare candidates fully for the final examination.

**Q.2 (a) Explain how political contexts influence magazines. Refer to *Pride* magazine to support your points. [5]**

**Assessment Objective:**

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

*Pride* magazine has clearly been influenced by significant political contexts and there are demonstrations of this on the front cover. This might include links to feminism, FGM, and the origins of the name, *Pride*. The wording of the question offers candidates the opportunity to consider political contexts in relation to magazines before focusing on examples from the set product.

Candidates were able to refer to many aspects of the magazine and many were able to add detail as to why they might have featured, but were not always able to explicitly explore how this was influenced by political contexts. A very small number of candidates offered a purely textual analysis of the cover without linking to context, which is not the focus of the assessment objective here (AO1 2 – see above). Candidates who used their response to discuss FGM or give historical information about BLM and *Pride* getting its name, without discussing how contextual elements influenced the product, were limited to the lower bands. There was some blurring of social/cultural and historical contexts in some of the mid-band responses, and this demonstrated secure teaching from centres about context in general.

The most successful responses for this question were able to explore how political contexts influence magazines as a whole, and were then able to securely link the variety of cover lines to some of the elements that influenced *Pride*. Those candidates who discussed the niche audience of the magazine and then the political specifics for the black female community had engaged well with the product during the teaching.

Candidates can be reminded that the space provided in the answer booklet for responses indicates roughly the amount they should be writing for each question based on the number of marks it is worth.

- Q.2 (b) Compare the representation of ethnicity in the *Pride* and *Essence* front covers. [25]**  
**In your answer, you must consider:**
- the choices the producers have made about how to represent ethnicity
  - how far the representation of ethnicity is similar in the two magazine front covers
  - how far the representation of ethnicity is different in the two magazine front covers.

**Assessment Objective:**

**AO2 1a and 1b: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions**

The unseen product for this question was a cover of the magazine *Essence* (2016) featuring Barack and Michelle Obama and this provided a rich text to compare to the set product of *Pride*. The text was accessible, and although it was not assumed or required that candidates had knowledge of the Obamas, there was a confident grasp of the two figures on the front cover and their status.

While performance on this question was considerably stronger than in previous examination series, there is still some evidence that candidates require more teaching on how to structure responses in an essay style and more practice on how to use the three bullet points provided to steer their answers. There should also be a more targeted approach to how to justify and conclude, as a key element of AO2 1b in particular. A large number of candidates provided a simplistic one sentence conclusion that did not show any ability to make judgements and draw conclusions.

On the whole, a large number of candidates for this question were able to provide a satisfactory approach to analyses of both products, working through the varying elements from each cover and linking to how they reflect the representation of ethnicity. There was a confident use of terminology that stretched across the theoretical framework, with candidates offering discussion on the target audience and, in some cases, the possible decisions being made by the industries publishing these issues.

Responses in the higher bands worked sequentially through significant features on each magazine, offering comparisons and then linking these to the argument set out at the very opening of their answer. There was some really insightful analysis from some candidates, including the exploration of rhetoric in cover lines, the genre of each magazine (lifestyle vs political) and exploration of the use of 'stars' as cover models. These responses also managed their discussion of ethnicity in an appropriate way, showing excellent teaching in centres about this area of representation. The ability to justify their points by discussing differing ideologies were seen in the very best responses to this question.

Responses in the lower bands found the discussion of ethnicity challenging and in some cases simply provided a textual analysis of each magazine front cover and avoided discussion of an area they may have not had confidence with. Other candidates in the lower bands offered discussions of ethnicity that were inappropriately and insensitively phrased or misinterpreted.

Centres are advised to use the factsheets provided by Eduqas to help with the teaching of any products that deal with aspects of representation, such as ethnicity; this provides a steer to centres and will help to avoid misinterpretations of the texts. Candidates should be well practised in using terminology such as 'person of colour (POC)', 'diversity', 'black' and 'ethnic' in responses and in the most appropriate manner.

Responses in the middle bands were able to explore coverlines as part of representations of ethnicity and there were many reasoned analyses of 'The Wig Revolution', 'Grace and Power', 'Failed by Feminism' and 'Legacy'. Some of these focused slightly too heavily on gender representations, without tying into analysis of representations of ethnicity, and mis-interpreted the question as a discussion of representations of femininity, which occurred in a small number of scripts. The discussion of the magazine as a construction by the producer helped many candidates build an argument and this is where they were able to use the steer successfully by referring back to the 'producers' decisions'.

There were instances where centres had delivered a range of A-Level theoretical approaches in their teaching, and while some had been applied relevantly (for example, bell hooks, Alvarado), others were discussed without correct application (for example, Mulvey, Hall). Centres are reminded that set theorists are outlined in the specification for GCSE and there is no requirement to deliver those that are more appropriate for A-Level teaching.

- Q.3**
- (a) Name one of the companies that produced Spectre. [1]**
  - (b) Briefly explain what a media conglomerate is. [2]**
  - (c) Briefly explain what convergence is. [2]**
  - (d) Explain how a film's website can be used to promote the film. Refer to the Spectre/007 website to support your points. [12]**

**Assessment Objective:**

**AO1 1a: Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media**  
**(b), (c) & (d) AO1 1a and 1b: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media**

- (a)** Most candidates were able to supply the four possible answers for this response, and responses such as Sony Entertainment, Sony Pictures or Sony were all acceptable alongside EON, MGM or Columbia. Acronyms 'MGM' and 'EON' were accepted and candidates did not have to break down the acronym to achieve the mark. Some candidates lost a mark for BBFC, which of course is the regulator, and who would not have been involved in the production process.
- (b)** To achieve both marks candidates needed to explain, including, for example, through exemplification, a media conglomerate in terms of structure (horizontal or vertical integration), outcomes (profits, audiences) or explicit identity (Disney owning Marvel and Pixar). Many candidates were only able to define without exemplification and there was a significant number that did not attempt this question. Some candidates confused 'ownership' with 'coming together' and in some cases it was felt that candidates confused their responses for Q.3(b) and Q.3(c).

- (c) It was surprising how challenging this question was for many candidates, resulting in a large number of not attempted responses for this question. The best responses here were able to define through companies 'coming together' and then exemplify with reference to technological elements, platforms, profits or increase in audiences. Some candidates exemplified with reference to *Spectre*. A range of definitions for this question seemed to confuse convergence with product placement, intertextuality, synergy and conglomerates (Q.3b). A significant number of responses focused on technological convergence and discussion of the range of platforms on which products might be available.
- (d) As an industry focused question there was a requirement for candidates to look at the website's promotional tools for the production/distribution company, and while this would naturally bring in some discussions about audience appeal, there was no necessity or credit for discussion of audience theories here as this was assessed in Question 4. Some candidates attempted to answer the question using active/passive or the Bartle taxonomy. It is worth noting that Bartle is appropriate mainly for the gaming industry.

The question asked for references to the *Spectre/007* website, and it was accepted that this website is in constant change and a new film has been released within the last year. There were expected references to *Spectre*, some to *No Time to Die* and a small number of candidates were even able to link to *Skyfall* in their answer. There were some cases where candidates were particularly strong on discussing the website's use as a promotional tool, with a range of examples, but without any specific reference to the set product. Candidates who were unable to reference explicit examples from the *Spectre/007* website would have only been able to achieve a mark in the lower bands.

Lower band responses were limited to discussing 'free advertising' as a sweeping term and it appeared the website had not been studied in enough depth.

The very best responses were able to make clear links between the website and promotion and marketing tools such as trailers, merchandise, social media links, competitions, and exclusivity. Candidates who were able to discuss each of these with exemplification of the benefits to EON, MGM or Sony demonstrated an excellent grasp of the question and how the organisations were clearly benefiting from the website as a marketing tool. Links to developing a fandom and really detailed examples from the website showed excellent teaching from some centres in this area.

- Q.4**
- (a) **Identify two ways in which media producers categorise audiences. [2]**
  - (b) **Briefly explain how *Fortnite* targets audiences. [4]**
  - (c) **Explain why users visit the *Fortnite* website. Refer to the Uses and Gratifications theory in your answer. [12]**

#### **Assessment Objective:**

**AO1 1a Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media (a) and AO1 1a and 1b Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media (b) and (c)**

- (a) Most candidates were able to provide two different audiences as a response to this question, and the very large majority opted for age and gender. Any demographic or psychographic breakdown was accepted including ethnicity, social class and then broader categories like active/passive or target audience and fans of a genre were accepted. Some candidates lost a mark with incorrect terminology such as 'non-active' instead of passive. PEGI categorisation was allowed as it had inference to age, but deviations into audience theory such as Hall's reception or Uses & Gratifications are not creditable categories of audience.
- (b) Candidates were able to discuss any techniques that target any audience. The best answers for this response explained a range of examples from the set product and how this drew in audiences. This included cartoon-like graphics, collaborations, non-violence, skins, v-bucks and bright colours. Some of the lower band responses were able to identify features but were unable to clearly link them to the audiences. A very small pool of candidates were able to make generic discussions about *Fortnite* targeting an audience (possibly from Q.3a) but without any exemplification of features from the set product.
- (c) As an audience focused question, this question asked candidates to draw on a range of features from the *Fortnite* website and discuss, through the theory, why audiences engage with the product. The question explicitly refers to the website, and while many candidates grasped this, there was a small quantity that seemed to reference just features of the game and therefore remained in the lower bands.

Some of the best responses were able to work through each category of the Uses and Gratifications theory and link in a feature of the website, with confident understanding. The very best responses were able to justify how the website and organisation (Epic Games) were able to exploit the features of their product to engage and enhance their relationship with the audience. This may have included v-bucks, forums, collaborations, skins, merchandise, updates and links to battle-royale. Some Band 4 responses showed detailed engagement with how parents of users might use the website to support regulation of *Fortnite* which showed an excellent grasp of the question.

Some candidates spoke eloquently about the theory without reference to the product and conversely some spoke in detail about the website without any reference to the theory. These candidates were not able to achieve the higher bands without engaging with both parts of the question. In a similar fashion, candidates that clearly did not have knowledge of the theory attempted to answer the question with links to active and passive audiences or generic reasons why users used the site. There were some candidates that implied some of the elements of theory without explicitly naming the category and they were rewarded for this (e.g. audiences bought skins to create characters that reflected their own image).

This question saw an increased engagement with Bartle's taxonomy (1996) as an audience theory and while it is very specific to gaming, it is not an explicitly named theory in the question so candidates would not have been advantaged by using it.



## Summary of key points

**Use of set products:** Candidates should be well practised in understanding how to interpret when a question asks for reference to a specific set product or element of a set product in their response.

**Question comprehension:** It would be good practice to encourage students to read all questions on a paper before starting to answer, and again before starting to answer each sub-question. This will improve candidates' engagement with each question so that they do not include approaches that will be tested later.

**Representation of Ethnicity:** Centres should support candidates by ensuring they are able to discuss and use terminology in the most appropriate manner for the product being analysed.

**Fact sheets** for products should be used in centres for factual knowledge in particular, including the spelling of names, products, and theories; in some cases, these are knowledge recall questions where candidates are losing marks.

**For questions on context,** the focus is on the relevant context/s and the product is a vehicle to demonstrate this understanding, rather than a textual analysis of the product.

Some centres would still benefit from regular extended response practice and exposure to a wide range of unseen products. A structured approach that allows students to justify and conclude in a comparative way would benefit outcomes.

## EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES

### GCSE

Summer 2022

## COMPONENT 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS

### General Comments

After the challenge of returning to summer examinations this year, it was very pleasing to see how well centres had prepared their candidates to meet the demands of Component 2. Overall, there was a good understanding of the requirements of the different elements of the paper, and, in most cases, a clear focus on the questions set. The level of engagement with both the set products and the relevant areas of the theoretical framework was generally very good, with a particularly strong performance on AO2 questions assessing analysis of Media Language and Representations.

One area where there was some inconsistency was in approaches to Contexts of Media. While some candidates demonstrated an excellent understanding of relevant contexts and confidently linked them to specific aspects of their set products, others struggled to show a clear grasp of this area of the specification, indicating that they may benefit from more explicit teaching of the contexts of their set products or more practice in making links between products and contexts.

### Comments on individual questions/sections

#### Q.1 (a) Explore how sound is used in this extract. [8]

##### AO2 1a: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media

This question was assessing the ability to analyse the use of sound in the extract from the chosen set television product (*Luther* or *The IT Crowd*) and proved accessible to the full ability range. It was encouraging to see how well centres had prepared for the extract-based questions, indicative in the confident use of examples from the set extracts and the candidates' overall ability to explore the use of media language to communicate meaning.

Most responses explored two or three sounds from the extract and the more successful responses selected and analysed specific examples of sounds from particular moments or scenes, then suggested how they were used to create meaning. These included the use of canned laughter, dialogue, or silence at specific moments to create situational comedy in *The IT Crowd* and changes in music tempo or volume to reflect turning points in the protagonist's narrative journey in *Luther*.

In the lower bands, functions of sound were often linked generally to atmosphere or mood, for example, music creating tension and suspense, whereas responses in the higher bands explored a range of different sounds, suggesting more specific functions associated with character, genre, or narrative. The relationship between sound and audiences featured in more detail in higher band responses, and these responses sometimes also explored how sound combined with other elements such as camerawork and editing to create meaning.

A good range of elements of sound was explored, candidates often using the terms diegetic and non-diegetic accurately to describe the examples chosen. Further subject specific terminology used successfully to analyse the effects of the sounds included enigma, disequilibrium, and verisimilitude. One area of sound explored less frequently than expected was the use of dialogue, indicating a need to ensure this area is included when practising extract analysis with candidates.

A significant number of candidates achieved full marks on this question but some appeared to spend too long on it. Centres are advised to support candidates by reminding them that both the marks available and amount of space in the answer booklet are useful indicators of how much time they should allow for each question. Using this format for some assessments as well as mock exams is helpful practice here.

In summary, the key determiner between the higher and lower band responses for Question 1(a) was the quality and consistency of the analysis. Higher band responses were analytical throughout whereas lower band responses were more descriptive when discussing examples of sound from the extract.

**Q.1 (b) How far is the camerawork in this extract typical of the genre? Explore examples from the extract to support your points. [12]**

**AO2 1a and 1b: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.**

This question required candidates to explore both the function and genre typicality of camerawork in the extract and was generally well-handled by candidates. It was pleasing to see the range and accuracy in the use of subject specific terminology on this question, reflecting how well centres are preparing their candidates to identify and explore technical codes in moving image set products.

The most successful responses clearly addressed the 'how far' part of the question, making judgements and conclusions about genre typicality based on their analysis of specific examples of camera shot/angle/movement. The majority of candidates concluded that the camerawork was typical of the genre, but a few successfully explored elements which they judged to be less conventional, such as the handheld point of view shot from Roy's perspective in the window cleaner scene, or the overhead shot of Luther's desk as the gun is being disassembled.

Some candidates did not address the 'how far' part of the question, limiting their responses to analysis of camerawork in the extract. This meant they did not engage with genre typicality or demonstrate their ability to make judgements and draw conclusions, preventing them from accessing the higher bands. The least successful responses took a generalised approach to camerawork and lacked focus on specific shots or angles, describing elements of mise-en-scene, such as costume and setting, which appeared in particular shots or frames.

A small number of candidates referred to further products within the crime drama or sitcom genre in order to make judgements about typicality of the camerawork in the set product extract. Although not required to achieve full marks, these references were generally appropriate and were helpful to candidates in engaging with the 'how far'. The most common products used were *The Sweeney* and *Friends*, but a range of others appeared too, reflecting good practice in providing candidates with an overview of the genre before zooming in on the set product.

Overall, performance on Question 1(b) demonstrated sound analysis of camerawork and good ability to use examples from the set extract. However, centres need to ensure that candidates learn about the conventions of either the crime drama or sitcom genre, so they are equipped with the knowledge to put their set product in context and make judgements about typicality relating to aspects of media language and representation.

**Q.2 Explain the effect of social and cultural contexts on crime dramas OR sitcoms. Refer to *Luther* OR *The IT Crowd* 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**

The focus of this question was contexts of media, requiring candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the *effect* of social and cultural contexts on the chosen television genre and set product.

There were some excellent responses to this question, which used accurate knowledge of specific aspects of society and culture to demonstrate understanding of the impact of contexts on the set products, explaining how contexts can have an effect on: casting; representation of social groups, issues, and places; patterns of distribution and consumption and audience responses.

The most successful responses made close reference to the set product to show their understanding of how particular social and cultural movements, events and products affect choices television producers make. Movements such as #blacklivesmatter and fourth wave feminism were frequently cited as contexts impacting on casting and representations in *Luther*, with responses to *The IT Crowd* also identifying a culturally diverse society and women's empowerment in the workplace as key contexts. It was pleasing to see the effect of cultural contexts of the BBC and Channel 4 remits explained in some responses, as well as the effect of popular culture and technology on *The IT Crowd*. The digital age of catch-up services and streaming sites also featured as a cultural context of both television products, candidates explaining how these have had an effect on audience consumption.

On this question, more than any other on the paper, many candidates offered responses lacking focus on the question set. There was frequent misunderstanding of contexts, where candidates described the characters, settings, and representations in the television products rather than identifying the contexts that had influenced those aspects.

Surprisingly, Uses and Gratifications theory was used frequently in responses to this question which was occasionally appropriate - candidates explaining that casting decisions influenced by contexts can lead to greater personal identity or social interaction from audiences - but more often reflected a misunderstanding of contexts or a prepared answer to Question 2 in 2019. Centres are advised to remind candidates of the importance of focusing on the question set rather than downloading an answer they may have produced in a mock examination.

Some responses referred to aspects of *The Sweeney* or *Friends* to explain how changing social and cultural contexts affect television products, especially changing societal attitudes towards gender and ethnicity. These were usually helpful when offered to make a point about *Luther* or *The IT Crowd*, but candidates should be reminded that the main focus of their question should be the product listed in the question.

Of particular concern was the number of candidates who failed to attempt this question, (especially in view of the Advance Information provided for 2022. In Component 2, knowledge and understanding of media contexts will be assessed in each examination series and candidates may be required to refer to specific media contexts (historical, social, cultural, political) in any of the questions, as outlined on pages 8 and 24 of the specification. Centres are therefore advised to ensure they are teaching relevant contexts in relation to all the set products.

### **Q.3 How far do these TWO music videos reinforce gender stereotypes? [20]**

**In your response, you must:**

- **explore representations of gender in the TWO music videos you have studied**
- **refer to relevant media contexts**
- **make judgements and draw conclusions.**

**AO2 1a and 1: Analyse media products using the theoretical framework of media, including in relation to their contexts, to make judgements and draw conclusions**

It was very pleasing to see how well candidates across the mark range engaged with this question, indicating how thoroughly they had been prepared by centres to demonstrate understanding of representation, and more specifically, gender stereotypes. Responses in all bands were usually able to select appropriate examples from their set music videos and use their analysis of them to draw conclusions about how far the representations of gender reinforced stereotypes. Analysis skills were also generally well developed with a good range of subject specific terminology confidently employed. Most candidates could explore the connotations of a range of visual and technical codes, reflecting how well centres are equipping candidates with the tools of textual analysis.

The most successful responses impressively demonstrated a high level of theoretical understanding and in some cases advanced beyond what could be reasonably expected of a GCSE candidate. In addition to Mulvey's male gaze, which was frequently applied at different levels across the whole mark range, some candidates effectively applied further feminist perspectives from Van Zoonen, Woolf, and Kilbourne. It should, however, be noted that brief references to a theorist's name without useful application of the theory do not add value to a response and some of the most successful candidates were awarded the highest band for their understanding of more complex aspects of the theoretical framework such as patriarchal ideology, post-feminism, and western beauty standards, as well as exploring areas of the theoretical framework such as under-representation and misrepresentation.

In the middle and lower bands, most responses were able to successfully explore more obvious aspects of representation, and stereotypes commonly cited included females as passive, submissive or sexually objectified and males as strong, dominant, or predatory.

Gender stereotypes associated with particular character archetypes also featured in many responses, such as the femme fatale in *Bad Blood* and the damsel in distress at the start of *Roar*. Indeed, an application of Propp's character functions proved useful to many candidates who were able to link roles such as the hero or dispatcher to gender stereotypes in the videos.

Another very encouraging trend for this exam series was the increasingly confident way in which candidates developed the sustained line of reasoning which is a requirement of this extended response question. The majority of responses demonstrated at least a satisfactory ability to engage with the 'how far' requirement of the question, making appropriate judgements about the extent to which their set music videos reinforced gender stereotypes. Many developed their arguments by exploring more progressive representations which challenged stereotypes such as the empowered female or metrosexual male, allowing them to logically structure their response and conclude that the videos reinforced gender stereotypes to an extent.

There were very few rubric infringements this series, a small number of candidates only exploring one set music video and fewer still exploring the videos by both female artists. Most candidates maintained a clear focus on the question but some candidates who had studied *Freedom* appeared to struggle to explore the representation of gender in this set product and in some cases were unable to discuss any relevant scenes or examples from the video to analyse gender stereotypes. While a wider approach to *Freedom*'s diverse representations of ethnicity, race and age was acknowledged in the Indicative Content, and it was acceptable for candidates to argue that *Freedom*'s *main* focus is not gender, the more successful responses who took this approach did explore some carefully selected examples of gender representation in the video to ensure they engaged with the question set. It is important that candidates are given opportunities to study both of their set music products in relation to all the areas of the theoretical framework listed in the specification grids so they can meet the requirements of particular questions for both of their music artists.

The biggest challenge to success on this question proved to be meeting the requirement to refer to relevant media contexts. This bullet point was often overlooked, and candidates need to be made aware that the bullet points are included as guidance of what needs to be included in a response rather than simply suggestions of what might be discussed. There were, however, some excellent links to relevant contexts across all the set music videos, including references to cultural products which influenced the use of intertextuality in *Bad Blood*, the influence of 80s culture on the representations in *Uptown Funk*, the social issue of the exploitation of women working in sweatshops highlighted in *Freedom* and the impact of fourth wave feminism on the gender representations in *Roar*.

**Q.4 How do music websites enable the music industry to make money? Refer to the official Katy Perry website OR the official Taylor Swift website to support your points. [10]**

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

The final question on the paper, with an Industry focus, proved highly accessible to the full ability range. Most candidates were able to identify a number of the commercial aspects of music websites listed in the Indicative Content, but the quality of reference to the set product was a key determiner in responses moving up the bands.

While most responses were able to explain how music websites make money for the set product artist, those candidates accessing the higher bands moved beyond knowledge into understanding by using detailed reference to specific aspects of the set product to explain how they enabled the *industry* to make money.

More successful responses demonstrated understanding of the commercial imperative of music websites, explaining how aspects such as branding, streaming revenue, sponsorship deals, synergy and convergence enable the industry to make money. Less frequently, aspects of audience were used – fandom, parasocial relationships, star theory – to demonstrate an understanding of how artists' relationships with the users of websites were essential to making money for the industry.

Less successful responses described aspects of music websites such as tour dates, merchandise, and music releases, using more generalised examples, and explained on a more basic level how they marketed the artist and their music. A significant number of candidates appeared to have limited knowledge of the set website, and, while detailed textual analysis is not required for AO1 questions, candidates still need to ensure they are using specific examples from particular pages of the websites as a vehicle for the demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

### **Summary of key points**

Centres are advised to approach their chosen television genre by first exploring the codes and conventions of the genre to provide students with an understanding of how far their set product is typical in its use of media language and representation.

Candidates are encouraged to transfer the skills they have developed in making judgements and conclusions in their responses to Question 3 to their approaches to Question 1(b).

Centres may wish to consider teaching approaches which lead with a study of Contexts of Media to highlight its importance as a key aspect of the course. Contexts of Media is listed in the specification as an additional area of study which links to all four areas of the theoretical framework. Candidates need to consider the contexts of each of their set products and how they have influenced the final product, as well as the processes of production and consumption associated with the product. The set product fact sheets available on the [Eduqas digital resources website](#) provide an excellent starting point for teaching the relevant contexts of each of the set products.

Finally, candidates should be provided with opportunities for close study of the websites and social media associated with their set music artists, approaching them with a level of attention to detail which matches their analysis of the set music videos.

## **EDUQAS MEDIA STUDIES**

### **GCSE**

**Summer 2022**

## **COMPONENT 3: CREATING MEDIA PRODUCTS**

### **General Comments**

There was a wide range of productions submitted by centres in response to the set briefs and the adaptations provided for submission this year. The majority of candidates responded appropriately to the set briefs and the adaptations. The focus of this component is the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to communicate meaning; most candidates were able to demonstrate this and their media knowledge through their Statement of Aims and final productions.

The component was approached in different ways by centres, some offering only one option of production or brief whilst others gave candidates a choice of briefs, both of which are acceptable approaches. Where candidates are given a variety of options, it is important that all candidates fulfil the requirements of the set brief and that centres ensure there is parity of assessment and internal standardisation across the various briefs.

The majority of centres submitted full productions; however there were some centres that utilised the adaptation options for submission this year. The print options remain the most popular, particularly Brief 2, but there was an even split in terms of choice of genre.

Centres are reminded that candidates should be given the opportunity to engage in independent research and planning specific to their chosen brief to ensure the knowledge and understanding of the conventional form is secure before attempting to complete their productions. 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 majority of centres uploaded work to Surpass in advance of the deadline, using appropriate file formats. While PDF files are acceptable, they do not always show print production work to its best quality, and it may be advisable to upload original files such as JPEGs in order that the work can be seen clearly. There were some cases of problematic file formats being uploaded within Zip files. Files such as .PSD and GIMP project files are not suitable file formats. Centres are reminded to check the list of appropriate file formats and to check files before uploading to Surpass for moderation to ensure they can be opened to avoid any delays in the moderation of the work.

It greatly helped the moderation process when each file was clearly labelled with the candidate's name and the description of the piece of work, e.g. 'double page spread'; however, this was not always the case. Several centres failed to upload elements of candidates' work, for example cover sheets, or uploaded cover sheets that were incomplete, which delayed the process considerably. It is of paramount importance that all elements of this component are uploaded by the deadline and by using one key code per candidate.



Most candidates' cover sheets were completed and submitted with the NEA work. However, several centres failed to use the coversheet for 2022 with the adaptation information on. It is helpful for moderation if the cover sheet is clearly labelled and submitted as one complete document rather than several separate files. If candidates submit a website production, the URL should be included as a hyperlink, or clearly typewritten, in order that the moderator can easily access the site. It is vital that centres make sure any permissions/access to websites is checked before sending website links and that the website does not expire after a certain amount of time to avoid the moderation process being delayed.

Some candidates completed Section A in detail, taking the opportunity to outline their research, planning and production process. This aids moderation and it is especially important for candidates who have taken photographs in unusual or distant locations to explain how they created their images to confirm that these are original. However, some candidates failed to complete Section A as required which made it very difficult to see how their research and planning had impacted upon the production. It is also important that this part of the cover sheet gives information about non-original material used and non-assessed participants; this was omitted on several occasions which made it difficult to moderate.

Many teachers included detailed comments in Section C, giving examples from candidates' work to support the assessment decisions. This is extremely important and helpful, especially as annotation is not a requirement on the work itself. Where phrases from the generic marking grid are used, it is important to ensure that these match the mark awarded, which was not always the case. There were some cases of no teacher commentary on Section C which made the moderation process difficult as it was not always clear why the work had been given the mark it had; it is crucial that this section is completed fully and signed off.

### **Meeting the requirements of the brief**

Candidates must respond to the set brief for the year of assessment. A minority of candidates appeared to have responded to an incorrect brief or not followed the set genres specified in the briefs which inevitably limited their ability to meet the requirements of Component 3.

Most candidates adhered to the requirements for length and quantity of work, although some produced less than the required number of, for example, magazine or web pages; this should be reflected in the assessment of these productions using the assessment grid for guidance.

While research and planning is not an assessed element of Component 3 and does not need to be submitted, research is essential to ensure that candidates are able to complete a successful production that responds to the brief. Where candidates did not discuss their research in Section A of the coversheet, their lack of awareness of the codes and conventions of the chosen form was usually evident in their production work.

To ensure parity across centres and forms it is essential that candidates adhere to all aspects of the set brief:

- The content and style of the production must be suitable for the target audience range specified in the brief. Some candidates extended the range of the target audience, while others selected a narrower age band within the range which is not permitted. Candidates should not amend the target audience in the brief in any way.

- All productions must adhere to the codes and conventions of the chosen form; this should be informed by completing detailed research and planning before starting the production. For example, film marketing campaigns should have clear branding and reflect the conventional layout of the form. Some candidates did not feature consistent use of fonts, layout and genre conventions to demonstrate the brand identity of the product. There was often an inconsistency between the branding on the DVD cover and posters. When completing the Magazine brief, there were instances where candidates did not show consideration for the centre fold of the double page article; this demonstrates a lack of understanding of the conventional form and should be reflected in the assessment of the production.
- All of the minimum requirements listed in the brief must be included in the productions, for example the required number of original images, the stipulated number of characters and range of camera shots. Some music videos, for example, did not include any performance footage and some websites did not include the required audio or audio-visual content.
- Candidates need to ensure that they meet the requirements of Column 3 of the marking grid where they are required to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations. Where candidates did not include any images of people, their ability to construct representations was limited. Some productions contained images of people with their backs to the camera, which also limited the ability to construct representations.

## **Statement of Aims**

Most candidates completed the Statement of Aims and Intentions in Section B of the cover sheet as required. It is essential that candidates include a word count and adhere to the 250 word limit (+/- 10%). Many candidates exceeded the word limit, sometimes by a significant margin. In such cases, teachers should cease marking the statement once the upper threshold has been reached. It is perfectly acceptable for candidates to use bullet points in the statement to maximise the word count.

The Statement of Aims and Intentions must be completed after the research and planning stage, but before production begins and must be written in the future tense. Most candidates did adhere to this requirement; however, some candidates appeared to have produced an evaluation after the production had been completed, which is not the purpose of this task. The Statement should be signed off by both candidate and teacher before the production process begins, which will ensure the production is fully planned and the intentions address the set brief.

Most candidates adhered to the requirements of this element of the component and those in the higher bands demonstrated their ability to discuss how they intended to apply their knowledge and understanding within their productions. Knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework was evident through references to media language and the use of subject-specific terminology. Some candidates referred to theories and theoretical perspectives; however, these must be appropriate and applied correctly and concisely rather than a descriptive approach.

The most successful statements were supported by specific, detailed examples of how candidates intended to construct representations within their own productions. Some candidates adopted a descriptive approach which made it difficult for them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

## **Production:**

The print briefs were by far the most popular option, the magazine brief saw an even split across the two genre options and there was also an even split between the two genre options for the film marketing brief. A small number of centres opted for the audio-visual briefs and there was evidence of both the music video and opening sequences. There were a small number of adaptations submitted, some with and without supporting evidence for the prototype and mock up options. There was evidence of highly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework across all of the briefs and the adaptations.

Centres are reminded that all images included in the production must be original and generated by the candidate. The inclusion of found images, even where they have been significantly manipulated, is not acceptable. Some teachers identified that candidates had used some 'found' images and had assessed the work accordingly. In some cases, however, it was difficult to determine whether candidates' images were original as this information was not available on the coversheet. There were some excellent examples of the use of original images and footage where candidates had paid detailed attention to the construction of appropriate representations through the use of clothing, expression, gesture, and setting. The quality of some images was also an issue; it is important that the images have been taken specifically for the purpose of creating the production and not found incidentally or taken in class/school when this does not fit the conventions of the form. For example, images of a characters in a school uniform on the front of a DVD cover for an action film.

There was evidence of very accurate application of the assessment grid; however a significant number of centres had assessed work generously, extremely so in some cases. Some candidates were generously assessed where the production work did not conform to the codes and conventions of the specified form as stated in column 2 of the assessment grid. Common issues such as unconventional layouts of the magazine double page spread and the DVD front and back covers led to assessment being generous in some cases. There was also a tendency to over-reward construction of appropriate and purposeful representations in some cases.

## **BRIEF 1: Television/Online**

### **Either:**

**(a) Create a credit and opening sequence for an episode of a new television drama in the mystery or comedy genre.**

### **Or:**

**(b) Create a functioning homepage and one other linked page for a website for a new television drama in the mystery or comedy genre.**

*Your production must target an audience of 16-30 year olds.*

There were very few centres who chose to complete this brief but of those that did, there were some examples of good knowledge and understanding of the conventional form of opening sequences demonstrated. These conventions were often edited in thoughtfully to create a successful opening sequence. The most successful candidates had adhered to the requirements of the set brief and incorporated a range of shots to establish representations of characters and the genre. The mystery genre was the more popular option. Some candidates failed to establish character roles and narrative successfully and this should be considered when applying the assessment grid.

## **BRIEF 2: Magazines/Online**

**Either:**

**(a) Create a front cover and a double page feature article for a new mainstream music or film magazine.**

**Or:**

**(b) Create a functioning homepage and one other linked page for a website for a new mainstream music or film magazine.**

*Your production must target an audience of 16-30 year olds.*

Option A was one of the most popular options for submission this year and there were some excellent realisations of the set brief; there were very few online options submitted. Nearly all candidates adhered to the requirements of the brief and produced either a music or film magazine. There were a small number of candidates who created a magazine outside of these set genres which meant that a high mark in column two of the assessment grid could not be awarded due to not meeting the requirements of the brief.

The most successful candidates had researched existing products in the music and film genres which clearly helped candidates apply the knowledge and understanding of the form and genre within their own productions. Some of the work was extremely successful in the application of the conventions of film and music magazines which constructed complex representations and demonstrated a highly appropriate mode of address. There were some excellent examples of original branding on the front cover which was replicated in the double page articles which helped create a sense of brand identity across both products.

However, there were a significant number of candidates who did not have a secure understanding of the conventional layout and design of double page articles. A large number of candidates did not adhere to typical layouts and conventions of the form such as not taking the centre fold into consideration; for example, images and text were often placed over the centre fold of the article. There were also cases of candidates not using the space of the article appropriately and leaving large areas blank, which is not conventional of the form.

There were also a number of candidates who failed to establish representations on their front covers due to the mode of address being inappropriate, for example there were instances of people having their backs to the camera which made it difficult to establish representations.

There were some very successful prototypes and mock-ups for this set brief, where candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the music and film magazine genres, as well as the conventions of the form through the final submissions and supporting materials.

## **BRIEF 3: Film Marketing**

**Create a DVD/Blu-ray front and back cover (including a spine) and a theatrical release poster for a new film in the coming of age or action genre.**

*You may, if you wish, produce film marketing material in a sub-genre or hybrid genre of your choice. Your production must target an audience of 16-30 year olds with an interest in the genre.*

This was a very popular option within centres and there was evidence of excellent examples of both genres.

The most successful candidates developed a coherent campaign, demonstrating a brand identity for the film across the DVD cover and poster. However, some struggled to develop a clear 'brand identity' that linked the poster and DVD cover together, for example they included very different images and font styles across the campaign. Once again, research into film marketing campaigns is essential to inform candidates' production work.

The 'coming of age' genre tended to be popular, possibly due to the ease of access to young people to feature in the images. Quite a large number of candidates submitted work with characters in school uniform; while this could potentially form part of the narrative and representation of the characters, centres are reminded that candidates should be encouraged to consider dress codes as a way of communicating meanings. To secure assessment in Band 5 the meanings communicated, and representations constructed need to be complex and purposeful. Candidates who had undertaken the action genre seemed to have largely engaged in appropriate research which had impacted upon their own productions and there was some excellent work in evidence, showing a real awareness of codes and conventions and the ability to construct valid representations within the action genre.

Applying the conventions of the DVD and poster form proved challenging to some candidates who did not conform to recognised conventions and did not include key elements of the brief. The layout and design of DVD back covers was an area of challenge in many cases as some candidates did not conform to typical conventions, particularly in the bottom half of the back cover where the technical information is usually found. There was also often replication of images across the poster and DVD and some candidates failed to include the required number of images or to construct an appropriate billing block that was not a found image. There were a small number of candidates who did not include any characters in their productions; not only does this not meet the requirements of the brief but it also makes constructing representations impossible.

Centres are reminded that the use of found images in thumbnails, as backgrounds and as part of special effects are not permitted; all images must be original and generated by the candidate.

There were some very successful prototypes and mock-ups for this set brief where candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the 'coming of age' and action genres, as well as the conventions of the form through the submissions and supporting materials.

#### **BRIEF 4: Music Marketing/ Online**

**Either:**

**(a) Create an original music video to promote a new artist or band in the rock music genre.**

**Or:**

**(b) Online: Create a functioning website, including a working homepage and one other linked page, to promote a new television teen drama programme.**

*You may, if you wish, produce a music video in a sub-genre of rock music, for example 'indie rock' or 'folk rock'. Your production must target an audience of 16-30 year olds.*

Although this brief was not chosen by a large number of candidates, there were some excellent examples of work for this set brief. Some excellent videos were seen that fully adhered to the codes and conventions of the genre, for example by constructing representations relevant to the genre, featuring performance and narrative footage, and interpreting the lyrics effectively to communicate meanings.

A small number of candidates did not include any performance footage to establish the identity of the artist/ band. In such cases, candidates had often been over-rewarded due to the lack of representation of the artist being constructed. There were some submissions which tended to be random footage pieced together to a soundtrack but these lacked narrative and the ability to construct representations was difficult meaning that the assessment was often generous.

As stated in reference to other briefs, where candidates dressed in school uniform and filmed entirely in a school setting, it was much more difficult for them to construct representations appropriate to the genre. Where candidates had carefully considered clothing, gesture and expression and other elements of media language, their productions were much more successful.

A small number of candidates completed the music website option, often very successfully communicating the genre of music and star persona of the artist. Audio-visual elements included interviews with the singer or performance footage of the artist/ band at a concert or in a studio, both of which were highly appropriate to the brief.

### **Summary of key points**

- All candidates must complete independent research into the chosen form before starting planning and production of the media products. This will ensure a foundation of knowledge that can support the construction of the final production and candidates will have a secure knowledge and understanding of the conventions of the form and the genre that has been chosen.
- Candidates must adhere to the requirements of the chosen brief in all aspects. These requirements should be used as a checklist to guide candidates during the production process. Where significant elements of the brief are missing, this must be reflected in the assessment of the work according to column 2 in the assessment grid.
- Through their production candidates must demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to communicate meaning. Candidates must consider the ways in which they can construct appropriate representations even when using their peers as their characters. Careful consideration of costume and locations can ensure that appropriate representations are constructed.
- Centres are advised to access exemplar work on the WJEC Secure site to ascertain the standards for Component 3 before delivering the component and before assessing the work. Internal standardisation of marks is recommended to ensure assessment is robust before inputting candidate marks.



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