

Answers to Quickfire Questions

1 The Media Studies Specification

1.1 Exploring products alongside the set products familiarises you with the codes and conventions of the chosen form. Also, for Component 1 Section A, you will be required to analyse two unseen products from the forms studied for this section.

1.2 Social and cultural contexts refers to the values and attitudes related to society at the time in which the product was produced. This will have an impact on the representations, themes, as well as cultural influences such as genres.

1.3 In relation to Media Industries you will have covered ownership and funding, including economic factors, regulation, the impact of technology and global production and distribution.

1.4 An extended response question requires learners to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

1.5 A stepped question is one that is split up into different stages or 'steps'. The marks for each step gradually increase along with the mark tariff.

1.6 In Component 2 you are required to study the set forms and products in detail applying all the aspects of the theoretical framework to the products studied.

1.7 One specification requirement covered is to study products from different historical periods. In Component 2 this is addressed through the study of a magazine produced before 1970. Another requirement is the effect of social, cultural and historical contexts on the representations constructed by the magazines. A further example is how media language and representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs.

2 Revising the Media Studies Theoretical Framework

2.1 Age, gender, ethnicity, culture and the context in which the sign or code appears can affect the audience response.

2.2 The code of technique is the way in which the product is constructed to convey a particular meaning. For example, the use of soft focus and muted colours in a fragrance advertisement suggests the smell of the perfume and constructs a romantic atmosphere.

2.3 For example, a technical code could be the use of close-up shots as a convention of charity advertising campaigns. It forces the audience to engage with the subject however uncomfortable this might be.

2.4 Editing is a process of selection and combination; what is included and what is left out contributes to the construction of meanings. The way in which different shots are edited together creates a narrative and communicates messages to an audience. Other aspects of editing, for example adding sound to create atmosphere, will also construct meanings.

2.5 Audiences may become familiar with the terminology used in particular media products and will feel superior if they understand this vocabulary. For example, regular viewers of crime dramas become familiar with the lexis and may even predict the dialogue at a particular point in the narrative. The lexis used in a niche magazine involves a specific audience in the magazine's community.

2.6 A hybrid genre refers to a product that incorporates the conventions of more than one genre in order to maintain the interest of the audience. For example, some crime dramas also incorporate elements of the horror or science fiction genre.

2.7 The repertoire of elements includes: narrative, characters, iconography and setting, technical codes and audio codes.

2.8 Hall put forward the idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other'.

2.9 Gauntlett suggested that while in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offers a more diverse range from which we can pick and mix different ideas.

2.10 The images, headlines and copy will have been carefully constructed and manipulated in order to convey a particular point of view with the purpose of persuading an audience.

2.11 In the blogs that are the set products for the Online Media section of Component 2.

2.12 Masculinity is the state of 'being a man', which changes as society changes. It is essentially what being a man means to a particular generation. This is then reflected in the media.

2.13 Newspapers, documentaries, music videos and radio podcasts are more likely to offer representations of issues and events.

2.14 A media product may encourage an audience through a headline or strapline in a newspaper or the introductory voiceover in a television documentary.

2.15 Opinion leaders refers to those in positions of power who aim to persuade an audience of their point of view. For example, newspaper editors and bloggers.

2.16 Curran and Seaton said that more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.

2.17 Demographic profiling is a simple way of categorising audiences, which does not explore the more complex reasons for consumer behaviour.

2.18 Demographic profiling is still used by the print and advertising industries. Advertisers use the information to determine where their products should be placed and it is a useful way for products, for example magazines, to inform potential advertisers of the target audience for their product.

2.19 The New York advertising agency Young and Rubicam first used psychographic profiling to categorise audiences.

2.20 The groups were based on motivational needs and included: Mainstreamers, Aspirers, Explorers, Succeeders and Reformers.

2.21 A newspaper will include content that reflects the opinions of its readers, for example through political bias or mode of address, in this way constructing a particular audience for the publication.

2.22 Hall suggested preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings.

2.23 Contexts are the aspects of the environment that impact upon the product at the time of its production, distribution and circulation, and as a result may affect the meaning.

2.24 The producer of a low-budget film made by an independent film company is under much greater constraints than that of a film made by a mainstream production company.

3 Component 1: Investigating the Media

3.1 *WaterAid* and the *Daily Mirror* have been studied in Section A in relation to political contexts.

3.2 Subject-specific terminology is the specific vocabulary that you must be able to employ when you are analysing media products. It is terminology related

to the specific form you are studying, for example when studying your film product you will have used terms that are particular to film and will be different from terms used when discussing other media forms and products.

3.3 Media language refers to the elements used to communicate meaning to an audience, for example the codes and conventions of a particular genre.

3.4 Media processes are the ways in which media products are produced, and the decisions made by producers at each stage (planning, production, editing, etc.) that affect the finished product, as well as distribution, marketing, regulation, circulation and audience consumption.

3.5 Gender, age and ethnicity are all examples of social groups.

3.6 Audience responses to representations may be affected by factors such as: age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group, occupation, situated culture, regional/national identity, political beliefs, religious beliefs, etc.

3.7 A repertoire of elements is the key features that distinguish products from one genre or sub-genre.

3.8 An active audience is an audience who actively engages with the messages encoded in media products through the way in which they interpret and respond to those products.

3.9 A paradigm is a set of related signs the encoder can choose from in constructing a product, for example the set of colours or font styles the designer of an advert or film poster may choose from. In choosing one sign which encodes messages rather than another, a paradigmatic choice is made that will influence meaning.

3.10 A syntagm is a combination of signs that are linked together in order to convey meaning. For example, the elements of a film poster including images, fonts styles, language, etc. create a syntagm.

3.11 Intertextuality is when one text is used or referenced in another. In media products an example would be the use of memorable film scenes in an advertisement. The text used will resonate with the target audience.

3.12 The Representation question is a higher tariff question as it is an extended response question. It requires you to develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

3.13 The typical codes and conventions of charity campaigns include: shocking and emotive images, information about the issue presented in a dramatic way with possible use of hyperbole, celebrities directly

addressing the audience and appealing for help (white saviour complex), statistics and vulnerable victims directly addressing the audience.

3.14 The use of technical effects, for example CGI, has made music videos more sophisticated. Technical codes and editing, including the use of graphics and animation, have made some examples of music videos highly cinematic in their production.

3.15 Star persona refers to those stars who establish an identity that develops beyond their ability to make music. This may be demonstrated through their personality and be evident across other media platforms, for example magazine interviews. Some stars are adept at changing their image and star persona as part of a marketing strategy and to keep audiences engaged.

3.16 If a band or artist plays an instrument then this establishes them as a serious musician. The inclusion of a performance element reinforces the musical skill of the band/artist. Their style of performance helps to establish their star persona, as well as helping to market them to a target audience.

3.17 Right wing refers to those with a more conservative, ethnocentric viewpoint. They believe in the free market and oppose socialism. They tend to support political parties such as the Conservative party and UKIP.

Left wing refers to people whose view is left of the centre in politics. They broadly believe that existing social inequalities must be addressed, have more liberal political views and tend to support the Labour party.

3.18 The *Daily Mirror* is a left-wing newspaper and explicitly supports the Labour party, and is critical of the Conservative party.

3.19 Newspapers mediate the news for their readers, which constructs a version of the truth but is not the same as real life. This may mean that they re-present the news story in a way that reflects the attitudes and beliefs of the paper and what they believe is the viewpoint of their readers. Consequently, newspapers will present issues and events in different ways.

3.20 The representation of issues and events in newspapers will be affected by the owner of the newspaper, the political leanings of the paper, the readers, and the attitudes and beliefs of the publication.

3.21 Dominant ideology refers to a set of values and beliefs that have broader social or cultural currency. This may be implicit, or, in the case of some tabloid-style newspapers, explicit.

3.22 For some newspapers, for example the *Daily Mirror*, the readership was made up of those who voted for and against Brexit. In order to avoid alienating this readership by explicitly giving a specific

viewpoint, the newspapers had to be more careful about how they represented this ongoing event.

3.23 The editorial, the letters pages, political cartoons and any articles covering social or political issues may allow readers to explore the political orientation of the newspaper in closer detail.

3.24 A conglomerate is a large organisation that has interests spanning a number of different businesses or industries. For example, some film companies also have business interests in television, music and radio.

3.25 Vertical integration is a process whereby one company acquires another involved at a different level of the industry. For example, a production company that owns a distributor or retailer. This gives the company greater control over distribution and circulation.

3.26 Diversification is the expansion of a company's operations into new or different areas. For example, newspapers now have websites and apps as well as the traditional print product.

3.27 Emerging media refers to communication through digital technology and on new platforms with interactive elements, for example websites, social media sites, podcasts and apps.

3.28 The BBC is funded by the annual licence fee. At the time of writing, in November 2019, the cost of a TV licence is £154.50.

3.29 A newspaper may use the headline, central image and the way in which it re-presents the story giving a particular viewpoint, to construct an idea of the reader. The aim of the newspaper is to include content that will appeal to the target reader and reinforce pre-conceived ideas.

3.30 Commercial radio stations are owned by private, corporate media industries. They are funded by the sale of advertising and are focused on making a profit. This means that they tend to cater for a broad audience and are ratings driven.

3.31 Radio stations have websites and catch-up facilities (iPlayer/BBC Sounds) to give flexibility to audiences. They also have apps and make their content available as podcasts.

3.32 Interacting with a radio programme may involve texting or emailing the programme and having this read out on air, getting a 'shout out' or a request played on music-led programmes, or taking part in a phone-in where their views can be aired.

3.33 Audio streaming means that a global audience can access radio content wherever they are and whenever is convenient for them. This has widened the BBC Radio audience.

3.34 The choice of topics and the guests on *LNWH* illustrate that the target audience are educated, relatively highbrow and interested in more challenging social topics.

3.35 Useful extracts from the film to help to explore industry issues may include: the opening credits, the end credits, extracts that suggest marketing opportunities (use of stars) and extracts that suggest the production values of the film.

3.36 Synergy is the combination of organisations to create a more powerful body with greater impact than could be achieved by one company alone. For example, Time Warner is a powerful media organisation made up of a combination of smaller companies, with the aim of producing more revenue.

3.37 Technical convergence is the merger of previously distinct media technologies and platforms due to digital advances. For example, being able to watch a Netflix or Amazon film on a smartphone. It also means the combining of different media forms, for example the film industry and the music or video games industry.

3.38 Vertical integration in the film industry is where a film company owns the means to produce, distribute and exhibit the film. For example, where a film company owns a distributor and cinemas/a television channel.

3.39 An example of horizontal integration is Warner Bros, which owns film studios, Rock Steady Games, DC Comics and other related companies.

3.40 A tabloid newspaper would be the *Sun* or the *Daily Mirror*. A mid-market may be the *Daily Mail* or the *Express*. Broadsheets would include *The Times*, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian*.

3.41 Newspaper websites are immediate and up to date. They offer interactive opportunities. Apps for some newspapers are available for mobile phones and tablets. It is easy to access archived stories and articles. It makes selecting the news and features that appeal to the individual much easier.

3.42 News vales are the criteria that influence decisions made by those in control of the newspaper industry, for example the owners, editors and journalists who select and construct the news.

3.43 The news agenda is the list of stories that may appear in a particular newspaper. The items on the news agenda will reflect the style, ethos and political stance of the publication.

3.44 Citizen journalism is when news is gathered by the general public who are there when the story unfolds. Advances in technology means that they can record and send information quickly.

3.45 Citizen journalism allows the newspaper immediate access to a news story as it happens, through images and interviews. It is cheaper than sending their own journalist to cover the story and having the member of public there means the story can be easily updated.

3.46 The Leveson Report was a public enquiry into the culture, practice and ethics of the British press. It was prompted by the *News of the World* phone-hacking scandal, which brought about the closure of the paper. It had a massive impact on the way in which the public viewed some newspapers and the future regulation of the industry.

3.47 A question on the newspaper industry may appear in Section B Question 3.

3.48 A unique viewer is a someone who returns to a website more than once over a period of time. They can be identified by tracking traffic to the website.

3.49 Three hypothetical positions from which messages and meanings may be decoded refers to Stuart Hall's reception theory.

3.50 An example of a traditional advertising platform would be a newspaper or the television. A digital platform would be a website or mobile phone.

3.51 On the whole, with some exceptions, representations of women are more positive and they are less sexually objectified than in the past. This is to reflect the changing role of women in society.

3.52 The click-through rate refers to the proportion of users of a website who click on a specific link to, for example an advertisement. It is used by advertisers to measure the success of an online campaign.

3.53 This technique was common, particularly in adverts for domestic cleaning products. Two women, who were relatable to the target audience, would discuss a domestic issue, for example how to get a whiter wash. This was usually resolved by one woman recommending the product being advertised. Advertisers thought women would be more likely to buy the product if they could see women like them using it.

3.54 These ideas include: Tide as the brand leader, as nothing else washes as well, the unique selling point of the 'miracle' suds will revolutionise washday, that purchasing Tide will make you happy, that all women should want their wash to be the 'Cleanest', 'Whitest' and 'Brightest'.

3.55 Young and Rubicam advocated psychographic profiling – categorising people according to their values, attitude and lifestyles.

3.56 The current regulation is only applicable to the hard copy of the games. The opportunities available for young people below the age of the PEGI rating to stream or purchase the game online means that they will be exposed to content unsuitable for their age.

3.57 A casual gamer is one who plays more spontaneously and less regularly. They tend to choose games that are less complex and challenging and are harder to target through marketing.

3.58 A core gamer refers to a player with a wide range of gaming interests who regularly actively engages with different types of games.

3.59 Fan communities allow audiences to share ideas about the game and interact with other fans. Some gamers also produce their own walk-through videos to introduce new players to aspects of the game.

3.60 Transgressive behaviour refers to behaviour that goes beyond the norms of social acceptability.

5 Component 2: Investigating Media Forms and Products

5.1 The term polysemic means having more than one meaning.

5.2 Iconography and mise-en-scène are both terms that are commonly used to describe the visual elements within media products such as television programmes or films.

5.3 Diegetic sound appears to come from within the text and is therefore audible to the people or characters we see on screen as well as the audience, whereas non-diegetic sound is only audible to the audience; it cannot be heard by people or characters within the text.

5.4 Genre hybridity occurs when the conventions of different genres are mixed or combined.

5.5 Equilibrium means balance, order or stability. The opposite of this is disequilibrium, which means imbalance, disorder or instability.

5.6 Verisimilitude means having the appearance of truth. It is commonly used to describe the realism of a product (the higher the level of verisimilitude the more realistic the product is).

5.7 Ethnocentrism is defined by Roger Brown as 'the application of the norms of one's own culture to that of others' (*Social Psychology*, 1965, page 183). In other words, the norms and values of one group are treated as if they are universally valid, which means that anyone or anything that does not conform to those norms and values is regarded as suspect, deviant or 'other'.

5.8 Patriarchy is a system of male dominance.

5.9 Misrepresentation means portraying or representing something in an inaccurate, misleading or limited way. Stereotyping is a particularly common form of misrepresentation.

5.10 Tokenism means providing a cursory or superficial representation of those who are under-

represented in order to convey the impression of inclusivity, thereby avoiding accusations of inequality and exclusion.

5.11 Publicly owned television companies are designed to serve the interests of the general public and are not-for-profit, whereas privately owned television companies are designed to make a profit for their shareholders.

5.12 A public service broadcaster is one that is required to fulfil certain public purposes, such as satisfying the needs and interests of a wide range of audiences, in order to comply with its public service remit and its licence to broadcast.

5.13 Media plurality is concerned with ensuring that there is a wide range of viewpoints available to audiences.

5.14 The watershed is the time when it becomes permissible to show programmes that are unsuitable for younger audiences.

5.15 In semiotic theory, myth refers to socially or culturally constructed meanings that come to be regarded as if they are not socially or culturally constructed at all but just common-sense or a representation of the way things really are. The process through which constructed meanings come to be seen as self-evident, achieving the status of myth, is referred to as naturalisation.

5.16 The happy housewife stereotype that featured prominently in women's magazines in the 1950s and 1960s is ideologically significant as it could be seen to convey the message that women's place is within the home and that this form of domestic containment should be a source of female contentment, happiness and fulfilment.

5.17 Advertising copy is the written text that appears in an advertisement.

5.18 The white beauty myth is a form of ethnocentrism in which female beauty is defined in terms of white standards and ideals.

5.19 The exotic other is a term used to describe someone or something that is perceived to be different, where that difference or 'otherness' becomes a source of fascination, attraction or pleasure.

5.20 Media concentration refers to a situation in which power comes to be held in the hands of fewer companies.

5.21 Horizontal integration occurs when one company acquires or merges with another that is involved in the same area of business. One magazine publisher buying a rival magazine publisher would be an example of horizontal integration.

5.22 Para-social interaction is the term used to describe the way in which mass media products create the illusion of face-to-face conversation.

5.23 A walk-through video is a video in which a vlogger demonstrates how to play a video game by walking the viewer through the necessary stages or levels. A let's play video is a recording of someone playing a video game, usually accompanied by some form of commentary.

5.24 A haul video is a video in which the vlogger displays and discusses the shopping purchases they have made.

5.25 Gatekeeping refers to a process of filtering and selection. For example, in the newspaper industry, editors perform a gatekeeping function as they decide which stories will make it into the paper and which will not. Vloggers also function as gatekeepers as they choose what to disclose or share with their viewers and what to withhold.

5.26 An advertorial is a specific type of advertisement. The main difference between an advertisement and an advertorial is that the advertorial is presented in the style of the media product in which it appears. An advertorial vlog, for instance, is an advertisement that is presented by the vlogger in their usual editorial style.

5.27 Display ads or banners are advertisements that appear beside or below an online video.

5.28 A pre-roll ad is a video advertisement that appears before the content that the viewer has chosen to watch (e.g., an advertisement that appears before a YouTube video).

5.29 A prosumer is a consumer who is actively involved in the production or circulation of content. For example, many users of online media create, comment on or adapt media content before distributing it online through the Internet or social media.

7 Component 3: Media Production

7.1 In your production you will be required to demonstrate your understanding of media language, representation, media industries and audiences.

7.2 Industry context refers to aspects of production, including the media organisation, production processes, distribution and marketing, and regulatory issues.

7.3 You are required to submit: a production, a Statement of Aims and Intentions and a cover sheet.

7.4 It is advised that learners spend up to eight weeks developing and creating their production.

7.5 The requirements of the brief are there to ensure parity between different briefs, so adhering to them is essential. The completion of them is also closely related to the assessment criteria and your final production mark.

7.6 Primary research is information you gain first-hand from looking at actual examples of existing media products, for example television drama opening sequences. Primary research allows you to formulate your own opinions. Secondary research is found in books and websites, for example, and is written by someone else about the media product you may want to create. It will contain the ideas and opinions of the writer.

7.7 Yes, you can use existing music for a soundtrack but it must be copyright free.

7.8 Yes, the images must be original and taken for the purpose of the production. However, you are allowed to use found images of industry logos and bar codes for magazines.

7.9 In the print and online magazine photographs, consideration of clothing, expression and gesture can help to construct appropriate representations.

7.10 Yes, you can use an existing song for your music video but the track must not have an existing video.

9 Examination Preparation

9.1 These questions carry a low mark tariff, for example 1 or 2 marks.

9.2 It is 3(d), as it refers to industry generally, newspapers which is the in depth study form, and contexts.

9.3 Question 3(d) has two parts. The first part is a broader industry and context focus. The product is referred to in the second part, suggesting that this is not a textual analysis question. The product must be used to highlight the industry issues raised in the first part.

9.4 The first of the two magazine questions is the lower tariff one; this is worth 5 marks. The focus of the question, which requires an explanation of the difference between two semiotic terms, is much narrower than the second magazine question, which is worth 15 marks.

9.5 The extract from the assessment grid suggests that you will need to demonstrate your ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse your set television product and to make judgements and draw conclusions.