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# **GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2022**

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

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2022 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## GCE A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES – UNIT 3

### SUMMER 2022 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.

## Section A: Television

Answer **one** question in each section.

Either,

- 1.1 'Meaning depends on the difference between opposites' (Stuart Hall). Use Hall's theory of representation to explore characters in *Hinterland* **and** the **historical** crime drama you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 1.2 'Patriarchy is a system that insists that males are inherently dominating' (bell hooks). Use hooks' theory of gender representation to explore characters in *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	<p><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of representation</li> <li>Excellent use of appropriate subject specific terminology and accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>	<p><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of representation to analyse the set crime dramas</li> <li>Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from the set crime dramas</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of representation</li> <li>Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology and mostly accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>	<p><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good application of knowledge and understanding of representation to analyse the set crime dramas</li> <li>Detailed exploration of examples from the set crime dramas</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory and generally accurate knowledge and understanding of representation</li> <li>Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and generally accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>	<p><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of representation to analyse the set crime dramas</li> <li>Straightforward exploration of examples from the set crime dramas</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic knowledge and understanding of representation</li> <li>Basic use of appropriate subject specific terminology and some errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>	<p><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic application of knowledge and understanding of representation to analyse the set crime dramas</li> <li>Tendency to describe examples from the set crime dramas</li> </ul>

<b>1</b>	<b>1-3 marks</b>	<b>1-3 marks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal knowledge and understanding of representation</li> <li>• Minimal use of appropriate subject specific terminology and many errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of representation to analyse the set crime dramas</li> <li>• Limited, if any, consideration of the set crime dramas.</li> </ul>
	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.</li> </ul>

### Question 1.1 and 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

- (a) Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of representations and Hall's critical perspective on representations. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of Hall's critical perspective and detailed exploration of representation issues in relation to the products studied. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of Hall's critical perspective, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with Hall's perspective or may not use it at all.
- (b) Responses are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of representations and hooks' critical perspective on representations. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit knowledge, understanding and application of hooks' critical perspective and detailed exploration of representation issues in relation to the products studied. Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of hooks' critical perspective, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with hooks' critical perspective or may not use it at all.

#### AO2

Responses may refer to:

- How representations of crime and criminality are constructed.
- How representations of place and social/cultural groups, including cultural identity and gender, are constructed.
- How stereotypes and representations are used as processes of categorisation, identification and recognition.
- How and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively.
- How and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented.
- How representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media.
- How audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them.

- 1.1 'Meaning depends on the difference between opposites' (Stuart Hall). Use Hall's theory of representation to explore characters in *Hinterland* and the **historical** crime drama you have studied.

***Hinterland***

- The character of Mathias, whom the mise-en-scene favours throughout, is an outsider to Aberystwyth; this contrast between representations of local people and Mathias is a key aspect of how narrative information is delivered.
- There are two patriarchal hegemonies within the product: the orphanage and the police. Within these representations it is suggested that one takes care of people while the other exploits them.
- There is a negative representation of a broken, unreconstructed underclass in *Hinterland*, which is the source of conflict and crime.

- 1.2 'Patriarchy is a system that insists that males are inherently dominating' (bell hooks). Use hooks' theory of gender representation to explore characters in *Hinterland* and the **historical** crime drama you have studied.

Responses may refer to:

- How representations of crime and criminality are constructed within gender parameters.
- How representations of gender are constructed.
- How stereotypes and representations are used as processes of categorisation, identification and recognition.
- How and why stereotypes can be used positively and negatively.
- How and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented.
- How representations embody values, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and discourses, which may be reinforced across a range of media.
- How audiences may be positioned by representations and may respond to and interpret them.

### ***Hinterland***

- Although Mathias is new to town, his masculine authority is accepted by all, even the previously established Rhys.
- The patriarchal systems of the orphanage and the church conspire to commit brutality upon young girls.
- Media language depicts Mathias as constantly moving and it is his kinetic agency that resolves the crimes, suggesting that the patriarchy of the police is hegemonically sound.

### ***Prime Suspect***

- The mise-en-scène and dialogue establish a specifically masculine world of in-jokes and male banter.
- The character of Tennyson has an ongoing conflict with the patriarchy, which is part of the USP of the series.
- Tennyson is also a complex and flawed representation of women, her weaknesses are represented as related to the pressures of patriarchy.

### ***Touching Evil***

- Masculine authority is explicit in the opening of the episode, which blends sanctioned male violence with the calm expertise of Creegan. Taylor is pointedly seen asking if anyone needs refreshments: a stereotypical representation.
- The snide comments from Creegan towards female members of staff and the backfoot which Taylor is placed upon assumes an audience complicity with the male characters of the show.
- Taylor is lit with soft key lights and often seen in medium shot from the POV of Creegan; we view her via a male gaze.

### ***Cracker***

- Despite his many anti-hero flaws, the absolute authority of male Fitz is never questioned by the audience, even if in this episode his superiors doubt him.
- The narrative backdrop of football violence, representations of football fans and the psychological fallout of experienced trauma speaks to the patriarchal dominance of the sport within popular culture.
- Penhaligon's struggle to be considered an equal within the boy's club atmosphere of the police is an enduring subplot.

### ***Morse***

- Morse and Lewis represent a united patriarchal front which spans across generations.
- The crime which they investigate centres on the sexual exploitation of a younger woman, suggesting that masculine authority is necessary to narrative resolution.
- *Morse* negotiates a class system which privileges men within the product.

## Section B: Magazines

Either,

- 2.1 How important are digital platforms to reaching and maintaining a variety of audiences? Compare the distribution of the **mainstream** and the **non-mainstream** magazines you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 2.2 How important are specialised audiences to the magazine industry? Compare how the **mainstream** and **non-mainstream** magazines you have studied reflect the needs of different audiences. [30]

Band	<b>AO1</b> <b>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and critical perspectives of media</b>	<b>AO2</b> <b>Apply knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media studies to analyse media products</b>
5	<b>13-15 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of magazine industry and audiences</li> <li>• Excellent use of appropriate subject specific terminology</li> </ul>	<b>13-15 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of the magazine industry and audiences to analyse mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> <li>• Perceptive and detailed exploration of examples from mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> </ul>
4	<b>10-12 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good, accurate knowledge and understanding of magazine industry and audiences</li> <li>• Good use of appropriate subject specific terminology</li> </ul>	<b>10-12 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good application of knowledge and understanding of the magazine industry and audiences to analyse mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> <li>• Detailed exploration of examples from mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> </ul>
3	<b>7-9 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory and generally accurate knowledge and understanding of magazine industry and audiences</li> <li>• Satisfactory use of subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<b>7-9 marks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of the magazine industry and audiences to analyse mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> <li>• Straightforward exploration of examples from mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> </ul>



2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge and understanding of magazine industry and audiences</li> <li>• Basic use of appropriate subject specific terminology</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of the magazine industry and audiences to analyse mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> <li>• Tendency to describe examples from mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal knowledge and understanding of magazine industry and audiences</li> <li>• Minimal use of appropriate subject specific terminology</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the magazine industry and audiences to analyse mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> <li>• Limited, if any, consideration of mainstream and non-mainstream magazines</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit.</li> </ul>

- 2.1 How important are digital platforms to reaching and maintaining a variety of audiences? Compare the distribution of the **mainstream** and the **non-mainstream** magazines you have studied. [30]

### AO1

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media industries and audiences, such as:

- how processes of production, distribution and circulation shape media products
- the relationship of recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation
- the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and circulation
- the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification
- the significance of economic factors to the magazine industry and its products
- how the magazine industry maintains, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally.
- 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 specialised 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 magazines
- how audiences/users interact with magazines and related online media such as magazine websites or social media platforms (e.g. Facebook)

### AO2

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of digital platforms to the magazines studied, such as:

#### **Cosmopolitan** <http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/>

- This magazine provides rolling coverage of the news values and areas of interest that the target audience are attracted to
- There is searchable content which is archived but readily available for readers: an article titled '18 Wedding Gift Ideas (accessed 3/11/18) uses key terms which will direct searchers back to the site.
- The mode of address communicates with the reader using an engaging, non-formal and fun style.

#### **Adbusters** <https://www.adbusters.org/>

- This website operates upon a promise of exclusivity, which privileges audiences who could feel part of a select non-mainstream tribe.
- There are options for readers to integrate with the website and its values with links to subscribe, to take part in campaigns and to donate.
- There is a significant amount of content (most of which links to the print version of the magazine), which flatters the cultural competence of the reader.

**Hello** <http://www.hellomagazine.com/>

- This magazine provides rolling coverage of the news values and areas of interest that the target audience are attracted to
- There is searchable content which is archived but readily available for readers: an article titled '18 Cocktail Bars you Need to Visit in London' (accessed 3/11/18) uses key terms which will direct searchers back to the site.
- The mode of address communicates with the reader using a formalised, yet intimate tone.

**Attitude** <http://attitude.co.uk/>

- The specific content of this magazine and the brand dominance makes this product an essential visit for its readership
- There is a variety of content which runs from escapist stories to more serious content concerning male health and stories which explore areas of sexuality which is not as visible in mainstream media.
- The benefits of the online magazine are exploited by links to cultural experiences.

**Men's Health** <http://www.menshealth.co.uk/>

- This online magazine makes full use of its digital features by allowing audiences to program the details of their workout
- There is specified instructional content laid out in a grid formation; used on a tablet, the website is an essential gym companion
- There are various links to consumer products, along with editorialised comments expounding the value of these products.

**Huck** <http://www.huckmagazine.com/>

- This website privileges digital natives, providing an easily accessible layout which provides audiences with a digital experience synergous to the magazine.
- There are options for readers to integrate with the website and its values with links to subscribe, and to buy previous magazines, where the focus is on high end photography making it a desirable, luxury purchase.
- There is a significant amount of content (most of which links to the print version of the magazine), which flatters the cultural competence of the reader.

**Vogue** <http://www.vogue.co.uk/>

- This magazine provides rolling coverage of the news values and areas of interest that the target audience are attracted to
- There is searchable content which is archived but readily available for readers: an article titled 'The 11 Definitive Accessories Trends of Spring/Summer 2019' (accessed 3/11/18) uses key terms which will direct searchers back to the site.
- The mode of address communicates with the reader using a formalised, yet intimate tone.

**Pride** <http://pridemagazine.com/>

- The specific content of this magazine and the brand dominance makes this product an essential visit for its readership
- There is a variety of content which runs from escapist stories to more serious content concerning racial issues and stories which explore areas not as visible in mainstream media.
- The benefits of the online magazine are exploited by live links to cultural experiences.

- 2.2 How important are specialised audiences to the magazine industry? Compare how the **mainstream** and **non-mainstream** magazines you have studied reflect the needs of different audiences. [30]

### AO1

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of audiences, such as:

- 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
- the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response
- 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/users interact with magazines and related online media such as magazine websites or social media platforms (e.g. Facebook)
- how audiences use magazines in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital
- how different audience interpretations reflect social and cultural circumstances.
- Responses may reference David Gauntlett's critical perspectives on identity:
- the idea that the media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities
- the idea that whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages, the media today offer us a diversity of ideologies from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

### AO2

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of mainstream and non-mainstream audiences to the magazines studied, such as:

**Cosmopolitan** <http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/>

- The representation of issues within this magazine is often mediated towards a contemporary female frame of reference
- The escapist and sybaritic ideologies of the magazine often means that issues will be related with minimal detail, reflecting the superficiality of 'clickbait' culture
- The news and politics section of the website is not a primary concern (having no presence in the navigation bar), the issues represented are linked to the themes of beauty and sex, reinforcing *Cosmopolitan's* USP in a competitive media context.

### **Hello** <http://www.hellomagazine.com/>

- The aristocratically aspirational content of *Hello* entails running coverage of issues linked to the British royal family, reflecting a social culture where interest in the Windsors is renewed by tabloids and escapist products such as *Hello*
- The intricate detail of royal stories reflects a social media context where websites must compete by having regularly updated content
- The representation of such issues is consistently positive, which reflects the ideology of the conservative readership

### **Men's Health** <http://www.menshealth.co.uk>

- Issues which are covered by other magazines are often studiously ignored by *Men's Health*, due to the niche interests of the content
- Issues which are covered – violent video games, net neutrality- are often mediated towards an explicitly male point of view
- The absence of hard news/issues on the website, which has a wide circulation, would suggest that its audience access the products to consume the dominant reading

### **Vogue** <http://www.vogue.co.uk/>

- There is more detailed coverage of issues within *Vogue*, which look at issues from a fourth wave feminist perspective (for example, the lack of female nominees within the 2018 Golden Globes)
- The 'Vogue Daily' link offers content which is updated daily, and offers representation of issues which are more specific to the general ideologies of the magazine, but which can be further ranging (Grenfell)
- The photography of *Vogue* is often striking, using characteristic media language to influence meaning

### **Adbusters** <https://www.adbusters.org/>

- The magazine's counter cultural ideologies offer representations that are in diametric opposition to the ideological content provided by more mainstream media
- Imagery within the website is usually a response to dominant media images: *Adbusters* recreates iconic images with satirical intent (a link on the navigation bar leads to 'spoofs')
- The magazine inculcates its own issues through campaigns designed to promote active participation of audiences, reflecting a cultural context wherein audiences can be producers as well as consumers

### **Attitude** <http://attitude.co.uk>

- The representation of issues are often gay-centric, reflecting a culture which is more open and which recognises gay men as viable consumers
- Issues are often mediated through their relevance to male vanity. For example, sporting issues are linked to athletes' diets and exercise regimes, with accompanying imagery that propagates a hegemonic ideal
- The selection of issues is often ideologically driven. For example, the ongoing coverage of gay marriage laws reflect a cultural context that is undergoing seismic change

### **Huck** <http://www.huckmagazine.com>

- *Huck* is a countercultural magazine which provides representation of subcultural issues which occur outside of mainstream hegemony
- The 'perspectives' area linked to by the navigation bar leads to an 'activism' sub-section, wherein an activist, social justice context is reflected
- The photography used within the website is often non-glossy, and constructed as a snapshot, to support an authentic representation in opposition to the ersatz experience of mainstream media.

**Pride** <http://pridemagazine.com/>

- As the self-proclaimed 'lifestyle bible for women of colour', *Pride* represents issues from this paradigm, reflecting an ongoing challenge to the white hegemony which still prevails in more mainstream publications.
- Representations of issues employ the hyperbolic mode of address which is typical of style magazines and typical of clickbait culture
- The 'Life Stories' section of the site mediates issues through individual experience, suggesting that black experience not represented in other publications

## Section C: Video Games

Either

- 3.1 How far do representations of ethnicity in video games reflect cultural contexts? Explore **one action-led game and one game in another genre** you have studied. [30]

Or,

- 3.2 How far do audience responses to video games reflect cultural contexts? Explore **one action-led game and 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	<p><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>Excellent use of appropriate subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<p><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts to analyse the two video games studied</li> <li>Excellent application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>Perceptive and detailed exploration of the video games studied</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>Good use of appropriate subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<p><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts to analyse the two video games studied</li> <li>Good application of knowledge and understanding of representation and media contexts</li> <li>Detailed exploration of the video games studied</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory and generally accurate knowledge of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>Satisfactory use of appropriate subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<p><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts to analyse the two video games studied</li> <li>Satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of representation and media contexts.</li> <li>Straightforward exploration of the video games studied</li> </ul>

<b>2</b>	<b>4-6 marks</b>	<b>4-6 marks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>• Basic use of appropriate subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts to analyse the two video games studied</li> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of media contexts</li> <li>• Tendency to describe the video games studied</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<b>1-3 marks</b>	<b>1-3 marks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts</li> <li>• Minimal use of appropriate subject-specific terminology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of representation and cultural contexts to analyse the two video games studied</li> <li>• Limited, if any, consideration of the video games studied</li> </ul>
	<b>0 marks</b>	<b>0 marks</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response attempted or no response worthy of credit</li> </ul>

### Question 3.1 and 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.

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 representation and cultural contexts. In the higher bands, there is likely to be explicit and detailed knowledge, understanding and application of representation and media contexts.

Responses in the middle band will include knowledge, understanding and application of straightforward aspects of media contexts, whilst responses in the lower bands may only engage implicitly with relevant media contexts.

#### AO2

Responses in the higher bands will explore audience representation 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.



- 3.1 How far do representations of ethnicity in video games reflect cultural contexts?  
Explore **one action-led game and one game in another genre** you have studied.

[30]

### AO1

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of representations and media contexts, such as:

- how social and cultural groups (specifically pertaining to 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 under-represented 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
- how audience/user responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances
- how media products relate to the social and cultural contexts in which they were made and set through their representations, discourses and ideologies
- how media products are shaped or informed by particular cultural influences such as genres, styles, movements and the work of other media producers
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media products reflect social and cultural circumstances

### AO2

Responses will apply knowledge and understanding of the concept of representations and media contexts, such as:

#### Assassin's Creed franchise

- The historical milieu of the franchise should be acknowledged, as the in-game heroics are aligned with Caucasian representations of masculinity.
- The scope of ethnic representation throughout the franchise is unmatched within gaming, with over forty separate ethnic identities receiving greater or lesser status within the game.
- The overarching narrative of the franchise implicates the end of the world, which can only be alleviated through stealth skill, violence and the destruction of enemy territory; suggesting an ideology of 'othering'

#### Grand Theft Auto franchise

- In general, *GTA* depicts a masculine world rife with ethnic stereotypes, which are deliberately exaggerated. The deliberate anti-heroic stance of the protagonists may be read as negative.
- However, the PEGI rating of this game (18), prevents younger audiences from exposure to these representations. A sophisticated, even satirical reading is possible, as the ethnic stereotypes are hyperbolic and borrowed from the pop culture canon (the Italian mobster, for example).
- The bricolage of guns, fast cars and competition plays exactly to a particular kind of masculine identity, which, despite the inclusion of Franklin in *GTAV*, remains overwhelmingly 'white': how far this is a wry acknowledgement of current cultural contexts is a source of debate.

### **Mass Effect franchise**

- As with most action games, the main protagonist is a Caucasian male and is defined by their strength and capability within combat situations.
- However, there are a variety of nationalities represented within the game, with such nationalities playing to stereotypes.
- The prevalence of alien characters does not extend to a diversity of race within the game: most human sprites are light skinned.

### **Tomb Raider franchise**

- Lara Croft is a pop cultural icon embodying all the agency which is otherwise attributed to male characters throughout the canon of action games, which includes her ethnicity.
- Her exaggerated morphology (which has altered over time) is clearly designed to appeal to a male heterosexual gaze: she conforms to a particularly white hegemony of beauty (a conscious decision as a real-life inspiration for Lara Croft was the dark-skinned rapper Neneh Cherry).
- This has not prevented Lara Croft from becoming an icon appropriated within cultural contexts in order to reflect a feminist context.

- 3.2 How far do audience responses to video games reflect cultural contexts? Explore **one action-led and one game in another genre** which you have studied. [30]

### **AO1**

Responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of audience and of media contexts, such as:

- 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.
- how audience/user responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect social and cultural circumstances. how media products relate to the social and cultural contexts in which they were made and set through their representations, discourses and ideologies.
- how media products are shaped or informed by particular cultural influences such as genres, styles, movements and the work of other media producers.
- how audience responses to and interpretations of media products reflect social and cultural circumstances.

### **AO2**

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

#### **Assassin's Creed**

- In a move made in order to not limit their fanbase to men, from 2016 playable characters can be either male or female reflecting cultural diversity.
- Ubisoft actively respond to audience input, relying on the social and cultural contexts of fans for suggestions of different 'eras' for the game's diegesis suggests.
- However, the successful marketing of the game would suggest that audiences still respond to the overt masculine codes used within the game's promotion despite cultural contexts.

#### **Wii Sports**

- The audience for Wii sports is not indicative of traditional players, as it is marketed to audiences who are not usually part of a gaming culture.
- Unlike narrative based games, where the linear progression can be intrinsically enjoyed by an individual player, Wii sports is an essentially communal experience, taking place within specifically social contexts.
- The image of the Wii as a digital substitute for the traditional family board game places it firmly within a social context.

### **Grand Theft Auto Franchise**

- Audiences respond to GTA in a variety of different ways, as suggested by the vast volume of games sold. There are several different ways to play the game, with each depending on the particular will of the player.
- The representation of female characters has been the source of much controversy with in the gaming community and, due to the popularity of the game, spearheaded discussion of female representation throughout the medium.
- The decidedly non-politically correct aspects of the game have been rectified by a culture of modding which can reflect audience circumstances. A famous example is the gay-themed 'San Francisco Parade' mod.

### **Cooking Mama**

- The famous *PETA* version of the game posited a vegan play mode where Mama did not use meat in her recipes reflecting a particular social and cultural context.
- An immensely popular game, it can be argued that players ignore any supposed ideologies and simply enjoy the 'pick up and play' pleasure offered by the gameplay.
- The aesthetic of *Cooking Mama* has cultural cachet with certain audiences who will respond to the knowing cuteness of the game.

### **Mass Effect**

- The lack of success of the later entries into the franchise reflect a growing audience disinterest in the game, with the producers not releasing further patches or updates. The varying fortunes of the game is reflective of changing social and cultural contexts.
- Fans organised a petition for the game's producers to remake the ending to *Mass Effect 3*. This reflects a prior culture of highly motivated interactivity.
- There has been minor controversy regarding the depiction of sexual acts within the game. This controversy was engineered by a person not from within the gaming community, within a cultural context separate to gaming, and as such faced a mobilised response from outraged gamers.

### **Minecraft**

- The educational applications of *Minecraft* have been exploited by audiences, as has the technical potential of the gameplay: computers have been designed within the game.
- The portmanteau of the game's title refers to the two verbs which make up the gameplay: to mine and to craft. The culture of creativity engendered by the game is prized highly by audiences.
- The emergence of conventions and the enduring popularity of the game suggests a highly positive audience response which reaches across different social and cultural contexts.

### **Tomb Raider**

- Lara Croft has become a cultural icon, moving far beyond the specific video game culture of her origins.
- Redesigns of the Lara Croft character have reflected social and cultural responses to her previously unrealistic figure.
- The endurance of the character, existing throughout technological developments and games of varying success indicate that Lara Croft is a character who has resonance with gaming cultures and beyond.

## **The Sims**

- Certain territories have age rated the game prohibitively high due to the positive depiction of same-sex relationships, a regulation which is indicative of social and cultural contexts of those territories.
- The producers of the game have created patches that reflect the global nature of the audiences- Mexican 'Day of the Dead' updates which create more diverse representation.
- *Sims 4* has expanded the control over gameplay to include the physical creation of Sims, which have the potential to reflect social and cultural circumstances.