



GCE A LEVEL EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**A LEVEL (NEW)
MEDIA STUDIES**

SUMMER 2019

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Unit	Page
Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences	1
Component 2: Media Forms and Products in Depth	8
Component 3: Cross-Media Production	14

MEDIA STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL (NEW)

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 1: MEDIA PRODUCTS, INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

General Comments

As this was the first Component 1 examination since the introduction of the reformed A Level Media Studies qualification, it was encouraging to see how positively centres and candidates have responded to the demands of the new specification and how well candidates had been guided by centres. The candidates generally demonstrated a good level of knowledge and understanding both with the set products and the relevant aspects of the theoretical framework. Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of what was required in the different elements of the paper, showing that they had been well prepared for the demands of this component. Most candidates attempted all of the questions and there were very few incomplete papers signifying that candidates had been well taught in managing the paper.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1

Explore how the combination of elements of media language influences meaning in the This Girl Can advertisement. [15]

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 set for this question was audio-visual and was an advertisement which is part of the *This Girl Can* campaign, produced by Sport England in 2017. This proved to be a rich product that was very accessible for most candidates who had been well prepared for this question through their study of the *WaterAid* set product. However, it was of some concern that the responses to this question suggested that there has been an over-teaching of theory at the expense of textual analysis. Many candidates were overly keen to refer to a range of theories, not all appropriate, instead of focusing on the media language element of the question. To prepare for the unseen product it is essential that candidates are given practice in applying their understanding of all elements of media language so that they are equipped to analyse a range of media products from the set forms.

In order to produce a successful response it was essential that candidates were able to dissect the relevant parts of the question to help them to focus their answer. The overall focus was clearly media language, but they were required to explore how the **combination of elements** of media language **influenced meaning**. Several candidates approached this question as a general analysis of the unseen product and missed the nuances of the question. In these responses there was a tendency to discuss meanings without incorporating the 'how' element of the question.

It was encouraging to see that some candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the product in detail, showing understanding of the relevant focus and employing various degrees of relevant media terminology. These candidates referred to appropriate theories and theoretical perspectives to support their points including Barthes and Levi Strauss with some candidates demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of semiotics. These more successful responses clearly addressed the 'combination of elements' aspect of the question. The expectation was that aspects of media language and how they work together to communicate meaning would be discussed, including:

- visual codes
- technical and audio codes
- setting and iconography
- use of language
- the codes and conventions of the advertising form particular to this sub-genre
- the purpose of this advertisement in empowering women and persuading them to take up exercise

Responses in the higher bands were confident in discussing the codes and conventions of the advertising form, were particularly strong when discussing media language and could, as expected, discuss how the impact and effect of specific camera shots, angles and editing techniques influenced meaning. The unseen product allowed candidates to approach their response from a range of different starting points and there were very few purely descriptive answers. There was some excellent, detailed analysis demonstrating understanding of the theoretical framework and applying relevant theory. Candidates who produced more sophisticated responses also used the language of semiotics to develop their analysis further, which is to be encouraged.

However, there were several candidates who approached this question as a representation question focusing almost entirely on the representation of women in the advertisement and how representations and more common stereotypes had been subverted. Whilst this approach is relevant where it contributed to an analysis of how media language creates meanings, this should not form the focus of the response. In addition, theories less relevant to this question were also used.

Candidates in the middle of the mark range often recognised the connotations of the visual elements, but failed to then explore them in any detail. They produced a reasonable and straightforward analysis of the advertisement and tended not to cover a broad range of points. Several candidates failed to discuss the fact that the product was an advertisement and missed the opportunity to use the work they had done in class in their preparation of similar products. As the unseen resource is always taken from one of the forms studied for Section A, the expectation is that candidates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to the selected form.

Candidates awarded marks in the lower bands tended to produce a more descriptive response, telling the story of the advertisement and missing the focus of the question. They were also less confident with the meaning of 'combination of elements', focusing more on the discussion of one element, for example camera shots. These responses showed limited understanding of the theoretical framework and limited use of subject-specific terminology.

Question 2

Compare how these pages from the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* construct versions of reality. In your answer you must:

- Consider the choices media producers make when constructing versions of reality
- Consider the similarities and differences in the representations
- Make judgements and draw conclusions about how far the representations relate to relevant media contexts

[30]

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.**

Candidates found this question the most challenging on the paper. This is an extended response question where candidates are assessed on the quality of their written response, including their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured. This question was answered well by many candidates who used the preparation that they had undertaken for the set product to aid them in the analysis of the unseen newspaper. It was clear that many candidates were familiar with the *Daily Mail* and has been well prepared by looking at a range of examples of this form in class.

There were some rubric infringements, the most common was the failure to discuss the article from the *Daily Mirror* in the response. This is an integral part of the set product and clear instructions were given in the question guiding candidates to refer to both the front cover and the article in their response. Candidates who failed to do so could not be seen to engage in 'detailed and appropriate comparisons' as required for Band 5. A minority of candidates referred to a different edition of the *Daily Mail* than the one set as the unseen product and some candidates referred to *The Times* set product instead of the *Daily Mirror*. Some candidates were confused between right- and left-wing political stances and this meant their responses were at times, inaccurate.

In this response the bullet points were included in order to help candidates to structure their answer and to guide them in what to include. The expectation is that all of the bullet points are covered, but not necessarily in the same amount of detail. Better responses were able to do this and to address the focus of the question analysing both products and making relevant comparisons. It was essential for this response that candidates demonstrated effective essay writing skills and employed subject-specific terminology. Candidates attaining marks in the higher bands effectively applied their knowledge of the theoretical framework and in particular, representation. These candidates were able to explore more detailed aspects of representation demonstrating clear understanding of the choices media producers make when constructing versions of reality. At the higher levels, this point was discussed in detail in both products, referring to visual codes, layout and design, language and mode of address and highlighting both similarities and differences. Candidates also demonstrated an understanding of the impact of the political ideology of the newspaper on the way in which events are represented. To be placed in the higher bands, it was essential to compare the two products.

Some candidates, however, failed to structure their response around the bullet points and as a result produced more straightforward comparisons of the two newspapers. Responses in the middle band focused on more straightforward or obvious aspects of representation related to, for example, colour and tended to focus more on one product. Less successful responses at times did not address the focus of the question and were largely undeveloped. Here there was a tendency to simply describe the key features of the two products and reference to relevant contexts was absent, or brief and undeveloped. Candidates who were less well prepared tended to rely on the analysis of the *Daily Mail* as that was available in the examination.

Regarding the use of theory, it is important that the theory/theoretical perspective chosen is valid, relevant and can be used to support the points the candidate wishes to make about the products. There were several examples of candidates who tried to include theories which were, at worst, irrelevant and, at best, not applied appropriately. For example, a few candidates referenced Stuart Hall in terms of representation but several used reception theory, thus changing the focus of the response to audiences rather than representation.

Responses in the higher bands made perceptive comments about media contexts supported by specific examples from the products. They were able to effectively relate these to the construction of representations and how this reflected the political stance of the newspapers. The reference to contexts in the middle range responses was more straightforward and undeveloped.

Section B: Understanding Media Industries and Audiences

Question 3

3. (a) *What is meant by an independent film?* [2]

AO1 a Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

Most candidates were able to answer this correctly but in varied degrees of detail. In order to attain 2 marks there needed to be an accurate explanation which included detail and/or exemplification.

3. (b) *Briefly explain what you understand by vertical integration.* [2]

AO1 a Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework

This was answered less well and a worrying number of candidates produced inaccurate answers, or ones discussing horizontal integration. 2 marks were awarded for an answer that was accurate and included detail and/or exemplification. Some candidates included examples unrelated to the media industry. Examples from media industries other than film were accepted.

3. (c) Explain two features of mainstream film production. Refer briefly to *Straight Outta Compton* to support your points. [6]

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

Up to 3 marks were awarded for each feature. This question was answered well by the majority of candidates, most attaining at least 4 marks overall. The most successful answers were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of this specific aspect of the film industry and apply this to the set film product. These responses referred to a range of features including budget, ownership, production values, marketing strategies and star personas. Some less successful responses highlighted features that were not specific to mainstream films, for example editing and the production of trailers. A minority of candidates failed to refer to *Straight Outta Compton*, some included references to other films.

3. (d) Explain how economic contexts shape independent films. Refer to *I, Daniel Blake* to support your points.

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

This question was answered very well by a number of candidates who understood the industry focus and could also demonstrate their knowledge of economic contexts. The set film product had clearly been well taught by many centres with candidates demonstrating their ability to place this product within its industry context.

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.

In their responses, candidates were required to discuss how economic contexts, for example ownership, funding, exhibition, distribution, narrative themes and ideology, are distinctive to independent films and as such shape the set product. Candidates responded to this question in different ways, some focusing on for example, how the lower budget influenced the more creative and innovative marketing strategies, whilst others explored the freedom independent films had to highlight political and social issues, for example poverty and the welfare system. There were some very good responses which also incorporated a discussion of the BBC's role as a public service broadcaster and the co-funding of the film. All these approaches are acceptable responses.

The first step of the question, which required candidates to engage with the film industry on a broader scale, was ignored by some candidates who focused solely on a textual analysis of *I, Daniel Blake*. Conversely, some candidates were able to use this example effectively in order to explore how the film was shaped by its economic context, others tended to describe elements of the film without relating these to the question.

More effective responses were able to also incorporate theories and theoretical perspectives, including Curran and Seaton and Hesmondhalgh. Weaker responses tended to mention these theorists without using them to further their analysis of the film industry and the set product in particular.

Question 4

4. (a) *Explain how the radio industry targets audiences. Refer to Late Night Woman's Hour to support your points.* [10]

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

The focus of this question was audience and it was in two parts, requiring candidates to discuss how the radio industry targets audiences and to use examples from the set product to support their points. More successful responses gave an introduction discussing the need for radio as a form to change the way in which it targets audiences in the digital age and proceeded to offer a range of examples from the set product. These responses effectively highlighted the specific target audience and referred to the choice of the presenter Lauren Laverne and her ability to relate to the younger, intellectual female audience, the guests including academics and professional women, the often controversial women centred topics, the scheduling time and the programme's availability across a range of digital platforms. Whilst most candidates made some reference to the set episode it was also acceptable to refer to the programme generally in terms of its purpose in targeting a new, specialised audience for Radio 4.

More straightforward responses failed to focus on the key word in the question: 'target' and instead focused on audience appeal without referring to the specific target audience of the programme. This often produced a very general response with no specific reference to the set product. In some of the more basic responses there were some very stereotypical references made about the 'northernness' of Lauren Laverne and her 'working class' accent which led to an inaccurate assumption about the audience targeted. A more considered discussion referenced her as a more controversial and interesting choice for Radio 4 suggesting the targeting of a more niche and exclusive audience.

Several candidates referred to audience theory and theoretical perspectives including Shirky to support their points.

4. (b) *Explain the impact of media technologies on audience consumption of radio. Refer to Late Night Woman's Hour to support your points.* [10]

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

Similarly to Question Q4(a), this was in two parts, requiring candidates to explain how media technologies had impacted upon the ways in which audiences consumed radio and then to use examples from the set product to support their points. The more successful responses demonstrated their understanding of the radio industry, focusing on the audience element of the question. These responses referred to for example, advances in technology establishing radio as a global medium, the switch from FM to DAB, the range of devices through which radio can be consumed making it a more portable medium and the ease of accessibility to the form geared towards the lifestyle of the audience. These points were then generally well supported by specific references to the set product with most candidates mentioning the *Late Night Woman's Hour* podcast enabling flexible listening and the Twitter account encouraging audience interactivity. Several candidates referred to Shirky's audience theories regarding changing audience behaviour.

More straightforward responses failed to focus on the audience stem of the question and the key words 'impact' and 'audience consumption' and instead tended to focus on one point, for example the programme's appeal to the 'on the go' audience. Some candidates produced a very general response with no specific reference to the set product.

As this was the last question on the paper it was evident that some candidates were short of time and the response was therefore hampered by its brevity. However, it was pleasing to see how many candidates had clearly planned their time well and could produce a competent final response.

Summary of key points

- Candidates need to be clear about the focus of each element of the examination paper and what needs to be included in their response.
- In preparation for Section A, candidates must be taught textual analysis and how to incorporate the language of semiotics to enhance their analysis.
- In all questions, candidates must be guided to dissect the question carefully in order to understand what is required and focus their response. This is particularly important in Section B where the product is the vehicle through which they discuss aspects of the industry and audience.
- Question 2 requires comparison and an extended response which would be aided by planning and essay writing skills.
- All elements of the set products need to be referred to in the questions.
- Candidates must develop their use of subject-specific terminology and the language of analysis to enhance their responses.

MEDIA STUDIES
GCE A LEVEL (NEW)

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 2: MEDIA FORMS AND PRODUCTS IN DEPTH

General Comments

As this was the first A Level examination for Component 2 since the introduction of the reformed Media Studies qualification, it was particularly encouraging to see how well candidates and centres had engaged with the demands and requirements of the new specification. Candidates generally appeared to be well-prepared for the examination and there was much evidence to show that they had engaged thoughtfully with the products studied and had been well-taught. In the top bands, there was some truly impressive work which, in some cases, advanced far beyond what could reasonably be expected of an A Level candidate. It was also pleasing to note that even in the lower bands, where knowledge and understanding was more basic or limited, there was still, in many cases, a genuine attempt to engage with course content. This is clearly testament to the hard work of the candidates and their teachers.

One area where there did appear to be some inconsistency and perhaps anxiety was in the use of theory. While some candidates made highly effective use of relevant critical theories, often applying these to productive or insightful effect, in many cases there was a tendency to simply include theory for theory's sake. Some candidates clearly felt that they had to refer to theory on every page or in every paragraph. It is worth emphasising that this is not the case as candidates are only required to use theory where the question explicitly demands it. Of course, this is not to say that candidates should avoid using theory elsewhere in the paper; it is simply to say that theory should only be used where it is relevant and where it can make a meaningful contribution to a candidate's analysis or argument. Making reference to a particular theory or simply including a theorist's name does not necessarily add quality to a candidate's response or gain extra marks (at least not in itself); what is important is how well the theory is understood, how relevantly it is used and how effectively it is applied.

Where possible, candidates should be encouraged to see theory as a set of tools that can be used to explain, explore or interrogate the world around them (or, more specifically, the world of the media) rather than as an end in itself. In other words, it is important to treat theory as a set of ideas to be engaged with rather than as a series of facts to be learnt and reproduced (the Eduqas Media Studies specification carefully frames the theories in precisely this way – as ideas rather than facts. For example, the summary of Shirky's 'end of audience' theory in the Eduqas specification describes it in part as 'the idea that the conceptualisation of audience members as passive consumers of mass media content is no longer tenable in the age of the Internet, as media consumers have now become producers who 'speak back to' the media in various ways, as well as creating and sharing content with one another').

Comments on individual questions/sections

Section A - Television in the Global Age

'Television is a global industry.' To what extent do *Life on Mars* and *The Bridge/Humans and The Returned/The Jinx* and *No Burqas Behind Bars* support this claim? [30]

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

AO2 3: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions

Candidates responded to this question in different ways. While the majority of candidates argued that their set products *did* support the claim that television is a global industry, a significant number argued that one or both of their set products challenged this idea. Either conclusion was perfectly acceptable provided that it was supported and justified with appropriate reference to relevant aspects of the set products.

Responses in the higher bands tended to show more detailed knowledge and understanding of the set products and relevant aspects of the television industry such as production and distribution. For instance, while many candidates made useful reference to the co-production model employed by the makers of *The Bridge*, *Humans* and *No Burqas Behind Bars*, candidates in the top bands often demonstrated a greater understanding of the significance of these production models and the sources of funding that the set products were able to draw on. For example, some candidates discussed the way in which APSA, which provided development funding for *No Burqas Behind Bars*, seeks to promote greater cultural awareness of the Asia Pacific region amongst international audiences, while others discussed the role of the Ile-de-France Regional Fund, which provided funding for *The Returned*, in promoting French culture and providing economic support for the Ile-de-France region. There was also some insightful discussion of the way in which the narrative, characterisation and settings used in *The Bridge* reflect its status as an international co-production.

Candidates in the higher bands also tended to engage more explicitly and in greater critical depth with the question of how global the television industry actually is. For example, some candidates highlighted the hegemony of Anglo-American programming within international markets, suggesting that this is more indicative of the cultural and economic power of specific nations rather than heralding a truly international television culture while others questioned whether success in American and European markets provides sufficient evidence to support the claim that television is a global industry.

In the lower bands, there was a more limited or basic understanding of relevant aspects of the television industry. This was often demonstrated through more general references to production and distribution, some of which were marked by significant factual inaccuracies. A particularly common misconception was that online platforms such as the BBC iPlayer and All 4 are straightforwardly accessible to global audiences all around the world. While there are certainly valid arguments to be made about the way in which digital technologies have facilitated globalisation, a significant number of candidates offered rather simplistic and generalised statements about the impact of such platforms and technologies on the set products with little evidence to support the claims that were being made.

There was also an issue in the lower bands with candidates discussing the appeal of the set products in more general terms without explaining whether this appeal was local or global or how it might relate to the idea that television is a global industry. Similarly, a number of candidates simply described the way in which the set products were marketed without relating this information specifically to the question.

Section B – Magazines: Mainstream and Alternative Media

- (a) Discuss the influence of historical context on representations in the set edition of *Woman magazine/Woman's Realm magazine/Vogue magazine*. [15]

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

While this question was generally well-answered, there were some issues in terms of how clearly and effectively the relationship between the representations in the magazine and the historical context was established. Some candidates outlined the historical context in detail but provided only a cursory discussion of the representations in the set magazine, while others simply discussed the representations in the set product without exploring how they were influenced by the historical context in which they were produced. The most successful responses were able to link specific representations from the set text to relevant aspects of the historical context.

Some candidates were also confused about the date/decade of publication. Lots of responses suggested that the set magazine was published immediately after the end of the second world war, many claimed that it was published in the 1950s and some claimed that it was published in the 1970s or 1980s. There were also some responses where candidates failed to refer to the set edition, either discussing the magazine in more general terms or focusing on other editions from different points in the magazine's history. Although some incidental reference to other editions of the magazine can be useful as a means of contextualising the set product (some candidates made instructive comparisons between the cover of the set edition of *Vogue* with that of a more recent edition, for example), it is important to emphasise that the primary focus should always be on the set edition specified for study.

A further issue was that some candidates limited their discussion to the front cover of the magazine. Although this was not an extended response question, candidates are still expected to show knowledge and understanding of a reasonable range of features from the set edition in order to support and illustrate their arguments.

Stronger responses generally showed a more secure understanding of the 60s context in which the set magazine was published. For example, some candidates drew useful links between the changing social and cultural attitudes of the 1960s and the representation of issues such as sex and divorce in the problem pages of *Woman* and *Woman's Realm*. Similarly, the growing financial independence of women in the 1960s was cited as an influence on the 'Money' feature in *Vogue* by a number of candidates, with some linking this to specific legislative changes that occurred during the era. There were also some interesting discussions of the Australian Sultanas advertisement in *Woman's Realm*, the advertisements for Breeze and the Women's Royal Army Corps in *Woman*, and the Cutex advertisement in *Vogue*, with many candidates relating these representations to a growing sense of female liberation in the 1960s culture and the move towards a more permissive society.

Some candidates also made useful reference to the idea of a culture lag in order to explain the way in which features such as 'A Present for Your Kitchen' in *Woman*, 'The Sunday Cook' in *Woman's Realm* and the Imperial Leather advertisement in *Vogue* offered more traditional representations of femininity.

While the majority of candidates focused predominantly on representations of gender, valid points were also made about the representation of ethnicity and, more specifically, the under-representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the set products.

- (b) Explore how the set edition of *Adbusters*/*Huck*/*The Big Issue* conveys viewpoints and ideologies. [15]

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

The variations in response here were largely to do with the extent to which candidates engaged with the 'how' part of the question. While responses in the middle and lower bands tended to identify and describe the viewpoints and ideologies outlined in the set magazine without fully exploring how they were articulated, those in the upper bands provided a more detailed analysis of the ways in which viewpoints and ideologies were conveyed in the set magazine product.

Although there was no specific requirement to refer to theory in this question, many candidates did make appropriate and productive use of relevant critical approaches and theories. Semiotic theory was employed to particularly good effect in a number of responses as candidates in the higher bands were able to discuss the processes of signification through which ideological messages and meanings were communicated in the set magazines. Good use was also made of structuralist approaches to textual analysis, particularly in relation to the culture jams in *Adbusters* and the countercultural ethos of *Huck*, with many candidates discussing the way in which binary oppositions were constructed in the set products. While responses in the middle band often showed an ability to identify and describe the binary oppositions operating in the set magazines, those in the higher bands moved beyond this to explore the ideological significance of these binary oppositions in greater depth.

The representations that featured in the set magazines were also widely discussed. Again, the most successful responses were those that linked this material back to the question by discussing the ideological significance of the representations that the set magazines offered. For example, the way in which the 'My Pitch' feature and the 'Moving On' article in *The Big Issue* challenged dominant cultural understandings of homelessness was usefully discussed by a number of candidates as was the Grayson Perry feature, with many candidates providing a constructive account of the more progressive and liberal values that this representation could be seen to embody. Similarly, the ideological significance of the 'Beyond Binary' feature in *Huck* was generally well discussed and the way in which the cover image and the 'Ocalan's Angels' article could be seen to articulate a feminist viewpoint was also thoughtfully explored by several candidates.

The layout, design and aesthetics of the set magazines were also discussed in a number of responses. For example, many candidates discussed the extent to which *Huck*'s countercultural status was reflected in its aesthetic, while many of those studying *Adbusters* made pertinent points about its rejection of mainstream magazine conventions, particularly in terms of its use of white space and the non-commercial nature of its aesthetic and mode of address.

Some candidates also made valid points about the way in which the ideologies and viewpoints of the set magazines were embodied not just in their representations and their use of media language but also in their business models and their methods of production and distribution. *The Big Issue*'s ethos of providing 'a hand up not a handout' and its use of street vendors was mentioned by a number of candidates, while many of those studying *Adbusters* made useful reference to its lack of advertising and its status as a 'not-for-profit' publication.

Section C – Media in the Online Age

Clay Shirky argues that audiences in today's online age are no longer passive consumers of media content.

Evaluate this 'end of audience' theory. Refer to PointlessBlog and DesiMag/Zoella and the Attitude website to support your answer. [30]

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

AO2 2: Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to evaluate academic theories

In some respects, this question proved the most challenging, perhaps because evaluation of theory is a more advanced skill that candidates have not had as much practice employing as other skills that they develop over the course of their studies (significantly, the requirement to evaluate academic theories is particular to A Level Component 2; it is not a requirement of the AS Level, nor is it assessed in Component 1). It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that many candidates simply applied or described Shirky's 'end of audience' theory rather than evaluating its validity, usefulness or relevance. While in some cases candidates could be seen to offer an implicit evaluation of Shirky's theory as they discussed the degree to which their set online products facilitated passive consumption or greater levels of audience interaction, in the lower bands, many candidates simply offered a more general description of the features and appeal of the set products without really addressing the question at all.

Candidates also showed varying levels of understanding of Shirky's theory. While some candidates made useful reference to the role of user-generated content and prosumers in the Web 2.0 era, demonstrating a sound grasp of the main principles of Shirky's theory, other candidates showed a more limited understanding of 'end of audience' theories. This was particularly apparent in responses which cited a loss of subscribers to Alfie's or Zoella's YouTube channels as the main evidence in support of Shirky's theory, as this decline in viewership was seen to equate quite literally to an 'end of audience'.

In the lower bands, there were also some rather simplistic or undeveloped discussions of the differences between passive consumption and more active audience responses, with a significant number of candidates suggesting that the simple act of subscribing to a YouTuber's channel or buying a product that they have promoted constitutes an active response. In the higher bands, these ideas and some of the assumptions underlying Shirky's theory were subjected to greater critical interrogation. For example, some candidates queried the idea that *all* media consumers are now producers who 'speak back' to the media, pointing to the fact that not everyone who watches a YouTube video posts a comment about it or produces their own video in response (many candidates made effective use of statistical analysis to support these points). The more limited possibilities for audience interaction provided by *DesiMag* and the *Attitude* website were also usefully discussed by many candidates. The idea that in the past all audiences were passive consumers of media content was also questioned, with some candidates making useful reference to the problem pages in the historical magazines they had studied as evidence that audiences were able to 'speak back' to the media even in the 1960s.

In the higher bands, useful reference was also made to other relevant audience theories as a means of evaluating Shirky's 'end of audience' theory. Many candidates were able to identify points of connection and crossover with Jenkins' theory of fandom, for example, while others discussed the way in which Shirky's theory highlighted some of the weaknesses and limitations in more traditional media effects theories such as the hypodermic syringe model and Bandura's theory.

Summary of key points

- Candidates should always ensure that they answer the specific question that has been asked rather than simply writing everything they know and can remember about a given topic or product.
- Theory should always be used selectively, appropriately, purposefully and to meaningful effect. It should be applied and explored rather than simply downloaded or included for its own sake.
- Candidates would benefit from further practice in evaluating theories. As well as preparing them for the question in Component 2 that assesses AO2 2, this is likely to facilitate a greater critical understanding of the usefulness of relevant theories and how they can be meaningfully applied.
- Candidates should be able to discuss the influence of relevant contexts (e.g. historical, social, cultural, economic) on the set products they have studied.
- Candidates should be able to refer to specific aspects of the set products they have studied to support and illustrate the points they make. Responses that only refer to the covers of the set magazines are likely to be self-penalising.

MEDIA STUDIES

GCE A LEVEL (NEW)

Summer 2019

COMPONENT 3: CROSS-MEDIA PRODUCTION

General Comments

A very wide variety of approaches had clearly been taken to Component 3 and it was pleasing to see a diverse range of work across all of the set briefs. Some really excellent cross-media productions had been created, fully deserving of marks in Band 5; however candidates across the achievement range were able to successfully meet the criteria for Assessment Objective 3.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Administration

Cover Sheets:

- Most centres used the current cover sheet which includes GDPR details. A small but significant number of cover sheets had not been authenticated by the candidate and/ or teacher; this is a JCQ requirement. Electronic signatures are acceptable, but these should be full signatures rather than initials. The vast majority of centres had monitored and signed off the work at each stage of the process, as required on page 54 of the specification.
- Most centres included teacher comments as required in Section C, however sometimes these consisted solely of descriptors from the marking grid. It is strongly recommended that teachers include examples from candidates' work to explain the rationale for the marks awarded.
- Many candidates did not complete Section A fully: it is important that candidates include as much detail as possible, and it is vital that full references to any non-original material (such as music tracks for music videos) are included.
- It was helpful when candidates included a hyperlink to their websites. Some identified where the second page and the embedded audio-visual work could be found.

Most centres uploaded work in the appropriate file formats to Surpass. Some audio-visual productions were submitted as links to YouTube which is not one of the accepted methods; audio-visual production tasks should be uploaded to Surpass. A small minority also uploaded research and planning work which is not assessed and should not be uploaded. Candidates should research similar products to those that they intend to produce, but this should be detailed in Section A of the cover sheet and discussed in the Statement of Aims.

Meeting the requirements of the specification

Some centres offered the full range of briefs, others offered a limited selection, or set one brief for all candidates. All of these approaches are acceptable, however candidates must be allowed to select their own genre and develop an individual response to the brief. A small minority of centres took quite a uniform approach, for example where all candidates filmed in a college setting or included the same small group of peers in their productions. While the same performers might feature in different candidates' work, each assessed candidate must direct their performers to create their own, individual work. It is also recommended that candidates select their own locations, appropriate to their chosen genre.

The vast majority of candidates submitted a statement of aims and created a cross-media production in response to the set brief for 2019. A very small minority of candidates created only one production task which limited the marks that could be awarded for the production to Band 1. Some produced more work than was required: only the specified amount of work detailed in the brief can be assessed. Some candidates wrote the statement of aims in the past tense; this must be completed before production work begins as a statement of intent, written in the future tense.

The set briefs are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. When the requirements had been followed closely, candidates across the bands of the marking grid were able to demonstrate an appropriate response to the brief. In many cases, however, candidates did not adhere closely to all of the requirements of the brief.

Some candidates used non-original material beyond the acceptable limits set by Eduqas. The use of 'found' images, for example, in a magazine or on a website is not acceptable as it is a requirement of the specification that candidates create original material for Component 3. Any non-original material must be referenced on the cover sheet and teachers must take this into account in the marks awarded in column 2.

A significant minority of candidates made reference to behaviour such as smoking and drug-taking or included images of weapons such as knives and guns in their productions that were not wholly appropriate. It is recommended that candidates research the relevant regulatory requirements and ensure that their work is appropriate to the industry and audience context specified in the brief. They should also be mindful of the current social context and sensitivities to issues such as knife crime; teachers are advised to guide candidates in relation to these issues to ensure that the work they produce is appropriate.

Assessment

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

When assessing the work, teachers should consider each of the bullet points in every column of the mark scheme, and use the guidance on page 57 of the Specification to determine the marks awarded. Some candidates had been over-rewarded as one of the bullet points had been prioritised over the others; for example, if a candidate has completed all of the 'minimum requirements' for the brief but has not targeted the specified audience or reflected the industry context, then a mark in the higher bands for column 2 is unlikely to be appropriate.

Both cross-media productions are assessed together in both column 2 and column 3. At Band 5 it is expected that these are completed to an equal standard; if one product is better than the other, teachers should follow the guidance in the Specification and award marks accordingly. This was not always evident in the assessment and resulted in some over-rewarding.

In column 3, candidates are assessed on their ability to use media language to communicate meanings and construct representations. The emphasis of AO3 is the application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework. Some teachers made reference to technical skills or the 'professional' quality of the work, however the focus should be on the use of appropriate conventions of, for example, the form and genre. Some candidates were over-rewarded; for example, marks were sometimes awarded in Band 5 when the control of connotations was not complex or sustained.

Centres are reminded that, if a candidate produces only one of the cross-media production tasks, they cannot be awarded marks above band 1 for the production. The Statement of Aims should be assessed according to the marking grid and can be awarded up to Band 5 if appropriate. However, marks cannot be awarded above Band 1 for realisation of the brief and use of media language (columns two and three of the marking grid). Some candidates had been over-rewarded, in some cases significantly so, where this rule had not been applied.

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

Statement of Aims and Intentions

The vast majority of candidates completed the Statement of Aims and Intentions. The most successful Statements discussed each area of the theoretical framework in relation to the cross-media production as a whole. Some candidates referenced the specific requirements of the brief very thoroughly in their Statements and this allowed them to demonstrate highly appropriate production plans. Some candidates responding to the Television brief, for example, clearly explained how they would construct a point of conflict or resolution within the narrative. Many candidates referred to their research into similar products which enabled them to apply their understanding to purposeful plans for production. For example, some candidates responding to the Magazine brief identified key conventions of other Conde Nast publications that would inform their own work.

Most candidates did demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework, and the vast majority were able to discuss their plans for use of elements of media language to target the audience. However, many candidates tended to describe their plans, without explaining why they intended to use particular elements of media language. Some candidates did not discuss representations of social groups in detail; it is vital that this area is addressed in the Statement, as the construction of representations forms a significant part of the assessment of the cross-media production.

Industry was often discussed in limited detail, if at all. Some candidates simply stated that they would create a product for a specific media organisation without explaining how or why they would do this. Some candidates did clearly reflect the industry context in the plans for use of media language, by, for example, working in a genre that was suited to an independent or mainstream context or by focusing on relevant regulatory issues. Explicit reference to industry issues enables candidates to demonstrate understanding of this area of the framework.

Not all candidates discussed digital convergence, and some made very little reference to the second task in the cross-media production, which inevitably limited their ability to explain their concept for interrelated products. Many candidates included reference to theoretical perspectives, which is absolutely appropriate, however some tended to describe theories rather than consider how they would be relevant to their own plans.

Cross-Media Production Work

Meeting the requirements of the brief

Many candidates produced a very appropriate response to all aspects of the set brief, including the industry and audience specified, as well as the list of minimum requirements. A significant number of candidates did not meet the requirements of the brief, for example:

- The work did not reflect the specified industry context. This should be evident, not only in the production company logos placed on the work, but in the use of appropriate conventions. The choice of genre is often crucial here and candidates are strongly advised to research products from the required industry context to identify appropriate codes and conventions.
- The work did not reflect conventions of the form, for example, a television sequence or magazine feature article. It was often the case that the second production task did not adhere to conventions as fully as the main task; it is important that candidates pay close attention to both tasks.
- The target audience demographic was altered; for example, the work was for a narrower age range or, in some cases, a completely different audience. The target audience should be evident in the mode of address, as well as in the use of media language and representations to engage the appropriate group.
- The cross-media productions were not clearly interrelated. Some websites, for example, did not maintain the 'house style' of the print work.
- The work did not include all of the required elements. This ranged from more minor elements (such as a director's name on a DVD cover for Brief 3) to more significant issues, such as not creating the required number of characters, or not including performance footage in a music video. These elements also enable candidates to demonstrate their ability to use media language and construct representations and so it is important that they are included.

Some centres identified these issues and awarded marks accordingly; however, in many cases, candidates had been over-rewarded as the assessment did not reflect the fact that the brief requirements had not been met.

Use of Media Language

Most candidates did demonstrate ability to use of media language to communicate some meanings. However, the productions did not always demonstrate a clear sense of construction or purposeful use of media language. For example, some appeared to feature pre-existing material, such as footage from a family holiday or photographs of a social occasion, which was not wholly appropriate. Candidates are strongly advised to create original material, specifically in response to the set brief, in order to meet the assessment objective.

Some candidates created few, if any, images of people in their work, which inevitably limited their ability to construct purposeful representations. This was most notable in some responses to Brief 2, Magazines, and Brief 3, Film Marketing. The construction of representations of social groups is one of the key ways in which candidates should apply their understanding of the theoretical framework and some candidates had been assessed generously if their work did not include images of people.

Audio-visual productions: many candidates filmed footage on a mobile phone, which is perfectly acceptable. However, the work should be filmed in the appropriate format; it is not generally conventional for television sequences or music videos to be filmed in 'portrait' format, or to switch between portrait and landscape format, as was the case in a minority of candidates' work.

It was pleasing to see that many candidates demonstrated an awareness of contemporary social and cultural contexts. There was a genuine understanding of diversity in the representations of gender, age and/or ethnicity in many candidates' work. Some candidates made reference to issues such as mental health or current topics of debate such as the 'Me Too' movement, usually in a highly appropriate and sensitive manner, communicating ideological perspectives as required in the higher bands.

Cross-media production Task 2: General Points. Please see sections below for further details in relation to each brief.

It is important that candidates research appropriate products and plan the production for Task 2 as carefully as Task 1. Candidates are also advised to research examples of convergence and cross-media promotion in order to create interrelated products.

Websites. The standard of the online work varied a great deal. Some candidates created highly effective websites that promoted the first production task. However, websites were often under-developed and did not always include the required amount of images, written copy or audio-visual work stipulated in the brief.

There were some excellent examples of engaging audio-visual material, firmly linked to the webpage. Some candidates had clearly planned this part of the production very carefully to engage the audience and enhance the experience of the website. Many included a range of camera angles and edited the sequences to include voice-overs, music and/ or captions to anchor the meaning for the audience. However, a large number of candidates did not create purposeful content that was fully appropriate to the website.

Radio programmes. A podcast is perfectly acceptable but this must adhere to the requirements in the brief, for example for a chat, news or current affairs programme. Many candidates created engaging audio content but did not include the conventions of a radio programme, such as music or recording in different locations. The very best examples adopted an excellent mode of address from the presenter and used appropriate language codes to clearly promote the magazine or film to the intended audience. However, others featured only the voice of the film director or magazine editor and were much less engaging.

Television programmes. Some candidates created an appropriate studio setting in, for example, a drama studio space. The product being promoted was sometimes featured visually (for example, film posters displayed as though at a 'press junket' or shots of 'millennials' reading the magazine). However, many were filmed in a living room or office space that did not always allow candidates to demonstrate appropriate use of media language in terms of the *mise-en-scène*. Many sequences featured a very limited range of shots and angles, and lacked a second location, which was less engaging for the audience.

Magazines. There was a real range of magazine work produced. Some were highly appropriate, adhering closely to conventions of the magazine form, and successfully promoting the television programme or music artist. However, the design and layout of many magazine covers and articles was not clearly conventional. Some magazine covers did not feature images or cover lines that directly referenced the audio-visual production.

Brief 1: Television

A cross-media production for a new television programme in a factual or fictional genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

Create an audio-visual sequence from a new television programme and associated print or online materials to promote the same programme.

*You should create a cross-media production for a mainstream **commercial broadcaster** (either ITV or Channel 5) targeting an **audience** of 18-35 year old 'millennials'.*

Television was the least popular brief, although a significant number of candidates did respond to this option. Most candidates who completed this brief created an appropriate product for ITV or Channel 5, however some candidates had created work that might have been better suited to, for example, Channel 4. The vast majority worked within fictional genres, crime drama being the most popular, and many did clearly adhere to recognisable genre codes and character types. A number of candidates created comedy productions, for example in the mockumentary genre. While some of these did justifiably achieve marks in the higher bands, it was often challenging for candidates to successfully deploy the conventions of the comedy genre in their work. A small minority completed non-fictional work in, for example, the reality or documentary genres, often very successfully.

The best responses constructed genre and narrative effectively, however not all clearly created a sequence that included a conflict, turning point or resolution as required in the brief. Many candidates created opening sequences, which was acceptable if the requirements of the brief had been met, however some created title sequences or trailers that were not appropriate. Some candidates constructed several scenes in an attempt to convey a more complete narrative, however these often lacked coherence. A significant number of candidates did not include the required three characters: not only did this impact on the realisation of the brief, it also limited candidates' ability to construct representations. Several included very little, if any dialogue, which was a requirement. Candidates are not assessed on technical ability, however sound is a key convention of the television form and so diegetic and non-diegetic sound appropriate to the chosen genre should be included.

There were some examples of excellent work, where candidates purposefully communicated meanings through elements of media language such as locations, visual signifiers, selection of camera shots and angles, editing and sound.

Task 2

Print option

Not all candidates created a lifestyle magazine as specified in the brief; some created television listings magazines which did not fully meet the requirements. The best work demonstrated very clear links to the audio-visual sequence by, for example, featuring an actor from the programme on the front cover and clearly promoting the programme through the interview and use of images (often including 'stills' from the programme and promotional photographs of the actors) in the article.

Online option

Most candidates created an appropriate website and the best examples of these included images of, for example, the actors or locations and further information to promote the programme. Audio-visual content often took the form of an interview with the director or actors, the best examples of these were engaging and discussed elements of the production process to further demonstrate their understanding. Some candidates included outtakes or 'bloopers', which did not always create an appropriate mode of address, especially if the main audio-visual task was a more serious product.

Brief 2: Magazines

A cross-media production for a new monthly lifestyle magazine in a genre (or sub-genre) of your choice.

Create print pages for a new magazine and associated audio/audio-visual or online material to promote the same magazine.

*You should create a cross-media production for a mainstream **publisher** (e.g. Condé Nast or Time Inc.) targeting an **audience of 18-35 year old 'millennials'**.*

This was a very popular brief and candidates responded in a variety of ways and produced work across the range of mark bands.

The brief required candidates to create a lifestyle magazine and many produced a general men's or women's monthly title, or a lifestyle magazine with a focus on fashion, health or fitness. These were appropriate and in line with the definition in the FAQs on the Eduqas website. Some created a feature article on a more specific topic, such as travel or sport, which was acceptable as long as the magazine covers, and the cross-media product, demonstrated broader lifestyle content. However, a significant number of candidates created more specialist publications, for example interior design or food magazines, while some focused on niche topics such as boxing, pets or business. These did not meet the lifestyle requirement of the brief and, in some cases, were not suitable for a mainstream publisher or millennial audience, and candidates had often been over-rewarded as a result. In many cases, these magazines did not include many images of people, which limited candidates' ability to construct representations of social groups. Some candidates created lifestyle magazines that were more 'alternative' and suited to an independent publisher; often having researched 'independent' publications – it is important that the research focuses on products from the industry context in the brief and that this is applied to the production.

Some candidates needed to apply conventions of print magazines much more fully in terms of the design and layout of covers and feature articles. Some articles were not laid out in columns or did not combine images and text in a generic manner, while many candidates did not include elements such as a standfirst or pull-quotes as required.

The very best magazines responded fully to the brief and constructed ideologies relating to, for example, consumerism or identity. Many adopted an appropriate mode of address and created content to engage the millennial audience. Some excellent feature articles were seen, for example interviews with successful YouTubers, possibly influenced by candidates' studies in Component 2, that constructed highly appropriate representations. Some candidates did not create a full 400 word feature article but created, for example, a list of travel or beauty tips. This limited their ability to use media language purposefully, and to construct representations or points of view. Many candidates did not create the required number of images across the print work or used the same model (often dressed the same way) in every image across both productions; this is not generic and does not demonstrate purposeful use of media language.

Task 2

Online option

Magazine websites did not always reflect the branding of the print magazine. Some online products appeared to be more general sites, for example a fashion or travel website. The best examples maintained the house style of the print work, featuring the masthead and other design elements from the magazine, and adopting a similar mode of address. Some highly effective online articles reflected the ideologies in the print work; however, many websites did not include an article as required and the lifestyle genre was not always evident in the menu bar content. Audio-visual footage varied enormously but was most successful when it clearly related to the magazine content, for example a training video in a gym to accompany an article about fitness. Some material lacked a clear purpose; for example, make-up demonstrations that were not clearly linked to the magazine content.

Audio-visual option

Some highly engaging television and radio productions were created that communicated the brand values of the magazine through interview content and critical or audience responses. Some featured footage of the magazine in production (e.g. a photo shoot or a designer editing the cover in a studio) which was very effective. However, some productions were less engaging and featured a conversation between presenter and editor in a single location with little variation. This did not fully reflect the conventions of the form.

Brief 3: Film Marketing

A cross-media production to market and promote a new film in a genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

Create print marketing materials for a new film and associated audio/audio-visual or online material to promote the same film.

*You should create a cross-media production for an independent film company (e.g. DNA or Bold Films) targeting a **global adult audience of 25-44 year-olds**.*

*The cross-media production must **not** include a complete short film, film sequence or trailer.*

This was a very popular brief and candidates responded in varying degrees of success across the mark bands. Candidates are advised to research examples of film marketing campaigns to identify the conventions of this form; many discussed the genre and narrative of the film in the Statement of Aims, with less focus on how they would construct these elements in the marketing materials.

The best work responded to the independent nature of the brief and targeted an audience in the 25-44 year old demographic. Many candidates achieved this through the selection of genre (for example, social realism or political drama) or narratives that reflected contemporary issues such as homelessness. It was evident that the study of *I, Daniel Blake* in Component 1 had informed some candidates' work. Many constructed older characters through elements such as dress and gesture codes that might engage the adult demographic.

Some candidates, however, worked in very popular genres and used mainstream conventions more suited to a major film company. There was also a trend for candidates to create work that appeared to target a much younger audience; for example, many featured coming of age narratives, set in a college, with a sole focus on teenage characters that would be unlikely to engage the target demographic. While it is not necessary for candidates to cast older actors if they are targeting an older audience, they should construct characters that are appropriate.

Many candidates successfully constructed posters for release in different countries, considering the different conventions that might need to be applied in an international context. Some produced two posters in the English language (e.g. one for release in the UK and another in the USA), while others produced one poster in a different language; either was acceptable as long as there was a clear global focus. However, a significant number of candidates did not appear to have produced posters for release in different countries.

Some candidates struggled to apply a consistent house style across the print work; sometimes each artefact looked very different and did not form a coherent marketing campaign. Conversely, some candidates created print pieces that were too similar, using virtually identical images on each piece of work which limited their ability to demonstrate purposeful and complex use of media language. DVD covers in particular produced a range of responses: some were highly effective and communicated complex meanings. However, thumbnails were not always clearly purposeful in communicating narratives or representations, and the blurbs were often extremely short and did not construct a clear mode of address. A significant number of candidates included very few images of people and had often been over rewarded in column 3. Also, many candidates working in the horror genre made use of masked characters which did not always allow them to demonstrate construction of representations of as fully as they might.

Task 2

Online option

Some candidates created highly engaging websites that maintained the house style of the print work and gave the audience additional insight into the film through further details and images of the locations and characters. However, many websites were under-developed and did not include a 'Characters' or 'Story' page, or different imagery from the print campaign. Most audio-visual material featured an interview with an actor or director, sometimes in an appropriate location or studio. The best of these were edited carefully and discussed areas of the production process, for example the choice of locations appropriate to the genre.

Audio-visual option.

The radio option was more popular than television and there were some excellent productions that adopted an appropriate mode of address for the adult demographic, for example by casting a presenter from the same age group. Some candidates demonstrated their understanding of the framework through discussion of funding for independent films, for example, while others focused more fully on the themes or issues in the narrative. Some radio productions in particular made excellent use of different types of sound, for example effects to suggest that the programme was being recorded at the premiere of the film. A small minority of candidates included film sequences or trailers in their audio-visual product or as the audio visual content on the website. This is not permitted and cannot be credited for assessment. Some candidates had been over-rewarded as a result of this.

Brief 4: Music marketing

A cross-media production for a new artist or band in a genre (or sub-genre/hybrid) of your choice.

Create an original music video and associated print or online material to promote the same artist or band.

*You should create a cross-media production for an **independent record label** (such as 4AD) targeting a **specialised audience of 16-35 year olds** who have a **specific interest in your chosen genre** of music.*

This was the most popular brief and a very wide range of genres had been selected, some of which were more appropriate to the brief than others. Popular genres included 'indie' and rap/ hip-hop, although some candidates created successful videos in genres such as electronic, jazz or world music. The brief specified an independent industry context and many candidates had researched appropriate record labels, analysing the conventions of their artists' music videos and selecting a track by an artist for whom they created an original persona. While it was not essential for candidates to choose a song by an artist signed to an independent label, generally candidates did benefit from this. Some candidates created videos for songs by mainstream pop artists – or much older tracks by well-known artists - which did not always enable them to use appropriate conventions for the independent industry context.

The vast majority of candidates did include conventions of the music video form, combining performance footage and an element of narrative as required. However, a significant minority did not include any performance (such as lip-synching or playing instruments) which often limited their ability to establish the persona of the artist. Conversely, some featured only performance which made it difficult for candidates to create an effective narrative.

There were some excellent examples of music videos that successfully constructed the identity of the artist or band, and communicated meanings and controlled connotations in a highly complex manner. Many candidates used appropriate techniques such as intertextuality and pastiche to demonstrate their understanding of postmodernism, and the very best work also embodied ideological perspectives.

Some candidates did not apply music video conventions as successfully; editing, for example, was often very slow and videos were not always cut to the beat. Some videos lacked a clear sense of purpose, featuring a montage of shots that did not communicate meanings as successfully as the marks suggested. Once again, it is vital that candidates analyse examples of music videos in their chosen genre and apply appropriate conventions.

Task 2

Print option

The requirement for an independent culture magazine was met by most candidates; some chose to create a specialist music magazine, while others constructed a broader cultural product; either was acceptable. Some candidates, however, created a lifestyle magazine or a more mainstream music magazine that did not fully meet the requirements.

The magazines were often executed very successfully and established the star persona of the artist from the video through promotional images on the cover and in the feature article. Candidates frequently adopted an appropriate mode of address, especially in the interview with the artist.

Online option

The music websites varied considerably; the very best examples successfully constructed an identity for the candidate's original artist, extending the brand identity from the video through the choice of media language. The design and layout of the site often reflected the music genre, coupled with the selection of colour palettes and font to communicate meanings. The embedded audio-visual material often took the form of an interview with the artist or band, sometimes in an appropriate location such as a studio. Some featured 'making of' footage of the video which was often very engaging. The news page or blog sometimes featured Instagram style posts with appropriate images, which successfully promoted the artist and their work. However, some websites were not so well developed and lacked a range of images (sometimes using only stills from the music video) or written text to engage the audience.

Summary of key points

It is important to adhere to the brief: the industry and audience specified, as well as the minimum requirements. Industry context should be reflected in the use of media language, including the selection of an appropriate genre, not simply through the inclusion of a company logo.

Research is of paramount importance: candidates should research similar products to those that they intend to produce, from a similar industry context and targeting a similar audience to that specified in the brief. They should analyse both types of product, as well as examples of convergence, to identify appropriate conventions to apply to their own work.

The Statement of Aims and Intentions is an opportunity for candidates to explain how they will respond to the requirements of the brief and apply their knowledge and understanding to the cross-media production. They should discuss each area of the framework as outlined in Section B of the cover sheet and consider both production tasks, explaining how these will be linked. It is recommended that candidates use examples from their research to support their plans.

Apply the theoretical framework: candidates should consider the meanings that they intend to communicate; for example, the messages and points of view in their work. Use of media language should demonstrate control of connotations, moving beyond a literal approach. It is also vital that candidates construct representations of social groups; they should create images or footage of people in their productions and construct purposeful representations (of, for example, ethnicity or gender) through their choice of visual, technical and language codes.



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