

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

MEDIA STUDIES

H409

For first teaching in 2017

H409/01 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 1 series overview

Overall, the paper was accessible to candidates who responded in a differentiated way to individual questions with areas of strength being clearly shown, depending on the topic and task. What was obvious was the impact of teaching in relation to the theoretical framework of media, the set products for this component, how the different styles of questions should best be approached and how to maximise marks by making good use of the available time and differences in mark allocation. On occasion, candidates ran out of time or rushed through Question 6. Some candidates began the paper with the two 15 mark questions, 2 and 6, followed by a chronological or 'most confident' order, which benefitted those who adopted this approach.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managed the timing of the paper well, completing responses to all six questions • established an argument to the question in the introduction and wrote well-structured, coherent, developed responses that referred back to the question and their argument regularly to remain relevant and engaged • analysed the source materials and case study products in detail to apply knowledge and understanding and fully support the points they made • made logical connections, developed lines of reasoning and could make judgements and conclusions in their responses • could confidently use subject specific terminology relevant for the framework, media form and products studied • were fluent and confident in their application of, and ability to critically evaluate, the effectiveness of the key ideas and arguments of theorists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not manage the timings for all questions effectively or no response to at least one question • didn't engage with or answer the question • answered the question with case study product examples that weren't relevant or accurate for the specifics of the question • described and/or listed what they knew rather than using the AO skills of application, analysis, explanation, evaluation, judgement • wrote responses that were unstructured, undeveloped and basic in the lines of reasoning or conclusions offered, if at all • did not use appropriate subject specific terminology or were inaccurate in their use of terms, especially terminology for media language conventions • did not understand, or evaluate, theoretical ideas.

Section A overview

This section on News was generally addressed well by candidates. Most candidates demonstrated focus on the analysis and application of knowledge, understanding of source material and the key media products to support their responses where required. There was mixed success in the knowledge and understanding of contexts and in the application of academic ideas and media theory.

Question 1

News

- 1 Analyse the media language used in **Source A** and **Source B** in relation to political contexts. Apply Barthes' theory of semiotics in your answer. [10]

Candidates adequately applied their knowledge and understanding of media language in relation to political contexts. There was generally appropriate reference to Barthes' theories of semiotics in relation to signs, signifiers, the signified, denotations and connotations with varying degrees of success. Candidates were able to support responses with some accurate references to Sources A and B and make some logical connections across the different uses of media language conventions in both sources. Use of subject specialist terms in candidates' analysis was good.

More successful responses comprehensively triangulated the three stems of the exam question (contexts, academic ideas, analysis of sources) and these were characterised by precise and relevant reference to, and application of, Barthes' theories in relation to media language elements found in the sources, functioning as signs that attached connotations and perpetuate ideological myths. Successful responses had accurate knowledge and understanding of how media language is used in relation to political contexts, particularly with regard to *The Daily Mirror*, and strong textual analysis skills that were detailed in their analysis of the sources in relation to their ideological aims. The most successful responses were well-structured, well argued, well supported, offered consistent comparisons and made connections across the sources, theory and context to provide good lines of reasoning. Those who excelled in this question often provided a brief outline of the theory at the beginning of the response and embedded it into detailed analysis that helped structure their responses.

Some candidates struggled to address all aspects of the question either by providing superficial analysis or overlooking one or more of the stems. For some candidates, reference to Barthes was absent or minimal with a key idea stated but not developed or applied. In some instances, candidates confused Barthes' theory with Hall's reception model or Levi Strauss' binary oppositions theory. Some candidates did not address political contexts. Less successful responses tended to describe the sources rather than analyse or refer to specific examples to support their response. In some instances, candidates offered a description of the representation of Boris Johnson and the Queen rather than the ways in which the media language conventions were used to communicate ideas about political contexts and /or the source's political leaning. Some candidates confused the political leanings of the papers and in some instances newspapers were referred to as magazines.

Centres prepared candidates well for this response. Textual analysis skills, application of theory and understanding of the influence of political contexts and the political affiliations of news brands was, overall, well prepared. The use of timings and structuring of responses was generally good.

Assessment for learning



Break down sample and past exam questions so candidates are aware of the different question stems they must address, and develop skills in triangulating these in responses, to achieve the higher level marks. Practice the application of theoretical ideas so that the ability to apply theory and not just describe knowledge of theory is further developed. Practice analysis of unseen sources and the difference between analysis and description and develop confidence in the use of subject specific terminology in writing.

Misconception



Candidates confused Barthes' theory with Hall's reception model or Levi Strauss' binary oppositions theory.

Question 2*

2* **Source A** and **Source B** cover the same news event from two different online news sources.

How far do the responses to and interpretations of the media representations used in the sources reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances?

In your answer you must:

- explain how media representations in news sources reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances
- analyse the responses to and interpretations of the media representations used in the sources
- make judgements and reach conclusions about how far the responses to and interpretations of these media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.

[15]

Responses showed accurate knowledge and understanding of how media representations in news sources reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances (AO1). The use of subject specific terminology was accurate (AO1). There was relevant, generally successful application of knowledge and understanding of representations to analyse Sources A and B. Candidates could identify and discuss a range of representations in Source A and Source B and provide some logical connections across the two sources with some adequate lines of reasoning. There were adequate judgements and conclusions made regarding how far candidates thought responses to, and interpretations of, media representations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances (AO2).

The more successful responses demonstrated a clear understanding of how media representations reflect different cultural, social and historical circumstances, with the strongest of these responses considering 'how far' rather than a generalised discussion (AO1). Successful responses offered convincing analysis of the representations in each source, referring to the issues of the resignation of Kevan Collins and the Queen's Jubilee. More successful responses could make logical connections and provide effective lines of reasoning across the representations to offer insights into the ideological underpinnings of the newspapers. Successful candidates also made accomplished judgements regarding the responses to and interpretations of the media in the social media responses published in the sources, discussing these in detail and with accuracy. Some candidates noted the opposition of the

responses to the ideological position of the lead articles as a reflection of the social, cultural and historical circumstances in which we live (AO2). Although not a requirement of the question, some of the very highest achieving candidates applied theoretical approaches very effectively, in particular Hall's reception model, Gilroy's theory of postcolonial melancholia and Shirky's 'End of Audience' theory. These responses placed the media, and these sources, within wider contexts and linked them to audience responses, often offering highly developed and accomplished judgements to demonstrate very comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding.

Less successful responses offered a description of the main representations found in the sources and struggled to effectively structure their responses to provide adequate analysis. The less successful responses repeated content from Question 1. While in some instances candidates could do this with some success through discussion of representations, more frequently these led to highly descriptive responses that struggled to focus on the question set or recognise that this was a representation question. Less successful responses demonstrated limited engagement with or omission of the influence of circumstances. Some ignored the requirement to consider the audience responses on the posts in the sources, so not addressing the specific requirements of the question.

A common misconception for this question was a misunderstanding of what social, cultural and historical circumstances are and often they were discussed as separate rather than interconnected entities that can overlap.

Candidates were generally well informed and well prepared for this question. They were well prepared to select appropriate examples to discuss representation, had good knowledge of the news brands in the sources and, although not a requirement, could apply theories to their analysis to make judgements and offer conclusions. For more successful responses, candidates had been well prepared in exam technique and how to structure an extended response to this style of exam question; candidates who used the bullet points under the question stem provided well-structured responses.

Assessment for learning



Developing skills in exam technique, particularly breaking down the examination questions, understanding the framework focus for assessment and using the bullet points as a guide for structuring responses. Provide opportunities for more focus on online, social and participatory news sources and audiences' use of and response to news on these platforms; practice selecting examples from sources and supporting analysis; develop skills in making judgements and reaching conclusions and confidence in articulating these in writing.

Exemplar 1

unhappy social and cultural circumstances to a great extent. However, there is a limitation as to what a wider group of the society would respond as, because we can only see 4 comments in ~~the~~ source A. Even in these 4 comments we see a range of ideas as one has mentioned -- "no one has been there before" suggesting no mistake is acceptable.

moreover, in source B, the story of Boris Johnson has created a similar interpretation and response from the audience. The comments show how the public is not pleased as they say "awful government", "promise, promise, promise - but do not mean at all" and a comparison to other countries like ^{the} US and Holland, showing the lack of care ~~the~~ Boris has put into the education system. This suggests that the responses are reflective of an unhappy society to an extent. There is also the same ~~the~~ limitation as source A, that not all comments are available to see the different reactions of the society towards this issue.

Overall, both source A and B suggest a negative interpretation towards the government and Boris Johnson in handling this massive issue caused by a pandemic, affecting everyone. The negative responses in the comment sections of both newspapers suggests that the audience has interpreted the representations in the way presented to them as they have ~~represented~~ both represented the issue as big and negative on society. However, they only reflect the social, cultural and historical circumstances to an extent as not all comments can be seen and this

Exemplar 1 is a very focused, comprehensive Level 3 response that is mostly sustained across the response in relation to all the descriptors in Level 3.

For AO1, there is evidence of comprehensive, detailed and largely accurate knowledge and understanding of how media representations in news sources reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances. The focus of the response is more on social and cultural circumstances but by addressing them together in the response the candidate has successfully demonstrated comprehensive understanding of how news sources reflect these circumstances overall. The use of subject specific terminology is relevant and accurate.

For AO2, there is a comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of the representations constructed to analyse the sources with a convincing, accurate analysis demonstrated. The analysis of the two sources provides logical connections and good lines of reasoning across the sources, which is mostly sustained and consistent across the response. There are some accomplished judgements made in relation to how far responses to and interpretations of the representations in the sources reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances, with focus on the social and cultural particularly strong. The response is 'descriptive in parts' and doesn't go higher into the Level 3 band due to some description and some inconsistency in the judgements and conclusions. The response is not as fully developed or sustained as would be needed for a mark at the very top of the level but nevertheless it is a solid, well developed response with a detailed line of reasoning which is coherent, logically structured, relevant and substantiated.

Question 3

- 3 Explain how historical contexts influence the ways newspapers target, reach and address audiences. Refer to *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* to support your answer.

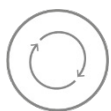
[10]

Candidates generally performed well on Question 3, demonstrating adequate knowledge and understanding of how historical contexts influence the ways newspapers target, reach and address audiences. There were two main approaches to this question. The first considered the history of both newspapers, placing them within historical contexts. The second, was to consider the change from print to online media for each paper and how this had affected existing audiences but also attracted newer audiences. The latter approach tended to lead to more successful responses. Responses were supported with generally accurate reference to *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail*. There was good subject knowledge and understanding of each newspaper with most candidates referencing target audience demographics and selecting case study examples to show how audiences, and different audiences for the same news brand, were targeted and addressed.

The higher achieving candidates approached the question from an economic, historical perspective, focusing on the decline of print media as a historical influence on the proliferation of online news. This approach proved successful and provided a springboard for discussions of how this shift has led to active, in some cases younger, audiences of news. These more successful responses could discuss concepts such as citizen journalism and textual poaching in relation to user generated content and how news brands use this content to further reach and target their audiences. Less successful responses did not answer the question of historical context directly, focusing generally on how newspapers target, reach and attract audiences. Or, conversely, provided potted histories of each newspaper but didn't link these to audiences. Less successful responses were characterised by lots of factual errors and some candidates were uncertain of who the audience for each newspaper was.

Candidates were well prepared for this question. They had good knowledge and understanding of the two newspapers in relation to ownership, target audience, content of the print and online versions of the newspaper, how they are financed and distributed and key dates historically that have impacted the newspaper or the way in which they target, reach and address audiences. Knowledge of the case study products, gatekeeping, demographics, and statistical data in relation to print circulations and online users, the historical contexts of declining print sales and online news platforms was evident, indicating that there has been some effective preparation for this question. Centre-chosen editions of the set products also provided strong evidence to support responses with, in most cases.

Assessment for learning



Areas that centres could develop in preparation for this question include examination technique and exam paper practice where candidates have opportunities to break down the question into its component parts and spend time on planning suitable, well-structured and well supported responses and developing the skill of making valid well supported points that are appropriate to the question and candidate's argument. Opportunities to consolidate knowledge of the case studies and using specific stories or sections to elevate their points and discussion. Developing understanding of media contexts which candidates find more challenging such as historical contexts and exploring how historical contexts as simply 'changes over time' can be considered in relation to the other contexts of social, cultural, economic and political. Candidates would benefit from developing exam technique and skills in how to structure AO1 responses that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the question rather than simply listing everything known about each case study.

Exemplar 2

Historical contexts ~~are highly influential~~ in highly influence the ways newspapers target, reach and address audiences. This is evident in The Guardian, a politically left wing broadsheet created in 1921, and the Daily Mail, a middle market tabloid first produced in 1883.

The historical context of influence can affect its ^{economic model} ~~political ideologies~~, which affect how it targets, reaches and addresses its audience. This is evident in The Daily Mail, which ~~was~~ ⁱⁿ produced by 1st Viscount Rothermere, ~~not~~ ^{and} Harold Harmsworth, ^{great-} who had proprietorship. Over a century later, his grandson, Jonathan Harmsworth, inherited proprietorship. This

^{Capitalist} leads to a ~~politically right wing~~ approach to targeting its readers which is mostly CDE. This is because, as a proprietor, Harmsworth wants to maximise his return on shares through clicks. This leads to sensational populist headlines such as 'What they hell have they done' in response to Boris Johnson's resignation in July 2022. This is because, due to their ownership model, ~~the~~ the use of differing editors also allows for differentiation in content, which widens their audience reach. Furthermore, The Guardian has also embraced digitally convergent technologies. This is evident through the growth of The Guardian .com, The Guardian's youtube channel and their social media. This allows them to reach target and address a younger, usually liberal audience who are more likely to be active and interact with Guardian products.

Exemplar 2 is a comprehensive demonstration of knowledge and understanding of how historical contexts influence the ways newspapers target, reach and address audiences. The candidate discusses a number of relevant issues to demonstrate comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the influence historical contexts have on the ways the case study products target, reach and address audiences. The response is well supported by detailed and largely accurate reference to both *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mail*.

Question 4

- 4 Evaluate the effectiveness of **one** of the following theories in understanding how newspapers are regulated in the UK.

EITHER

- Curran and Seaton on Power and Media Industries

OR

- Hesmondhalgh on Cultural Industries

[10]

Curran and Seaton were, marginally, the more popular choice in candidate responses. Candidates demonstrated some adequate application of knowledge and understanding of how newspapers are regulated in relation to both theories. Many candidates demonstrated good understanding of the theory they had chosen and were able to provide solid summaries, often supported with appropriate examples from the case study products. Many candidates displayed good working knowledge of regulatory aspects of the press, correctly identifying that *The Daily Mail* pays to be regulated by IPSO and *The Guardian* is self-regulated within the Scott Trust. Few were able to discuss the idea that all the press is self-regulated to support freedom of speech although issues around censorship were sometimes discussed. Where candidates were able to evaluate the effectiveness of the theory, this was generally successful with focus on the effectiveness of the theory in relation to UK regulation. For candidates achieving mid-level marks this was a more taken for granted evaluation. Some candidates omitted the evaluation requirement of the question entirely.

More successful responses were able to structure their responses using the key ideas of the chosen theory, their knowledge of the case study products to support the theory and then make connections to broader issues and debates regarding regulation in the UK. Successful responses could evaluate the limitations of Curran and Seaton's or Hesmondhalgh's theories in relation to regulation, with consideration of, for example, the effect online news platforms and active audiences had and through proposing more suitable theories as counter ideas, such as Livingston and Lunt or Shirky's 'End of Audience', demonstrated convincing, perceptive evaluation. Less successful responses did not address all the requirements of the question. For example, a response might explain the theory, highlight one or two case studies and evaluate the theory, but not incorporate the regulation requirement of the question. Alternatively, explain the theory, apply it to newspapers with case study examples in relation to regulation but neglect the evaluation requirement. This latter misconception in approaching the question is problematic, as the mark scheme descriptors require evaluation for both bullet points; omission of this significantly impacts the mark a candidate can achieve.

Centres had prepared candidates well for this question. Candidates were generally confident in their explanation of each theory and even in the less successful responses a limited understanding of the chosen theory was evident. Candidates were prepared to use their subject knowledge, appropriate media terminology and their case studies to support the theoretical points they discussed. Timing was generally good for this question and most candidates wrote an extended response.

Some common misconceptions in responses were that newspapers were regulated by Ofcom and in some cases, candidates confused the two theories.

Assessment for learning



Areas for centres to develop in preparation of candidates for this question would be to:

- use the information about the academic ideas and arguments in Appendix 5e of the specification closely, stick to the explanations for each theory and don't stray too far from these
- develop skills in selecting and using case study examples to apply the key ideas of each theory to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding
- develop skills in evaluation so candidates understand that this question requires an evaluation of the theory; make sure candidates can discuss not just the usefulness but also the limitations of a theory and have a bank of alternative theories that can be suggested
- provide opportunities to learn, recall and check factual knowledge and understanding of news regulation in the UK and what the key debates are for print and online news.

Misconception



Question 4 requires candidates to explain the key points of a theory, apply it to news with case study examples and evaluate the usefulness or effectiveness of the theory. The misconception in approaching the question without evaluating the theory is problematic, as the mark scheme descriptors require evaluation; omission of this significantly impacts the mark a candidate can achieve.

OCR support



Use Appendix 5e of the specification in teaching the set academic ideas and arguments. Use the key ideas given about each theory to structure question responses. For each key idea, find supporting examples from each case study and assess what the strengths and limitations are for each idea and for the theory overall. What are the wider key debates relating to this theory? What other theories may be more useful or effective in developing understanding? Refer to the OCR Academic ideas and arguments factsheet on [Teach Cambridge](#) to explore the usefulness and limitations of the theories.

Exemplar 3

Curran and Seaton believe that media industries are constantly conglomerating through verticle integration. This leads to a reduction in diverse opinions as ~~firms~~ ^{organisations} will be owned by a small number of people. This may cause difficulty in IPSO's regulation of newspapers as ~~one~~, despite their efforts to ~~not~~ create a 'free press', this may be difficult if the media is controlled by a select few people. However, this ~~may be~~ viewpoint may be limited considering ~~other~~ the growth of the 'prosumer' (Whitely) due to digitally connect technologies. This may complicate UK regulation of ~~the~~ newspapers.

Curran and Seaton's ideas on conglomeratisation are evident in ^{the} UK media. This may cause issues for regulators such as IPSO. For example, Jonathan Harmsworth's Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) has a significant stake in the market for news. This is evident as the DMGT own The Daily Mail, the 'I', the metro, and the Mail Online. This may reduce the opinions seen in these papers as Harmsworth has the power to select editors, such as Tim Weynt, who reflect his view. This ~~may~~ can help understand UK regulation of newspapers because IPSO must be able to regulate large organisations in order to promote a 'free press'. Conglomerates could deteriorate the 'free press' as the companies have such a large share over the market ~~that only~~ which results in only their heteronormative views being represented. It is difficult for IPSO to regulate this as ~~their~~ the power of these firms is

So large which ~~results in~~ could result in lobbying or regulatory capture - as those who work in print may regulate the industry later on and be required to regulate their former employers, who they are sympathetic with.

However, Curran and Seaton may not be the most effective theorist in understanding how ~~the~~ UK ~~reg~~ newspapers are regulated. This could be because, within the growth of digitally convergent technologies, UK regulators also must regulate ~~the~~ the growing class of 'prosumers', who are able to create their own content and interact with it online. This group of people may require regulation in order to protect citizens from harmful content.

This is seen in Shirky's prosumer theory, as consumers are now able to produce their own content thanks to the lower barriers of entry to journalism on websites such as Twitter or YouTube. This may require regulation as those with extreme ideas can ^{content} produce and cultivate an audience to promote their ideas. This may be harmful to society. Although Twitter and YouTube are regulated using a terms of service, the sites may need to be regulated by the likes of IPSO or OFCOM in the future.

This is a comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of how newspapers are regulated to evaluate Curran and Seaton's theories. There is a convincing, accurate and perceptive evaluation of the effectiveness with real focus on the development of prosumer content and the impact this has on news, the regulation of the news industry and associated difficulties. The candidate fully understands the theory and how UK newspapers are regulated including the issues and debates around this such as how IPSO works and understands the conflict of interest that is involved in regulation. A sophisticated response that fully evaluates the theory.

Section B overview

This section on Media Language and Representation was addressed adequately by candidates. Most were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical frameworks of media language and representation, apply this knowledge to the set products and/or stimulus sources with adequate textual analysis and appropriate subject specific terminology to support their understanding with relevant examples. There was mixed success in candidates' ability to explain, identify connections or make well-reasoned judgements and conclusions.

Question 5

Media Language and Representation

- 5 Explain how the combination of elements of media language influences meaning in music videos.

Refer to **one** of the music videos you have studied to support your answer.

[10]

You should have studied **two** music videos: **one** from **List A** and **one** from **List B** below.

List A	List B
Corinne Bailey Rae – <i>Stop Where You Are</i>	Radiohead – <i>Burn the Witch</i>
Massive Attack – <i>Unfinished Sympathy</i>	Fatboy Slim – <i>Ya Mama</i>
Emeli Sandé – <i>Heaven</i>	David Guetta – <i>Titanium</i>

For many candidates, this was the most successfully answered question. Candidates generally displayed strong knowledge of their chosen music video and effectively discussed how various elements of media language contributed to the construction of meaning. Candidates could use a range of appropriate subject specific terminology associated with media language and most could provide some analysis of some technical or visual elements in their chosen video. All candidates were able to discuss meaning to some extent. When candidates focused on the question of media language and could discuss how a combination of media language elements were used together to create meaning, the question was answered well.

Successful responses used aspects of mise-en-scène, camerawork and specific shot selections, editing techniques and uses of intertextuality to develop their responses. *Burn the Witch* and *Heaven* produced some of the strongest responses for this question. *Stop Where you Are*, *Unfinished Sympathy* and *Titanium* were also popular choices. *Ya Mama* was less popular and responses were less successful. Although not a requirement, some candidates were successful in applying theories, such as Barthes' theories of semiotics and Strauss' binary oppositions theory. Some candidates applied Hall's representation theory and Gauntlett's identity theory but these responses tended to focus on representation issues in the music videos rather than how the use of media language elements creates meaning.

The more successful responses to this question clearly addressed the 'combination' element of the question well and focused on the media language framework requirement with clear, precise and detailed textual analysis of key sequences from the music video. They could explicitly identify a range of specific, detailed and accurate technical elements used in the music video with appropriate use of

subject specific terminology, clearly and precisely explain how they worked together to communicate meaning and how this meaning helped to develop the intended message of the video, the artist and the wider contexts of the music video. Less successful responses were often brief, descriptive or approached the question from a representation angle, lacking explanation of how media language elements communicate meaning. Some of the less successful responses were characterised by an ability to consider the meaning of the videos but without successful analysis of media language, or use of subject specific media language terminology or reference to accurate, specific examples. Some less successful candidates gave a set, learned response that they found difficult to apply to the question and focused on star image and/or representation. Some candidates didn't understand what media language was, providing description of the lyrics of the song.

Centres prepared candidates well for this question. Candidates had good knowledge of their chosen music videos, were able to provide effective, appropriate examples of several different media language and technical elements and demonstrated understanding of the key meanings in the videos. However, exam paper practice in terms of reading the question carefully to identify the media theoretical framework that is being assessed in the question would benefit from greater preparation to keep knowledge and understanding of media language and representation as two explicit frameworks when studying the case study products.

Centres are reminded that there are changes to some of the set music videos for first teaching September 2023, first assessment 2025. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

Assessment for learning



Areas for centres to develop in preparation of candidates for this question would be:

- developing understanding of what the different theoretical frameworks of media language and representation comprise as set out in the specification and being able to distinguish explicitly between the two
- practice close textual analysis of the use of technical elements in key sequences in the music video to develop knowledge and understanding of how music videos are constructed through the use of media language and technical elements
- developing skills and precision in using appropriate subject specific terminology when discussing the technical elements so their use is precise rather than descriptive ('a long shot is used' as opposed to 'we see' for example)
- opportunities to develop exam technique and reading exam questions to make sure the appropriate framework focus for assessment is written about in candidates' responses.

Misconceptions



- Candidates interpreted media language as the lyrics of the song.
- Candidates focused on the representation rather than the media language framework in their responses.
- Candidates discussed two music videos in their response, causing them to either not answer in adequate detail or to run out of time for other questions.

Question 6

- 6** Analyse how effective the representations in **Source C** and **Source D** are in making claims about realism.

In your answer you must:

- analyse the representations in **Source C** and **Source D** in relation to claims about realism
- make judgements and draw conclusions on the effectiveness of these representations.

[15]

Candidates demonstrated a satisfactory level of understanding, focused on the issue of realism in advertising campaigns and were able to address the key concepts of representation, stereotypes and ideology. Clear ability was shown in referencing the source materials, sometimes creating an argument as well as making logical connections and providing adequate lines of reasoning.

More successful candidates focused specifically on the representation of realism. These responses identified how representations were intentionally constructed by producers to evoke specific reactions from the audience. They went beyond analysis and evaluated the effectiveness of the representations to make accomplished judgements and reach developed conclusions. Although not a requirement, some more successful responses linked their analysis and judgements to media theories of representation and media audiences, demonstrating comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding. Less successful responses offered brief analysis or were descriptive and did not fully address the question of realism, so did not focus on the question. Less successful responses didn't have a sufficiently robust understanding of the concept of realism and offered an analysis or description of the adverts in terms of the media language framework and not representation. They offered generalised responses on audience and how the adverts engage the audience, which lacked relevance.

Candidates were well prepared for the demands of answering questions on charity advertising. They were able to demonstrate how adverts communicated to audiences and identify representations constructed in the adverts. They could evaluate persuasion and causes, which are not solely commercially driven, and there was confidence in analysing unseen texts and selecting examples from both sources. Candidates were prepared to identify how the adverts communicated to audiences and a large proportion of candidates understood what realism is however, understanding of realism as a representation issue wasn't always secure.

Centres are reminded that there are changes to some of the set adverts for first teaching September 2023, first assessment 2025. Further information can be found on our [website](#).

Assessment for learning



Areas for centres to develop in preparation of candidates for this question would be:

- developing exam technique in relation to identifying the framework focus of the question as either representation or media language
- planning and structuring 15 mark question responses and practising analysis across question topics in relation to the specification areas of study for representation and media language
- to develop knowledge and understanding of what is meant by representation and realism
- practice how to develop sophisticated responses that make developed judgements and conclusions so that candidates have the skills and confidence to evaluate their points
- if media theories are used, make sure candidates have opportunity to develop accuracy in their knowledge and application of these theories.

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