

# Answers to Quickfire Questions

## 1 The Media Studies Year 2/A Level Specification

**1.1** Critical analysis refers to your ability to apply your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in a more complex way. This can be done though engaging in academic debate, considering and evaluating the arguments of others and giving your own ideas and opinions. This may be evident through your exploration of the usefulness of a particular media theory in relation to one of the set products.

**1.2** Theoretical approaches refers to the academic framework related to the study of a particular discipline, for example Media Studies, which underpins understanding.

**1.3** In Year 2 of the course you will:

- ✓ Develop your understanding through critical analysis of media products.
- ✓ Develop understanding of more complex theories and theoretical perspectives.
- ✓ Engage with less familiar aspects of the media, for example products from different historical periods.
- ✓ Explore the global nature of contemporary media.
- ✓ Explore media products made outside the UK.

**1.4** With regard to the media, the term commercial mainstream refers to traditional forms of mass media with a broad audience. This form of media represents corporate interests, has a powerful influence and is largely concerned with profit. It is less likely to provide content for or target minority groups.

**1.5** Cultivation theory is the idea that constant exposure to the media influences, or cultivates, particular attitudes and beliefs that shape our perception of the world around us.

**1.6** The Representation question in Section A requires you to construct an extended response, where you need to compare a set product with an unseen in the same or a different form. This may be question 1 or 2 on the paper, depending on the form of the unseen resource.

**1.7** It is important to know which contexts are relevant to which product, as you could be asked about a specific context in relation to one of the set products or forms in an examination question, for example 'make judgements and draw conclusions about how far the representations relate to relevant media contexts' (SAMS, 2019).

**1.8** Digital convergence is a process through which different media forms merge or overlap with one another, providing audiences with the opportunity to access multimedia content across different platforms and devices.

**1.9** A specialised audience refers to an audience with specific interests and needs that require targeting in a particular way. This audience may be smaller and more niche than a mass audience.

**1.10** In Section A you will have textually analysed the set products, considering the use of media language and the construction of representations. Textual analysis is not a requirement for Section B, here you will use the products to support points you make in relation to media industries and audiences.

**1.11** In an extended response question you are required to construct and develop an answer with a sustained line of reasoning that is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

**1.12** Where a question is stepped, you need to plan your time carefully, taking into account the mark tariff for each part of the question. Make sure that you do not spend too long on the lower tariff, knowledge-based questions, and leave time for those parts that demand knowledge, understanding and reference to a set product.

**1.13** Those questions that assess purely knowledge will tend to be low tariff (1 or 2 marks) and will ask you to simply identify or give an example. Those that require knowledge and understanding will ask you to illustrate or clarify your understanding by applying your knowledge to a media product in order to exemplify. These questions will carry a higher mark tariff.

**1.14** As production costs in the television industry increase and revenue depletes, producers of television content have taken the step of entering into collaborations to support production costs. This usually involves teaming up with a production company from another country and/or independent production companies, which will all contribute to the funding and making of the programme, and is known as an international co-production.

## 2 Revising the Media Studies Theoretical Framework

**2.1** Newspapers will often support one story or personality over another, thus demonstrating bias. The binary oppositions of good vs evil are frequently used when representing political standpoints that highlight the viewpoint and ideology of the newspaper.

**2.2** Semiotics is the study of the way in which texts communicate their meanings through signs and codes. These signs function at the level of denotation, which is the common-sense meaning of the sign, and connotation, which is the more complex meaning suggested by the sign.

**2.3** Roland Barthes

**2.4** The key terminology related to semiotics is: codes, connotation, denotation, decoding, encoding, polysemic, signification and signs.

**2.5** The use of post-production techniques in beauty advertising, for example digital manipulation, air-brushing and soft filters, creates an unrealistic version of the truth and false claims for what the product can achieve. This creates an ideology of what it means to be beautiful.

**2.6** A paradigm is a set of visual codes an encoder can choose from in order to create meaning in a product.

**2.7** A syntagm is the overall meaning produced when the paradigmatic choices work together.

**2.8** An ellipsis is three dots at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence, used to attract attention and interest through the withholding of information.

**2.9** An idiom is a group of words, the meaning of which is established by usage. The words themselves have no meaning in isolation, only by common understanding of the audience, for example getting cold feet or crossing your fingers. Tabloid newspapers often use idioms to create a negative representation of a person, event or issue.

**2.10** A repertoire of elements refers to the key features or conventions of products that are recognisable to audiences, and so distinguish one genre from another.

**2.11** Global village is a phrase coined by the philosopher Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s to describe the metaphoric shrinking of the world as a result of technological advancements, so the world has become a 'global village'.

**2.12** Discourse refers to the way in which a topic is talked about and so represented in the media, for example gender or ethnicity. How the topic is discussed in a media product conveys an ideology.

**2.13** Stuart Hall (theories of representation)

**2.14** Opinion leader refers to a person in a position of power, for example newspaper owners and editors, whose aim is to persuade audiences of a particular viewpoint.

**2.15** David Gauntlett asserts in his theory of identity that the contemporary media, unlike that of the past, offers a more diverse range of representations from which an audience may pick and mix different ideas.

**2.16** The literal meaning of patriarchy is 'rule of the father' and is Greek in derivation. It refers to a culture or society in which men have overall control and hold the power in all aspects of that society.

**2.17.** Race is commonly defined by racial characteristics that are inherited and passed down, for example skin colour and particular facial features. Ethnicity refers to a person's cultural identity, which may be evidenced through, for example, customs, clothing and food, suggesting an identity that is based on a sense of place, ideology or religion.

**2.18** Colonial rule was when Britain imposed its religion, economics and culture on the inhabitants of the countries it colonised as part of its empire. Postcolonial refers to the time after the end of this colonial rule. Postcolonial studies explore the lasting impact of colonial rule on countries, people and culture.

**2.19** A digitally convergent media platform is one whereby different media platforms have merged together, facilitated by advances in technology. For example, the smartphone brings together different functions, which would have previously existed on separate platforms, in one device.

**2.20** Bloggers and vloggers have revolutionised the media industry in the way they, as individual producers, have shown how ordinary people can become globally successful and create a huge fanbase.

**2.21** Pan European Game Information

**2.22** IPSO, the Independent Press Standards Association

**2.23** Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Z are all labels given to social groups according to when they were born.

**2.24** A participatory culture is the opposite of a consumer culture. It is a culture in which private individuals are not only consumers of media products but also contributors and prosumers. This has been facilitated by advances in technology.

**2.25** Political context refers to how the representations, themes, values, messages and ideologies contained within the product reflect the political circumstances in which they were made. It also relates to how industry and audience aspects, for example ownership, production, marketing and consumption, also reflect a political context.

### 3 Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences

#### Section A: Analysing Media Language and Representation

**3.1** Intertextuality is the process by which one text makes reference to another in order to create meaning.

## Advertising and Marketing

**3.2** A repertoire of elements refers to the key features or conventions that are recognisable to an audience and, as such, distinguish one genre or sub-genre from another.

**3.3** A discourse in relation to advertisements refers to the exploration of an issue within the parameters of the advertisement. The advert may engage in spoken or written interactions, with the non-present audience encoding a preferred meaning, for example Bobbi Brown makeup can make you more confident.

**3.4** 'White saviour' is a controversial term used to describe a white person, who is shown to be helping non-white people. The suggestion is that there is a quick-fix solution to the issue and that lives of the non-white people will be better for the intervention. It has been accused of perpetuating outdated stereotypes of developing countries.

**3.5** Civilisationalism refers to Gilroy's idea that geopolitics will always be centred on difference rather than similarities. He associated civilisationalism with ethnocentrism, as, in his opinion, it reproduces racial hierarchies and colonial attitudes by constructing certain, usually non-Western, cultures as 'other'.

## Music Video

**3.6** In *Dream*, the main intertextual references relate to 1950s children's television programmes. This serves to suggest a time when society was less complex and is in binary opposition to the society presented in the song lyrics. It also suggests a matriarchal world of white dominance.

In *Formation*, there are many historical intertextual references used to highlight discrimination, including Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans flooding, slavery and divided societies.

**3.7** Disjuncture refers to a lack of unity that creates a separation or disconnection, for example, between the lyrics and the visuals in a music video. This challenges the audience's expectations.

**3.8** A concept-based music video is a music video that is a more abstract creation, not based on a coherent narrative or necessarily featuring elements of performance. It may interpret the song lyrics but in an enigmatic way that does not clarify meaning. It may also be more experimental in style and cultural references.

## Newspapers

**3.9** Mediation refers to the way in which newspapers present aspects of the world to readers. Newspapers act as a mediator, encoding meaning through, for example, the choice of headline and images, focus of the story, and language and mode of address. In making these editing decisions, the ideology and viewpoint of the newspaper is communicated to the audience.

**3.10** Tabloid and broadsheet historically referred to the size of the newspaper, whereby popular newspapers, for example the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror*, were smaller and tabloid in size and quality newspapers, for example *The Times*, were much larger, broadsheet publications. With falling newspaper sales, broadsheet newspapers reduced in size, therefore the term now refers more to the style than the size of the newspaper.

**3.11** The newspaper may have decided to avoid the Brexit focus the day before the election as, similarly to other newspapers, the readership was divided and included both leavers and remainers. The decision to focus on social issues would be important to all of the readers.

**3.12** The opinion leaders in newspapers include the owners, editors and those who write opinion or comment columns in the publication.

## Section B: Understanding Media Industries and Audiences

**3.13** A mass audience is defined as large groups of people that are targeted by media forms and products. Reaching such large groups has been facilitated by advances in technology.

**3.14** Emerging media is dynamic and refers to the innovative and interactive technology of the time, for example podcasts, blogs and social media platforms.

## Radio

**3.15** The term cultural capital was first introduced by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and refers to the accumulation of cultural knowledge that then gives social status and power. Those who have cultural capital will be more comfortable engaging in discussion of the media, demonstrating their understanding and ability to engage critically with media products.

**3.16** BBC Sounds is a streaming service, including live radio, audio on demand and podcasts. It is important to the BBC as it allows the organisation to target a wide range of audiences across different devices and platforms. The service also makes recommendations to the subscriber based on their listening habits, which helps to market BBC products.

**3.17** Self-regulation refers to the fact that the BBC is initially responsible for the content produced and when it is broadcast. Like other broadcasters, it operates in the framework of the watershed, whereby content unsuitable for younger audiences is shown after 9pm. It is also responsible for working with production companies to ensure that regulatory codes are not breached by outside agencies. The BBC also has the option of issuing warnings about content at the start of live programmes, catch-up platforms and podcasts.

**3.18** The *LNWH* audience allows the BBC to fulfil its remit to broaden its content in order to attract a more diverse audience. Its production also demonstrates its evolving role as a public service broadcaster catering for all needs and responding to audience demand.

### The Film Industry

**3.19** A social realist film refers to a film that attempts to portray life as it really is. It often explores wider social issues through the creation of emotional personal stories.

**3.20** A grassroots campaign is a marketing strategy that targets a small, niche group, often a particular community, in the hope that they will spread the word. For *I, Daniel Blake*, it was decided to have the premiere of the film in Newcastle Upon Tyne, where the film was set, holding it at several community screenings instead of a central London venue.

**3.21** Disruptive-display advertising refers to advertising content that appears in unexpected places. It arrests audience attention because it challenges typical expectations. The fictional Daniel Blake was given a one-off column in the *Daily Mirror* and its masthead and front cover take-overs were used across Reach titles and platforms.

**3.22** Vertical integration is when a film company owns other companies across different stages of the film-making process, for example a production company that owns a distributor, facilitating its ability to control the distribution and exhibition of the films made.

**3.23** Horizontal integration is when different companies producing and selling similar products join together, for example the merger of two film companies into one, to form a more powerful company.

### Newspapers

**3.24** Gatekeepers refers to everyone who has any editorial control over a newspaper, for example the owner, editor, sub-editors and leading journalists.

**3.25** Media democracy refers to the way in which developments in technology have empowered citizens and promoted democratic ideals. This has given individuals the opportunity to participate in the media and journalism, specifically by creating content that allows them to report on current affairs and express opinions.

**3.26** A paywall is a method of restricting access to a website other than by a subscription payment. It has been used by some newspapers, including *The Times*, as a way of creating revenue to make up for losses from print sales and advertising.

**3.27** An edition-based digital format is an online newspaper distributed in digital form but formatted identically to the print version.

**3.28** Rolling news digital format is a 24-hour, continuously updated news service, broadcast on television and, in the case of newspapers, online.

### Advertising

**3.29** Demographic profiling refers to the categorising of audiences by dividing them into groups based on certain criteria, including age, gender, income, marital status, etc.

**3.30** Psychographic profiling refers to categorising audiences according to their values, attitudes and lifestyles. This model considers how audiences think and behave, what is important to them and how this affects the way they spend their money.

**3.31** Young and Rubicam

**3.32** An advertising tribe is a group of people who together identify themselves with a particular lifestyle and set of behaviours. They also identify with particular products and share similar views about certain brands.

**3.33** Tribes are influencers and can play a role in marketing a product and in raising brand awareness.

### Video Games

**3.34** A digital native is a person born or brought up during the age of digital technology, who therefore has a high level of digital literacy when it comes to computers, the internet and social media.

**3.35** Virtual costuming is when new costumes or skins can be bought for characters in the virtual world of the game. This merchandising strategy allows gamers to be involved in making choices about how they want the characters to be represented and the game's publishers can increase their revenue.

**3.36** Backward capability refers to a property of the game system that allows interoperability with an older system. It allows gamers to play video games that were developed for previous versions of the console.

**3.37** VSC is the Video Standards Council, which is the statutory body responsible for age-rating video games using the PEGI system.

**3.38** PEGI stands for Pan European Game Information. It has established a video game content rating system to help the buyers and users of video games.

**3.39** A core gamer is a player with wide-ranging gaming interests, who actively engages with a diverse range of games, but does not demonstrate the intensity of a hardcore gamer.

**3.40** A casual gamer plays more spontaneously and may only select to play a few games a year. They tend to choose games that are less challenging and lacking in complexity.



## 4 Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences: Assessment

**4.1** Stepped questions are when an examination question is divided into different parts, with the mark tariffs usually increasing as the questions become more difficult. In Component 1, Section B there may be some questions that test only your knowledge and have lower marks.

## 5 Component 2: Media Forms and Products in Depth

### Television

**5.1** Genre hybridity occurs when the conventions of two or more genres are combined.

**5.2** Steve Neale is a key theorist who argues that genres change, develop and vary as they borrow from and overlap with one another.

**5.3** Combining conventions from different genres can increase the audience appeal of a product. It can also help to reinvigorate a genre by introducing new ideas and taking it in new directions.

**5.4** A binary opposition occurs when two people, groups, ideas, concepts or values are set up in conflict with one another. According to Lévi-Strauss, binary oppositions play a fundamental role in establishing meanings; without the notion of good, it is impossible to understand what evil means, for example.

**5.5** A PSB, or public service broadcaster, is a radio or television broadcaster that offers a public service by catering for a range of tastes and audiences rather than just broadcasting programming that has the broadest commercial appeal. PSBs typically have set quotas for original programming, independent programming and news.

**5.6** Cultural verisimilitude, generic verisimilitude and surface realism are all concerned with the credibility or plausibility of the text. Cultural verisimilitude is established when a media product corresponds with what we know about the social and cultural world that exists outside the text, whereas generic verisimilitude is to do with the internal rules of the genre; the more closely a text adheres to those rules and meets audience expectations, the more likely the audience is to suspend disbelief. Surface realism is a form of realism in which aspects of mise-en-scène such as costumes and props are used to convey an impression of authenticity.

**5.7** An oppositional reading is the interpretation an audience member makes if they disagree with the messages or values that a product conveys.

**5.8** The term patriarchal denotes something, such as a society, system or set of values, that privileges men over women and reinforces male dominance.

**5.9** Ofcom or the Competition and Markets Authority might decide that a merger of separate media companies is *not* in the public interest if it significantly threatens media plurality by placing too much power in the hands of a single company.

**5.10** Ensuring choice and market competition might be seen to protect the interests of citizens as well as consumers by guaranteeing public access to a range of different viewpoints rather than just one – a fundamental principle of democratic societies.

**5.11** Specialised audiences such as niche audiences and fans are important to the media because their loyalty not only guarantees a ready-made audience but can also be harnessed to help promote media products within specialised networks and communities (e.g. through online fandoms). Niche audiences are particularly important to public service broadcasters as these organisations are required to provide programming for audiences who may not otherwise be catered for.

### Magazines

**5.12** Culture jamming is defined by Naomi Klein (2000) as ‘the practice of parodying adverts and hijacking billboards in order to drastically alter their messages’.

**5.13** Iconography refers to the visual elements of a media product such as the props, costumes or settings that are used.

**5.14** Some of the criticisms of Barthes’ theory of semiotics might also be levelled against other structuralist theorists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Tzvetan Todorov.

**5.15** Stuart Hall’s reception theory could be seen to address some of the limitations in Barthes’ theory of semiotics by acknowledging that different audiences can read and interpret texts in different ways.

**5.16** Discourse is a particular way of talking and thinking about a topic; it is a system of representation.

**5.17** A publisher-agency is a media company that combines the functions of a magazine publisher with those of a content marketing agency.

**5.18** Desktop publishing (DTP) refers to the use of computers and software programs to design, create and publish books, newspapers and magazines.

**5.19** The magazine industry in the UK is primarily regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), the same body that regulates the newspaper industry. However, IPSO is only responsible for regulating those magazines whose publishers have signed up to the Editors’ Code of Practice. Many magazines are not regulated by IPSO.

**5.20** The Editors’ Code of Practice is a set of rules that magazines and newspapers regulated by IPSO have agreed to follow.

**5.21** Cultural capital is a form of cultural knowledge that endows those who possess it with power or social status. The ability to speak knowledgeably about particular topics, to identify intertextual references, or to distinguish between the 'good' and the 'bad' are all forms of cultural capital.

**5.22** Gauntlett's theory of identity could be referenced when discussing the way in which readers use magazines as a tool for identity construction.

### Online Media

**5.23** According to Wang, Tucker and Haines (2012), phatic internet technologies are 'special forms of communications technologies devoted to personal and social needs and goals'.

**5.24** Colonial discourse is a way of thinking and talking about race, ethnicity and culture that typically privileges white, Western norms and values over those of other groups or cultures. Historically, this was often used as a justification for colonial conquest, as colonial discourse emphasised the supposed superiority of the colonisers over the colonised.

**5.25** According to Paul Gilroy, civilisationism is the tendency to present conflicts as a battle between civilisations. Gilroy suggests that civilisationism constructs racial hierarchies, as it sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.

**5.26** 'Othering' is the process of treating someone or something as fundamentally different from and therefore inferior to oneself.

**5.27** A multi-channel network is an organisation that curates a large number of channels, offering creators support in areas such as video production as well as marketing and promotion.

**5.28** Blumler and Katz's uses and gratifications theory suggests that audiences actively use media products to satisfy the need for information, diversion, personal identity or social interaction.

## 7 Component 3: Cross-media Production

**7.1** The statement of aims and intentions outlines how you intend to apply your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework in relation to your chosen brief and how the intended audience will be targeted.

**7.2** Digitally convergent refers to the fact that advances in technology have made it easier to access similar multi-media content from different devices and platforms. A media product can now be produced and distributed across a range of different media. These platforms also ensure a broader marketing of a media product. For example, a new music artist has a range of platforms through which they can reach a potential audience.

**7.3** Industry context refers to elements of the production, for example the media organisation, production processes, distribution, marketing and regulation.

## 9 Examination Preparation

**9.1** Possible answers to a 3(a) question may include and may be supported by a specific example:

- ✓ A film made outside of the commercial mainstream as well as being outside of the financial and artistic control of a large film company.
- ✓ A film that is privately conceived and funded.
- ✓ A film made by a smaller film company on a low budget.

**9.2** Possible answers to a 3(b) question may include and may be supported by a specific example:

- ✓ A process where one company acquires another that is involved at a different level of the industry. For example, a production company that buys a distributor.
- ✓ When a company owns multiple stages of a production to distribution chain. A vertically integrated company owns both the means of production and distribution of a product that is financially advantageous, for example Universal.

**9.3** A question using the command words 'analyse' or 'explore' would be likely to address AO2 1: *Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts and through the use of academic theories.*

**9.4** A 'to what extent ...?' type of question would be likely to address AO2 3: *Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions.*