

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

MEDIA STUDIES

J200

For first teaching in 2017

J200/02 Summer 2024 series

Contents

Introduction 3

Paper 2 series overview 4

Section A overview 5

 Question 1 5

 Question 2 5

 Question 3 6

 Question 4 9

 Question 5* 10

Section B overview 13

 Question 6..... 13

 Question 7 13

 Question 8 14

 Question 9* 15

 Question 10 18

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

Candidates were well prepared for this examination.

More successful candidates allocated time effectively and answered all the questions, using the space provided in the booklet for each question to pace their responses effectively. Many of the most successful responses used only the answer booklet and did not require extra sheets and, particularly, answered Question 3 in the space provided and did not spend too much time on this question.

Successful responses, in order to gain the most marks in the space provided, would usually avoid lengthy introductions, instead launching straight into answering the question. They would avoid discussing irrelevant areas of the theoretical framework.

Some candidates did not attempt questions later in the exam paper.

Question order

Candidates can answer the questions in any order. Some might want to start elsewhere than Question 1, for example, with those questions – Questions 3 and 10 – which require memory of set products. Question 10 often proves quite accessible to less successful candidates, so may be a good place to start.

There were many typed scripts this year. Some candidates hand wrote the responses to Questions 1 and 6 in the paper booklet then typed out the rest of their responses on separate sheets, which was unhelpful. Some candidates typed out the questions as well as their responses, which is not necessary as long as the responses are clearly numbered.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answered all ten questions answered all elements of the questions paid close attention to the specific media area addressed by each question analysed, where required showed knowledge and understanding of <i>Radio 1 Live Lounge</i>, music videos, media audiences, media industries and media contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not complete questions appeared to answer questions from previous exam papers wrote about representation in media language questions and vice versa described where analysis was required did not demonstrate knowledge and understanding, particularly of media industries and audiences for (online) newspapers.

Section A overview

This section comprises a mix of knowledge and understanding (AO1) and analysis (AO2) questions, including a comparative media language analysis of unseen products. The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted all these questions.

Question 1

- 1 BBC Radio One is an example of a PSB. What do the initials PSB stand for?

..... [1]

This question was generally answered correctly. The word 'service' was sometimes misremembered.

Question 2

- 2 Audiences might respond differently to the same radio content. Give **one** example of content from the Radio 1 Live Lounge and explain two different audience responses.

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..... [4]

This question was generally answered well. More successful responses were able to give a specific example from the *Radio 1 Live Lounge*, usually an example of a named artist who had appeared, and two plausible audience responses. There were very few responses that did not show knowledge or understanding of the *Radio 1 Live Lounge*. Some candidates tried to build their response around passive and active audiences and struggled to give an audience response for the passive audience.

Question 3

3 Explain how music videos use mise-en-scène to match their songs. Give examples from the pair of music videos you have studied from the list below.

- 1 Wheatus – Teenage Dirtbag / Avril Lavigne – Sk8er Boi
- 2 Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars – Uptown Funk / Beyoncé – If I Were a Boy
- 3 The Vamps – Somebody To You ft. Demi Lovato / Little Mix – Black Magic
- 4 Tinie Tempah, Jess Glynne – Not Letting Go / Paloma Faith – Picking Up the Pieces

[10]

This question was generally answered at least adequately and often excellently. The 'to match their songs' element of this question proved an effective differentiator between those with detailed knowledge and understanding of their chosen set videos who could adapt material to answer the question and those with pre-conceived ideas of what to write. Candidates who addressed the 'matching' aspect usually discussed the messages or lyrics of the songs, or their overall tone, or their genre. Most candidates were able to discuss specifically mise-en-scène elements such as setting, costume, make-up, lighting and performance, although some less successful responses included irrelevant paragraphs on camerawork and editing that were not focused on mise-en-scène.

Exemplar 1

[10]

In the Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars video, 'Uptown Funk' possesses an up-beat, pop like sound which has been relayed throughout the mise-en-scene. Initially, the location is an urban environment, with pawn shops, salons and pizza places being an indicator to the set being in a poorer area. When contrasted with expensive looking watches, chains as well as the appearance of 'limos', we can recognise a deeper contrast of the video celebrating those from a (suggested) poor background by implying the idea that they can still be successful. This is able to relate to the song's uplifting beat as we see positively represented men enjoying their time - which is further amplified by the dance moves and handshakes the group exchanges, conveying a set of content friendships and relationships after their success. Despite this, one of the main narratives of the song connotes ideals about women being sexualised which is evoked by their costumes of dresses, heels and shorter skirts, causing them to be viewed by the male gaze, much like how women are portrayed within the song and lyrics, matching the suggested enjoyment of women.

In contrast, the 'If I Were a Boy' video holds a slow paced, emotive R & B track which is indicative of the mise-en-scene. The black and white filter conveys a serious tone to the video, matching the song in

terms of employing the idea of the video focusing on a serious topic, an imbalance of power between a relationship of a man and woman. This idea of a gender switch is aided by the costume of Beyoncé, by wearing a Police Uniform, she can allow viewers to establish her occupation as she takes on a role affiliated with masculine stereotypes of strength and power. Furthermore, to amplify this idea the prop of a gun is used to express her ability to perfectly executed a difficult job requiring skill and expertise as conveyed by the video, connoting her capability, and matching with the song in terms of her representing her as able to complete male associated tasks and jobs.

The mark scheme states that responses reaching the top of the Level 3 (seven to ten marks) 'excellent' band will explicitly address the 'matching' aspect of the question with exemplification from both chosen set videos. This answer fully meets that requirement, so earns full marks. 'Uptown Funk' is explained as having an uplifting beat and lyrics that suggest the sexualisation of women and the examples that illustrate this are all mise-en-scène: the settings, props, costume and performance. 'If I Were a Boy' is explained as being slow-paced, emotive R&B about a serious topic. The examples are mostly mise-en-scène: monochrome was allowed, just, although technically an aspect of camerawork or editing, but this response does not rely on that aspect, as many less successful responses did, and goes on to explain the use of costume and props.

Question 4

4 Refer to **Extracts 1** and **2** in the Insert.

Analyse the representation of musicians in these extracts from MOJO and Songlines magazines.

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..... [5]

This question was answered at least adequately and often excellently. The very best responses noted that the question was asking for the representation of musicians in general; slightly less successful responses analysed the characterisation of the two musicians in the main cover images; the least successful discussed media language, often descriptively, and ignored representation.

Question 5*

5* Refer to **Extracts 1** and **2** in the Insert.

How far are Extracts 1 and 2 more similar than different in their use of media language?

In your answer you must:

- analyse the media language in Extracts 1 and 2 from MOJO and Songlines magazines
- make judgements and reach conclusions.

[15]

This question was generally answered well. Most responses did address media language rather than representation, but many strayed into irrelevant discussion of audience; it was common for responses to replace comparative connotative analysis with description focused on irrelevant discussion of target audience or audience response. Many responses simply listed various aspects of the front covers – the free CDs, whether or not the musician's image covered the masthead, the pugs, the number of reviews, and so on – ignoring the instruction in the first bullet point to analyse. This tendency was particularly pronounced when discussing the similarities between the two extracts. More successful responses often spent more time on the differences, deploying media studies terminology and connotative analysis, and discussed the similarities in terms of generic conventions.

Misconception



Even otherwise successful responses sometimes confused serif and sans-serif fonts or did not identify which fonts they were referring to (e.g. the masthead, the cover lines).

Reading exam questions in tandem

Candidates should read Questions 4 and 5 together before they start answering, in order to work out which media area is addressed in which question, as they should not be repeating themselves in both. In this case, they should note that Question 5 is clearly about media language, so they should not analyse media language in Question 4. Question 4 is clearly about representation, so they should not discuss the same element in Question 5.

Exemplar 2

In Extract 1, there is more harsh contrasts of colour with blue and orange acting as opposites within the colour wheel. This creates a retro feel as we can associate this colour scheme with an era from the 70s-80s. This may allow us to recognise the type of musicians featured in the magazine as it appears to provide a sense of nostalgia for fans, or readers. This is contrasted by Extract 2's colour scheme of darker, more neutral tones paired with a red. ~~As~~ Due to this colour scheme being ~~so~~ less eligible to stand out, the magazine appears more modernised. Therefore the two extracts differentiate from each other in terms of their colour scheme as they both symbolise different eras.

Similarly, however, both magazines appear to have a combination of serif and sans serif typography. With the title appearing in sans serif, both magazines appear more relaxed than formal conveying a more inclusive tone as it allows them to provide for the middle market, not high class but not working class. This, however, subverts from their coverlines being of serif font connoting a more reputable tone for in terms of their magazines brand image, which is more likely going to aid grasping more audience.

Additionally, Both extracts express a similar tone due to their advertisement of CDs in the foreground of their main image. This tells us both magazines may require an extra incentive for music fans to buy their magazine, suggesting they are both at a similar level of popularity. Despite this, Extract 1 has more text around the cover than Extract 2, this conveys a more chaotic tone which may appeal to a more free-going audience. In contradiction to this, Extract 2 contains less text which is indicative of a more simplified cover which feels more formal and adds a cleaner and sleeker look to the magazine - which again, ties into the overall tones of the magazine as we can recognise the minimalist tone and image it tries to create.

This response gives three detailed examples of similarities or differences: colour, typography and layout.

It minimises discussion of audience, although some is present, and analysis predominates, although there is a description of the presence of a CD on each cover. The response does specify that it is referring to the titles of the magazines when it refers to their sans-serif fonts, although it becomes a bit vague over the coverlines, as it does not point out that only some of these are serif fonts. However, every difference is connotatively analysed in this response in terms of tone.

Clear judgements are made throughout, but the introduction of extraneous elements, such as the free CDs suggesting something about popularity, means that it sits at the bottom of the Level 3 band for AO2(1b) at four marks. The mark scheme for AO2(1a) asks for perceptive and accurate analysis of two or more detailed examples for the Level 3 mark band (seven to ten marks) and this response fulfils this requirement completely, so earns ten marks.

Section B overview

This section comprises a mix of knowledge and understanding (AO1) and analysis (AO2) questions, including analysis of unseen extracts of tweets of articles from *The Observer* newspaper and knowledge and understanding questions on ownership of *The Observer* and the influence of media contexts on representations in the historical print editions of *The Observer*. Successful candidates performed as well on this section as on section A, but less successful candidates often did not complete all the questions.

It is still common for the least successful candidates to not identify *The Observer* as a newspaper, referring to it instead as a magazine.

Question 6

6 Identify the name of the trust that owns The Observer.

..... [1]

This was almost always correctly answered.

Question 7

7 Explain how ownership by a trust makes The Observer different from most other newspapers.

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..... [4]

This appeared to be the most demanding question on the paper. It clearly differentiated between candidates with some knowledge and understanding of the ownership and control of newspapers and those with none. There were a number of candidates who thought that other newspapers were owned by the state, who confused 'trust' and 'trustworthiness', or who thought that *The Observer* did not have to make money so did not take advertising. There were a number of partially successful responses that struggled to answer the question but did show some knowledge of newspapers as media industries, mentioning funding, (self) regulation, conglomerates and 'Press Barons' or could refer in a vague way to the role of The Scott Trust. More successful responses could either explain the difference between *The Observer* and the rest of the newspaper industry (usually in terms of editorial independence versus the influence of owners) or could explain two ways The Scott Trust influences *The Observer*.

Question 8

8 Refer to **Extracts 3, 4 and 5** in the Insert.

Analyse the use of **camerawork** to create meaning in **two** of these social and participatory media feeds.

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.....

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..... [5]

This question was generally answered well. The more successful responses gave two examples of camerawork, using accurate terminology, and identified that the key word 'meaning' was pointing them towards media language rather than representation analysis. Less successful responses described the content of the images without reference to camerawork or were inaccurate in their description of camerawork. The most common example of inaccuracy was description of the shot in Extract 5 as a 'close up'.

Question 9*

9* Extracts 3, 4 and 5 are from The Observer's social and participatory media feed.

How far do these representations target The Observer's audience?

In your answer you must:

- analyse the representations in all three extracts
- refer to the target audience for The Observer
- make judgements and reach conclusions.

You will be rewarded for drawing together elements from your full course of study.

[15]

This was the synoptic question on this paper and successful responses often included some relevant media language or industries or contextual content to back up their response. The question asked for analysis of representations and of audience targeting in the extracts. Some responses contained lengthy discussion of *The Observer's* target audience, which was often both highly specific and inaccurate in terms of demographics.

The most successful responses deployed detailed representation analysis of the extracts and discussed how they served an *Observer* audience that is liberal, progressive, left-leaning and open to innovation. They might mention *The Observer's* institutional ethos, the role of the Black Lives Matters movement, the rise in environmentalism, and so on.

Less successful responses often still managed to make judgements and draw a conclusion, by, for example, arguing that the post about the protest outside the National Gallery was targeting an ethnic minority audience, the post about the vegan butcher was targeting a vegan audience and the post about Tory MPs was targeting an audience that was older (only old people are interested in politics) or younger (only young people pay rent). The least successful responses struggled to understand the intentions behind the posts.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practise analysing *Observer* articles as they may appear online from different sections of the newspaper, as some candidates seemed unaware of the newspaper's lifestyle material and assumed incorrectly that *The Observer* only publishes hard news.

Key point: reading exam questions in tandem

Candidates should read Questions 8 and 9 together before they start answering in order to understand which media area is addressed in which question, as they should not be repeating themselves in both. In this case, they should note that Question 9 is clearly about representation, so they should not discuss the same element in Question 8.

Exemplar 3

In Extract 3, we can see the main image (in the twitter feed) is a group of many people kneeling down and holding posters up. The tweet states how there's a 'counter-monument' protesting taking place. ~~to~~ The black person in the extract ~~the~~ creates an ~~anti-stereotype~~ ~~as~~ a stereotypical representation of black people fighting for justice as the man's raised fist connotes anger and fight for justice. This links well to an Observer's modern and anti-racism audience as ~~at~~ the audience can relate to the man's frustration of constant racism and it also shows how the Observer highlights the importance of equality. ~~to~~ The Observer is a left-wing ~~new~~ broadsheet, we can see how they deliver hard news and create social awareness of the inequality taking place in society. ~~the~~ It fits well to a ABC1 audience who are interested in social issues.

In Extract 4, we can see how there are 'new

vegan 'Butchers' in the UK. This The use of ~~script~~ simplistic and informal language in 'new vegan', ~~A~~ connotes a feeling of excitement and hope for vegans as they can try new things in their diet. The word 'butchers' connotes meat and animal-meat however this is ~~not~~ challenged as the 'vegan' butchers' don't include actual meat. This links well to the observer's audience of those who are interested in lifestyle as they can ~~try~~ ^{try} new things / products ~~to~~ in order to gain a healthy and vegan diet. This is evidence of the observer's modernity and their attempt to normalise veganism ~~as they~~.

Extract 5 shows a conservative's face through a mid shot and we can also see how the post has been liked by 283 people and reposted by 299 people. This connotes how popular ~~and~~ the news is amongst a left-wing audience as the '£3M in housing rent' ~~not~~ ^{not} angers many of the observer's target audience as they see the outrageous amount of money claimed. This ~~links~~

Overall, the extracts target the observer's target audience to a great extent.

The mark scheme for Level 3 for AO2(1a) states: 'Answers higher in the band will provide effective representation analysis of all three extracts, including how these representations fit or do not fit the target audience for *The Observer*'. Whereas many otherwise excellent responses often missed one of the posts – usually the one about the 'vegan butcher' – this exemplar maintains effective representation analysis throughout, albeit less successful on the butcher. It is accurate on audience, partly because it does not over-complicate the matter.

This is the synoptic question, so asks candidates to draw on their full course of study. The response includes, as well as representation and audience, genre ('broadsheet') and institutional ethos ('modernity'), drawing on media language and industries. This allows the AO2(1a) mark to move above the eight mark limit, gaining the full ten marks.

Clear judgements are made throughout that are fully supported by the evidence, so, although the conclusion is short, the response still earns the full five marks for AO2(1b).

Question 10

- 10** Explain how political or historical contexts influenced the representations in newspapers from the 1960s such as *The Observer*. Refer to examples from the set newspapers you have studied in your answer. **[10]**

This question was generally answered well. Most candidates who attempted this question could name at least one context from the 1960s and discuss at least one newspaper story that reflected the influence of its context. Less successful responses showed either vague or no knowledge of the set products, where successful responses showed either detailed knowledge and understanding of two contexts and their influence on the set products or knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts and stories.

There was, unsurprisingly, quite a bit of historical inaccuracy in responses. Some candidates argued that, in describing the Black Power salutes from the athletes at the Olympic Games, *The Observer's* use of the commonly accepted liberal terminology of the time was demonstration of the newspaper's racist stance.

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