



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**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 2024 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

Either,

- 1 | 1** Explore how genre conventions are repeated and/or subverted in crime drama. Refer to *Hinterland* **and** the **European** crime drama you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 1 | 2** 'Genres change over time to reflect social and cultural contexts.' Explore this statement 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 genre and how genre may reflect social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) - Excellent use of appropriate subject specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of genre and social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the crime dramas studied - Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from the crime dramas studied - Excellent ability to explore the crime dramas studied
4	10-12 marks - Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of genre and how genre may reflect social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) - Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology and mostly accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding of genre and social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the crime dramas studied - Detailed exploration of examples from the crime dramas studied - Good ability to explore the crime dramas studied
3	7-9 marks - Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of genre and how genre may reflect social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) - Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and generally accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	7-9 marks - Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of genre and social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the crime dramas studied - Straightforward exploration of examples from the crime dramas studied - Satisfactory ability to explore the crime dramas studied

2	4-6 marks • Basic knowledge and understanding of genre and how genre may reflect social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) • Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and generally accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling.	4-6 marks • Basic application of knowledge and understanding of genre and social/cultural contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the crime dramas studied • 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 genre and how genre may reflect social/cultural contexts (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 of genre to analyse the crime dramas studied • Limited, if any, ability to explore 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. If only one television product is considered, assess the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors in all five bands and divide the marks by two.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of television and the dynamic nature of genre. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of genre and the television products. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of genre and the television products, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the dynamic nature of genre and the television products.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of genre when applied to television products, such as:

- genre codes, conventions and iconography
- principles of repetition and variation of a repertoire of elements
- hybridity and intertextuality of the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions
- the dynamic nature of genre
- the significance of genre to the television industry and television audiences
- 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)
- print-based media language such as design and layout conventions (positioning of images/photographs and language, use of typography, graphics and colour)
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate meaning
- the relationship of recent technological change and media production

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore genre 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 genre in relation to the television products, such as:

Hinterland

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

The Scandi-noir style is appropriated along with the correspondingly dark plot material which has cultural relevance. Location is also important in creating mood and atmosphere.

The marketing of *Hinterland* relies on cultural competency of the crime genre, especially Scandi-noir.

The Bridge

Escapism is evident in the sweeping narrative, along with the generic suspense and the steady apportion of clues to deepen plot.

Saga typifies the awkward genius of the Sherlock Holmes archetype (and corresponds with the lone wolf Mathias). Nonetheless, her cool cache created a dynamic protagonist. The sleek cinematography and fringe locations locate *The Bridge* within noir territory.

The Disappearance

Within the opening episode, more narrative space is afforded to potential suspects and the underlying drama of the Morels than to Detective Molina.

The heavily signalled red herrings invite audience involvement and are enacted to keep audiences returning over the eight instalments.

The teen focused narrative, and gradual revelations of Lea's secret life, are a USP which provides cross demographic appeal.

The Killing

A clear mystery is established in the opening episode, and the extreme nature of the crime provides catharsis. Generic suspense, the gradual apportion of clues and the deepening plot attract audiences' need for resolution.

Lund is a compelling lead, who challenges the patriarchal structures of the genre, and who became an international icon.

The shadowed cinematography and pitiless focus on familial grief suggest an especially dark insight into the repercussions of criminal activity.

Arne Dahl

The plot is hyperbolic, and a clear sense of escapism is offered by the unambiguous threat of 'the mafia' and their sordid crimes.

The narrative pace and the ensemble cast suggest a European take on the type of American crime shows of the time (*C.S.I.* et al).

Current social issues are tackled within the show, and the diversity of the cast challenges the otherwise prevalent white authority within the genre.

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. If only one television product is considered, assess the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors in all five bands and divide the marks by two.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of television, the dynamic nature of genre and relevant media contexts. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of genre to relevant media contexts. Responses in the middle band will include straightforward knowledge, understanding and application of genre to relevant media contexts whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the dynamic nature of genre applied to relevant media contexts.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of genre when applied to television products, such as:

- genre codes, conventions and iconography o principles of repetition and variation of a repertoire of elements
- hybridity and intertextuality
- the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions
- how genres reflect their social and historical contexts
- the dynamic nature of genre
- the significance of genre to the television industry and television audiences
- 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)
- print-based media language such as design and layout conventions (positioning of images/photographs and language, use of typography, graphics and colour)
- how the different elements of media language, and the combination of elements, influence meaning and communicate meaning

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore genre 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 genre in relation to the television products, such as:

Hinterland

The global nature of both Scandi-noir, and the availability of streaming television renewed audience interest in international product. Genre diversity led to *Hinterland*, a Celtic Noir, which ran for three seasons, suggesting audiences responded positively to its hyperbolic drama and idiosyncratic locations.

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

Prime Suspect

Prime Suspect offered audience harder content than was previously broadcast and was more explicit in terms of themes and spectacle.

Patriarchy is challenged within the show and the genre is used as a vehicle for wider social and cultural issues.

Standard tropes are established in *Prime Suspect*- work banter, interview sequences, leads. Yet the institutional corruption of the police within the narrative offered a contemporary USP.

Cracker

Similar genre tropes include investigation, suspense- but the threat is afforded as much narrative space as Fitz, suggesting that McGovern is encouraging wider cultural review.

Fitz is a beleaguered noir-ish hero faced with a culturally charged crime and juggles the press, his job and personal commitments. The character interacts with audience pre-conceptions of Coltrane.

Iconography of stations, interviews and investigation locate this product firmly within crime, as does the narrative structure.

Morse

Protagonist driven narrative which unfolds in generic fashion of clue, conflict, recognition.

The leafy and red brick milieu of Oxford offers cosy spectacle, however the (comparatively light) sexual aspect of the crime invokes darker shades.

Characterised by a sequential structure, and the implacable grumpy genius of its central character, *Morse* deliberately does not engage with cultural discourse but instead offers audience escapism.

Touching Evil

Creegan fulfils a patriarchal maverick archetype, which is catalysed by secondary role of Taylor.

Genre tropes are evident and are given urgency by the horrific implications of the crime which reflect abiding tabloid fears.

Creegan is an authority figure whose moral nature and ability is unquestionable, within whom the audience can trust and find reassurance.

SECTION B: MAGAZINES

Either,

- 2 1** Levi Strauss argues that meaning within a media product is created through oppositions. Discuss this statement with reference to the online **mainstream** magazine **and historical** magazine you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 2 2** Stuart Hall states that media products are encoded by producers and decoded by audiences. Discuss this statement with reference to the **mainstream and non-mainstream** online magazines 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 magazines studied and Strauss or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of the magazines studied and Strauss' or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - 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 magazines studied and Strauss or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding of the magazines studied and Strauss' or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - 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 magazines studied and Strauss or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	7-9 marks - Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of the magazines studied and Strauss' or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) - 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 magazines studied and Strauss or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) • Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	4-6 marks • Basic application of knowledge and understanding of the magazines studied and Strauss' or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) • 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 magazines studied and Strauss or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) • Minimal, if any, use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	1-3 marks • Minimal application of the magazines studied and Strauss' or Hall's critical perspective (as appropriate) • Limited, if any, exploration of examples from the magazines studied • Limited, if any, ability to explore the magazines studied
	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. If only one magazine is considered, assess the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors in all five bands and divide the marks by two.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of magazines and critical perspectives on media language. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of Strauss' theory. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of the relevant critical perspective, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the relevant critical perspective or may not use it at all.

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of media language and of Strauss' theory of structuralism when applied to magazines, such as:

- the different elements of media language, including technical and visual codes, layout, design, language, mode of address
- print-based media language such as page design and layout, position and sizing of photographs and images, text design and layout, typography, graphics and colour
- online media language such as design conventions (position of photographs/images in relation to text, design of navigation features and use of links, graphics, colour and choice of font)

- 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 media language and the relevant critical perspective 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

Framed feminism during second wave, defined freedom and liberation for women in opposition to androcentrism - 'meaning is dependent upon pairs of oppositions' (Strauss).

Often copy depends upon audience actualisation: 'If you're broke, do this', 'Mental health books that everyone should read' positing a binary opposition of constructed needs and potential fulfilment.

Themes of self-empowerment are intrinsic to the magazine, recently extending to resurgent new-age hobbies such as Tarot reading. This suggests movement from one state to another.

Hellomagazine.com

The aristocracy is defined in terms of aspiration: inherent to *Hello!* is the concept that its subjects are worthy of coverage simply because of their relative position in society to the readership.

Stereotypical representations of how to dress and present solidify mainstream hegemonies - there is 'particular ideological significance' (Strauss) in these representations which by their aspirational nature as posed in relation to the audience.

Tips and beauty solutions are offered only within the context of celebrity aspiration, 'Ruth Langsford's hair hack', 'Princess Kate's Zara earrings have sold out: Here are 5 stunning similar pairs to get her BAFTA look', which reinforces binary opposition.

Menshealth.com

Essential to the magazine is self-improvement, an ongoing movement from one state to another.

The lexis locates health in contexts of competition and success, indicating a 'winner' ideology: the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved have particular ideological significance. (Strauss).

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

Vogue.com

Aspirational femininity is central to the magazine, although content has developed to represent gender diversity, challenging binary notions of gender.

Consumerism offers distinct feminine actualisation: fashion shows, seasons and collections offer idealised potentials.

Vogue assumes a materialistic culture of celebrity, who are revered within the magazine due to their fame and constructed glamour, which is in presumed opposition to the readership - 'Meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions' - Strauss.

Vogue

International aspiration is created: an Italian actress evokes Hollywood glamour and is further re-positioned within exotic iconography.

The luxurious representations are nonetheless presented as accessible by the anchorage which reminds the audience of the availability of consumer products - 'Texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying Structure' (Strauss).

The adverts further sell of the fantasy and are predicated upon the constructed needs of the audience.

Woman

When linked to the content, the blunt pronoun of the magazine implies that this is a 'how to' guide for British women of the 1964 positioned to fulfil a perceived archetype - 'the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance' (Strauss).

The flattering, yet prescriptive, mode of address gives the audience clear instructions on how to apply make-up and arrange kitchens: a promise of actualisation.

There is a running theme of how to deal with men ('eavesdrop'), reinforcing a binary gender opposition.

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.

Letters asking for advice focus of the perceived etiquette of femininity.

'Perfect... best... beautiful', the magazine's superlative lexis supports the hegemonic ideal - 'Meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions' (Strauss).

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. If only one magazine is considered, assess the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors in all five bands and divide the marks by two.

AO1

Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of magazines and critical perspectives on audience. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of Hall's theory. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of the relevant critical perspective, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with the relevant critical perspective or may not use it at all.

- the different elements of media language, including technical and visual codes, layout, design, language, mode of address
- print-based media language such as page design and layout, position and sizing of photographs and images, text design and layout, typography, graphics and colour
- online media language such as design conventions (position of photographs/images in relation to text, design of navigation features and use of links, graphics, colour and choice of font)
- 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 audiences are grouped and categorised by the magazine industry, including by age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste
- the role and significance of specialised audiences, including niche and fan, to the magazine industry
- how media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences
- how the magazine industry targets audiences through the content and appeal of magazines and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated
- how the magazine industry reflects the different needs of mass and specialised audiences including through targeting
- how specialised audiences can be reached, both on a national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms
- 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 magazines
- how audiences use magazines in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore media language and the relevant critical perspective 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 exuberantly positive lexis and vivid iconography suggest breezy escapism - 'the relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes' (Hall), with codes exemplifying concepts of glamour and escapism.

The mode of address depends on a shared cultural competency, in cultural references and also the choice of language. *Cosmopolitan* presents copy in the confiding manner of a best friend offering gossip advice.

The use of recognisable celebrity icons is a shorthand to convey notions of glamour and empowerment - 'representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs' (Hall).

Hellomagazine.com

The syntax of complex sentences, formal lexis and declarative headlines suggest that the content is high status.

The mode of address depends on a shared cultural competency, and icons recognised by the audience posit vicarious pleasures.

The aristocracy is defined in terms of modern, aspirational style. Hall suggests that 'stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power' - the glorified, concentrated representations which are offered by this product may support this idea. There is a heteronormative assumption and cultural reassurance is offered to the audience within a dialogue which has made icons of the represented pantheon.

MensHealth.com

A dynamic lexis- 'goal smashing', 'mental *strength*', 'explosive power' - locates health in contexts of competition and success

Morphology is masculinity in *Men's Health*, and self-improvement is equated with self-esteem which plays into the aspirations of the readership 'the production of meaning through language' (Hall).

The target audience's specific needs are met by the title of the magazine, and the imperative mode of address has the familiar urgency of a coaching partner.

Vogue.com

A clear and complex lexis lends credibility to the representations of modern femininity.

Clean pantones of white, olive and monochrome establish a contemporary style that the audience will recognise as elegant and aspirational.

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

Attitude.co.uk

Celebrity Icons are specifically recognised by the audience, and, crucially, have a different meaning within this context (e.g., representations of Zendaya will be recontextualised as gay icon within this magazine). 'The relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes' (Hall), with the context of the magazine creating bespoke meaning.

Reportage of hate crimes and gay relevant politics link to the cultural and social contexts of the audience.

Use of quotes in headlines and focus on real life experience both reflects and involves audience.

Adbusters.org

Cultural competency is essential to *Adbusters*: the audience need to understand what is being parodied (coded) before they can consume the spoof (decode).

A shared ideology is also necessary to accept the preferred reading, which is socially and politically motivated. The product addresses Hall's 'inequality of power' notion.

A promise of community and activism offered by the magazine's lively offshoots, giving audiences the opportunity to contribute to the product's discourse.

Pridemagazine.com

The target audience is given a more ethnocentric content which contrasts more mainstream representation and populist hegemonies.

The cultural codes are recognised by Black British, mixed-race, African and African-Caribbean women in the United Kingdom and have explicit meaning to this audience.

Often the magazine will feature anonymous black models presenting varieties of celebratory black beauty. Icons used are specifically recognised by readers, and, crucially, have especial meaning for this audience (e.g., Minnie Riperton as black icon). 'The relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes' (Hall), with the context of the magazine creating bespoke meaning.

Huckmag.com

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

Audiences reject star and celebrity pantheons, and instead engage with fringe movements and documentary photography. The monochrome tones and sedate layouts code content as serious fare. Representations within the magazine support this, and 'meaning is produced through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs' (Hall). A lexis of dynamic verbs 'the artist using the outdoors... standing their ground... reclaiming the peaks' connote vicarious activity to the motivated target audience.

SECTION C: VIDEO GAMES

Either,

- 3 1** Explore how stereotypes can be used positively and/or negatively within video games. In your answer refer to **one action-led** franchise game **and** the **one** game in **another genre** you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 3 2** How far do representations of gender reflect their social contexts? In your answer refer 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 the ways stereotypes are used/representations of gender reflect social contexts (as appropriate) - Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	13-15 marks - Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the video games studied - Perceptive and detailed exploration of how examples from the video games studied use stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) - Excellent ability to compare the video games studied
4	10-12 marks - Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of the ways stereotypes are used/representations of gender reflect social contexts (as appropriate) - Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology	10-12 marks - Good application of knowledge and understanding of stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the video games studied - Detailed exploration of how examples from the video games studied use stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) (as appropriate) - Good ability to explore the video games studied

3	7-9 marks • Satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how representations of the ways stereotypes are used/representations of gender reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	7-9 marks • Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the video games studied • Straightforward exploration of examples from the video games studied use stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • Satisfactory ability to explore the video games studied
2	4-6 marks • Basic knowledge and understanding of how representations of the ways stereotypes are used/representations of gender reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	4-6 marks • Basic application of knowledge and understanding of stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the video games studied • Tendency to describe examples from the video games in reference to how the video games studied use stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • Basic ability to explore the video games studied
1	1-3 marks • Minimal knowledge and understanding of how representations of the ways stereotypes are used/representations of gender reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • Minimal, if any, use of appropriate subject-specific terminology	1-3 marks • Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) to analyse the video games studied • Limited, if any, consideration of how the video games studied use stereotypes/ how representations may reflect social contexts (as appropriate) • 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.

If only one video game is considered, assess the quality of the response in relation to the descriptors in all five bands and divide the marks by two.

AO1

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

- 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 media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how audiences/users may respond to and interpret media language.
- how social and cultural groups (including gender and ethnicity) 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 social groups
- how audiences/users may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore stereotypes 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 stereotypes to the video games studied, such as:

Assassin's Creed franchise

The reconfiguration of history, religion and myth is a post-modern bricolage which uses stereotypes. The main characters are defined by masculine signifiers. Cultural archetypes are used to denote different eras and global locations.

Grand Theft Auto franchise

A pop cultural bricolage of Hollywood tropes and crime cinema define the game, wherein different levels of cultural competence allow varied access to the game's competing levels of irony. Arguments of 'white cool' (hooks) have been levelled at GTA, while supporters argue that the stereotypes and hyperreal violence are part of the meta-play. Anti-social simulation is a saleable aspect of the game, and role playing stereotypical bad behaviour is part of the vicarious pleasures of engaging with the game.

Mass Effect franchise

Mass Effect offers Science Fiction escapism, which nonetheless has generated positive audience response via its utopian representation of sexual minorities. There is an option to play characters as either male or female wherein the agency of either iteration is unaltered. Tropes are borrowed from mainstream SF products, wherein audiences are invited to recognise and interplay with stereotypes.

Tomb Raider franchise

Croft conforms to the action film stereotype of female hero: brunette, white, with tied back hair (Katniss Everdeen, Rey Skywalker). However, the ways in which audience respond to this stereotype diversify. Croft has polysemic meaning and challenges the masculine hegemonies of video games. The globe trotting nature of the gameplay often relies on stereotypes which communicate meaning but are arguably reductive.

Wii Sports

The cartoon Miis are composed of softened edges and exaggerated features, which conform to the Nintendo house style. The user created Mii avoids a prescribed avatar, and, within the limited palette of the game, players can subvert stereotypical representation. The underlying structure of *Wii Sports* is based on an opposition of success or failure, which reflects the stereotypical dynamics of sport.

Cooking Mama

The representation of the main character suggests defined stereotypical roles. However, the representation is foregrounded and celebrated in a manner which invites polysemic meaning. Dedicated fans may respond to the Kawaii presentation and place the game within a larger social culture.

Minecraft

The low verisimilitude codes of Minecraft entail basic signifiers of gender, ethnicity and nationality. A thriving fan industry of 'stereotypical' skins exists; user generated content that may denote youth subcultures such as 'emo' or even nationality: 'ultra silly Russian stereotype'. Negative female archetypes such as a village haunting witch, plaguing the male inhabitants of the village, did exist within the diegesis but was modified following fan complaints.

The Sims

Audiences are invited to play *The Sims* in an open world, sandbox context. However, success is often predicated upon stereotypical ideals: running a household, holding down a job. The socially conscious ideologies of the game attempts to subvert stereotypes. However, the oppositional fan 'black Simming community' have created Sims skins to support black representation, which arguably reinforce cultural stereotypes. The marketing of the Sims uses stereotypes of certain cultures in order to promote the game's inclusive and diverse nature.

Question 3.2: Indicative content

AO1

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

- 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 media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- how audiences/users may respond to and interpret media language.
- how social and cultural groups (including gender and ethnicity) 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 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 social groups
- how audiences/users may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them
- how audience/user responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances.

AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore how gender representations may reflect social contexts 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 representation to the video games studied, such as:

Assassin's Creed franchise

The representations are often hyper-masculine, with macho signifiers such as muscular morphologies, flowing locks and thick beards. Such representations coincide with populist understandings of history, and of patriarchal control. The game does include a character (Eivor) who can be played as either male or female, which indicates an audience need for diversity.

Grand Theft Auto franchise

Accusation of problematic representation issues have been levelled at *GTA*: from the marketing onwards, women are either decorative or depicted as shrill party poopers. Despite different permutations of audience generated content, modification has yet to challenge this effectively, which could indicate an ingrained patriarchal diegesis. Different types of masculinity abound, but are tied to ideas of actualisation involving winning, success and conspicuous consumption, along with masculine honour.

Mass Effect franchise

There is an option to play characters as either male or female, and the utopian suggestions of the game posit that gender is a fluid detail in the far-flung cosmic arenas of space. The game instigates rewards for successful social interaction and sexual fulfilment: a nurture element. Tropes are borrowed from mainstream SF products, which audiences are invited to recognise, including the genre's often progressive representations.

Tomb Raider franchise

Depending on the context of reception, Croft is either feminist icon or male adolescent fantasy. Croft duly conforms to the hegemonic ideal of action-adventure beauty (white/brunette/ponytail), which is almost stereotypical. This has not prevented the brand's development as an icon of feminist empowerment, nor has the more male targeted multi-platform representations (within comics and the earlier film iterations) been hindered.

Wii Sports

The cartoon universe of *The Sims* relies on audience manufactured avatars, which are free from gender specifications. Audiences can design avatars which may be reflective of the individual circumstances, or more playful/creative. The lack of narrative structure potentially frees the play from typical tropes and hegemonic structures.

Cooking Mama

Accusations of sexism exist, with arguments stating that female stereotypes, implied by the compound noun phrase of the title, prevail. It is possible that Mama is in fact an empowered matriarch with her playful representation a knowing wink to the audience. The audience intrinsically seek her approval.

Minecraft

The game's creator, Notch, has claimed that "gender doesn't exist" in *Minecraft*, and popular discourse commonly refers to young children's digital play in the game as gender-neutral. Originally, however, to play as someone other than Steve- with his many gender specific skins- audiences would have to make an in-game purchase. This has changed in response to audience reaction. The official *Minecraft* Education website has a committee dedicated to 'Appreciating the diversity of genders and to inculcate the values of respect and acceptance'.

The Sims

Within the simulacra of *The Sims*, audiences may recreate their own life experience, or manufacture an aspirational utopia. Ideological resonance abides within discourse surrounding the game, with *The Sims* being criticised for limited sexual and ethnic options, which has encouraged audiences to modify the game. Nonetheless, this is a game which is marketed on its progressive ideals surrounding gender roles. *Sims 4*'s gender options include non-binary and trans, as well as cisgender.