



MEDIA: BRIDGING ACTIVITY

Introduction

The media play a central role in contemporary culture, society and politics. They shape our perceptions of the world through the representations, ideas and points of view they offer. The media have real relevance and importance in our lives today, providing us with ways to communicate, with forms of cultural expression and the ability to participate in key aspects of society. The economic importance of the media is also unquestionable. The media industries employ large numbers of people worldwide and generate significant global profit. The globalised nature of the contemporary media, ongoing technological developments and more opportunities to interact with the media suggest their centrality in contemporary life can only increase.

Successful students will be able to:

- demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis
- demonstrate a critical approach to media issues
- demonstrate appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture, politics and the economy
- develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, industries and audiences
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media
- apply theoretical knowledge and specialist subject specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed
- make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- engage in critical debate about academic theories used in media studies
- appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- demonstrate sophisticated practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production.

Theoretical Framework

The A Level Media Studies specification is based on the theoretical framework for analysing and creating media, which provides learners with the tools to develop a critical understanding and appreciation of the media. The framework consists of four inter-related areas:

- **Media language:** how the media through their forms, codes, conventions and techniques communicate meanings
- **Representation:** how the media portray events, issues, individuals and social groups
- **Media industries:** how the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms
- **Audiences:** how media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them, and how members of audiences become producers themselves.

Historical Contexts

- The effect of historical context on representations
- How media products relate to the time in which they were made and set through their representations, discourses and ideologies
- How audience responses to and interpretations of media representations reflect historical circumstances

Social and Cultural Contexts

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

Industry Contexts (including economic and political contexts)

- How media products relate to their industry contexts, for example in terms of economic and political factors such as globalisation, ownership, funding and regulation, and through their representations, discourses and ideologies

Bridging tasks

Task 1:

Research **ALL** of the theorists listed below.

Make notes on these and be prepared to discuss their theoretical approaches to Media, with reference to specific textual examples.

You should write approximately 100 words on each bullet point, once you have read and researched, using your own words. There is lots of information online, but some theorists are also relevant to other subject areas so make sure you are looking at how they apply to Media.

Media Language

- *Semiotics*, including Roland Barthes
- *Narratology*, including Tzvetan Todorov
- *Structuralism*, including Claude Lévi-Strauss

Representation

- *Theories of representation*, including Stuart Hall
- *Theories of gender performativity*, including Judith Butler
- *Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory*, including Paul Gilroy

Media Industries

- *Power and media industries*, including Curran and Seaton
- *Regulation*, including Livingstone and Lunt
- *Cultural industries*, including David Hesmondhalgh

Audiences

- *Media effects*, including Albert Bandura
- *Cultivation theory*, including George Gerbner
- *Reception theory*, including Stuart Hall

Task 2:

Compare the choices that have been made in the representation of **ethnicity or gender** in a **film poster** (of your choice) and a **music video** (of your choice).

In your answer, you must consider:

- how **ethnicity/gender** is represented through processes of selection and combination
- **reasons** for the choices made in the **representation of ethnicity/gender**
- the **similarities** and **differences** in the **representations of ethnicity/gender**
- how far the representations **relate to relevant media contexts**

(750 words)

Task 3:

Produce a realistic 30 second advertisement for a product of your choice, suitable to be shown during a break in a mainstream TV show.

This can be filmed and edited on your phone (using an app such as TikTok or iMovie) or edited on a desktop or laptop (using MovieMaker, OpenShot or other software depending on what technology you have at home).

You must be able to send me a copy in September, or publish it in a way that I can access, such as on a YouTube channel.

If you cannot film at all, produce a detailed storyboard for your advertisement instead – but please be aware you will need to do some photography/filming/audio recording and editing as part of the course.