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# **GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**GCSE (NEW)  
MEDIA STUDIES**

**SUMMER 2019**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

### **Online Results Analysis**

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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## **MEDIA STUDIES**

### **GCSE (NEW)**

**Summer 2019**

#### **UNIT 1: EXPLORING THE MEDIA**

##### **General Comments**

It is very pleasing to report that, in the first instance of the examination of the new specification in GCSE Media Studies, the questions set in the examination paper for Unit 1: Exploring the Media were generally well answered by most candidates. All questions proved accessible for candidates who were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of Media Studies as set out in the specification and were able to analyse media texts in effective ways.

For Section A: Representations - advertising, video games and newspapers, the resource material, a poster for the video game *Emergency 2017*, proved particularly effective in enabling candidates to demonstrate their analytical skills on an unseen media text, and to apply their knowledge and understanding of representations in comparing it with their own studies in centres. It was very impressive at times to see evidence of high-level comparison skills that were based on excellent knowledge and understanding of gender representations explored in the texts.

Section B also proved effective in allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the music industry. There was clear evidence in the candidates' responses of how a range of products produced by the industry are used by media organisations, and how audiences engage with them for a range of uses and gratifications. The knowledge and understanding of a wide range of media products, including radio programmes, social media and music video was, at times, very impressive and showed clear evidence of candidates being well prepared by their centres for the wide range of texts that need to be studied for the new specification.

##### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

###### **SECTION A: Representations – advertising, video games and newspapers**

- Q.1 (a) The vast majority of candidates achieved one mark, offering a basic description of one man in the poster. This was most often the fire fighter in the foreground although a number of candidates did describe other men in the poster such as the police/ security officer with a gun, the medic attending an injured person or the fire fighter attempting to rescue people from the train. Two marks were awarded for answers which used some subject specific terminology in their answer such as 'stereotypical male hero' or in their description of dress codes, object codes or a range of other symbolic codes.

- (b) This question proved more challenging for a number of candidates. The question required candidates to explain the design and layout of the poster. Most candidates identified key features of the visual organisation - the position of the title at the top, the main character in the foreground and the setting in the background. Where most candidates identified these key features they were awarded at least three marks for a detailed explanation. Answers which explored the layout and design and its visual organisation and compositional codes supported by subject specific terminology were awarded four or five marks. These points included the rule of thirds, typographic design, clear sense of layering in foreground, middle and background, placement of company logo and the platform distribution of PC digital. Many candidates also explained the use of colour in the design, explaining the use of bright colours from a warm colour palette of red, orange and yellows and connotations of fire, explosions and accidents. The highlighted glow around the main character was also explained by many candidates in their explanation of the design.
- (c) Candidates generally responded well to this question with its focus on the mise-en-scene and how men are represented. Answers often focused on the accident and emergency scene and the range of props, character and their costumes. Most candidates attempted to describe the narrative of the scene and the role of the characters linked to their costumes and props. A variety of points on gender stereotypes were provided, including the main character being represented as a heroic rescuer, the firearms officer with a gun linked to stereotypes of men with guns, or the medic saving an injured person. Answers in the higher bands of 4 or 5 offered good detailed answers of the mise-en-scene and representations of men. Candidates awarded a mark of 8 at band 5 often explored the complexities of male representations linked to the mise-en-scene. These candidates also discussed how the representations either reinforced stereotypes or challenged them.
- (d) This question was particularly effective in enabling candidates to compare the examination resource material with an example of video game cover studied at their centre. Popular examples were video game covers such as The Last of Us, Heavy Rain or GTA where candidates often compared in detail the representations of men as the main characters in these games. These comparisons were often supported with very effective use of subject specific terminology based on a wide range of technical and symbolic codes. The use of gestural and body language codes was used most effectively to determine a representation of males. These were often linked to the setting, props and costume and the wider narrative suggested by the mise-en-scene. For candidates awarded the higher marks in band 5, there was often clear reference to theoretical perspectives such as binary oppositions or the uses and gratifications theory. The best answers often explored the complexities of male gender representations in sophisticated ways with reference to masculinity or contemporary issues of men in caring professions compared with more traditional male stereotypes in action games.

## SECTION B: Music

- Q.2 (a) Most candidates achieved one mark for an appropriate way in which digital technology is used to listen to music.
- (b) Most candidates were able to offer a simple explanation based on attracting a wide range of listeners to new songs. Higher level answers offered more detailed explanations, often addressing issues of promotion of new songs and linking this to chart success or constant airplay on popular radio stations with popular presenters.
- (c) Whilst most candidates offered a detailed response, many answers failed to identify a specific radio programme, instead offering a radio station such as Radio One. Candidates who offered only a radio station could therefore not be awarded marks above band 2. However there was much evidence of candidates referring to presenters such as Nick Grimshaw or the Breakfast Show on Radio One to access the higher bands on the marking scheme for this question.
- Q.3 Most candidates could offer an appropriate contemporary artist or band and explain their social media presence on Facebook or Twitter but unfortunately many candidates did not explore how their chosen artist or band was represented. The focus of many answers explored how social media is used by contemporary artists and how audiences engage with them. To access the higher bands, candidates should explore issues of representation through stereotypes of pop stars, such as Divas, bad boys or girls and/or genre issues related to representation or positive / negative representations. The answers awarded the higher marks which demonstrated good or very good knowledge and understanding of representations at bands 4 and 5 often explored issues around representations including gender, ethnicity, artists as business people, artists in control of their own representation or being role models for young people.
- Q.4 This question asked candidates to explain how camerawork and editing was used in one historical music video they had studied. The question was effective in eliciting insightful responses with a wide range of historical music videos in evidence. Popular choices were Michael Jackson's Thriller, Duran Duran's Rio or Madonna's Material Girl. Most candidates could offer detailed explanations of the camerawork used with a range of shots, angles and movements explored in the music video. Editing was not as well explained although many candidates explained how the structure of the music video was sequenced to build a narrative using a range of locations and settings to appeal to audiences. In a small number of instances candidates used a contemporary music video and therefore could not access the mark levels above band 2. Centres must be mindful when choosing the texts for study in this section to cover both historical and contemporary music videos.

### Summary of key points

Overall the paper proved very successful in allowing candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the new specification as applied to Representations in video games and in music and giving opportunities to demonstrate the application of their knowledge and understanding to analyse media products as specified for Unit 1 in Exploring the Media.

In the vast majority of cases most students were able to complete the whole paper with few questions not attempted and it is very pleasing to report that the time management by candidates in the examination proved effective and manageable. In summary, centres should:

- Ensure all the codes and conventions of the print products for Section A are studied and how they are used to construct representation in advertising, video games and newspapers.
- Study representations of gender with a range of examples of both men and women in video games and advertising and of events in newspapers.
- Study specific radio programmes for Section B music and remind candidates to refer to these when answering examination questions.
- Ensure candidates study representations of specific artists or bands.
- Study both historical and contemporary music videos.

## **MEDIA STUDIES**

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#### **UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING TELEVISION AND FILM**

##### **General Comments**

Overall, the examination paper for Unit 2 proved somewhat challenging for many candidates with a greater number of incomplete scripts and a number of questions not attempted by a small minority of candidates when compared with Unit 1. The questions most often not attempted were questions 3 and 4 on Section B of the paper which suggests that a number of candidates spent too much time on Section A. Question 1d in particular showed evidence of candidates writing very full and detailed responses, perhaps at the expense of the two final questions in Section B. However, there was much evidence of some excellent responses to questions 3 and 4 where candidates had clearly managed their time effectively during the examination period.

There was some evidence of candidates finding questions 1c and 2c more difficult, suggesting Centres need to cover wider organisational issues in the television and film industries such as marketing of television programmes and funding in the film industry in greater detail. Again, however, there was evidence of some excellent responses to these questions.

Many candidates must be praised for their excellent responses to these challenging questions and on the depth and detail of their responses under examination conditions.

##### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

###### **Section A: Wales on Television**

- Q.1 (a) The vast majority of candidates were awarded a mark for this question in identifying an appropriate audience for their chosen television programme which in most cases was the audience for Gavin and Stacey.
- (b) This question required candidates to briefly explain why the television programme studied is popular in Wales. The vast majority of candidates offered at least a satisfactory response based on the audience appeals of comedy, inclusion of Welsh people, the settings, stories and characters. Good responses demonstrated good media knowledge and understanding of the issues of representations linked to media language and the genre codes and conventions used in the programme studied.
- (c) Many candidates found the issues of how the television programme studied was marketed more challenging. Many candidates confused the use of trailers with advertising particularly as Gavin and Stacey was marketed on BBC which of course does not carry advertising. It was agreed therefore that examiners could credit advertising by inference to trailers for one of the marketing techniques used. This was often supported by the use of social media as a second way in which the programme was marketed or the use of the BBC website. Some better answers outlined the two appropriate methods often with reference to BBC radio, print media such the Radio Times and TV listings magazines or in editorial in newspapers.

- (d) In the main, this question proved very effective in eliciting detailed and well developed responses from many candidates with well-structured and organised answers based on the chosen television programme and the audience appeals. Many candidates used the bullet points on the paper to structure their responses. Candidates demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and in their application of these key concepts to the analysis of the chosen television programme which in the vast majority of cases was Gavin and Stacey. At best, candidates awarded marks in the higher bands often explored the complex issues of representation of English and Welsh people. Sophisticated analysis included detailed reference to the main characters and the narratives and key themes involved, from comic scenes to more serious themes of personal relationships and the issues involved. Some of these complex issues were then explained with reference to the wider uses and gratifications of the episode studied. In a small number of instances some candidates did not identify the episode studied and talked about the series in general. In some cases, candidates may have spent too much time on this question, writing incredibly detailed and perhaps overlong responses to the detriment of their attempt to complete all the questions, particularly question 3 and 4 in Section B.

### **Summary of key points**

#### Advice to Centres

- Candidates must attempt to answer all questions and manage the time spent on each section equally.
- Explore the key concepts involved in media organisations such as the marketing and funding of television programmes and Hollywood films and ensure candidates understand the differences between production, distribution and exhibition in these different industries.
- Ensure the appropriate episode of the television programme is studied in detail and identified in their written responses.



## **MEDIA STUDIES**

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## **UNIT 3: CREATING MEDIA**

### **General Comments**

In this, the first year of the new Specification, most centres and candidates applied its requirements appropriately. The set briefs were accessible to the full range of candidates and production outcomes demonstrated generally effective application of knowledge and understanding of media language, representation and audiences in relation to a production for a specified audience.

The print options: magazine and film were most popular, but a significant number of candidates selected from the audio-visual brief options: music, film and TV. Least popular were the online options but work seen in response to these brief options was well executed. In the main, work produced across Unit 3, as a whole, was in line with the details outlined in the specification.

### **Comments on individual questions/sections**

#### **Administration**

This year, centres and moderators used Surpass to upload and download Unit 3 work. On the whole, the system worked well. Key points to consider for next year are:

- May 5<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for work to be uploaded to Surpass. It is important to note that keycodes for Surpass will be generated 48 hours after the sample has been generated from IAMIS; this needs to be taken into consideration in order to avoid the late arrival of sample evidence
- Centres must use the required file formats. Failure to do so may result in delay to the moderation process
- Incomplete portfolios requested in the sample will require centres to request new codes for substituted candidates. Centres are reminded to include a cover note to inform the moderator if this has been agreed by WJEC
- Centres must clearly label all files with candidate surname, forename, candidate number and the what the file is
- All forms must be signed by teacher and candidate
- Three different review dates for production authentication signatures are required
- Assessors must complete summative comments in sufficient detail for the moderator to have a clear understanding of the context of the work, importantly referencing the mark grid to support the marks awarded.
- Centres with candidates undertaking paired (audio visual) work must upload the pair work form indicating candidates who have worked in pair and the role they have taken
- Centres must include any correspondence between the centre and WJEC when uploading work; they must not contact moderators directly. Should there be any need to contact the centre, this will be done through the official contact information.

## **Assessment and Task Setting**

Carefully designed task setting is essential for candidates to be successful. Only the official production briefs published by WJEC for the year of the accreditation are permissible. Candidates must also carry out the specific requirements for each element of the brief as indicated in the specification. Centres cannot design tasks outside the remit of the specification. No marks can be awarded for work undertaken which is not within the mark grids. Well-designed task setting is essential to ensure candidates have the opportunity to meet the assessment criteria outlined in the assessment grids: Research, Planning, Production and Reflective Analysis.

Most over rewarding of work resulted in marking which did not accurately apply the descriptors for each band in the mark grids. For example, productions at band 5 must demonstrate excellent technical and creative skills for the genre and form. The production must demonstrate consistency of knowledge and understanding of media language, and must construct representations of people, places, events or issues that target the intended audience in a highly appropriate way. Additionally, the production must demonstrate an excellent ability to use media language to communicate meaning to the intended audience. Work cannot receive top band marks if these are not sufficiently met.

Centres must use a best-fit approach when placing work within bands for assessment. Once the band has been met, centres are advised to then place each piece of work within the band. Summative assessment commentary provides essential information to moderators and serves to justify the marks awarded at the centre. It is essential, therefore, that teachers' comments are based on the mark grid assessment criteria, but they should not be a simple cut and paste exercise since that does little to help direct the moderator to the individual candidate's specific outcomes. It is no longer a requirement to annotate individual pieces of work, (although it is always very much appreciated by the moderator and does help highlight specific points where work exemplifies assessment criteria being met). Summative teacher comments therefore, may be the only opportunity for the centre to justify the marks awarded.

## **Research**

Research presented the greatest areas of concern for the moderators. Whilst much of the research candidates undertook was appropriate, centres are advised to review task setting to ensure candidate's outcomes will enable them to access the criteria within the mark grid. Page 21 of the Specification states candidates need to undertake research into the way that media language is used to establish genre conventions, representations and target specific audiences. This means candidates should explicitly research the genre codes and conventions of the form they are research. Likewise, centres are advised to direct candidates to identify representations, using appropriate media language to demonstrate knowledge understanding. Candidates may apply theories as appropriate, but they are not a prerequisite to achieve even the highest band marks.

Good practice makes explicit reference to the ways investigated texts address audiences through visual codes, technical codes, camera work, framing, editing, language or sound codes, for example. Many candidates only implied this knowledge, relying often on description rather than analysis. Less successful responses lacked focus of the three areas of study in their application of knowledge and understanding.

Some centres over awarded work in band 5 where research was not highly relevant and appropriate to the future production, or research texts selected did not match the intended audience set in the brief.

Learners are required to analyse two products comparable with their chosen production. For clarification, having reviewed a variety of work this first Series, candidates working in Print options are advised that the expectation is that two products will be analysed (i.e. 2 x covers or 1 x cover and 1 x contents page) as opposed to 2 full productions (contents x 2, cover x 2, additional page x 2) to allow candidates to go into sufficient depth with their analyses given the word count. Candidates were not penalised for centres' divergent interpretation of this point of the specification.

Moderators noted that candidates presented their research in a range of forms, including annotations, tables and formal reports. The vast majority of candidates generally met the word of 250-500 words. Centres are reminded that should candidates exceed this limit, there is a 10% tolerance for work that is over the specified limits for time and length. If a production exceeds the limits by more than 10%, the teacher/assessor should not mark the additional work submitted beyond this limit, as candidates can only be credited for work that falls within the stipulated limits for time and length. This applies to Research word count (see Page 26 of the Specification).

## **Planning**

Page 21 of the Specification details planning requirements: a storyboard for the audio-visual briefs and a draft design per page (therefore three) for Print options. It was disappointing to see a significant number of centres had tasked candidates to plan extraneous activities, which could not be credited within the mark grid. Whilst original images are not required for print planning, hand drawn, or random images do not support the planning process. When candidates undertake planning, they should carefully consider the appeal to audiences through the use of representational and genre conventions; visual composition including use of space, layout of images, framing; mode of address; lighting; use of mise-en-scène and language content and tone. Candidates are required to submit a storyboard for their audio-visual planning. Storyboards should be approximately 15-20 frames in length. They should be hand drawn and candidates should not use grabbed stills from completed productions, which are not acceptable since they exemplify post-production activities. When developing storyboards, candidates are advised to consider technical aspects such as camera work, editing, lighting, timings and language/audio codes to demonstrate appropriate and 'relevant' planning.

## **Productions**

It was pleasing to note that candidates' work was generally more secure when developing media products for their intended audience. Most candidates were able to apply knowledge and understanding of concepts of media studies which was relevant and appropriate. Moderators commented on the high quality of the print audio-visual and online work they saw. Many candidates produced excellent technical and creative pieces, which were successful in meeting the requirements set out in the Briefs. Centres are advised, however, that where productions do not meet the requirements and meet the standards for each band in the mark grid, this should be reflected in the marks awarded. The most successful production outcomes had been explicitly derived and influenced by appropriate research and focused planning. Candidates' knowledge and understanding of media language was also more consistent across the production. Likewise, representations of people, places, events or issues showed greater consideration and were also more consistently applied. This direct correlation between research and planning stages production genre codes and form were often more appropriate and creative. Centres are strongly advised to take this into consideration when planning teaching activities for both research and planning.

## **Audio-visual options (individual or pair): Television, Film, Music or Advertising.**

If candidates work in a pair, the role they have taken in the production, either camera work or editing (including sound), must be clear. Candidates should complete all cover sheets detailing this information. It also helps support the centre's assessment of paired production work if the teacher/ assessor also details explicitly the role the candidate has taken. Each Brief has specific timings. In a number of centres, it was evident this may not have been taken into consideration at the planning stage. Generous and inaccurate assessment had occurred where the appropriate penalty had not been applied to productions that exceeded the time limits. Conversely, productions which fell short were sometimes over marked since such productions are technically incomplete. Candidates must submit individual and distinct research and planning for a paired production. Teachers should bring this requirement to the attention of all candidates who choose to work in pairs. Page 32 of the specification provides detail of key skills that should be evident in audio-visual productions. Further helpful advice is available in the supporting resources available for WJEC GCSE Media Studies.

## **Reflective Analysis**

Most candidates analysed and evaluated their production in relation to the two products they researched with little difficulty where there was a clear understanding of the requirements of the specification and the mark grid. The very best Reflective Analyses were articulate and detailed, highlighting the use of media concepts in productions by focusing and evaluating how key genre conventions had been incorporated. These examples evaluated representation issues raised by the production and evaluated how genre conventions and other key features were used to target the specified audience. Centres are advised to encourage candidates to be selective and focus on key elements of the production, making comparisons between the products they individually researched and their own completed production; this is particularly important when considering the word limit: 500 -750 words. The Reflective Analysis must be word-processed form and it may be illustrated (for example with screengrabs or images). Excessive word counts should not be rewarded beyond the 10% allowance.

## **Summary of key points**

Learners must adhere to the specified limits for time and length.

The importance of appropriate research is paramount. When task setting, centres must fulfil the Specification requirement that candidates undertake research into the way that media language is used to establish genre conventions, representations and target specific audiences so as to facilitate candidates' access to all bands of the assessment grid.

Learners are required to analyse two products comparable with their chosen production. For clarification, having reviewed a variety of work this first Series, candidates working in Print options are advised that the expectation is that two products will be analysed (i.e. 2 x covers or 1 x cover and 1 x contents page) as opposed to 2 full productions (contents x 2, cover x 2, additional page x 2) to allow candidates to go into sufficient depth with their analyses given the word count.

Candidates can only be rewarded for work completed that is within the requirements of the Specification; any extraneous work that is submitted cannot be assessed.

Centres must adhere to the Specification requirement pertaining to paired work, and all paired work must be appropriately detailed in the paperwork submitted to WJEC.



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