

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

MEDIA STUDIES

H409

For first teaching in 2017

H409/02 Summer 2024 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 2 series overview

The Evolving Media paper allows candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the changing media landscape through the set media products. This series was the final assessment of several of the set products for film, video games and LFTV drama. More information about the changes to the set products can be found on our [website](#).

Examiners reported seeing a diverse variety of responses across the full range of marks. Candidates approached the questions in varied ways, and it was especially pleasing to see centres incorporating feedback from previous reports in their teaching, particularly in section A where candidates used a broad range of examples to support their responses. There was also a significant improvement in candidates addressing contexts in Question 1 to enhance their responses. There was a marked improvement on previous sessions in evaluation in Question 4.

OCR support



Following the changes to some of the set media products in September 2023 this series was the final assessment of *The Jungle Book* (1967 and 2016 versions), *Minecraft*, *Homeland*, *House of Cards*, *Borgen*, and *The Killing*.

A range of resources to support teaching of the new products can be found on [Teach Cambridge](#). Blogs discussing approaches to teaching the new set products are available on our [website](#).

It was clear that candidates understood the questions and were often able to provide detailed and, in the main, well-structured responses. There were some truly excellent responses from candidates at the top end of the mark range. In many cases those candidates engaged in-depth with each question, integrating a variety of relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding, using details from the set products to illustrate ideas relevant to the question. These responses were typically fluent and lucidly expressed, and it was clear that exam technique was an area where centres have worked hard to prepare their candidates.

Candidates at the lower end of the mark range still made some factual and statistical errors, particularly in relation to the questions in Section A, or made generalisations about the use of intertextuality in their chosen long form television dramas in Section B. It seems that, as in previous series, responses at the lower end of the mark range tend to be more descriptive and often use irrelevant theories, typically trying to 'shoehorn' them into their responses at the expense of writing detailed responses that answer the question; there was also instances of learnt responses being used.

Responses to Question 4, the theory evaluation question, seem to be going from strength to strength, and centres are taking feedback on board from previous reports. Most centres are now well-versed in teaching the theories, and it seems that candidates have a good grasp of the nuances of the theories and are able to apply these to their two long form television dramas. Some candidates at the middle or bottom end continue to not evaluate the usefulness of the theories, although this element of the question was generally better addressed this series than in previous sessions.

Timing was less of an issue than in other series, with most candidates completing the paper in full. It is important to stress the importance of planning though, as it was clear that effective planning, done in the answer booklets, led to more coherent and structured essays as candidates could refer to the plan they initially drafted throughout their response. It was also clear in this series that centres worked hard with their candidates to develop strong essay writing techniques. Many candidates demonstrated a systematic approach by opening their essays with clear and concise introductions, structuring their points coherently, and generally providing well-rounded conclusions that directly addressed the given

question. This was particularly noticeable in Question 3, where candidates displayed an awareness of the bullet points outlined in the question, using them as a guide to structure their paragraphs effectively.

As with previous sessions, the most successful responses were those that did not rely solely on the OCR support materials and provided insights that had clearly been researched independently or were drawn from teaching of this component.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequently used case study examples, carefully chosen to support their discussions and arguments • read and understood the specific requirements of the questions and consistently revisited them to stay on track • effectively demonstrated a strong grasp of theorists' concepts and arguments, confidently delving into their main ideas • could confidently use appropriate terminology as relevant to the question • were confident in essay writing and demonstrated a well-organised and purposeful approach in addressing each question and effectively managed their time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not manage their timing well • did not engage with or misread the question and provided generalisations that strayed away from the question focus • wrote responses using a scattergun approach or included irrelevant details from the set products • wrote short or descriptive responses • did not apply theories or attempted to 'shoehorn' them into their response without explicitly embedding them in their discussion • did not use terminology well • were less confident in essay writing skills.

Section A overview

This section focuses on the changing media industry and its audience. This year, the focus was on Film and Radio. It was clear that centres are now adept at teaching the set products. The most successful responses often adopted a 'macro' approach to the industry, using the set products to support their discussions.

Question 1 elicited some strong responses, with candidates discussing, often at length, the range of marketing strategies employed by Disney to market both versions of *The Jungle Book*. In these instances, candidates often supported their discussions with relevant economic factors.

Question 2 focused on audience interpretations and responses to radio shows, and there were two distinct routes that candidates took in response to the question, both of which elicited some very fruitful responses, although generally, this question was answered less successfully than Question 1.

Question 1

Media Industries and Audiences

- 1 Explain how films are marketed to a variety of audiences, both nationally and globally. Use Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967 and 2016 versions) in your answer.

In your answer you must also consider how economic contexts can influence the marketing of films. [15]

Overall, this question was well answered. Knowledge of the set products was generally sound, allowing many candidates to access marks in Level 2. Responses to this question tended to be systematic in their approach, often beginning by explaining why marketing is important to mainstream films, and then describing the different marketing strategies used by both films; more successful responses integrated economic contexts throughout.

Typical responses at the top of the mark range often began with an explanation of the importance of marketing for mainstream films and contextualised this within the two different time periods. There was strong knowledge of the film industry demonstrated in this series, with candidates exploring how different techniques and technologies are used by film producers to target audiences both nationally and globally. Some responses contextualised their discussions by explaining how Disney, as a film conglomerate, has changed, and how this influenced the range of marketing strategies available to them.

Responses lower in the mark range provided largely 'learnt' accounts of the different production methods used in the two films. While this could have been a successful way to approach the question, only a few candidates managed to do this successfully. Techniques such as the multiplane camera in *The Jungle Book* (1967) and the use of CGI in *The Jungle Book* (2016) were valid methods of 'attracting' audiences, mainly because they provided something that other films did not and could be considered a USP.

Exemplification was particularly secure in this series, with candidates often providing very specific examples of marketing, including the use of digitally convergent methods such as the Facebook 360-degree video and the use of the Snapchat lens in the 2016 version, or the more traditional marketing approach of using trailers and posters in the 1967 version. Many responses focused effectively on the use of star appeal, and this was often very well supported in most responses that took this approach.

Economic contexts were, overall, tackled well by candidates. Many considered budgetary constraints and/or opportunities, costs, and financial returns. The most successful responses used economic contexts to drive their discussions, underpinning their responses. Less successful responses tended to either state the economic context at the start or end of the response without really explaining how this affects the different marketing strategies.

Assessment for learning



For the film industry element of this component, candidates must be able to explore how historical and economic contexts can influence films. Centres may wish to guide their candidates more closely to make this explicit in their responses.

There were several inaccuracies in this series with candidates confusing budgets and box office statistics. Many responses incorrectly stated that *The Jungle Book* (2016) made \$100 billion at the box office, which was clearly inaccurate.

Exemplar 1

1		When marketing Films, Producers aim to reach the widest possible audience, in order to gain the maximum profit.
		This is very clear the when looking at both of Disney's Adaptations of the Jungle Book from 1967 and 2016.
		When developing the 1967 version of the Jungle Book, Walt Disney decided that a change had to be made to the structure of film production & marketing due to the recent failure of the Sword in the Stone. Therefore Disney's priorities lay further towards creating a larger profit by marketing to a wider audience. Walt Disney decided that the original the story of the Jungle Book was too dark for a family audience, so he changed the ending to appeal and attract to a wider audience, to a more light-hearted finish.
		The Marketing a film in the 1960's was less of a challenge, as there were fewer production companies acting as competition, whilst Disney remained a large conglomerate with somewhat of a monopoly over the children + family genre. Therefore less marketing strategies were used, But But Common that whilst common strategies were used, they such as the distribution of posters,

They also used methods such as introducing well known voice actors such as Louis Prima as King Louis, to bring in a wider audience.

To this day, Disney continue to market the 1967 production of The Jungle Book internationally. For example the release of VHS and DVD / Blu ray editions in more recent years to maintain incoming profits. Disney 'Vaulted' The Jungle Book in 2019, meaning it was not for sale, which increases its demand on other services, such as Disney+.

In contrast, the 2016 version of The Jungle Book had a much more extravagant and expensive marketing strategy.

There were many different versions of trailers released, which ~~was~~ marketed ~~to~~ towards a very diverse range of audiences. For example trailers differentiating between the classic, jolly nature of the 1967 version which featured snippets of the original soundtrack to attract a nostalgic audience, and the darker more action filled trailer, which lent towards the idea of younger audiences today being more mature than they were at the time of the original release.

		As The 2016 version was a tent-pole production with certain profits, Disney's Marketing Campaign could be funded highly, allowing them to put the trailer in content such as the Super Bowl, with an enormously wide audience, spanning a huge proportion of the USA, which would ideally reach the typical American market ^{mass media} audience, who may otherwise pay no attention to something traditionally marketed for children.
		Modern Technology also allowed a greater marketing scheme, such as a preview of the trailer being played at a Disney Convention, going on to become trending on Twitter. And the general ability to access the trailer far more easily than and other marketing strategies audiences in 1967.

Exemplar 1 is a Level 2 response that starts clearly but drifts into a narrative-based blow by blow comparison of the films. Explores marketing and economic contexts in places but not consistently.

Question 2

- 2 Explain how different audiences interpret and respond to radio shows differently.
Use *The BBC Radio One Breakfast Show (R1BS)* in your answer.

[15]

This question was well answered but often not as successfully as Question 1. The question elicited a wide variety of responses from candidates who approached it in numerous ways. It was pleasing to see centres responding to feedback about including more specific examples for radio. This was particularly evident in responses to this series, where candidates used a much broader range of examples to support their discussions. Candidates often selected examples well and used these to explore interpretations and responses effectively; on occasion, candidates were still using examples from 2018 rather than contemporary examples.

There were several responses that disregarded the question and read more like answers to a question on how radio audiences are targeted. Centres may wish to guide their candidates to carefully consider the focus of the question before they start writing and use topic and clincher sentences to make sure that their responses are focused and include relevant content.

Responses at the top of the mark range typically explained how different factors, such as age, gender, or class, influence how audiences respond to and interpret radio shows. Others focused, often more successfully, on how the changes in the *BBC Radio One Breakfast Show* were the result of 'active' audience feedback and response. Effective exemplification was demonstrated through discussions of the change in hosts, particularly from Chris Moyles to Nick Grimshaw, and more recently to Greg James. This often led to successful analyses of how these personas elicited different responses from audiences. Responses lower in the mark range were typically more generic and not always focused on the question at hand.

Exemplification was typically strong, and candidates often used examples from social media, the BBC Sounds app, and an episode they had listened to in class to explain how audiences interpret and respond to radio shows. It was clear in this series that those candidates who listened to a recent episode of the radio show, rather than an episode from five or six years ago, often had a wider array of contemporary examples from which to draw, resulting in much more comprehensive responses. Candidates often used examples such as the '10 Minute Takeover', 'Sit Down Stand Up', and 'Unpopular Opinion', which, to some degree, require audience response to be successful. Responses often successfully integrated discussions of the Royal Charter and the BBC's public purposes to explain why the radio show includes celebrities such as John Boyega and Alan Carr in the range of features they provide.

Exemplar 2

2		<p>It is evident that audiences interpret and respond to radio shows in numerous ways. This is particularly significant in relation to the BBC as a public service broadcaster and its radio one breakfast show, hosted by Greg James. Radio listenership amongst audiences to the show is evidently recorded amongst RAJAR - the external body of measuring listenership - whom evidently influence the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast show in regard to maintaining audiences.</p> <p>RAJAR is the official external organisation regarding radio listenership. RAJAR utilise data in order to understand how audiences interpret and respond to radio shows differently, establishing patterns of audience listenership. The BBC evidently utilise such data throughout its radio content in order to maintain listenership and combat the</p>
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competition of Streaming and Commercial stations. One way in which Taylor's findings regarding audience listenership have influenced the Breakfast Show regard the movement of time of the show ~~from~~ To 7am - 10:30am. Thus, audience listenership and diversity greatly influenced the BBC to make a change to its show. Audience engagement is particularly an issue for the BBC due to its establishment as a public service broadcaster. This means its requirement as a organisation is to meet the needs of the audience due to its Remit and compulsory license fee. Thus Radio 1 must incorporate the ways audiences respond to its content as a requirement of its establishment.

Radio 1 are also responding to differing audience interpretations and listenership through its content and production. The Breakfast show evidently utilises content such as pop music, interactivity and games to produce content for its 15-29 demographic within its \$36 million Budget. The show from the 2nd Feb 2024 evidently

2		<p>utilised content such as Donald Glover, Newsbeat and the yesterday Quiz in order to promote and engage a variety of audiences who respond differently to content than an older and traditional demographic (Radio 2). The BBC is also in turn effectively engaging its Reithian values to inform, educate and entertain audiences. A mass change in audience interaction is largely a prosumer culture, thus Radio One effectively utilise Greg James persona and interactivity with listeners to consistently appeal to its 4.28 million daily listeners. Thus, providing evidence of developing audience response</p>
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and the BBC's active attempt at engagement with a youthful and changing demographics.

Another vast change in how audiences respond to and interpret radio shows is the development of a digitally convergent media and audience. This has resulted in the expansion of radio across social media. Engagement in which Rajar does not consider in its data. Thus, audiences are not merely declining amongst radio but changing. The BBC Radio 1 BS have therefore established an engaging online platform with a youtube (8 million subscribers) and Instagram feed (1.7 million subscribers). Thus audiences are vastly developing to new radio listenership and content such as interviews, live lounge and the big weekend. Thus audience response and interpretation of Radio shows is vastly developing beyond conventional platforms of Radio.

In conclusion, it is evident that the way in which audiences interpret and respond to radio shows is vastly

		different from traditional radio listenership. Rajar fails to consider such figures and suggests the evidential decline in listenership. Radio one have therefore evidently developed to audience demand throughout the initial content and a vast expansion to new digitally convergent platforms. Such development is vastly summarised in changes such as Radio ones engagement with Alexa listeners after Rajar figures suggested such change in listenership and the evidential elements of interactivity that audiences demand. Social media has also now become a mainstream revenue for the breakfast show due to changes in audience consumption, interpretation and response.
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Exemplar 2 is a Level 3 response that starts confidently and addresses the question. This candidate used RAJAR to launch into the question and then goes on to demonstrate a range of knowledge linked to audiences and the focus of the question.

Section B overview

This synoptic section allows candidates to explore and compare a US and European (non-English language) long form television drama. Responses to this section demonstrated some very successful approaches to tackling the highest tariff question in this qualification. As mentioned previously, there were marked improvements in the responses to Question 4.

Question 3*

Long Form Television Drama

3* 'Intertextuality is essential for long form television dramas to appeal to both national and international audiences.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

In your response, you must:

- explain the contexts in which long form television dramas are produced and consumed both nationally and internationally
- explain how media contexts may have influenced the use of intertextuality in the set episodes of the two long form television dramas that you have studied
- refer to academic ideas and arguments
- make judgements and reach conclusions about the reasons for similarities or differences in how intertextuality is used to appeal to audiences between the two episodes.

[30]

Impressive responses were seen to this question. As in other series, *Stranger Things* and *Deutschland 83* remained the most popular television dramas to compare, although responses to all set products were seen. This question was generally well answered, with many candidates effectively addressing the key ideas, which this time revolved around intertextuality and the synoptic link of how its use appeals to national and international audiences. Most responses followed the four bullet points outlined in the question, resulting in effective and well-structured answers.

Candidates who fully grasped the distinctions of the question were able to produce insightful and perceptive responses. They selected examples of intertextuality they could discuss in-depth and explored how these reflected specific contexts. It was important for candidates to recognise that US dramas often target international audiences, while European dramas typically target domestic/national audiences, although there was scope to discuss otherwise in all the set products.

Cultural contexts were well addressed, as were economic contexts; candidates who discussed specific characters often addressed some form of social context. Historical contexts were addressed by most candidates since intertextuality relies on some form of 'historical' influence. As with other series, political contexts are a clear area where centres could encourage candidates to explore in more detail, as this was often not addressed as well as the other contexts.

The inclusion of the word 'essential' in the question allowed candidates to present arguments from various perspectives, they could either agree, disagree or 'sit on the fence'; all these approaches were plausible and acceptable. Candidates who presented a balanced and well-structured argument generally achieved the highest marks. Successful responses followed a clear essay and paragraph structure, including a concise introduction that addressed the economic contexts of production and consumption and stated a well-articulated thesis. Merely stating this thesis without using it to evaluate points was not effective – it should be referenced throughout the response.

Some Level 2 responses limited themselves by not referencing specific textual examples or only superficially mentioning them without any in-depth analysis. Textual examples were sometimes generic or unrelated to the point being made. It's important to remember that AO2 assesses 'judgements and conclusions', so analysis must be made against the statement in the question and the argument presented at the beginning of the response; this is a major aspect of AO2.

Exemplar 3

3		Intertextuality can be a useful technique for producers of media texts to attract audiences from different geographical demographics as popular culture references will be likely known by people globally. Depending on where the product is released, different contexts can determine how audiences consume it, including historical and cultural contexts.

One way that intertextuality is used in the LFTVD Mr Robot is via the references and parallels to the film Fight Club. This can be seen in episode one of the show when the established order is questioned when Elliot joins F society in their fight to bring down E corp. They are portrayed ~~by~~ as a universal threat symbol of capitalism and greed as Elliot calls them "The top 1% of the top 1%, the guys who play God" which infers that the higher-ups in corporate giants no longer have morals as they like to control and manipulate those in lower classes to suit their own needs and desires while disregarding those who they are destroying the lives of. This relates to Fight Club as there are many questions in the movie about the order by which people are expected to live and behave in society. Baudrillard's theory stated post-modern texts may use intertextuality to encourage audiences to recognise similarities in narratives and themes which can help them better understand the meanings and messages of a text.

Another way intertextuality is used in Mr Robot is through the narrative of Elliot as a homodiegetic narrator. As this is the case, audiences are only let in to know what Elliot is telling them and are then lead to believe

that everything he says is truth, but this results in a restricted narrative that is single-stranded and where we eventually discover Elliot wasn't speaking the whole truth. This relays the element of Fight Club where the main character is also a homodiegetic narrator who conceals the truth that Tyler is not real until close to the end point. Audiences might recognise Elliot's narration and contemplate if he is reliable or not because his thoughts often spill out in the narrative but we are shown him taking drugs which might alter his version of events and lead to a half-truth.

Media producer Sam Esmail - creator of Mr Robot - stated he was heavily influenced by Fight Club when writing Mr Robot and this can help us to understand the use of intertextuality as a promotional tool aimed at audiences who will know of popular references in media. This might have aided Sam in ensuring the economic success of the show.

One way that Deutschland 83 uses intertextuality is through the historical background of the Cold War which is immediately indicated by the opening archival footage of Ronald Reagan's 'evil empire' speech during 1983 where he describes the

Question Part

a struggle

conflict as "the fight between right and wrong, good and evil". This infers to audience that the drama will be focused on the events of the Cold War as the first thing they see is the speech and it can target global audiences as not only Germany was split into East and West, but to some extent the whole world, so many people from different countries will know of it. This helps institutions to reduce risk as a variety of audiences are targetted (Hesmondhalgh theory). Another way the show uses intertextuality is through the use of popular 80's music as part of the soundtrack, such as 99 Red Balloons, which was a war protest song released in 1983, the same year that this LFTVD is set, and if audiences know of the lyrics then they are able to better understand the meaning of the representations in the show. For instance, the song is played in German in the East and in English in the West so this conveys the divide of Germany and the differing values and ideals of each side. Audiences are able to understand that the West were much more consumerist as they adopted Western music and products, as shown by Martin's Puma t-shirt he is made to wear in the West.

		Another way that intertextuality is used in Deutschland 83 is through
		However there is not a large element of intertextuality in Deutschland 83 as there aren't any references to existing products like in Mr Robot. For example, the show mainly focuses on Martin and his journey of becoming a spy and the drama includes many conventions of the spy genre, including suspense music, use of props like secret files, location markers on the screen. Deutschland 83 doesn't necessarily conform fully to the spy genre though because Martin is an inexperienced spy who struggles on his first mission, shown by his worried facial expression and trembling hands while he is sweating which shows his nerves. Neale's genre theory states that media texts will follow their genre codes and conventions but will also create genre difference by not being conventional, which can lead to hybrid genres. This can mean that economic contexts influence the use or absence of intertextuality as some dramas can use other techniques to successfully make a LF TVD interesting to audiences.
		Overall, intertextuality is not essential for attracting audiences but it can be useful in doing so as media producers may decide
3		that it will help in gaining more audience appeal.

Exemplar 3 is a Level 2 response that explores a range of contexts but lacks explicit focus on political and social contexts despite the television dramas discussed clearly lending themselves to this. The response deals with the question quite logically and explores the relevance of intertextuality in *Mr Robot*; the argument that intertextuality is not essential in *Deutschland 83* is quite effective and the candidate explores this with some degree of success.

Question 4

- 4 Evaluate the usefulness of **one** of the following theories in understanding long form television drama:

EITHER

- Butler's theories of Gender Performativity

OR

- Gilroy's theories around Ethnicity and Post-Colonialism.

[10]

This question was generally answered well, with Butler being the more commonly chosen theorist. Many candidates were able to effectively apply their selected theory to at least one, if not both, long form television dramas. Candidates were well prepared to explain the theory. While many candidates successfully applied the theory to specific examples from the LFTDs, some struggled when it came to evaluating the theory. They either made sweeping statements that the theory was not relevant to long form television dramas or made inaccurate assertions.

The most successful responses were those that confidently explained the theory, applied it to both LFTDs, and then proceeded to evaluate the limitations of the theory within the context of long form television drama.

Exemplar 4

4.	When looking at Long Form TV Dramas, Bilroys theory around ethnicity and post Colonialism Can be used to aid analysis.
	Long form Dramas Typically have a large production budget, Meaning that most of the time Careful thought And Consideration will have been applied to the production. Therefore we Can assume that Choices made in relation to representation of Ethnicity are more likely to be an intentional, Than in low budget Productions. An example of this Can be Seen in the Production of Stranger Things, where the only Black or even non-white Character is is Called 'midnight' by his bullies. This is Clearly being utilised as an insult in regards to his Race. However, Will this is is likely to be a Choice made by producers in order to reflect the lack of Cultural Sensitivity of the time that Strange things is Set. Therefore this argument that this theory is useful in this example is restricted, as the representation that is unlikely to have been Created in regards to Current day impacts of Colonialism, but rather Historical Contexts of the effect of Colonisation in the Past.

		<p> This theory is also limited to by the fact it is not was not created for the use of analysis of Long form TV Dramas, but a more general theory. It takes little consideration of potential audience interpretation, for example Lucas, the black character previously mentioned from <i>Stranger Things</i> is presented as the hero/protagonist, therefore aligning the audience's views against the comments made by the Bully, and therefore against the idea that colonialism has had an impact on producers' attitudes to ethnicity negatively, all which are then reflected would then be reflected in the product. </p>
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Exemplar 4 is a Level 2 response that only discusses one television drama but there is some effective evaluation of the limitations of the theory. More discussion of the other television drama is needed to access higher marks. The response would have benefited from a more explicit definition of the theory.

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