

MEDIA STUDIES A LEVEL

Course outline & Pre-course tasks

2025-2027

GCE A LEVEL

eduqas
Part of WJEC

WJEC Eduqas GCE A Level in
MEDIA STUDIES
ACCREDITED BY OFQUAL

SPECIFICATION

Teaching from 2017
For award from 2019

Version 12 June 2025



wjec
cbbc

This Ofqual regulated qualification is not available for
candidates in maintained schools and colleges in Wales.

COURSE OUTLINE

The specification can be accessed here:

<https://www.edugas.co.uk/media/kprhs5jd/edugas-a-level-media-studies-spec-from-2017.pdf>

The course is made up of **three components**:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences Written examination: 2 hours 15 minutes | 35% of qualification |
| Section A: Analysing Media Language and Representation This section assesses media language and representation in relation to two of the following media forms: advertising, marketing, music video or newspapers. There are two questions in this section: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one question assessing media language in relation to an unseen audio-visual or print resource• one extended response comparison question assessing representation in one set product and an unseen audio-visual or print resource in relation to media contexts. Section B: Understanding Media Industries and Audiences This section assesses two of the following media forms – advertising, marketing, film, newspapers, radio, video games - and media contexts. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one stepped question on media industries• one stepped question on audiences. | |
| Component 2: Media Forms and Products in Depth Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes | 35% of qualification |
| Section A – Television in the Global Age There will be one two-part question or one extended response question. Section B – Magazines: Mainstream and Alternative Media There will be one two-part question or one extended response question. Section C – Media in the Online Age There will be one two-part question or one extended response question. | |
| Component 3: Cross-Media Production Non examination assessment | 30% of qualification |
| An individual cross-media production based on two forms in response to a choice of briefs set by WJEC , applying knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and digital convergence. | |

PRE-COURSE START UP TASKS

Please complete the three tasks below and bring this completed workbook with you in September. We have also added some links and information about future career pathways in media, with links for you to do some research!

Task 1: Course file

Buy an A4 lever arch file and at least 12 file dividers. It is also recommended that you buy A4 plastic wallets to keep your work as neat as possible. Put your name and 'A Level Media Studies' on the front of your folder. You will be given a sheet to explain how to label your file dividers in September.

Other resources that you will require are pens, pencils, highlighters and A4 lined paper.

Task 2: Media language and audiences

Complete the four activities below as an introduction to media language and audience theories.

A) FIND IT OR PHOTOGRAPH IT: Can you give an example of each of these shot types?

- 1) Extreme close-up shot
- 2) Long shot
- 3) Medium shot (mid-shot)
- 4) Low-angle shot
- 5) High-angle shot

B) DEFINE IT: Can you define these five media language terms?

- 1) Mise-en-scene
- 2) Diegetic sound
- 3) Non-diegetic sound
- 4) High key lighting
- 5) Low key lighting

C) RESEARCH IT AND SUMMARISE IT: Can you research these five audience theories and summarise each one in a sentence?

- 1) Hypodermic syringe/needle model
- 2) Cultivation theory
- 3) Two-step flow theory
- 4) Stuart Hall's reception theory
- 5) Uses and gratifications theory

D) READ IT AND THINK OF IT: Can you read this resource and give examples of each code?

Read through [Appendix A](#) which contains information above on Barthes' narrative codes. Find examples of each of these codes from existing media products. Can you manage to find all five?

Task 3: Analysing an existing media product

During the A level Media course, you will study a range of set products using factsheets. These factsheets are based around the theoretical framework: media language, representations, audience and industries. Your task is to choose a **media product** (this could be a TV advertisement, print advertisement, film poster, radio show, newspaper article, music video or video game) and create a **detailed factsheet** on the product. You should use each element of the theoretical framework as a subheading and can use the questions in Appendix B to get you thinking about how to analyse the texts using this framework. You are not expected to answer every question in the appendix – but rather use the questions that are going to most help you to analyse your chosen product.

For example: (Imagine this is an A3 page...)

Factsheet on Music Video:
Harry Styles – As It Was

Audiences

Media language

Representations

Industries

Appendix A: BARTHES' NARRATIVE CODES

Roland Barthes was a French philosopher who believed that all narratives have five codes that can explain the way a story is told. According to Barthes' five narrative codes, a media product can be:

- 'Open' - which is when lots of or all of the narrative codes are used, making the story complicated. For example the film '*Inception*' is an open media text as it has embedded complicated story lines.
- 'Closed' - which is when a single narrative code is used, therefore the story is simple.

Hermeneutic/Enigma Code

The hermeneutic code, less formally known as the **enigma code**, refers to the mystery within a text, where clues are dropped but there are clear answers given to the audience. Enigmas within the narrative make the audience want to know more, but unanswered enigmas tend to frustrate audiences as people like closed endings.

Examples of the hermeneutic code in '*Frozen*' are:

- How to return Arendelle to summer?
- Who will provide the true-lover's kiss?

Proairetic/Action Code

The proairetic code, less formally known as the **action code**, contains sequential elements of action in the text to add suspense.

Example of the proairetic code in '*Frozen*' are:

- Anna gets hurt *so therefore* goes to see the trolls.
- Elsa has icy hands *so therefore* has to conceal her hands with gloves *which* Anna takes off *making* the castle/room icy.

Semantic Code

The semantic code refers to parts within the text that suggest and refer to additional meanings, where the audience makes suggestions. Elements of the **semantic code** are called *semes*, which have a connotative function in the text. They have an extra layer of meaning in addition to its literal meaning.

Examples of the semantic code in '*Frozen*' are:

- Elsa runs away *suggesting* that she feels different and alone.
- Hans wants a princess wife *suggesting* that he wants to raise his status.

Symbolic Code

The symbolic code is about symbolism within the text which exercises opposites to show contrast and create greater meaning, creating tension, drama and character development.

Examples of the symbolic code in '*Frozen*' are:

- Human (*logical*) **VS** Animals (*uninhibited*)
- Ice (*cold, no emotions*) **VS** Heat (*emotions, romance*)

Referential or Cultural Code

The referential or cultural code refers to anything in a media text which refers to an external body of knowledge such as scientific, historical, cultural knowledge. The referential or cultural code makes the audience understand or expect stories from what we already know.

Examples of the referential code in '*Frozen*' are:

- In the book '*The Ice Queen*', - which '*Frozen*' is based on - Elsa is the villain ***so in*** the film '*Frozen*', we expect Elsa is the villain, but then she becomes the hero.
- In Disney princess films, the princesses marry the first man they see ***so in*** '*Frozen*', we expect it when Anna wants to marry Hans.
- From royalty, if the King or Queen die, there is a coronation where the oldest child will become the new King or Queen ***so in*** '*Frozen*', when the King and Queen die, we expect it when there is a coronation and Elsa - the eldest sibling - becomes Queen.

Appendix B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING MEDIA TEXTS

MEDIA LANGUAGE

- What are the things that you first see in this text? What do they mean?
- What are the deeper meanings (connotations) and what is the significance of these?
- What are the non-verbal features in the text (e.g. gesture, facial expression, positional communication, clothing, props, colour, font styles, etc)?
- What is the significance of mise-en-scène/sets/settings?
- What work is being done by the sound track/commentary/ language of the text?
- What are the dominant images and signs, and how do they relate to the major themes of the text?
- What sound and visual techniques are used to convey meaning (e.g. camera positioning, editing; the ways that images and sounds are combined to convey meaning)?
- How is the narrative organised and structured?
- How is the audience positioned in relation to the narrative?
- What is the role of such features as sound, music, iconography, genre, mise-en-scène, editing etc. within the narrative?
- What are the major themes of the narrative? What values/ideologies does it embody?
- To which genre does the text belong? What are the major generic conventions within the text?
- To what extent are the audience's generic expectations of the text fulfilled or cheated by the text?
Does the text conform to the characteristics of the genre, or does it treat them playfully or ironically?
- Does the text feature a star, a director, a writer etc who is strongly associated with the genre? What meanings and associations do they have?

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS

- Who is being represented? In what way? By whom?
- Why is the subject being represented in this way?
- Is the representation fair and accurate?
- What are the major values, ideologies and assumptions underpinning the text or naturalised within it?
- What criteria have been used for selecting the content presented?

MEDIA AUDIENCES

- Who is the target audience of the text? (Age? Gender? Race? Location? Interests?)
- What assumptions about the audience's characteristics are implicit within the text?
- What assumptions about the audience are implicit in the text's scheduling or positioning?
- In what conditions is the audience likely to receive the text?
- What do you know or can you assume about the likely size and constituency of the audience?
- What are the possible and likely audience readings of the text?
- How does the text appeal to the target audience?
- How do you, as an audience member, read and evaluate the text? To what extent is your reading and evaluation influenced by your age, gender, background etc?
- What opportunities are there for the audience to interact with the text? (Perhaps sharing/commenting if online).

MEDIA INDUSTRIES

- Who has created/produced/distributed the text?
- What can you tell about the industry responsible for the text? What do they get across about themselves?
- In what ways has the text been influenced or shaped by the company which produced it?
- Is the source a public service or commercial company? What difference does this make to the text?
- Who owns and controls the company concerned and does this matter?
- How has the text been distributed?
- How would the text be regulated?
- How has the production of the text been funded? Would it be considered a high or low budget?
- What can you find out about the profits generated from this media product?

CAREER RESOURCES

My Learning MyFuture: Where can studying Media Studies take you?

Use this link to find out about different career pathways and to read case studies on different media-related careers.

[1558 MLMF Media Studies 2022.pptx \(live.com\)](#)



Explore a career as a...

Here are some example roles and careers linked to

Media Studies



FILM & MEDIA

WE'VE GOT THE APPRENTICESHIP FOR YOU!

MORE INFO

- JOURNALIST**
 Creating new items using a combination of words, pictures and moving images.
- JUNIOR 2D ARTIST (VISUAL EFFECTS)**
 Assist senior visual effects (VFX) artists with integration of live action footage and computer-generated imagery to create images for TV and film.
- POST PRODUCTION ENGINEER**
 Produce high quality content in the film and television sector.
- PROPS TECHNICIAN**
 Support the props master to supply, build and maintain dressing and hand props for film, television, and theatre production.
- BROADCAST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**
 Provide support and assistance to help with the delivery of content for TV or radio shows.

There are many other apprenticeships you might be interested in:
 Junior Content Producer, Publishing Assistant, Costume Performance Technician, Advertising and Media Executive, Assistant Recording Technician and many more!

Visit apprenticeships.gov.uk to find out more.

MEDIA

careers using media

- editing
- web design
- copywriting
- digital media
- media planning
- market research
- public relations
- desktop publishing

- advertising
- marketing
- journalism
- broadcasting
- publishing
- media research
- digital marketing
- multimedia development

- proofreading
- photography
- event management
- radio production
- camera operation
- media presenting
- tv and film production
- digital content editing

find out more at planitplus.net