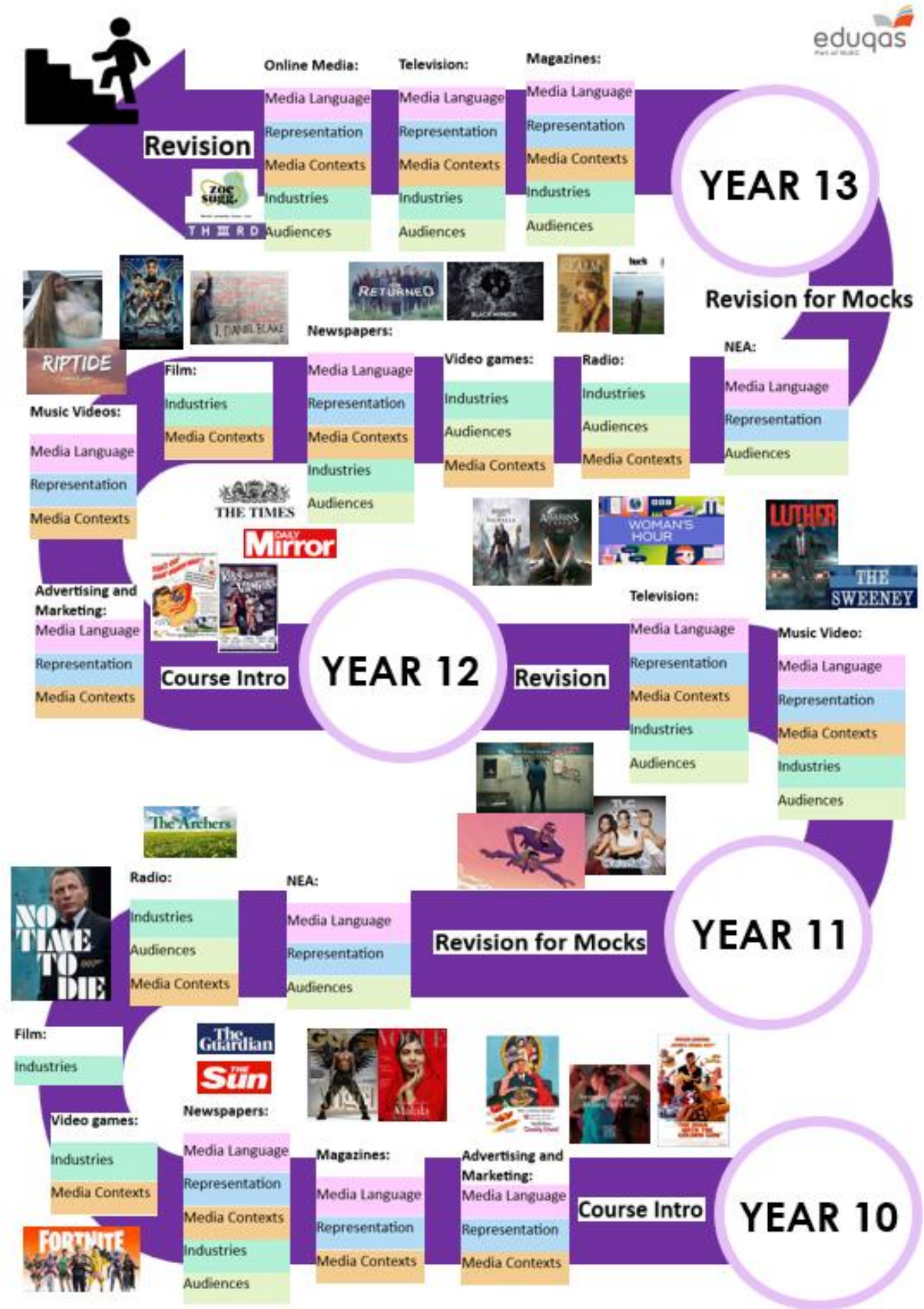


A LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES

Transition Booklet





Welcome to Media Studies

What is The Media?

The term medium (the singular form of media) is defined as 'one of the means or channels of general communication, information, or entertainment in society'.

The media plays a central role in contemporary culture, society and politics. It shapes our perception of the world through the representations, ideas and points of view it offers. The media has 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 its centrality in contemporary life can only increase.

What will I learn?

Media Studies offers the opportunity to develop a thorough and in depth understanding of these key issues, using a comprehensive theoretical framework and a variety of advanced theoretical approaches and theories to support critical exploration and reflection, analysis and debate. The study of a wide range of rich and stimulating media products provides opportunities for detailed analysis of how the media communicate meanings in a variety of forms. Working from set products outwards, we debate key critical questions related to the social, cultural, political and economic role of the media. Through studying media products holistically in relation to all areas of the theoretical framework, you will engage with the dynamic relationships between media products, media industries and audiences. You will also consider established media forms alongside more contemporary forms, developing an awareness of emerging and evolving media.

Although the primary emphasis in this specification is on the contemporary media, you will explore how the products relate to their wider historical contexts. You will also extend your experience of the media through the study of products with which you may be less familiar, including those produced by, or for, a minority group, non-mainstream and non-English language products. This specification aims to develop knowledge and understanding of the transnational nature of the media, considering the effect of different national contexts on representations in media products, the global reach of media industries, and the targeting of audiences on a national and global scale.

This specification recognises the fundamental relationship between theoretical understanding and practical work, providing you with exciting opportunities to develop media production skills in different forms, apply your knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to media forms and products, and become creators of meaning yourself. You will be offered a choice of briefs and forms within which to work, enabling you to explore and pursue your own media interests

How will I learn?

Year 12 Autumn Term	Introduction to Theoretical Framework: - Media Language, Representation, Industry and Audience Component 1: - Advertising and Marketing – ‘Tide’, ‘Super.Human’, ‘Kiss of the Vampire’ - Film – ‘I, Daniel Blake’ and ‘Black Panther’ - Music Video – ‘Formation’ Beyonce and ‘Riptide’ Vance Joy
Year 12 Spring Term	Component 1: - Newspapers – ‘The Daily Mirror’ and ‘The Times’ - Video Games – Assassins Creed franchise - Radio – ‘Women’s Hour’
Year 12 Summer Term	- Revision of all products in preparation for mock - Mock exam – covering all products and areas of theoretical framework studied so far - Component 3 - NEA – coursework
Year 13 Autumn Term	- Component 3 - NEA – Complete coursework - Component 2 - Magazines – ‘Women’s Realm’ and ‘Huck’ - Component 2 - Television – ‘The Returned’ and ‘Black Mirror’
Year 13 Spring Term	- Component 2 - Online Magazine – ‘Thiiird’ and ‘Zoe Sugg’ - Revision of all products in preparation for mock
Year 13 Summer Term	Revision of all products in preparation for exams

At KS5, Media Studies is underpinned by four **KEY CONCEPTS** that you will learn about:

- **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
- **AUDIENCE:** how the media industries' processes of production, distribution and circulation affect media forms and platforms
- **MEDIA INDUSTRIES:** how media forms target, reach and address audiences, how audiences interpret and respond to them, and how members of audiences become producers themselves.

In addition, you will learn:

- **THEORIES:** You will study a wide range of theoretical approaches and theories, including advanced approaches, to inform and support your analysis of media products and processes.
- **CONTEXTS:** You will develop knowledge and understanding of media products in relation to relevant key social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts.

Preparation for A Level Media Studies

Media Language

Media language refers to how media products communicate meaning. You will find that media texts communicate meaning through the use of signs and symbols, known as semiotics. The signs and symbols are encoded by the media producer and decoded by the audience and fall under three main categories: technical, symbolic and written codes.

Key terminology:

Denotation	The literal meaning of a sign, e.g. the car in the advert is red.
Connotation	The suggested meanings attached to a sign, e.g., the red car in the advert suggests speed and power.
Symbolic codes	Something which communicates meaning, e.g., colours, sounds. The meaning of the sign changes according to the context, e.g., the colour red can mean passion, love, danger or speed depending on how and where it is used.
Iconography	The props, costumes, objects and backgrounds associated with a particular genre; for example, in a police series you would expect to see, uniforms, blue flashing lights, scene of crime tape and police radios.
Encoding	Media producers encode messages and meaning into products with the expectation that the audience will understand them.
Decoding	Audiences interpret the media text according to their own cultural background and experiences.

Representation

In the context of Media Studies as a subject, representation means the way in which aspects of society and social identity, including gender, age and ethnicity, are presented to an audience in specific media products through media language. It is also relevant to consider how issues and events are represented in the media and what effect this might have upon how an audience may respond. The way in which these aspects are represented will change according to the context of the product.

Key terminology:

Mediation	The way in which a media text is constructed in order to represent a version of reality; constructed through selection, organisation and focus.
Selection	Media producers actively choose elements of media language and place them alongside others to create specific representations or versions of reality.
Anchorage	The words that accompany an image (still or moving) contribute to the meaning associated with that image. If the caption or voice-over is changed then so may the way in which the audience interprets the image. An image with an anchor is a closed text; the audience are given a preferred reading. A text without an anchor is an open text as the audience can interpret it as they wish. The same image of a school in a local newspaper could include a negative or a positive headline, which may change the way in which the same image is viewed by the reader.
Sexual objectification	The practice of regarding a person as an object to be viewed only in terms of their sexual appeal and with no consideration of any other aspect of their character or personality.
Stereotypes	An exaggerated representation of someone or something. It is also where a certain group are associated with a certain set of characteristics, for example all Scotsmen are mean, blondes are dumb, etc. Stereotypes can be quick ways of communicating information in adverts and dramas, e.g. the rebellious teenager in a soap opera, as they are easily recognisable to audiences.

Media Industries

Media industries refer to the business aspect of the media. As media students you will be exploring how different media industries produce, distribute and market their products. Mainstream media products are often produced by large global conglomerates that have a large amount of power within the industry.

Key terminology:

Conglomerate	A conglomerate is a large company composed of a number of companies (subsidiaries) engaged in generally unrelated businesses.
Convergence	The coming together of previously separate media industries and/or platforms; often the result of advances in technology whereby one device or platform contains a range of different features. The mobile phone, for example, allows the user to download and listen to music, view videos, tweet artists etc. All this can be done through one portable device.
Distribution	The methods by which media products are delivered to audiences, including the marketing campaign. These methods will depend upon the product (for example, distribution companies in the film industry organise the release of the films, as well as their promotion).
Regulation	The control used within the media industry. What is and isn't allowed to be shown to particular audiences.
Synergy	The combination of elements to maximise profits within a media organisation or product. For example, where a film soundtrack sells the film and the film sells the soundtrack.
Independent	A media product made outside of the financial and artistic control of a large mainstream film company. A truly independent product will be privately conceived and funded. However, few products made are really 'independent'. This more commonly refers to a product that is made by a smaller film company on a low budget

Audience

What would be the point of any media text if there was no audience to consume it? Within Media Studies, 'audience' refers to how different forms of media target, reach and address audiences. We also explore how to group people into audiences and how these groups respond differently to different media texts.

Key terminology:

Active audience	Audiences actively engage in selecting media products to consume and interpreting their meanings
Categorisation	How media producers group audiences (e.g. by age, gender ethnicity) to target their products.
Consumption	The way in which audiences engage with media products (e.g. viewing a TV programme, playing a video game, reading a blog or magazine). Methods of consumption have changed significantly due to the development of digital technologies.
Demographic	A group in which consumers are placed according to their age, sex, income, profession, etc. The categories range from A to E where categories A and B are the wealthiest and most influential members of society.

Media Theorists

During the Media Studies course you will encounter many media theorists that have studied various areas of the media. In order to give you a head start you will need to learn the following:

MEDIA LANGUAGE

Semiotics - Roland Barthes

- the idea that texts communicate their meanings through a process of signification
- the idea that signs can function at the level of denotation, which involves the 'literal' or common-sense meaning of the sign, and at the level of connotation, which involves the meanings associated with or suggested by the sign
- the idea that constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident, achieving the status of myth through a process of naturalisation.

Narratology - Tzvetan Todorov

- the idea that all narratives share a basic structure that involves a movement from one state of equilibrium to another
- the idea that these two states of equilibrium are separated by a period of imbalance or disequilibrium
- the idea that the way in which narratives are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

Genre theory - Steve Neale

- the idea that genres may be dominated by repetition, but are also marked by difference, variation, and change
- the idea that genres change, develop, and vary, as they borrow from and overlap with one another
- the idea that genres exist within specific economic, institutional and industrial contexts.

Structuralism - Claude Lévi-Strauss

- the idea that texts can best be understood through an examination of their underlying structure
- the idea that meaning is dependent upon (and produced through) pairs of oppositions
- the idea that the way in which these binary oppositions are resolved can have particular ideological significance.

Postmodernism - Jean Baudrillard

- the idea that in postmodern culture the boundaries between the 'real' world and the world of the media have collapsed and that it is no longer possible to distinguish between reality and simulation
- the idea that in a postmodern age of simulacra we are immersed in a world of images which no longer refer to anything 'real'
- the idea that media images have come to seem more 'real' than the reality they supposedly represent (hyperreality).

REPRESENTATION

Theories of representation - Stuart Hall

- the idea that representation is the production of meaning through language, with language defined in its broadest sense as a system of signs
- the idea that the relationship between concepts and signs is governed by codes
- the idea that stereotyping, as a form of representation, reduces people to a few simple characteristics or traits
- the idea that stereotyping tends to occur where there are inequalities of power, as subordinate or excluded groups are constructed as different or 'other' (e.g. through ethnocentrism).

Theories of identity - David Gauntlett

- the idea that the media provide us with 'tools' or resources that we use to construct our identities
- the idea that whilst in the past the media tended to convey singular, straightforward messages about ideal types of male and female identities, the media today offer us a more diverse range of stars, icons and characters from whom we may pick and mix different ideas.

Feminist theory - Liesbet van Zoonen

- the idea that gender is constructed through discourse, and that its meaning varies according to cultural and historical context
- the idea that the display of women's bodies as objects to be looked at is a core element of western patriarchal culture
- the idea that in mainstream culture the visual and narrative codes that are used to construct the male body as spectacle differ from those used to objectify the female body.

Feminist theory - bell hooks

- the idea that feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression and the ideology of domination
- the idea that feminism is a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice
- the idea that race and class as well as sex determine the extent to which individuals are exploited, discriminated against or oppressed.

Theories of gender performativity - Judith Butler

- the idea that identity is performatively constructed by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results (it is manufactured through a set of acts)
- the idea that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender
- the idea that performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual.

Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory - Paul Gilroy

- the idea that colonial discourses continue to inform contemporary attitudes to race and ethnicity in the postcolonial era
- the idea that civilisationism constructs racial hierarchies and sets up binary oppositions based on notions of otherness.

MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Power and media industries - Curran and Seaton

- the idea that the media is controlled by a small number of companies primarily driven by the logic of profit and power
- the idea that media concentration generally limits or inhibits variety, creativity and quality
- the idea that more socially diverse patterns of ownership help to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.

Regulation - Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt

- the idea that there is an underlying struggle in recent UK regulation policy between the need to further the interests of citizens (by offering protection from harmful or offensive material), and the need to further the interests of consumers (by ensuring choice, value for money, and market competition)
- the idea that the increasing power of global media corporations, together with the rise of convergent media technologies and transformations in the production, distribution and marketing of digital media, have placed traditional approaches to media regulation at risk

Cultural industries - David Hesmondhalgh

- the idea that cultural industry companies try to minimise risk and maximise audiences through vertical and horizontal integration, and by formatting their cultural products (e.g. through the use of stars, genres, and serials)
- the idea that the largest companies or conglomerates now operate across a number of different cultural industries
- the idea that the radical potential of the internet has been contained to some extent by its partial incorporation into a large, profit-orientated set of cultural industries

AUDIENCES

Media effects - Albert Bandura

- the idea that the media can implant ideas in the mind of the audience directly
- the idea that audiences acquire attitudes, emotional responses and new styles of conduct through modelling
- the idea that media representations of transgressive behaviour, such as violence or physical aggression, can lead audience members to imitate those forms of behaviour.

Cultivation theory - George Gerbner

- the idea that exposure to repeated patterns of representation over long periods of time can shape and influence the way in which people perceive the world around them (i.e. cultivating particular views and opinions)
- the idea that cultivation reinforces mainstream values (dominant ideologies).

Investigating Technical Codes

Below is a list of key technical terms that will support you within your Media Studies course. To help you prepare for the course you should begin by researching and writing your own definition of the key terms below, you could also include the effect of the technical code too.

Cameras work and photography create meaning and communicate messages through:

Framing	
Medium shot	
Close-up	
Long shot	
Medium close-up	
Extreme close-up	
Medium long shot	
Establishing shot	
Overhead	
Point of view (POV)	
Two-shot	
Over shoulder shot	
Angles	
High angle	
Low angle	
Canted angle (Dutch)	
Movement	
Static	
Pan	
Whip pan	
Tilt	
Track	
Crane	
Hand-held (Steadicam®)	
Zoom	
Aerial	
Composition	
Aspect ratio	
Rule of thirds	
Depth of field	
Focus pulls	
Colour	
Warm	
Cold	
Black and white	
Monochromatic palette	
Exposure	
Filters	
Colour Hue	