



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**A LEVEL
MEDIA STUDIES - UNIT 3
1680U30-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

WJEC GCE A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES – UNIT 3

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

GENERAL INFORMATION

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The awarding of marks must be directly related to the marking criteria. The generic assessment grid is designed to establish the quality of a response whilst the indicative content will provide guidance on the scope of acceptable responses and the likely content of a candidate's response. Examiners should use the full range of marks available to them.

Band Descriptors

There is an assessment grid for each question, covering both options where there is a choice of questions. When awarding a mark, examiners should select the band that most closely describes the quality of the work being assessed.

- Where the candidate's work completely meets the descriptors, the highest mark should be awarded.
- Where the candidate's work securely meets the descriptors, a mark in the middle of the band should be awarded.
- Where the candidate's work just meets the descriptors, the lowest mark should be awarded.

If an answer demonstrates different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band. The strengths of the candidate's response should be then used to determine the mark to be awarded within the band. For example, if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Indicative Content

The mark scheme instructs examiners to reward valid alternatives where indicative content is suggested for an answer. Indicative content outlines some likely areas candidates may explore in their responses. This is not a checklist for expected content or a 'model answer'.

Where a candidate provides a response that contains aspects or approaches not included in the indicative content, examiners should use their professional judgement as Media Studies specialists to determine the validity of the response in light of the examples chosen and the question asked. All questions provide opportunities for candidates to make informed, independent responses, and such opportunities need to be upheld in the marking. Valid alternatives should be rewarded where deemed appropriate, in line with the banded levels of response in the generic assessment grids.

Answer one question in each section.

SECTION A: TELEVISION IN THE GLOBAL AGE

Either,

- 1 | 1** All narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another' (Todorov).
Discuss this idea with reference to *Hinterland* and the **European** crime drama you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 1 | 2** 'The way in which binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance' (Levi-Strauss).
Discuss this idea with reference to *Hinterland* and the **historical** crime drama you have studied. [30]

Band	AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media	AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products
5	13-15 marks - Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the crime products studied and Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding to the crime products studied of Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from the crime products studied - Excellent ability to analyse the crime products studied.
4	10-12 marks - Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of the crime products studied and Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Good use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding to the crime products studied of Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Detailed exploration of examples from the crime products studied - Good ability to explore the crime dramas studied.
3	7-9 marks - Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the crime products studied and Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	7-9 marks - Satisfactory of knowledge and understanding to the crime products studied of Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) - Straightforward exploration of examples from the crime products studied - Satisfactory ability to explore the crime dramas studied.

2	4-6 marks • Basic knowledge and understanding of the crime products studied and Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) • Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling	4-6 marks • Basic application of knowledge and understanding to the crime products studied of Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) • Tendency to describe examples from the crime dramas studied • Basic ability to explore the crime dramas studied.
1	1-3 marks • Minimal knowledge and understanding of the crime products studied and Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) • Minimal, if any, use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and generally accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	1-3 marks • Minimal application of knowledge and understanding to the crime products studied of Todorov or Strauss' critical perspective (as appropriate) • Limited, if any, ability to consider the crime dramas studied
0 marks No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.		

Question 1.1: Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive, and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of television, the particular appeal of the programmes for audiences, and the ways in which audiences use media texts. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of television products and the respective critical perspectives. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of the television products and the respective critical perspectives, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the television products and the respective critical perspectives.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media language when applied to television products, such as:

- the different elements of media language, including technical, visual and audio codes
- moving image media language such as camerawork (distance, angle, movement), mise-en-scène (settings, locations, costume, props), editing (continuity editing) and sound (diegetic, non-diegetic and post-production sound)
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings
- principles of repetition and variation of a repertoire of elements
- hybridity and intertextuality

- the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions
- narrative construction, structures, techniques and conventions
- how media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- Todorov's critical perspective, including:
 - the idea that all narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another
 - the idea that these two states of equilibrium are separated by a period of imbalance or disequilibrium
 - the idea that the way in which narratives are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore the critical perspectives in relation to the television products studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive. Higher band responses are required to engage with the debate within the question.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the critical perspectives in relation to the television products, such as:

Hinterland

The initial murder leads to a conventional narrative structure involving recognisable situations and typical characters. However, there is moral ambiguity in the Todorovian resolution.

At the end of the show, authority is re-established with Mathias 'solving' the mystery of Helen Jenkins' death.

The final sequence of the product revisits the opening scene, suggesting that despite the resolution of the crime, nothing has really 'changed' within the gloomy Celtic-Noir genre contexts.

The Bridge

Audiences are invited to partake in the ongoing narrative via a series of ongoing clues and sequences which present ongoing disequilibrium .

What initially seems to be a sex atrocity soon expands towards a politically motivated crime which is ideologically charged and suggests cultural disequilibrium; 'Our part of the world would be wonderful if we solved our problems. I would like to point out five in particular....'

In terms of character, the show presents the developing partnership of Martin and Saga, and the sub-narrative disequilibrium of their lives.

The Disappearance

Narrative space is afforded to potential suspects, suggesting how far the titular disappearance has affected those involved.

The heavily signalled enigma codes encourage audience involvement to keep audiences returning over the eight instalments, such as the shock ending disequilibrium of episode one.

The dual narrative - the present day and flashbacks to the lead up to the disappearance - explicate disequilibrium via character development.

The Killing

A clear mystery is established in the opening episode, while the gradual apportion of clues and focus on familial grief catalyse the audience's need for resolution.

The crime expands towards a political disequilibrium involving a mayoral election and the promise of associated cultural resolutions.

Alongside the central murder narrative, there is the deepening character study of Lund.

Arne Dahl

The hyperbolic disequilibrium is given urgency by the potentially serial nature of the crime: lack of resolution could mean further death.

The show allows for a more detailed exposition of the detectives' personal lives, developing narrative involvement.

Current social issues are tackled within the show such as drug taking, immigrant workers and exploitation, reflecting a wider social disequilibrium.

Question 1.2: Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive, and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of television, the particular appeal of the programmes for audiences, and the ways in which audiences use media texts. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of television products and the respective critical perspectives. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of the television products and the respective critical perspectives, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the television products and the respective critical perspectives.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media language when applied to television products, such as:

- the different elements of media language, including technical, visual and audio codes
- moving image media language such as camerawork (distance, angle, movement), mise-en-scène (settings, locations, costume, props), editing (continuity editing) and sound (diegetic, non-diegetic and post-production sound)
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings
- principles of repetition and variation of a repertoire of elements
- hybridity and intertextuality
- the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions
- narrative construction, structures, techniques and conventions
- how media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how television producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences
- how the television industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of media products
- how audiences interpret the media, including:
 - how and why audiences may interpret the same media products in different ways
 - different kinds of response, such as preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings, literal or actual responses
 - how meanings are created in the interaction of media language and audience response
- how audiences are positioned by media products
- how audiences/users interact with television
- how different audience interpretations reflect social and cultural circumstances.
- Lévi-Strauss' critical perspective, including:
 - the idea that texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying structure
 - the idea that meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions
 - the idea that the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore the critical perspectives in relation to the television products studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive. Higher band responses are required to engage with the debate within the question.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the critical perspectives in relation to the television products, such as:

Hinterland

Oppositions between authority and criminality become increasingly less binary as the narrative progresses. Villains are represented as victims with the revelation of Catrin's motive.

The unresolved moral implications of the narrative invite audience engagement. Nonetheless, authority prevails, and the denouement entails safety and reassurance.

Lone wolf Mathias is contrasted with Rees who is pointedly referenced as a matriarch and steadfast member of the community. The programme ends with this opposition still in place.

Prime Suspect

At the end, authority does prevail with Tennison and her team discovering the evidence needed to prosecute George. Order would seem to be restored, although an open end epilogue does destabilise the resolution.

Patriarchy is challenged with the male police are either hostile or at least suspicious towards the notion of Tennison in charge. This distinct opposition is crucial to the ideologies of the show.

The diegesis of *Prime Suspect* is one where women are exploited by men: from George's victims to Moyra being gaslit, to the sex workers whom the police manipulate. Such narrative opposition supports the ongoing ideology.

Cracker

Fitz is a beleaguered noir-ish hero whose steadfastly liminal status puts him in opposition with most characters, especially his erroneous replacement from the university.

Albie sees the world in dangerous terms of us and them, adopting the value-structure of a Neo-Nazi to consolidate his constructed persona. Albie is a figure who is troubled and requires both a 'cause' (Hillsborough) and a perceived antagonist (non-whites).

Albie and Fitz are correlated within the narrative - both destructive, both solo, both white men in a racially charged context - and Fitz's assessment of Albie resolves in a way which is unexpected to the psychologist.

Morse

The leafy, red brick setting of Oxford with all its supposed safeties is in opposition to the dark implication of murder. Intrinsic to *Morse's* appeal is violence occurring within this cosy setting.

Morse is a protagonist driven narrative which unfolds in generic fashion of clue, conflict, recognition. At the end of the episode, the crime is solved via Morse's impeccable ability and authority is duly restored.

Morse and Lewis are placed within an odd couple dynamic, and narrative tension is derived from this necessarily unresolved opposition.

Touching Evil

Creegan fulfils a patriarchal maverick archetype, which is catalysed by the secondary role of Taylor. This binary opposition is consistent throughout the episode, wherein Taylor's sensibility is proven to be outdone by Creegan's active nature.

The horrific implications of the crime reflect abiding tabloid fears and manifest the unquestionable 'evil' of the title. The uncomplicated delineation of good and evil provides easy escapism.

Creegan is an authority figure, within whom the audience can trust and find reassurance. His maverick actions enact resolution.

SECTION B: CHANGING REPRESENTATIONS - MAGAZINES

Either,

- 2 1** In what ways can stereotypes be used positively and negatively by magazines?
Explore examples from **the mainstream magazine online and the historical magazine** you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 2 2** In what ways can representations in magazines embody values and ideologies?
Explore examples from **the mainstream magazine online and the non-mainstream magazine online** you have studied. [30]

Band	AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media	AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products
5	13-15 marks - Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding to the magazines studied of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from the magazines studied - Excellent ability to analyse the magazines studied.
4	10-12 marks - Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Good use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding to the magazines studied of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Detailed exploration of examples from the magazines studied - Good ability to analyse the magazines studied.
3	7-9 marks - Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	7-9 marks - Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding to the magazines studied of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines - Straightforward exploration of examples from the magazines studied - Satisfactory ability to analyse the magazines studied.

2	4-6 marks • Basic knowledge and understanding of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines • Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	4-6 marks • Basic application of knowledge and understanding to the magazines studied of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines • Tendency to describe examples from the magazines studied • Basic ability to analyse the magazines studied.
1	1-3 marks • Minimal knowledge and understanding of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines • Minimal use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	1-3 marks • Minimal application to the magazines studied, of the ways representations/ stereotypes (as appropriate) are used within magazines • Limited, if any, exploration of examples from the magazines studied • Limited, if any, ability to consider the magazines studied, with little or no evidence of comparison.
0 marks No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.		

Question 2.1: Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive, and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of stereotypes are used within magazines. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of how stereotypes are used within magazines. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of how stereotypes are used within magazines, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with relevant aspects of how stereotypes are used within magazines.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of representations when applied to magazines, such as:

- the significance of the representations offered by the magazines studied.
- how representations and ideologies relate to social, cultural and historical contexts.
- how social and cultural groups (including gender, ethnicity and sexuality) are represented
- how selection and combination of aspects of media language construct representations
- how and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be underrepresented or misrepresented
- how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively

- how representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media
- the effect of social and cultural contexts on representations
- the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- how audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings
- the codes and conventions of magazines as a form
- how media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how audiences respond to and interpret media language.
- how media producers target, attract, reach and address audiences
- how the magazine industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of magazines
- how audiences interpret the media, including:
- how and why audiences may interpret the same media products in different ways
- how meanings are created in the interaction of media language and audience response
- how audiences are positioned by magazines.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore stereotypes in relation to the magazines studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive. Higher band responses are required to engage with the debate within the question.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of media language to the magazines studied, such as:

Cosmopolitan.com

Post second-wave feminist ideologies purport to offer different female archetypes within the magazine. However, emancipation from androcentrism is often linked to looking and behaving in certain mandated ways.

Female celebrity representations focus on icons who conform to typical modes of female presentation across generations: Sidney Sweeney, Britney Spears, Julia Fox [accessed 22nd October 2023]

Although presented with an address of playful irony, new-age pursuits such as Tarot and Zodiac readings are a Cosmopolitan mainstay: hobbies linked explicitly to stereotypes of the 'spiritual' woman.

Hellomagazine.com

The aristocracy is defined in terms of aspiration and the relative position in society to the readership: a distanced stereotype which the reader is positioned to aspire toward.

Stereotypical representations of how to dress and present solidify mainstream hegemonies.

Wealth, success and a conformity to hegemonic standards suggest actualisation in *Hello*, and the magazine offers representations concurrent with this ideology.

Menshealth.com

Imagery represents men as physically empowered with hyperbolically muscular morphology, presenting a limited but culturally accepted ideal of men.

The lexis locates health in contexts of competition and success, indicating a stereotypical 'winner' ideology.

There is an element of sensitivity and awareness of masculine crisis - 'mental wellbeing' - which does challenge prescribed notions of masculinity.

Vogue.com

Aspirational femininity which is linked to stereotypical representations of beauty and style is central to the magazine, although content has developed to represent gender diversity.

Fashion, and its surrounding ideologies, is often a reaction to previous models: yesterday's fashion modes are developed or even rejected according to new seasons, displacing stereotypical looks.

Actualisation is linked to stereotypical images of wealth, beauty and style. The opportunity to achieve of such ideals is presented in a wide-ranging manner, however: 'Switch Up the French Girl Look With a Denim Skirt', '20 Chic Halloween Hairstyles That You Can Do By Yourself' [accessed 22nd October 2023].

Vogue

The magazine utilises a bricolage of international stereotyping to create aspiration: an Italian actress invokes Hollywood glamour and is further positioned within exotic iconography.

The luxurious stereotypes are presented as accessible by anchorage which reminds the audience of the availability of consumer products, and adverts which aggressively direct address the reader, reinforcing a stereotypical ideal.

Nonetheless, copy does focus on financial independence, rejecting patriarchal mandated stereotypes.

Woman

When linked to the content, the blunt pronoun of the magazine implies that this is a 'how to' guide for British women of 1964 who are positioned to fulfil a perceived stereotype.

Hitchcock explicates the archetype of the mysterious femme fatale, a reductive stereotype filtered through the male gaze: 'any man who hasn't been caught off guard by an English girl's... seductive depths doesn't know what he has been missing'.

Men are stereotyped by the feature 'Extra Special on Men', where oversimplified ideas such as men's top four topics of conversation are shared as an insight: 'Women, sports, cars, politics'.

Woman's Realm

A manual for women to fulfil patriarchal obligations which balances housework with maintaining beauty standards: both pursuits are specifically gendered within the product, reinforcing stereotypes.

Letters asking for advice focus of the perceived etiquette of femininity, a way of fixing and limiting gender roles.

The prescriptive mode of address gives the audience clear instructions on how to present food and keep hands soft: it is arguable that content such as this not only reinforces expected stereotypes but also worked toward establishing such stereotypes.

Question 2.2: Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive, and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how representations are used within magazines. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of how representations are used within magazines. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of how representations are used within magazines, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with relevant aspects of how representations are used within magazines.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of representations when applied to magazines, such as:

- the significance of the representations offered by the magazines studied.
- how representations and ideologies relate to social, cultural and historical contexts.
- how social and cultural groups (including gender, ethnicity and sexuality) are represented
- how selection and combination of aspects of media language construct representations
- how and why particular social groups, in a national and global context, may be underrepresented or misrepresented
- how and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively
- how representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media
- the effect of social and cultural contexts on representations
- the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- how audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate multiple meanings
- the codes and conventions of magazines as a form
- how media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how audiences respond to and interpret media language.
- how media producers target, attract, reach and address audiences
- how the magazine industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of magazines
- how audiences interpret the media, including:
 - how and why audiences may interpret the same media products in different ways
 - how meanings are created in the interaction of media language and audience response
- how audiences are positioned by magazines

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore representations in relation to the magazines studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive. Higher band responses are required to engage with the debate within the question.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of media language to the magazines studied, such as:

Cosmopolitan.com

The lexis of actualisation and positivity embody a celebratory ideology of femininity, which are supported by representations commemorating female beauty: 'EmRata just added another selfie to her collection and she looks 🔥' [accessed 22nd October 2023]

Content expounds the cultural and social context of female roles, suggesting specific values: 'The real lives of female chefs'.

The use of recognisable celebrity icons and their proposed fashion nous is ideologically presented as aspirational: "Priyanka Chopra's latest red carpet 'fit is epic"

Hellomagazine.com

Hello defines the aristocracy as both aspirational and honorary, a clear ideology which the magazine purports and the audience share.

There is a heteronormative assumption and focus on idealised maternity: 'Archie and Lilibet's school life will be so different to George, Charlotte and Louis' [accessed 22nd October 2023]

Values include looking a particular way, a representation supported by glossy photographs of hegemonic ideals.

MensHealth.com

A dynamic lexis- 'blow up your arms', 'perfect the pullup', 'power up your inbox'- locates health within ideologies of competition and success [accessed 22nd October 2023]

Morphology is masculinity in *Men's Health*, and self-improvement is equated with self-esteem which plays into the aspirations of the readership.

The target audience's values are encoded by the title of the magazine, and content elaborates upon specific ways of achieving peak physical conditions.

Vogue.com

The magazine assumes a hegemony of fashion, and that audiences share that value: 'Latte Dressing Is Officially Everywhere This Fall' [accessed 22nd October 2023].

The consumerist ideologies offer actualisation to the target audience: fashion shows, seasons, collections. A shared cultural competency is assumed.

Ideologies of self-improvement offer shared experiences regarding common conflicts: 'Thanks to the 'One-Minute Rule,' I Can Finally Keep My House in Order'.

Attitude.co.uk

Gay positive ideologies are central to this magazine, which promote stories focussing on LGBTQ+ social contexts: 'The goal for Jake Daniels is to 'kick on' inclusivity in football' [accessed 22nd October 2023].

The magazine confronts increasing transphobic ideologies, promoting values of inclusivity.

Hegemonies of how to look and dress are offered via style sections, although a less fixed ideology is presented via focus on high street fashions along with haute couture: 'Punk, leather and latex abound: 16 images from Attitude's latest metal-inspired fashion shoot'.

Adbusters.org

Ideology is content in *Adbusters* which positioned itself as creating a 'whole new cultural vibe to escape the capitalist paradigm'. A shared ideology is necessary to accept the preferred reading, which is socially and politically motivated.

Adbusters assumes a cultural competency to recognise the spoof adverts and also assumes that the audience will share the magazine's oppositional reading of these texts.

A promise of community and activism offered by the magazine's many offshoots, giving audiences the opportunity to contribute to and share in the magazine's ideology.

Pridemagazine.com

Focussed ideologies are central to this magazine, which 'celebrate the woman of colour'.

The magazine features content which explores ethnic experience within the social culture: 'Why Does British TV Still Not Reflect Real Black British Life' [accessed 22nd October 2023].

Often the magazine will feature anonymous black models presenting varieties of celebratory black beauty, suggesting that such idealisation is not only represented via celebrity culture.

Huckmag.com

The magazine is defined by its opposition to mainstream hegemonies, an ideology reflected in the more alternative content of the magazine.

Huck rejects star and celebrity pantheons, and instead engages with fringe movements and documentary photography.

Visual representations are purposefully diverse: 'Stories from the Fringes': 'A Joyful Window into Rural Mongolian Nomadic Life' [accessed 22nd October 2023].

SECTION C: MEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE - VIDEO GAMES

Either,

- 3 | 1** How important are specialised audiences, such as fans, to the video game industry? Discuss with reference to **one action-led franchise game** and the **one game in another genre** you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 3 | 2** How important is marketing in attracting audiences to video games? Discuss with reference to **one action-led franchise game** and the **one game in another genre** you have studied. [30]

Band	AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media	AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products
5	13-15 marks - Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of video games and audiences - Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding to video games and audiences - Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from the video games studied - Excellent ability to compare the video games studied.
4	10-12 marks - Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of video games and audiences - Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology.	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding to video games and audiences - Detailed exploration of examples from the video games studied - Good ability to compare the video games studied.
3	7-9 marks - Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of video games and audiences - Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	7-9 marks - Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding to video games and audiences - Satisfactory exploration of examples from the video games studied - Satisfactory ability to explore the video games studied.
2	4-6 marks - Basic knowledge and understanding of how representations of video games and audiences - Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	4-6 marks - Basic application of knowledge and understanding to video games and audiences - Basic exploration of examples from the video games studied - Basic ability to explore the video games studied.

1	1-3 marks - Minimal knowledge and understanding of video games and audiences - Minimal, if any, use of appropriate subject-specific terminology.	1-3 marks - Limited application of knowledge and understanding to video games and audiences - Minimal exploration of examples from the video games studied - Limited, if any, ability to consider the video games studied, with little or no evidence of exploration.
	0 marks No response attempted or no response worthy of credit	

Question 3.1 Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of audiences and video games. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of how audiences and video games. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of how audiences and video games, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with relevant aspects of audiences and video games.

- how technical, visual and audio codes create meaning
- moving image media language, presented in graphic form, such as types of shot (distance, angle, movement), mise-en-scène (settings, locations, costume, props), editing (continuity editing) and sound (diegetic, non-diegetic and post-production sound)
- the codes and conventions of video games as a form: for example, graphics, sound, interface, interactivity/immersion, ludic qualities and/or narrative features
- the codes and conventions of video game genres
- intertextuality – the use of references to existing media texts or products to create recognition in audiences
- how audiences/users may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them
- the role and significance of specialised audiences, including fan, to the video games industry
- how the video games industry targets, attracts, reaches, addresses and constructs audiences
- how the video games industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of video games and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated
- how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms
- the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response
- how audiences are positioned by video games
- how users interact with video games and related online media
- how users can be actively involved with video games through gameplay and

- participatory cultures
- how users use video games in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore the concept of audiences in relation to the video games studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of audiences to the video games studied, such as:

***Assassin's Creed* franchise**

Fandom is critical to the *Assassin's Creed* franchise, with producers Ubisoft inviting and exploiting fan input in the genesis of ongoing instalments.

A healthy fan community abides, with dedicated fan site theoneswhocamebefore.com and various social media accounts providing a nexus for audience dialogue.

Supplementary media exists across platforms, with audiences supporting the brand via graphic novels, films and merchandise.

***Grand Theft Auto* franchise**

As a defining mainstream game, *GTA* has a dedicated fandom which interact with each other online, discussing the minutiae of the game and maintaining its profile.

More active fan communities remix the game via modification, creating new ways to play the game and in doing so enliven the brand.

Supplementary media does exist across platforms, but is limited in comparison to other games, suggesting that the game and its online multiplayer potentials are sufficient experiences for the dedicated audience.

***Mass Effect* franchise**

Fandom is critical to the *Mass Effect* franchise, with producers Bioware inviting and exploiting fan input in the genesis of ongoing instalments.

A healthy fan community abides, with dedicated fan sites and various social media accounts providing a nexus for audience dialogue.

Tropes are borrowed from mainstream SF products, which audiences are invited to recognise, and correlative media exists across platforms with audiences supporting the brand via graphic novels, animated films and merchandise.

***Tomb Raider* franchise**

Tomb Raider's appeal and cultural cache reaches far beyond the ludic pleasure of gaming, with Croft becoming a cultural icon with polysemic meaning for audiences.

Audiences interact with the brand in increasingly personal and specialised ways such as fan art, cosplay, and modification of the game. The iconography of the game has especial meaning for audiences.

A cross platform brand, *Tomb Raider* offers audiences opportunity to experience the representations and narratives of the game via graphic novels, franchise films and merchandise.

Wii Sports

Audiences can design avatars which may be reflective of their individual circumstances, or be more playful/creative. Even before playing, the game invites a personal response.

However, the open, competitive play and lack of narrative structure may not engender the same audience commitment which other games enjoy.

Wii Sports was marketed to audiences who are not typical gamers and was predicated upon being a more occasional 'party game'.

Cooking Mama

A cult proposition, *Cooking Mama* relies on its dedicated audience who consume the various iterations of the game. The audience intrinsically seek Mama's approval.

A PETA modification of the game created unofficially by a specialised audience imbues the game with a specifically mandated ideology.

Cooking Mama is a post-modern iteration of the Kawaii phenomena, and specialised audiences will recognise the archly cute stylings of the game.

Minecraft

Minecraft demands specialised interaction via its open world, open ended gameplay and personalised interface.

The dedicated educational interactions of the software entails specialised application and specific audience pleasures.

Communities are mobilised by events such as *Minecraft Live*; 'a virtual event accessed around the world... packed with news about games, content creators'; an audience focussed experience.

The Sims

A healthy fan community abides, with dedicated fan sites and various social media accounts providing a nexus for audience dialogue and the opportunity to share user generated content.

The sandbox nature of the game and the interactive necessity of play allows audience subcultures to remake the game to reflect specialised audience contexts, i.e. the Black Simming Community.

Electronic Arts actively encourages the importance of specialised audiences to the game, with the periodic release of fan art kits and add ons which refer to social contexts.

Question 3.2 Indicative Content

The content below is not prescriptive, and all valid points should be credited. It is not expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of audiences and video games. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of how audiences and video games. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of how audiences and video games, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with relevant aspects of audiences and video games.

- how technical, visual and audio codes create meaning
- moving image media language, presented in graphic form, such as types of shot (distance, angle, movement), mise-en-scène (settings, locations, costume, props), editing (continuity editing) and sound (diegetic, non-diegetic and post-production sound)
- the codes and conventions of video games as a form: for example, graphics, sound, interface, interactivity/immersion, ludic qualities and/or narrative features
- the codes and conventions of video game genres
- intertextuality – the use of references to existing media texts or products to create recognition in audiences
- how audiences/users may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them
- the role and significance of specialised audiences, including fan, to the video games industry
- how the video games industry targets, attracts, reaches, addresses and constructs audiences
- how the video games industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of video games and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated
- how audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms
- the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response
- how audiences are positioned by video games
- how users interact with video games and related online media
- how users can be actively involved with video games through gameplay and participatory cultures
- how users use video games in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore the concept of audiences in relation to the video games studied in more detail, whilst those in the middle band will focus on more straightforward or obvious aspects, and those in the lower bands may be descriptive.

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of audiences and video games to the video games studied, such as:

***Assassin's Creed* franchise**

Assassin's Creed utilises traditional marketing platforms such as trailers and print media (consisting of posters and adverts) which elaborate upon the epoch spanning narratives of the game and prioritise the escapist masculine representations that characterise the franchise.

These marketing procedures are viral ready and can be shared via social media. Audience participation is further encouraged by interactive sites.

The franchise includes products across different media forms - films, merchandise, comics - which supports brand awareness.

***Grand Theft Auto* franchise**

From the marketing onwards, accusations of problematic representations have been levelled at *GTA*. Within the infamous print adverts women are decorative, sexualised figures while men are often portrayed within hyperbolic stereotypes. Some readings suggest that such marketing plays into the power fantasies of its target audience.

GTA V was marketed via gradational campaign over a series of months where content was deliberately apportioned. New trailers and posters were periodically released to build and maintain audience interest.

Posters and trailers were shared by fans; the 'earned media' of fan mash ups and edits increased the audience's perceived ownership of the property.

***Mass Effect* franchise**

Traditional marketing platforms exhibit the handsome SF of the games' iconography and narratives, showcasing the genre culture which audiences are invited to recognise.

Producers *Electronic Arts* engaged in talking point stunts for the release of *Mass Effect 3*, wherein games were launched into the atmosphere via balloon to return to earth, creating neat synergy with the space exploration narratives of the game.

Game trailers are a shrewd blend of live action and gameplay, proposing unfulfilled Todorovian narratives which gameplay promises to resolve: 'Take Back the Earth'.

***Tomb Raider* franchise**

Marketing of *Tomb Raider* depends largely on the archetypal presence of Lara Croft and her polysemic relevance as adolescent fantasy figure or feminist icon.

Earlier iterations of the game would entail a 'real life' Lara - an actor who would play the part of Lara Croft for publicity platforms such as photo shoots and even interviews. This meta-marketing exploited the close bond audiences felt to the character.

Producers *Square Enix* engaged in talking point stunts for the release of *Rise of the Tomb Raider*, wherein participating gamers stood on platforms in front of billboards while undergoing harsh weather conditions. This spectacle was streamed to the public via a dedicated landing page and shared on social media platforms.

Wii Sports

The best-selling Nintendo game ever, *Wii Sports* and its ensuing iterations were marketed as a vital aspect of the new Wii hardware and focussed on social, often familial, interaction.

Centralising *Wii Sports*, the console was marketed as an opposition to the more 'invested gamer' targeting Xbox 360 or PlayStation machines. Alternatives were suggested by the simple and colourful style of the game's mise-en-scene.

Audio visual marketing presented audiences of diverse ethnicity and age, focusing on the audience and their pleasures rather than intricacies of gameplay.

Cooking Mama

The marketing of *Cooking Mama* is discrete. 505 games is a relatively smaller production and distribution company who build audience loyalty through the idiosyncratic branding of its games.

Cooking Mama exemplifies the Kawaii aesthetic which enjoys a niche fandom and is recognised by its target audience.

The *Cooking Mama: Cook Off* trailer presents gameplay in a manner which is deliberately basic, soundtracked by a cheery fanfare. The direct address of Mama's broken English instructions - 'Very very good in my kitchen. I show you' - suggests a layer of knowing irony that fans will recognise.

Minecraft

As a game made by an independent publisher with limited commercial aspiration, *Minecraft* was initially an audience mobilised, word-of-mouth phenomenon.

As an open source game, *Minecraft* is a product which exists within specific social contexts, with audiences being maintained through co-operative play and the application of editions dedicated to skill building, such as MinecraftEdu.

Fan-created audio visual trailers released by the official YouTube channel are in keeping with brand ideologies and promote the participatory pleasures of the software. Other trailers remind audiences of the upcoming *Minecraft Live*; 'a virtual event accessed around the world... packed with news about games, content creators, and including a community'; an audience focussed experience.

The Sims

The Brand Management Director of Electronic Arts states that 'The Sims is really all about empowering people to tell personal stories through their creativity', and consequently the marketing of the game focuses on diversity and individualisation.

Marketing is brightly coloured and expressive, promoting the fun ideologies of the game. However, later trailers, such as the YouTube video advertising the free base game of *Sims 4*, are more adult and featured knowing themes of nihilism and sexuality.

Electronic Arts offers free content to players as a way of maintaining audiences. The gaming potentials of the free content is explored by online communities, an earned media which is beneficial to the product.