

Chapter 9 The examinations

What you will learn in this chapter

- This chapter will provide an overview of the two A level examination papers.
- It will identify the structure of the papers and the type of questions you can expect.
- Sample questions will be provided and you can use these to practise your responses and test your knowledge and understanding as you prepare for the examinations.
- Information about the examiner's expectations in the way you respond will also be provided and suggestions for helping you respond to the different types of questions will be offered.

9.1 Introduction to the A level examinations

The A level qualification requires you to complete three formal assessments:

- **The Non-Exam Assessment (NEA):** based on the completion of a cross media production. This is worth 30% of the A level qualification (see Chapter 8 for further information).
- **Media One:** a two-hour written examination that is worth 35% of the A level qualification.
- **Media Two:** a second two-hour written examination worth a further 35% of the A level qualification.

Each paper covers the whole of the specification in some way but they are structured so you can be sure which media forms and CSPs need to be used in each examination:

- **Media One:** a focus on the targeted CSPs.
- **Media Two:** a focus on the in-depth CSPs.

You will sit both papers at the end of your second year of study.

Each section of the paper will cover specific media forms. This structure will be the same in all subsequent examinations.



| Media One | | Media Two |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Section A | Section B | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK All areas of the framework FORMS (In-depth CSPs) Magazines Television Online, social and participatory media/ gaming UNSEEN/NON-CSP PRODUCT |
| THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK Media language and representation FORMS (Targeted CSPs) Advertising and marketing Music video UNSEEN/NON-CSP PRODUCT | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK Audience and industries FORMS (Targeted CSPs) (Two of the following) Radio Newspapers Film (industries only) | |

Each paper will include a **non-CSP media product** – that, is a media product that you will not have prepared before the examination. This unseen media product could come from any of the media forms studied for the examination, but the choice of non-CSP product will relate specifically to the focus of the paper and, where appropriate, the section of the paper. For example, the non-CSP product in Media One will be related to advertising and marketing or music video and the question will test the application of knowledge of media language and/or representation.

Both examinations will test your knowledge and understanding of:

- the **theoretical framework** (see Chapters 1 to 4)
- **media contexts** and their **influence on media products and processes** (see Chapters 5 and 6).

You will also be assessed on your ability to apply the theoretical framework to:

- analyse media products (considering context and using theory)
- evaluate theories
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

The content of the examinations will always be based on the detailed information provided in the specification as to the content of the theoretical framework and the CSP guidance document provided by the awarding body.

The key areas for revision are:

- the **theoretical framework** – specifically, the **enabling ideas** for each area of the framework
- the application of ideas from the theoretical framework to **non-CSP** media products
- the application of the theoretical framework to the eight **in-depth CSPs** and the **nine targeted CSPs** from the **nine media forms**.

A note about the non-CSP media products

Each examination paper will provide you with a media product that you will not have prepared for the examination. This product will be related to the forms that are assessed in the paper. They will be print products but they could be old or new and targeted towards any audience. The purpose of the unseen product is to test your ability to apply the theoretical framework to analyse media products without prior study.

It won't matter if you've never seen the non-CSP product before as you will not need any detailed background knowledge about it. If appropriate, you will be provided with any specific information you need to be able to answer the question.

You will be asked to analyse and evaluate the product in the exam room in response to a specific question about the theoretical framework. You should demonstrate your theoretical knowledge and understanding using the non-CSP product to provide examples that support your ideas, observations and conclusions.

The exam papers will ask different types of questions, some will be worth more marks than others and they will ask you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and media products in different ways.

Close study products

The CSPs referred to here are the ones identified by the awarding body in 2017, as detailed in the table below. It is possible that some of the CSPs may change so you must make sure that you are studying the right CSPs for your examination.

| A level paper 1 | | A level paper 2 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Targeted CSPs – Media language and representation | Targeted CSPs – Audience and industries | In-depth CSPs – all theoretical framework |
| Advertising & Marketing | Newspapers | Television |
| Score Hair Cream print advert (historical product) AND Maybelline 'That Boss Life Part I' online advert | <i>Daily Mail</i> AND <i>The i</i> | (Includes non-English language product) <i>Capital and Deutschland 83</i> OR <i>Witnesses and The Missing</i> OR <i>No Offence and The Killing</i> |
| Music video | Radio | Online, social and participatory media/video games |
| 'Letter to the Free', Common ft Bilal AND 'Billie Jean', Michael Jackson (historical) | <i>The War of the Worlds</i> (1938) (historical product) AND <i>The Surgery</i> (BBC Radio 1) | <i>Teen Vogue</i> website AND <i>The Voice</i> website The Sims Freeplay (game and its Facebook page and Twitter feed) AND Metroid (the game and the game cover) AND Tomb Raider: Anniversary (the game and the game cover) |
| | Film (industries only) | Magazines |
| | <i>Chicken</i> (Joe Stephenson, UK, 2014) | <i>Men's Health</i> (January/February 2017) (front cover and selected items) AND <i>Oh Comely</i> (Issue 35) (front cover and selected items) |

9.2 Media One

The paper

Media One will ask you to answer questions that demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework using targeted CSPs and a non-CSP media product that will be provided for you in the examination.

This is a two-hour paper and it is split into two sections. It is expected that you would spend one hour on each section.

Section A – a range of compulsory questions

- **Theoretical focus: Media language and representations**
 - using CSPs from the following media forms: advertising and marketing and music video
 - one non-CSP media product.

Section B – a range of compulsory questions

- **Theoretical focus: Audience and industries**
 - using CSPs from **two** of the following media forms: radio, newspapers and film (industries only)
 - three questions.

Different questions will offer different amounts of marks. This should be your guide when you work out your timings in the examination. You should spend most time on the questions that offer the most marks.

As a guide:

- Spend approximately 10 minutes on questions that offer up to 10 marks.
- Spend approximately 15 minutes on questions that offer between 10 and 20 marks.
- Spend approximately 30 minutes on questions that offer 20 marks.

The marks for each question will not always be the same – it is possible that question 1 could offer more marks than question 2, for example.

There are several different types of questions that you could be asked in Paper One. Some may be multiple-choice, some short answer questions and some may ask you to provide an extended answer.

- You could be asked to demonstrate your knowledge by providing definitions or explanations.
- You could be asked to apply a specific idea or theory from the framework to one or two media products.
- You could be asked to evaluate a media theory or an idea from the theoretical framework.

You may not be able to predict which bit of knowledge will be assessed in what way but you do know that in this paper you will be assessed on your knowledge and understanding of media language and representation as applied to advertising and marketing and music video (Section A) and industry as applied to film and industry and audience as applied to newspapers and television (Section B).

As long as you have a general understanding of the theoretical framework and have prepared your CSPs thoroughly (using the appropriate theoretical ideas), you will be prepared for any type of question that could come up in the exam. The AQA specification offers more detail on the specific knowledge required for each area of the theoretical framework and the CSP guides offer lots of different ideas that you can consider when studying the CSPs.

TIP

Plan your timings in detail before you start and then stick to your plan. Spending too much time on individual questions may mean that you will run out of time and lose marks. The number of marks offered for each question indicates the relative depth and detail that is expected in your response and the final question in each section carries almost half of the marks for the paper. You must spend more time on these questions than the others.

- The effect of social and cultural contexts.*
- Positive and negative stereotyping.*
- Under-representation and mis-representation.*
- How representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs.*
- How audiences interpret media representations.*
- The way in which representations make claims about realism.**
- The impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups.**
- The effect of historical context on representations.**
- How representations may invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences.**
- How audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.**

* These ideas and theories are in the AS specification and are shown in detail in the AS & Year 1 book. The ideas make up the foundation knowledge for each area of the theoretical framework.

** These ideas and theories are specific to the A level specification and build on the foundation knowledge offering more detailed and complex ways of looking at the media, its products and contexts.

To demonstrate your understanding, you should be prepared to discuss and apply the following key theories and ideas:

- representation theory (including Hall)*
- identity theory (including Gauntlett)*
- feminist theory (including ideas from van Zoonen and hooks)**
- theories of gender performativity (including Butler)**
- Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory (including Gilroy).**

You will have looked at these ideas and theories throughout your two years of study and you will have applied them to a range of media products, including the targeted and in-depth CSPs. In preparation for the exam you should make sure you understand the ideas and theories and are able to discuss how they apply to media products using media terminology. You will be practising these skills throughout your course but you may need to revise terms and practise applying them as you get ready for the examination.

APPLY IT

Here are some of the enabling ideas for media language. What do these terms mean?

| Term | Meaning? |
|-------------------|----------|
| denotation | |
| connotation | |
| anchorage | |
| symbol | |
| signification | |
| binary opposition | |
| hyper-reality | |
| simulacra | |

Write a paragraph discussing the use of media language in the construction of one of your CSPs using at least five of the terms above.

Section A: types of questions

Non-CSP questions

One of the questions on this exam paper will ask you to look at a non-CSP media product. There will be questions that require a relatively short answer that will be directly related to the use of media language and/or the construction of the representations in the unseen product. Check to see how many marks are available for the question before you start, so you know how long to spend on it. It is likely that the non-CSP specific question will be a short answer question, which means you will need to spend about 10 minutes writing your response.

The question will be specific and will give you a clear indication of which particular aspect of media language and/or representation you should comment on. This question could ask you to discuss any aspect of these two areas of the theoretical framework. You will be assessed on your ability to use ideas from the theoretical framework to analyse media products.

As the product will be related to either advertising and marketing or music video in some way, the question may ask you to discuss the nature of the form of the product. This question will test your knowledge and your ability to apply that knowledge by quickly analysing the media language choices made and the way they combine to create meaning. For this non-CSP focused question you should only refer to the product provided in the exam when constructing your response.

Take a look at the advert on the left. It has used a number of media language choices in the layout and design of the advert, the selection of images and in the way it uses words to address the target audience. As an advert its primary functions are to:

- reinforce the Dove brand
- create positive associations with the brand and the product
- attempt to create desire for the product that will lead to its purchase.

There are many shampoos on the market, so the consumer needs a reason to choose Dove over all the other alternatives. Every media language choice is made with a view to help the target audience (adult women) make Dove a product they want to buy.

Over many years, Dove has invested heavily in advertising and marketing campaigns which have helped construct the brand image and USP that Dove celebrates the idea of female beauty as being diverse. This idea is in reaction to criticism that beauty brands often set narrow and unrealistic ideals that are difficult for most women to achieve.

With an unseen media product such as this, you could be asked to focus on any aspect of the use of media language and/or the representations constructed within this advertising and marketing product.

For example:

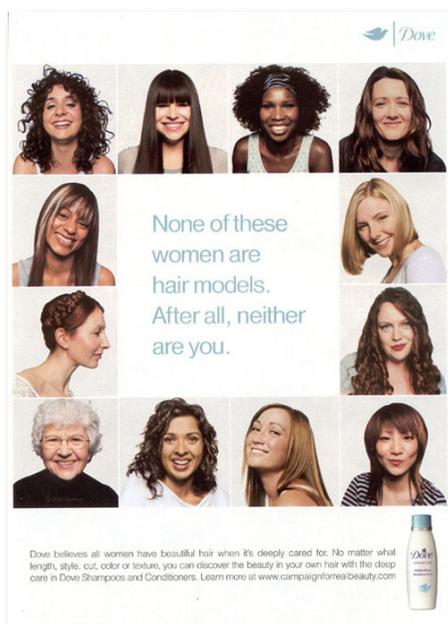
- How does the design of the advert help create audience appeal?

or

- How do the images and words in this advert combine to construct a positive brand image for Dove?

or

- How do the representations of the women in the advert help to sell Dove shampoo?



TIP

You may feel that you are not able to mention everything that you think is important when answering the question in the time available to you. You may have to select three or four key observations and ideas that you can cover in some detail in your written response rather than try to force in lots of observations that will end up being a descriptive list rather than an answer to the question. Too much listing or description will reduce the amount of marks you can achieve for this type of question.

In your answers to questions such as these you should make sure that you provide a detailed analysis of aspects of the product provided. When discussing the design of the product you may want to discuss the **rule of three**, the use of **direct address** or the **placement** of the product in the bottom right-hand corner of the design. Your answer should include some detail and use relevant terminology as much as possible, so if you identify that the colour palette is largely white and pale blue you should also be able to indicate what **connotations** these colour choices could create. Also crucial is that you link your observations to the question – how do the colour palette choices help create audience appeal? or construct a positive brand image for Dove? or help sell Dove shampoo? There are many ways to answer these questions and the ideas here are not the only ones you could use. The examiner is always going to be pleased to read what you think.

Compare/contrast the non-CSP to a CSP questions

You may need to answer a question that asks you to discuss both the non-CSP product **and** one of the targeted CSPs. This question will again be based on media language and/or representation but you may be asked to compare or contrast the media products in some way and to demonstrate a knowledge of the impact of context on the construction of media products. You should check the amount of marks that are available for the question that asks you to compare or contrast the non-CSP to a CSP. Make sure you spend an appropriate amount of time on your response.

One of the original advertising and marketing CSPs is an online advert for the beauty brand Maybelline. The advert is on YouTube with the title 'That Boss Life Pt. 1 ft. MannyMua and Makeupshayla: New Big Shot Mascara'.



This advert features social media celebrities and is set in a high-rise Manhattan hotel. It is promoting a new mascara from the Maybelline make-up range.

Before the examination, you should have studied this advert closely and considered it in several ways including:

- the use of media language choices made in the advert's construction
- the construction of narrative within the advert
- the use of representations of ethnicity, age, gender and lifestyle
- the use or subversion of stereotypes
- the values and ideologies communicated in the advert
- the use of media language and representations to create desire for the product
- the way the advert addresses the target audience
- The construction of brand images for the brand ambassadors and the make-up brand itself.

APPLY IT

Using the Dove advert, answer the following questions. Work towards being able to answer the questions in about 10 minutes.

- 1 How does the design of the advert help create audience appeal?
- 2 How do the images and words in this advert combine to construct a positive brand image for Dove?
- 3 How do the representations of the women in the advert help to sell Dove shampoo?

TIP

Where print CSPs are used in the examination, they will be printed in the exam paper.

A number of context issues could be considered when looking at this advert including:

- the fluidity of gender identity
- the aspirational, consumerist lifestyle
- diversity of representations
- the importance of social media 'influencers'
- the use of non-traditional advertising methods.

Within this study of the advert you should have considered how to apply theories from the framework to this advert, for example Hall, Butler, Barthes among others.

As you won't have access to the Maybelline advert in the examination, you should be prepared to make reference to specific media language choices or observations about the representations in the exam. You should avoid generalising about the advert and use terminology to discuss it at all times. You will need to provide detail about the advert and explain the significance of your observations in a way that responds directly to the question.

In these example questions you would be asked to demonstrate your detailed knowledge and understanding of the Maybelline advert in relation to the unseen media product – in this case the Dove advert.

For example:

- How are representations of women used differently to promote these beauty products? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.

or

- How are the representations of racial diversity shaped by the context of production? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.

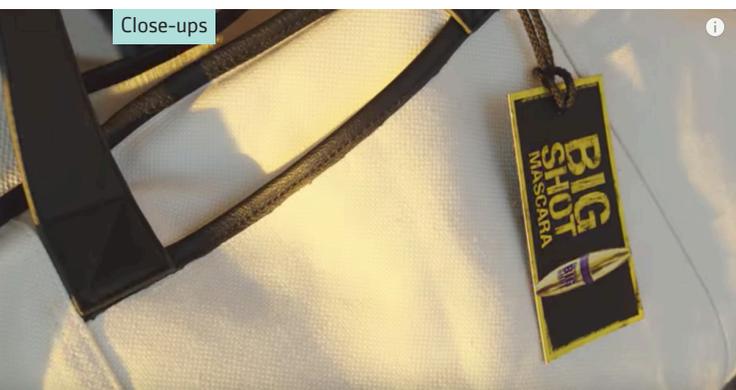
or

- How do the brand identities created in the adverts relate to the target audiences? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.

As before you should be able to provide detailed references to both products in your response to this question. Choose examples from the products that help you make the point you wish to raise. In addition to detail from the Dove advert you could discuss the mise-en-scène of the Maybelline advert as well as the advert's use of camera, editing and sound. You should use terminology as much as possible. You could mention the Maybelline advert's use of (for example):

- close-ups
- overhead shots
- gold props and lighting
- the product
- post-production lighting effects.

Close-ups





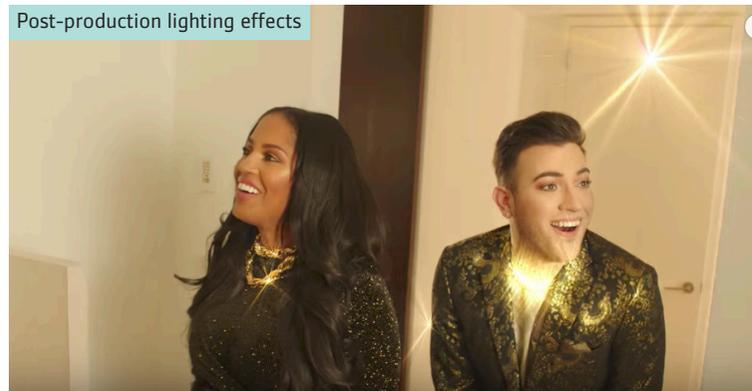
Overhead shot



Gold props and lighting



The product



Post-production lighting effects

You should not simply describe the advert in the exam but should use your detailed knowledge to apply ideas from the theoretical framework.

You could consider (among other things):

- How meaning is **encoded**.
- How the gold props and the lighting effects create **connotations** and act as **symbols**.
- How the dialogue and use of props create a **narrative**.
- How the advert creates a **constructed reality** and is a **simulacra**.
- How media language is used to promote the **dominant ideologies/hegemonic values** of a specific lifestyle.
- How **countertypes** and/or **stereotypes** are used in the advert.
- How the celebrities act to **position** the audience.
- How the representations of race could reflect the idea of **double-consciousness**.
- How gender can be seen as **historical, situational** and **performative**.

APPLY IT

Answer the following questions. You could spend time researching, analysing and planning your responses but work towards writing for about 15 minutes.

- 1 How are representations of women used differently to promote these beauty products? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.
- 2 How are the representations of racial diversity shaped by the context of production? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.
- 3 How do the brand identities created in the adverts relate to the target audiences? Your answer should refer to the Dove advert and your CSP, the Maybelline mascara advert.

Although this example compares two advertising products, the exam may ask you to compare an advertising product to one of the music video CSPs.

Of course, you will not be able to use all this knowledge in the examination. You will need to select the examples, the ideas and the concepts that are best suited to answering the question.

Questions requiring you to analyse media products using a specific aspect of the theoretical framework (media language or representation)

Another type of question you may encounter in Section A is one where you are asked to analyse one or two named CSPs using a specific theory or idea. You may be asked to discuss the advertising and marketing CSPs or the music videos you have studied in this way. In Section A, this type of question will focus on a specific idea or theory related to media language or representation.

As this type of question will ask you to focus on one or two named CSPs, it requires that you discuss the product or products in detail, providing examples from the CSPs to support the ideas you wish to raise. As with the other questions in Section A you will need to demonstrate your ability to discuss the product using specific media language terminology. You will also need to be prepared to answer a question on any aspect of the media language and representation sections of the theoretical framework. You will be assessed on your ability to apply your knowledge to analyse media products and make judgements as to how the media products make meaning.

For example, here are some of the ideas you should have covered when studying the music video CSPs:

- How is media language used to create the music videos?
- How do media language choices construct meaning in the videos?
- How have technologies influenced media language choices in the two videos?
- How is narrative created within the music videos?
- How do the videos create audience appeal?
- What relationship do the videos have with the codes and conventions of:
 - music videos (as a form)?
 - the genre of music video?
 - the genre of music?
- How is intertextuality/hybridity created or used within the videos?
- What type of representations are created in the music videos?
 - Ethnicity?
 - Gender?
 - Other?

Again, you should prepare for the exam by applying theories to the music videos and considering how the videos relate to ideas including:

- Neale's ideas about genre
- Todorov's ideas about narrative
- Butler's ideas about gender
- Hall's ideas on representation
- Postmodern theory (including Baudrillard)
- theories around race and ethnicity (including Gilroy).

You should also have considered the music videos in their cultural context.

The two original music video CSPs are:

- 'Billie Jean' by Michael Jackson
- 'Letter to the Free' by Common.

Thorough preparation for the exam by studying the two videos using media language and representation ideas means you should be able to discuss these theoretical ideas when discussing either or both of the music videos.

For example:

- How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use media language to create audience appeal?
- How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use media language to represent the experiences of African-Americans?
- How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use and/or challenge subvert racial stereotypes?

Your answers to these questions should:

- address the question directly
- use specific examples from the music video to support your ideas
- use media terminology and ideas from the theoretical framework in your discussion.

How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use media language to represent the experiences of African-Americans?

| How | For example | Terms/theory |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Setting parts of the video in a prison location |  | Stereotype Mise-en-scène Reinforcing dominant values Cultural expectations Cultural positioning |
| Lyrics: <i>Southern leaves, southern trees we hung from ...</i> <i>Forgive them father they know this knot is undone,</i> <i>Tied with the rope that my grandmother died</i> | Reference to the song ‘Strange Fruit’ about lynching of black men in the US southern states in the 1930s. <i>Southern trees bear strange fruit</i> <i>Blood on the leaves and blood at the root</i> <i>Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze</i> <i>Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees</i> | Intertextuality Historical reference Historical, situational identity |
| Use of tracking shot through the prison to the light (and an exit sign) |  | Symbolic encoding Visual metaphor Camera movement Positioning audience Construction of narrative Low-key lighting Binary opposition of light/dark; incarceration/freedom |

APPLY IT

Consider the following questions and plan your response before spending approximately 10 minutes writing your answer.

- 1 How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use media language to create audience appeal?
- 2 How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use media language to represent the experiences of African-Americans?
- 3 How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ use and/or challenge subvert racial stereotypes?

Now use your knowledge to answer this, more specific style of question.

- 4 Hall argues that black culture is often shown from a white person’s perspective, the ‘white eye’. How does Common’s ‘Letter to the Free’ subvert conventional stereotypes of black culture?

TIP

These examples focus on music videos but you may be asked about advertising and marketing in the extended response question.

Extended response questions

One of the questions in Section A will offer 20 marks. You should spend more time answering this question than the others in Section A. The question will ask you to use named CSPs in response to the question. This question will be based on a specific theory or idea from the theoretical framework, and it will ask you to engage and evaluate the idea and use the CSPs to demonstrate your perspective. You will be marked on your knowledge and understanding of the theory as well as the way you make judgements and conclusions.

For example:

- Neale discusses the idea that genres have to change to maintain audience interest. How valid is this idea when considering the use or subversion of codes and conventions in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.

or

- Gilroy argues that black music can express 'diasporic experiences of resistance to white capitalist culture'. How valid is this argument when looking at the representations in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.

or

- Narratives are based on conflicts between binary oppositions. How useful is this idea when looking at narratives in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.

This type of question offers more marks than others in this section because you have more work to do in your response. Not only do you need to apply the idea provided in the question to the media products, analyse specific examples to show how the idea can be applied, you also have to consider the validity of the idea in light of the evidence from the CSPs. You need to evaluate the theory as well as apply it. The theories or ideas that you could be asked to consider and evaluate are detailed in the specification and all these ideas have been covered in this and/or the Year 1 book.

Before starting to write your answer to this type of question, be clear about what you think about the issue or theory you are being asked to evaluate. You may even want to write some brief notes to help you clarify what you think before you start your formal answer.

For example:

Narratives are based on conflicts between binary oppositions. How useful is this idea when looking at narratives in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.

Initial idea/notes:

- *Using the conflicts created by binary oppositions is a useful way to explore the ideas created in these music videos.*
- *Supporting evidence:*
 - *'Letter to the Free' uses the binary between freedom and imprisonment in its visual imagery and its lyrics. The overall narrative is one of hope – hope that there is a way out of the current situation of extreme incarceration of black men and*

criminalisation. Religion is offered as a solution and is in opposition to the experiences of black people in the US at the moment where violence, racism and political oppression are still present.

- *Billie Jean* does not have the same politicised content but it uses the idea of conflict between binaries to create tension and tell a story in the video. The character played by Michael Jackson is being 'stalked' by a journalist who is investigating a celebrity scandal. The binary oppositions used within this narrative are between the light (Jackson) and the dark (the journalist). Jackson's character brings light wherever he goes but is pursued by the darkness of gossip and scandal. This links to the binary of truth v. lies. Jackson's character is being accused of fathering a child, something he denies. These conflicts reflect on the way celebrities have to sacrifice their privacy and they are often subject to lies and speculation about their private lives.

Of course, in the exam you won't have lots of time to think and make such detailed notes. This is why preparation for the exam is so important. To be able to engage quickly with the ideas, you need to understand the ideas well and have a detailed knowledge of the CSPs you are discussing. When writing a response based on these kinds of ideas, as with all other questions, it is important to provide detailed examples from the products to support your observations and to use media terminology.

Section B – Industries and audience

You must answer all the questions in Section B. As with Section A, one question will be worth 20 marks and you should make sure you spend more time on this question than the others. You should allow approximately one hour for Section B. You can, of course, answer the questions in whichever order you like. Just make sure you label your questions accurately on your paper.

This section of the examination tests your knowledge and understanding of media industries and audiences. In your responses, you will need to use the relevant targeted CSPs for this area taken from the following media forms:

- radio
- newspapers
- film (assessed via questions on media industries only).

This paper will require you to discuss **two** of these three media forms. One question will ask you to use one of the forms and the other two questions will focus on a second form. Each question will be focused on ideas about audience and/or industries.

It won't be possible to predict which forms will appear on the paper, so you will need to make sure you have studied all three.

APPLY
IT

Research and plan answers for the following questions. You should aim to be able to write your response to these kinds of questions in approximately 30 minutes.

- 1 Neale discusses the idea that genres have to change to maintain audience interest. How valid is this idea when considering the use or subversion of codes and conventions in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.
- 2 Gilroy argues that black music can express 'diasporic experiences of resistance to white capitalist culture'. How valid is this argument when looking at the representations in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.
- 3 Narratives are based on conflicts between binary oppositions. How useful is this idea when looking at narratives in music videos? In your response you should refer to your music video CSPs, 'Billie Jean' and 'Letter to the Free'.

Questions in Section B will test your knowledge and understanding of the following theories and ideas:

Industries

- Processes of production, distribution and circulation.*
- Patterns of ownership and control.*
- The impact of economic factors.*
- How organisations attract and maintain audiences (national and global).*
- Media regulation.*
- The impact of digital technologies on media industries.*
- The effect of individual producers on media industries.**

To demonstrate your understanding, you should be prepared to discuss and apply the following key theories and ideas:

- Ideas about media power as summarised by Curran and Seaton.*
- Regulation as summarised by Livingstone and Lunt.**
- Ideas about cultural industries as summarised by Hesmondhalgh.**

Audiences

- The grouping and categorising of audiences.*
- The targeting and creation of audience appeal.*
- Marketing, distribution and circulation to audiences.*
- Audience interpretation of the media.*
- Audience interaction with the media.*
- How specialised audiences can be reached.**
- How media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences.**
- How audiences use media in different ways.**
- The role and significance of specialised audiences (e.g. niche and fans).**
- The way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.**

To demonstrate your understanding, you should be prepared to discuss and apply the following key theories and ideas:

- media effects (including Bandura)*
- cultivation theory (including Gerbner)*
- reception theory (including Hall)*
- fandom (including Jenkins)**
- end of audience theories (including Shirky).**

In preparation for this section you should have engaged with all the ideas from these two sections of the theoretical framework. You should be able to define media terms and the main theoretical ideas. You should also have considered these ideas when studying the CSPs and in preparation for the exam you should be confident about the industrial and audience issues related to each of the CSPs.



* These ideas and theories are in the AS specification and are shown in detail in the AS & Year 1 book. The ideas make up the foundation knowledge for each area of the theoretical framework.

** These ideas and theories are specific to the A level specification and build on the foundation knowledge, offering more detailed and complex ways of looking at the media, its products and contexts.

Section B: Types of questions

Context questions

You may be asked a question that will ask you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of an aspect of media context and the way context influences media products and their production. As with all questions in this section, you could be asked to consider industry or audience and be asked to focus on radio, newspapers or film CSPs.

For example:

- Explain the influence of economic factors on the production and distribution of films. In your response you should refer to the industrial context of your CSP, *Chicken*.

or

- How does the context of attempting to appeal to an audience impact on the presentation of news? In your answer you should refer to your CSPs: the *Daily Mail* and the *i*.

or

- Using your radio CSPs, demonstrate how social/cultural context issues impact on the production and/or distribution of radio programmes.

These questions need you to consider various aspects of the context of production of your CSPs. There are many ways that these questions could be answered and you should consider a number of contextual issues when you study each CSP in preparation for the exam.

Here are just some of the context issues that could be used in the answer to these questions. They are not the only ideas that could be covered when answering these questions and in the time allowed it will not be possible to deal with all potential context issues. You should select two or three ideas that you think will be most useful to you when addressing the question and you should offer examples and explanations for these ideas. Don't try to cram in 'everything you know' when answering the question. This will lead to an unfocused response that lacks detail.

| <i>Chicken</i> (industrial context) | <i>The i</i> (audience appeal) | <i>War of the Worlds</i> (social/ cultural context) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Economic issues related to independent filmmaking – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • production budget impacting on production choices and techniques • distribution techniques • marketing strategies • responses to audience behaviour patterns, etc. | <p>Responses to the decline in sales of print newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the paper's attempts to reach its target audience shaping its presentation style • the paper's attempts to offer broadsheet and tabloid gratifications • the way the reporting style is influenced by online news conventions • attempts to provide ways for the audience to interact with the publication | <p>Historical issues – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • narrowness of choice for audience in terms of media technology • radio as competition to newspapers and cinema newsreels • innovative use of the form • use of audio codes that created realism • context of European political instability • Early 20th century invasion/infection fears |

TIP

You could be asked to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of contexts in Section A of Paper One. Examples here refer to audience and institution CSPs but you should also engage with context when studying all of the CSPs.

APPLY IT

Research and plan your answers to the following questions. You should aim to be able to write a written response to these questions in approximately 30 minutes.

- 1 Explain the influence of economic factors on the production and content of films. In your response you should refer to the industrial context of your CSP, *Chicken*.
- 2 How does the context of attempting to appeal to an audience impact on the presentation of news? In your answer you should refer to your CSPs, the *Daily Mail* and the *i*.
- 3 Using your radio CSPs, demonstrate how social/cultural issues impact on the production and/or distribution of radio programmes.

For information on multiple-choice questions see the online Examination Paper chapter for the Year 1 book.

Short-answer questions

You will find that one of the questions requires a shorter response than the others and will be focused on testing your knowledge and understanding of a specific aspect of the theoretical framework. Short-answer questions could be presented in the form of a multiple-choice question. You may be asked to recall terminology, provide definitions or show you understand a specific aspect of the theoretical framework.

For example:

The literal meaning of a sign is its:

- a myth
- b connotation
- c denotation.

You will be given instructions on the exam paper as to how you should identify the correct answer in a multiple-choice question.

Short-answer questions could be linked to one of the Section B media forms, so you should provide examples and ideas from your CSP study in your response when asked. You could be asked to provide definitions or explain how something works. You may have to provide a brief example or explanation in your response but you should not spend too much time providing lots of detail.

For example:

- Identify three strategies used by newspapers to try to attract audiences. What benefits or gratifications do these strategies offer the audience? Each of the benefits or gratifications should be different. In your answer you should refer to your CSPs: the *Daily Mail* and the *i*.

Your response will be based on your knowledge of the context of the newspaper industry – specifically the *Daily Mail* and the *i*. In your studies you will have noted how these newspapers present information in a way that intends to attract audiences. Modern newspapers use a combination of techniques to try to attract an audience – some are traditional, for example the use of sensational headlines that aim to provoke an emotional response. This front cover of the *Daily Mail* uses emotive language ('Fury', 'defied', 'crisis', 'ENEMIES'), which intends to generate an angry response in people who voted leave in the EU referendum of 2016. Other attempts to attract the audience can be seen on this front page: the offer of a free gift is used as a lure to buy 'tomorrow's' paper and the poppy, a symbol of remembrance, is placed on the masthead. The poppy is a symbol that can be interpreted in different ways but ideas of patriotic bravery are common associations and this is in juxtaposition to the implication that the judges in the lead story have acted in a 'treasonous' way. The front page has been constructed to appeal to a group of readers who share specific political views.

Some strategies used to attract an audience are as a direct response to the competition newspapers coming from online and/or broadcast news providers. The name 'the *i*' and the fact that it is written in lower case carries connotations of up-to-date technologies (iPlayer, iPad, etc.) and the paper aligns itself with more contemporary attitudes towards methods of distributing news and information, despite the fact that it is a print-based product. The design of the front cover is more like the design of web pages rather than traditional newspapers, with its content being displayed in grids and its use of images and block colours. The front page shows that the paper offers a range of different types of stories that would cater to different interests (sport, entertainment, UK news and politics, global politics, social comment and puzzles). Its main story is offered in bullet points giving



A *Daily Mail* front page used to generate political outrage and anger.

a level of detail without being overly wordy. All these features on the front page are strategically chosen to attempt to attract the audience.

Each of these strategies offers different benefits or gratifications for the audience. Some audience members like to catch up on news and events quickly, some like to read a newspaper that reflects their own political viewpoints, while others want to read a newspaper so they can be informed on a range of social, political and cultural issues.

You shouldn't be trying to work this all out in the exam room. During your studies of audience you should have considered the various reasons why audiences access media products and how and why they may make these choices. In your studies of the newspaper CSPs you will have looked at the specific ways the products are marketed and how they attempt to appeal to audiences in the way they present the news. This is the knowledge and understanding you can use to respond to this type of question.

In a question like this, you should make sure your responses are specific to the CSPs you are discussing. Remember, though, this is a short-answer question so you will need be brief in your explanations. Keep your responses short and to the point.

Extended-response questions

The extended response question will require you to offer a longer, more detailed response than the other questions in this section. This question will usually be the final question on the paper – although the order of questions isn't always guaranteed. You should identify which of the questions in Section B is offering the higher marks.

Again, the question will aim to test your knowledge and understanding of audience and industry, and will ask you to use your newspaper, radio or film (industries only) CSPs. You will also have to show that you can make judgements and draw conclusions that show you can critically evaluate the ideas and theories you are using to answer the question.

Questions will focus on a specific aspect of the theoretical framework and ask you to use your CSPs to provide evidence for your analysis of the ideas you are discussing. As with all the questions on this paper, the specific ideas that could come up in this question will be taken from the detailed list of ideas and enabling ideas that are published in the AQA specification. Although there is no way to predict which specific industry or audience issue will be raised in the exam, your preparations should have included the application of lots of different audience and industry ideas that you can use to help you answer the question.

For example:

- How important is convergence in the success of British newspapers? In your answer you should refer to your CSPs, the *i* and the *Daily Mail*.

or

- Hall argues that audiences understand media products according to their own cultural upbringing. How useful is this idea when considering audience responses to radio programming? In your answer you should refer to your radio CSPs.

or

- How important is it for contemporary media industries to consider changing patterns in the way audiences access and consume media products? In your answer you should refer to your CSP, *Chicken*.

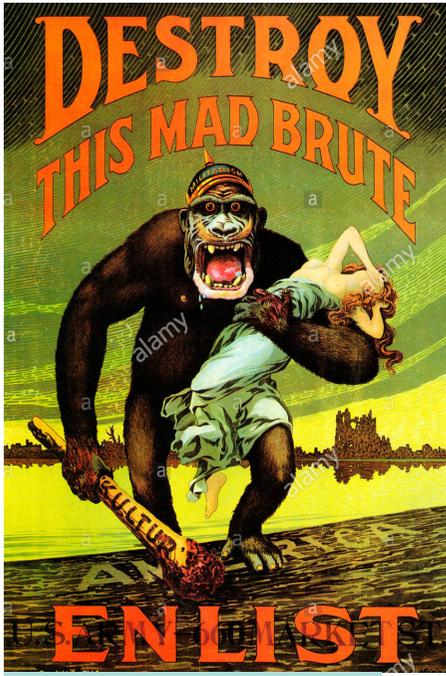


An *i* front page showing the variety of content offered by the newspaper.

APPLY IT

Answer the following question and spend approximately five minutes writing your response.

- 1 Identify three strategies used by newspapers to try to attract audiences. What benefits or gratifications do these strategies offer the audience? Each of the benefits or gratifications should be different. In your answer, you should refer to your CSPs: the *Daily Mail* and the *i*.



A 1917 (World War I) propaganda poster, tapping into fears of invasion.



For example:

The audience response to *The War of the Worlds* in 1938 was specific to the cultural context and, therefore, the cultural upbringing of the listeners to the broadcast. Some listeners in America did not have the media experience to necessarily determine the difference between a dramatic fiction presented in the style of a news broadcast and a real news story. This is not to say that audiences were less intelligent but they had not had the high levels of exposure to the media that modern audiences have, and much of the media of the time followed conventions, so things that sounded like the news, were usually the news. The global political context of the day, where Americans were aware that international relations in Europe were disintegrating and, since World War I, the Russian Revolution, the tensions in Europe, fears about war, revolution and invasion were real for people at that time. This example from media history supports Hall's ideas, as the cultural upbringing of the listening audience could account for both the response at the time of broadcast and the criticisms aimed at the producers of the radio drama afterwards.

APPLY IT

Research and plan for your responses to the following questions.

When you have considered the issues and feel ready to write, spend approximately 30 minutes writing your response. Don't forget to use media terminology and use specific and detailed examples from your CSPs to support your response.

- 1 How important is convergence in the success of British newspapers? In your answer you should refer to your CSPs, the *i* and the *Daily Mail*.
- 2 Hall argues that audiences understand media products according to their own cultural upbringing. How useful is this idea when considering audience responses to radio programming? In your answer you should refer to your radio CSPs.
- 3 How important is it for contemporary media industries to consider changing patterns in the way audiences access and consume media products? In your answer you should refer to your CSP, *Chicken*.

SUMMARY

There are several different types of questions that will come up on Media One, so you should make sure that you read the questions carefully and check how many marks they offer you. Spending a long time on a question worth 6 marks will still only give you a maximum of 6 marks. Spending too much time on a short-answer question could mean that you run out of time when answering the more valuable questions and this could impact on your final grade.

Your preparation for this exam needs to ensure that you are familiar with each of the targeted CSPs and have considered each product in light of the appropriate parts of the theoretical framework. You should be able to use very specific examples from the CSPs to demonstrate the ideas from the theoretical framework.

Your knowledge of how media language and representations work to create meaning will be assessed through questions based on the non-CSP product. These questions will be based on exactly the same knowledge you have applied to CSPs but you will be using examples from the unseen media product to demonstrate the theoretical ideas.

As long as your preparation of the theoretical framework and the CSPs is thorough, you will have the knowledge and understanding needed for short- or long-answer questions.

9.3 Media Two

The paper

Media Two will ask you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the whole of the theoretical framework as applied to the in-depth CSPs. It is a two-hour paper and you will need to complete four compulsory questions. One question will be based on an unseen, non-CSP media product and each of the other three questions will require you to discuss CSPs from the three in-depth media forms, magazines, television and online, social and participatory media/gaming.

This paper can ask questions on any aspect the theoretical framework. You could be asked to define, explain or apply, so it is important that you have a thorough knowledge of the framework and can apply it confidently to your CSPs and to one unseen, non-CSP media product.

Paper Two will ask you to show your knowledge and understanding by asking a number of different types of questions. Each question will have a specific number of marks available and this should inform your time-management in the exam. The most likely structure for Paper Two would be to begin with question based on the non-CSP product requiring a medium-length response and then you will need to answer three longer-response questions. One of the questions will need an extended response, where you need to develop a line of reasoning and another of the longer-response questions will be synoptic.

Unseen, non-CSP-based question

Just like all of the exam questions on Media Two, the non-CSP-based question will need you to show you knowledge and understanding of some aspect of the theoretical framework. The question will make it clear which area of the framework you need to use and which ideas specifically you need to discuss.

For example:

- How do the media language choices made in the construction of media products create ideological meaning?

This question relates to media language and the way meaning is created. There are a number of ways this question could be answered :

- through a breakdown of the construction of meaning in representations
- through an analysis of the way narrative creates meaning
- how the use of genre codes and conventions can be ideological.

The ideas or theories you select will depend on the product you are discussing.

APPLY IT

1 How do the media language choices made in the construction of media products create ideological meaning?

- Show how this occurs in one of your magazine CSPs.
- Show how this occurs in one of your television CSPs.
- Show how this occurs in one of your online media CSPs.
- Show how this occurs in one of your gaming CSPs.

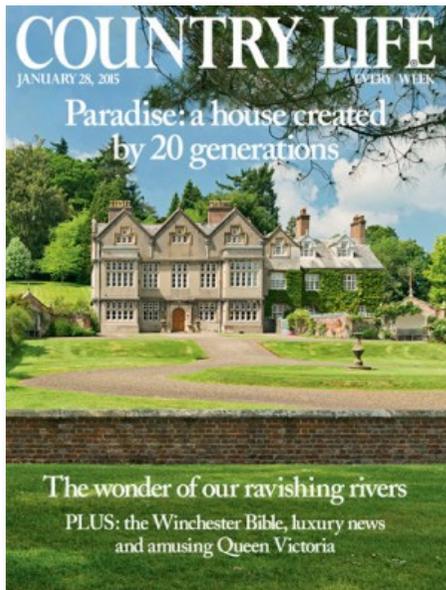
The knowledge and understanding that allows you to answer this question is the same in each version of the question but the specific example you would use to show how this works would be different.

TIP

Note: the two media forms 'online, social and participatory media' and 'gaming' are combined for the purpose of the structure of this paper. You should, however, study both of these forms in detail and have an in-depth knowledge of all CSPs in preparation for the examination.

TIP

The synoptic question will need you to offer ideas drawn from a number of areas from the course. This could mean that one question will need you to use ideas from a number of the theoretical areas in your response.



Paper Two will ask you a question based on an unseen, non-CSP product. This product will be provided in the examination and will be print based. The non-CSP product could relate to any of the in-depth media forms.

The knowledge used to answer the previous question about your CSPs can also be used to discuss a media product you have not seen before. For example, here are some notes on how the media language choices made in the construction of the front cover of *Country Life* magazine create ideological meaning.

The cover of the magazine consists of a single image of a large country house set in a rural location. The house is presented in long-shot, ensuring that its location is clear. The magazine title, dateline and cover-lines are all placed over the image but the house itself remains the central focus of the cover. The blue-sky, the dominance of the green of the grass and leaves combine with the choice of the word 'paradise' to create an idealised image of the countryside. Further anchorage is created with the phrase 'a house created by 20 generations' reinforcing the values that it is longstanding traditions that support the utopian vision of the countryside created here. The traditional values of the magazine are further reinforced in the mentioning of the royal family (specifically Queen Victoria) and its idealisation of the countryside in the promise of a feature on 'ravishing rivers'. The British countryside, history and heritage are clearly important to the producers of the magazine and its audience, who are drawn together as a community with the use of the word 'our'.

APPLY IT

Look at this cover for *Wolfenstein II*. Make notes based on the question below and then write your answer in approximately 15 minutes.



How does this media product feed into the discourse of gender and power?

The prospect of a non-CSP-based question can sometimes feel a little daunting. It's natural to want to feel prepared for an examination and an unseen product could cause an initial feeling of surprise or concern. In addition, the question could be related to any aspect of the theoretical framework, so could feel even more random. The non-CSP element of the exam should not cause too much concern, though, if you feel confident in your knowledge of the theoretical framework. Look again at the *Country Life* magazine cover.

- How does the cover position its audience?
- In what ways does can the front cover be seen as an example of selective representation?
- How does this front cover help communicate the magazine's brand image?
- Gerbner argues that repeated exposure to specific ideas in representations can encourage audiences to 'cultivate' specific views and opinions. How might the front cover cultivate and reinforce specific ideas about social class?

You can prepare for this type of question by considering the ideas you are learning using the theoretical framework and how they can be applied to lots of non-CSP media products. You can do this every day – as you are watching videos on YouTube, looking at magazines in a waiting room or reading your favourite blogger's most recent update. This not only deepens your understanding of the theoretical framework but will also help you deal with the non-CSP question in the exam.

Longer-response questions

The other questions on this paper require a detailed and extended engagement from you as you consider the issue raised in the question and then explain your response using ideas from the framework and examples from your CSPs. You cannot predict which CSP products you will need to discuss using which ideas, so you must make sure that you have prepared all CSPs thoroughly. As in-depth CSPs you will need to have some background knowledge on the industrial context of the products, as well as have a detailed knowledge of the way media language is used in each product's construction and the specific representation and audience issues raised by each product. You should also have considered any relevant social, political or historical context related to each CSP.

When preparing for the examination ensure you have covered all areas of the theoretical framework in your analysis of each in-depth CSP.

| CSP name | Main industrial issues | Audience | Use of media language (including genre and narrative) | Representation (including ideology) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Television CSPs | | | | |
| Online media and gaming CSPs | | | | |
| Magazine CSPs | | | | |

There are several different types of longer-response questions that could come up in the examination.

Evaluation of theories

You may be asked to show your knowledge and understanding by evaluating a specific idea or theory. In this type of question, the idea or theory will be detailed in the question and you will be asked to discuss how valid or useful you feel the ideas are. This type of question needs you to show that you can engage with ideas and understand them. In this type of question you may wish to agree with the theory but you don't have to. If you feel a specific idea is limited or even just not valid, you are able to challenge the ideas in your response. However, don't simply agree or disagree. You need to be prepared to explain your thoughts on the theory and provide support for your evaluation from your CSPs. The question will specify which CSPs you should provide examples from.

For example:

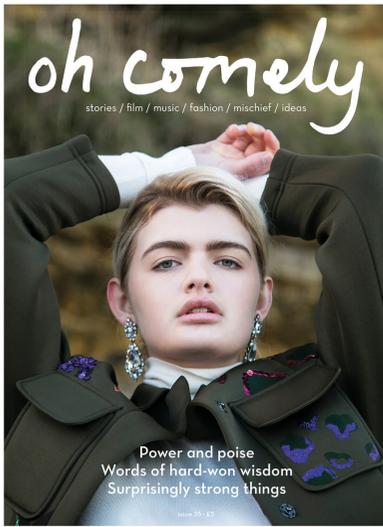
- Social learning theory speculates that audiences can be influenced by media representations. How valid is this idea? Refer to *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* in your answer.

or

- Binary oppositions create conflicts that drive narratives forwards. Is this a valid idea when considering the appeal of television drama? You should refer to your television CSPs in your answer.

or

- Mulvey said that 'the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly'. Is the male gaze a useful idea when considering the representations in magazines? You should refer to the CSPs *Oh Comely* and *Men's Health* in your answer.



These questions direct you to think about a very specific idea and CSPs from one media form to help support your ideas. Here are some notes showing how the question about Mulvey's ideas can be approached using *Oh Comely*.

Oh Comely is an example of how some contemporary media products act to reject the male gaze and the male 'phantasy' of how women should be. The model on the front cover of the CSP is androgynous and, although she is wearing some make-up has not been styled in a stereotypical way. She controls the gaze by looking directly into the camera and, even though she is wearing earrings, the rest of the styling subverts the conventions of how women usually look on magazine front covers. Her body is covered and the image is anchored with words that are not stereotypically associated with the feminine: 'power', 'wisdom' and 'strong'. The model is not sexualised in any way and, although this challenges Mulvey's assertion, we can perhaps argue that the idea of the male gaze is a useful tool to help us engage with the ideologies created by media representations of women. Mulvey's ideas are still valid in other contexts (conventional lifestyle and fashion magazines) but *Oh Comely* is an independent media product which wishes to appeal to an audience that does not identify with the femininity often represented in mainstream products. The representations chosen here are in response to the conventional ways women are usually presented to be gazed upon.

APPLY IT

Make notes and plan responses to the following questions where you refer to several examples from the relevant CSPs to help you evaluate the theories. You could attempt to write responses in approximately 30 minutes.

- 1 Social learning theory speculates that audiences can be influenced by media representations. How valid is this idea? Refer to *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* in your answer.
- 2 Binary oppositions create conflicts that drive narratives forwards. Is this a valid idea when considering the appeal of television drama? You should refer to your television CSPs in your answer.
- 3 Mulvey said that 'the determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly'. Is the male gaze a useful idea when considering the representations in magazines? You should refer to the CSPs *Oh Comely* and *Men's Health* in your answer.

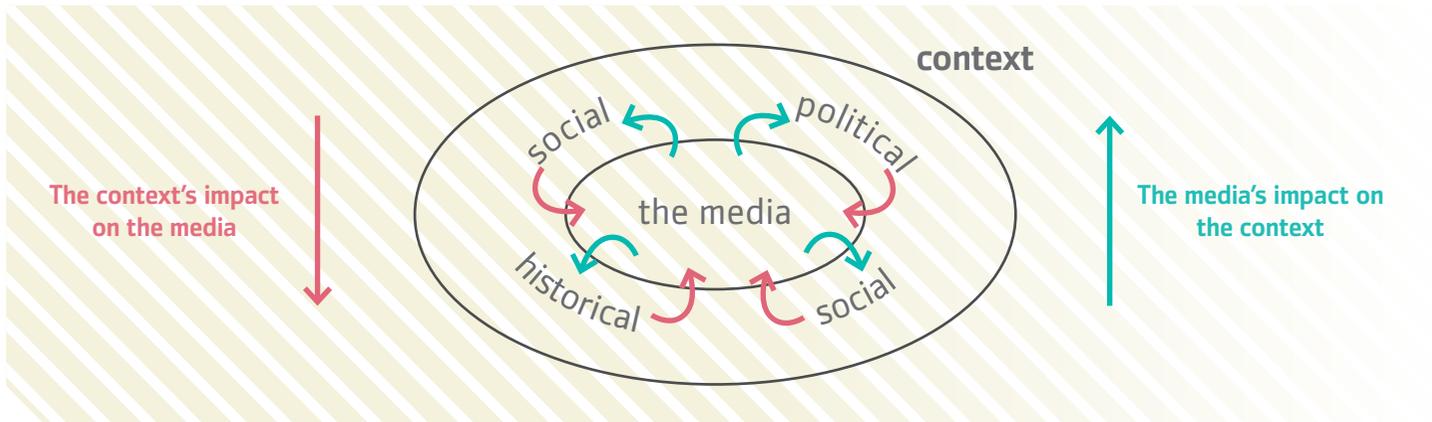
Application of context questions

You could be asked to apply a specific context issue to your CSPs. Again, the question will detail the issue you need to discuss and you will be told which CSPs you should use to help you answer the question.

To consider context is to consider the circumstances specific to the production and reception of a media product. Context is often identified as being 'historical', 'social', 'political' and/or 'cultural'. This can also include the economic context.

- The **historical context** refers to the circumstances specific to the era of production.
- The **political context** refers to the impact that dominant ideological ideas may have on media products and their reception.
- The **social context** refers to the aspects of how people live their lives related to the production and reception of media products.
- The **cultural context** refers to the relationship the production of and/or reception of a media product may have with the other things created at the time (technological developments, other media products, art, literature, etc.).
- The **economic context** can refer to the industrial context of production as well as the broader economic context, including the impact of capitalist, consumerist and materialist values.

It's probably not worth getting too worried about the differences between these ideas of context as they often overlap. The most important thing is to recognise that media products are influenced by the context of production and some media products can have an impact on the context that surrounds it.



Take one aspect of the contemporary cultural context – the development of microblogging technology (Twitter). This technology has had a major impact on politics, the way the news is reported, celebrity culture, advertising, the way people communicate, the creation of fan communities, etc.

APPLY IT

How has Twitter changed our cultural, political and social context?

Complete the following table by making notes on the way Twitter has impacted on a range of different aspects of contemporary culture.

| The impact of Twitter on ... | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Politics | |
| The reporting of news | |
| Celebrity culture | |
| Advertising | |
| Communication between strangers | |
| The creation of fan communities | |
| Other changes? | |

No examiner will expect you to know everything there is to know about the contemporary context, but they will expect that you have looked at specific context issues related to the CSPs. As with the other questions on this paper, you could be asked to focus on any of the theoretical framework areas and any of the media forms you have studied in depth.

For example:

- 'Magazines reflect the social attitudes and values of the context of their production.' To what extent do your CSPs, *Oh Comely* and *Men's Health*, support this idea?

or

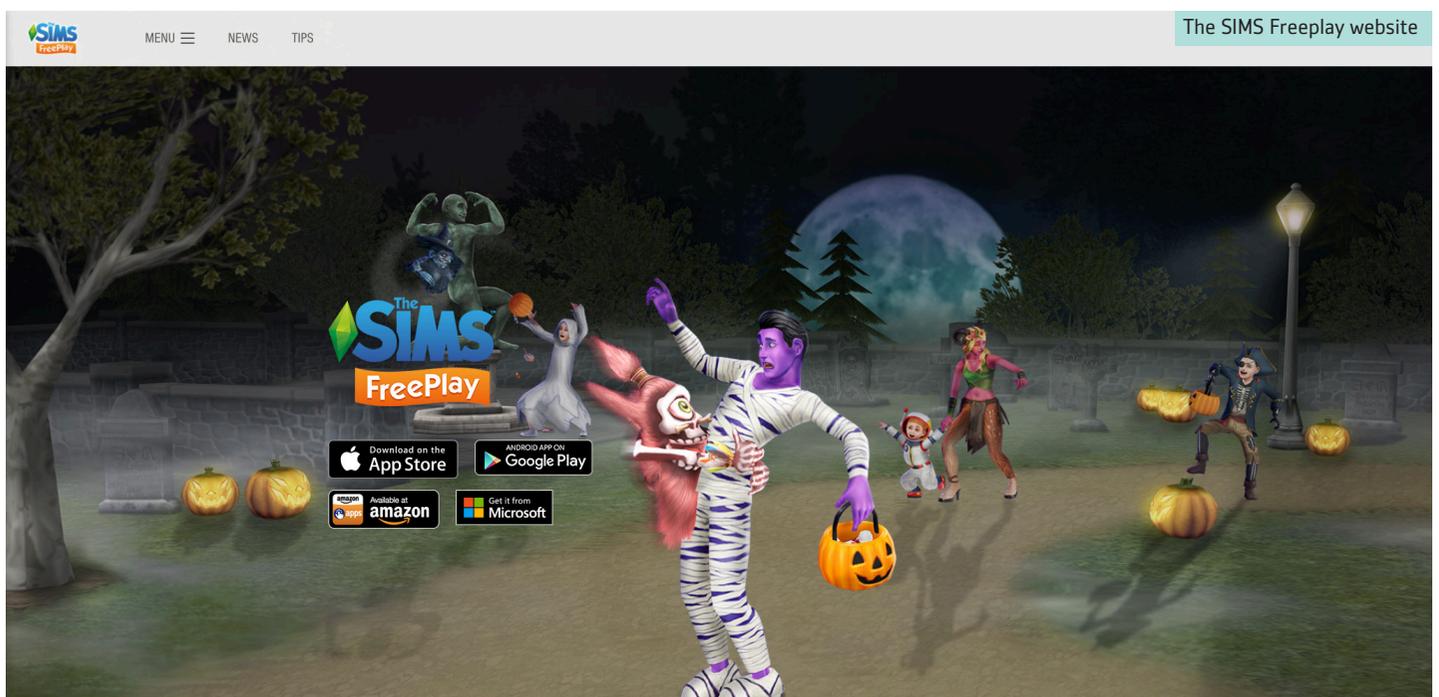
- Technological developments lead to changes in audience behaviours. Referring to your television CSPs, how has the production of television drama responded to changes in the way audiences watch television products?

or

- Does online media offer more choice and more variety for media audiences? Refer to *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* websites in your response.

or

- Some video games have been at the centre of moral panics about the impact of gaming on audiences. Based on your study of *The Sims Freeplay*, *Metroid: Prime 2 Echoes* and *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*, how valid are the arguments that video games have a negative impact on players?



There will always be a number of ways you could answer a context question. You should ensure that you give plenty of evidence for your ideas. Evidence will largely come from the media products themselves and ideas from the theoretical framework.

Here are some ideas that could be used when answering the questions above.

| Magazines: contemporary attitudes and values | Television: impact of audience behaviour | Online media: choice and variety | Gaming: moral panics |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Cultural values around gender and sexuality in the content and representations within the magazines</p> <p>Representation theory: methods of encoding, cultural decoding; fluidity of identity; stereotypes and countertypes</p> <p>Gender theory: feminism, post-feminism; gender fluidity; gender as performance; male/female gaze</p> | <p>Social context of technology leading audience behaviour – mobile technology, streaming, etc.</p> <p>Development of long-form narrative; genres reflecting adult interests (literary influences); subversive binary oppositions; extended narratives using online products; rise in subscription services changing economic models of production</p> <p>Audience fragmentation; importance of niche groups; rise of social interaction via social media</p> <p>Audience choice and freedom from schedules, the television, mainstream broadcasters</p> | <p>Democratisation of production (to an extent): easy access to production technologies for individuals and smaller media companies</p> <p>Audience fragmentation and the importance of niche groups; media products as community hubs; convergence offering alternative experiences</p> <p>Economic factors: changes in funding models, data mining; selling an audience to advertisers</p> <p>Audience interaction, influence of amateurisation</p> | <p>Social learning and socialisation theory, hypodermic needle theory, cumulation and cultivation theory; hyper-reality, simulacra</p> <p>Moral panics, encoding/decoding</p> <p>Genre theory; narrative theory; gender as power discourse; gazes; performance; media literacy</p> |

APPLY IT

Make notes and plan responses to the following questions where you refer to several examples from the relevant CSPs to demonstrate your application of contextual ideas. You could attempt to write responses in approximately 30 minutes.

- 1 Magazines reflect the social attitudes and values of the context of their production. To what extent do your CSPs, *Oh Comely* and *Men's Health*, support this idea?
- 2 Technological developments lead to changes in audience behaviours. Referring to your television CSPs, how has the production of television drama responded to changes in the way audiences watch television products?
- 3 Does online media can offer more choice and more variety for media audiences? Refer to *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* websites in your response.
- 4 Some video games have been at the centre of moral panics about the impact of gaming on audiences. Based on your study of *The Sims Freeplay*, *Metroid: Prime 2 Echoes* and *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*, how valid are the arguments that video games have a negative impact on players?



Tomb Raider: Anniversary

Synoptic questions

One of the questions on this paper will be a synoptic question. This means it can ask a question about any aspect of the theoretical framework and may ask you to show your knowledge and understanding of more than one theoretical area and/or context. You could be asked to show connections and relationships between theoretical ideas and you will be assessed on your ability to draw on different areas of study. The synoptic question will be focused on one of the in-depth areas of study but you will not be able to predict which one before the examination. It is

**APPLY
IT**

Make notes and plan responses to the following questions where you refer to several examples from the relevant CSPs and ideas from different parts of the theoretical framework. You could attempt to write responses in approximately 30 minutes.

- 1 Narratives offer a range of audience gratifications. Demonstrate this using examples from your television CSPs.
- 2 Multiculturalism and racial identity can be commodified by media industries. To what extent do *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* websites support or challenge this idea?
- 3 The genre of a game influences the representations used and the ideological meaning created. Discuss this idea making reference to *The Sims Freeplay*, *Metroid: Prime 2 Echoes* and *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*.



most likely that this will be the last question on the paper, so you must make sure that you leave enough time at the end of the examination to complete the question fully. If you produce a limited response in the synoptic question, it can have a very negative impact on your mark. You should leave at least 30 minutes for this question.

Providing a synoptic response relies on your having made connections between the ideas you have been studying. For example, when looking at **media language**, you will have engaged with the idea that choices in the production of media products create meaning. **Media producers** create the products and **audiences** interpret them, and through the creative choices made **representations** are constructed. **Media language** choices are selected to appeal to **audiences** and some **media producers** have access to more **economic/industrial** support, which will influence the production choices they make. Limited budgets may make some **genres** inaccessible and could mean that productions have to be creative in the way they use cheaper technologies. Production choices and audience responses are influenced by the social, historical, political, cultural and economic **contexts of production and reception**. The separate aspects of the theoretical framework are, of course, not really separate at all. The synoptic question will ask you to demonstrate your understanding of this.

For example:

- Narratives offer a range of audience gratifications. Demonstrate this using examples from your television close study products.

or

- Multiculturalism and racial identity can be commodified by media industries. To what extent do *The Voice* and *Teen Vogue* websites support or challenge this idea?

or

- The genre of a game influences the representations used and the ideological meaning created. Discuss this idea making reference to *The Sims Freeplay*, *Metroid: Prime 2 Echoes* and *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*?

Each of these questions requires ideas from different parts of the theoretical framework to be used if they are to be answered properly.

For example:

- The genre of a game influences the representations used and the ideological meaning created. Discuss this idea making reference to *The Sims Freeplay*, *Metroid: Prime 2 Echoes* and *Tomb Raider: Anniversary*.

This question needs you to connect the construction of meaning (*media language*), genre theory (*media language*) and ideas about representation (*representation*).

In your answer you could refer to ideas such as **genres of order and integration**, **encoding and decoding**, **cultural codes** and **cultural myths**. You could link different genres to different **audiences** and the **gratifications** they seek. You could consider the use (or not) of **quest narratives** and **character roles** within specific genres and the way **binary oppositions** lead to **ideological meaning**. You might be interested in the way genres use ideas related to gender and/or race (**identity, feminist, post-feminist** and/or **postcolonial theories**) and the relationship genres have with **dominant ideologies** and **hegemonic values**.

Extended responses

Three of the four questions on Paper Two are longer-response questions. These offer higher marks and need you to provide more detail than the answers to shorter-response questions.

Extended responses need you to do more than simply show what you know. You should also demonstrate that you are able to assess, evaluate, make judgements and draw conclusions. You need to be able to engage with ideas and develop an argument.

For example, remembering what intersectionality is, is, of course, very important but what is its significance? Why might it be an important idea? Does this idea help us understand the impact of representations and the experiences of some segments of the audience? How does it relate to cultural discussions about race, gender and sexuality?

When responding to an extended-response question, you will not only be asked to show what you know but you will also be asked to show that you have engaged with the ideas you're discussing and have considered them carefully. You should evaluate their validity as ideas and use your CSPs to support your points of view.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Preparation for the A level examinations can be broken down into the following elements:

- Detailed knowledge of the theoretical framework.
- Thoughtful engagement with the ideas from the theoretical framework.
- Detailed knowledge of the CSPs – to include relevant contextual issues.
- Application of the theoretical framework to CSP and non-CSP products.

So, remember:

- Read the questions carefully.
- Consider time management based on the marks offered for each question.
- Make sure you use the correct theoretical framework ideas and CSPs.
- Use specific examples from CSPs.
- Use specialised terminology from the theoretical framework.
- Paper One: Targeted studies
 - Section A: Media language and representation
 - Advertising and marketing and Music video
 - Section B: Industries and audience
 - Newspapers, radio and film (industry only)
- Paper Two: In-depth studies
 - All areas of the theoretical framework
 - Magazines, television, online, social and participatory media and gaming.



The terms in the following table are the ideas that you should engage with when studying the CSPs. Questions in the examination may assess your knowledge and understanding of these theoretical ideas.

| The enabling ideas for the theoretical framework from the AQA specification | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Media language | <p>Semiotics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign • Signifier • Signified • Dominant signifier • Icon • Index • Code • Symbol • Anchorage • Ideology • Paradigm • Syntagm <p>Barthes' ideas and theories on semiotics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signification • Denotation • Connotation • Myth <p>Narratology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative codes • Narration • Diegesis • Quest narrative • 'Character types' • Causality • Plot • Masterplot <p>Todorov's ideas and theories on narratology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative structure • Equilibrium • Disruption • New equilibrium <p>Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventions and rules • Sub-genre • Hybridity • Genres of order and integration • 'Genre as cultural category'. | <p>Lévi-Strauss' ideas and theories on structuralism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binary oppositions • Mytheme • Cultural codes • Ideological reading • Deconstruction <p>Postmodernism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastiche • Bricolage • Intertextuality • Implosion <p>Baudrillard's ideas and theories on postmodernism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulacra • Simulation • Hyperreality |

The enabling ideas for the theoretical framework from the AQA specification

Media representations

Theories of representation:

- Positive and negative stereotypes
- Countertypes
- Misrepresentation
- Selective representation
- Dominant ideology
- Constructed reality
- Hegemony
- Audience positioning

Hall's ideas and theories on representation:

- Encoding/decoding

Identity

- Fluidity of identity
- Constructed identity
- Negotiated identity
- Collective identity

Feminist theories:

- Male gaze
- Voyeurism
- Patriarchy
- Sexualisation/raunch culture
- Post-feminism
- Female gaze

Van Zoonen's ideas and theories on feminist theory:

- Gender and power
- Gender as discourse.

hooks' ideas and theories on feminist theory:

- Intersectionality

Theories of gender performativity:

- Sex and gender

Butler's ideas and theories on gender performativity:

- Gender as performativity ('a stylised repetition of acts')
- Gender as historical situation rather than natural fact
- Subversion

Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory:

- Cultural imperialism
- Multiculturalism
- Imagined communities
- Marginalisation
- Orientalism
- Otherness (alterity)

Gilroy's ideas and theories on ethnicity and post-colonial theory:

- Diaspora
- Double consciousness

The enabling ideas for the theoretical framework from the AQA specification

Media industries

Regulation

- Deregulation
- Free market
- Media concentration
- Public service broadcasting (PSB)
- Globalisation
- Conglomerates
- Neo-liberalism
- Surveillance
- Privacy
- Security.

Regulation as summarised by Livingstone and Lunt

- Public sphere
- Governance
- Regulation
- Public interest/**PSB**
- Media literacy
- Power
- Value
- Transnational culture
- Globalisation.

Cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh):

- Cultural industries
- Commodification
- Convergence
- Diversity
- Innovation
- Conglomeration
- Vertical integration
- Cultural imperialism.

The enabling ideas for the theoretical framework from the AQA specification

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Media audience | <p>Media effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses and gratifications • Hypodermic needle theory • Moral panic • Cumulation • Media literacy <p>Bandura’s ideas and theories on media effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social learning/imitation <p>Cultivation theory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialisation • Standardisation • Enculturation • Bardic function <p>Gerbner’s ideas and theories on cultivation theory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivation differential • Mainstreaming • Resonance • Mean World Index <p>Reception theory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda setting • Framing • Myth making • Conditions of consumption. <p>Hall’s ideas and theories on reception theory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encoding/decoding • Hegemonic/negotiated/oppositional | <p>Fandom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosumer • Interactivity. <p>Jenkins’ ideas and theories on fandom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory culture • Textual poaching. <p>‘End of audience’ theories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital natives • ‘We the media’ • Web 2.0 • Convergence <p>Shirky’s ideas and theories on ‘end of audience’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass amateurisation • Cognitive surplus |
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KEY TERM

PSB

public service broadcaster – television companies whose main income stream comes from public money or investments