

OxfordAQA

International GCSE

Media Studies (9257)

Scheme of work: Non exam assessment (NEA)

For teaching from September 2024 onwards
For International GCSE exams in June 2026 onwards

Introduction

These outline schemes of work are intended to help teachers plan and implement the teaching of the NEA component of the Oxford AQA International GCSE Media Studies (9257) specification. The purpose of these outline schemes is to provide advice and guidance to teachers, not to prescribe and restrict their approach to the delivery of the NEA. Each scheme has been produced by a practicing subject expert. There are obviously many other ways of organising the NEA, and there is absolutely no requirement to use this scheme.

Timings have been suggested but are approximate. Teachers should select activities relevant to their students, resources and the curriculum time available.

The order is by no means prescriptive and there are many different methods by which the content could be delivered.

The resources suggested are indicative; other materials that may be helpful are likely to be available. Suggestions are only given in brief and risk assessments should be carried out. All links were active at time of publication. In particular, centres are advised to make use of the guidance on pages 29-36 of the specification throughout their delivery of the NEA as well as the support offered within the NEA Briefs document and to make sure that candidates are familiar with the requirements of the NEA. Centres are also advised that the set of briefs will change **every three years**; new briefs will be released by OxfordAQA on 1 July, two years before the first assessment for that set of briefs. Centres are asked to check that they are using the current set of briefs for their cohort and to contact OxfordAQA if there is any uncertainty.

Assumed coverage and teaching hours

This scheme assumes that the OxfordAQA GCSE Media Studies (9257) is delivered as a two-year GCSE course, with an assumed 70 taught hours per year (approximately 2 hours per week). Although the NEA is worth 50% of the overall marks, it should not take 50% of the time of the course. Just as with the examined material, it is intended that students spend time learning the relevant concepts and skills before they embark on the assessed work itself. Teachers should strike a balance between the preparation for and completion of the NEA and preparation for the examined component. Additionally, demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the Media Studies Framework is key to success in the NEA so time spent teaching the framework will inform the NEA products.

It is therefore assumed that around 30 hours (15 weeks) will be spent on the NEA. It is also assumed that (prior to the delivery of the NEA) students will have had some experience of the hardware and software they are going to use for their final NEA projects. Work may also need to be completed outside of lessons, although this will ultimately depend on the amount of contact time available and the extent to which practical activities take place within timetabled lessons.

National focus

When researching and planning their NEA projects, students may consider or research media organisations and media products from their own country or territory but should be aware that there may be differences between the media produced in other countries and that these may influence the global media market. They should also be aware that all materials for assessment should be submitted in English.

The Briefs

The NEA component requires students to independently create a media product in response to **one** of six briefs set by OxfordAQA, covering the six media forms covered during the course. The set of briefs will change every three years, and will be released by OxfordAQA on 1 July, two years before the first assessment for that set of briefs. Only one response to an NEA brief should be submitted.

OxfordAQA will specify the media form, the commission, and the intended audience for the media product. The media product created by the student must communicate meaning to the intended audience and must draw on what they know and understand about media language and media representations. It is advised that the NEA component be started towards the end of the first year or the beginning of the second year of the course so that students have a clear understanding of the Media Framework and some of the media forms. Centres are advised to choose media forms for which they have appropriate resources available (e.g. if video editing software is not available, the video brief should not be chosen). The length or duration of each production will be specified within the brief.

Students must complete an individual media production. Students may use unassessed participants to appear in their media products or operate equipment under the direction of the assessed student. A completed final production should be submitted; drafts, research and planning materials should not be included.

The Submission Statement

As well as the finished product, students must complete a 1000-word Submission Statement that outlines how their product meets the brief and the needs of the audience, analyses how their product uses conventions and specific media language, and how it constructs specific representations to convey meaning to the intended audience. The statement should also include further ideas for the creation of a cohesive series of products, as required by the chosen brief.

[oxfordaqa.com](https://www.oxfordaqa.com)

Use of non-original material, online apps and assets

All NEA content should be created by the student, with the following exceptions:

- Logos for existing companies where design of these does not form part of the requested material and where these demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media conventions, such as social media logos and icons, or sponsorship by major companies.
- Special effects added to original images and footage that would be impractical or unsafe for students to capture themselves, such as fires and explosions.
- Music.

For briefs where website or video game creation is required, students do not need to be able to code. Students can use website design apps, online templates and game design software. However, students are responsible for the design of the website or game and the content (such as written text, images, audio-visual material) must be original.

Students may also use online logo creators and layout apps for print products but must create all images and text within the layout themselves.

The use of generative AI is permitted for the creation of images or video where it is impractical or unsafe for students to take photographs themselves, such as for news images showing explosions, earthquakes or fires. The use of AI is not permitted for the creation of text.

Students must acknowledge any external resources or materials used in their NEA projects; further guidance can be found in the specification.

For the purpose of this scheme, the **Print** brief from the NEA briefs ('devise a new upmarket arts or lifestyle magazine aimed at an educated and relatively wealthy audience') has been used. However, the structure could be followed for any of the other five briefs.

Specification content

- 3.5.1.1 Media Forms and meanings
- 3.5.1.2 Codes, conventions and genres
- 3.5.2.1 Representations and the representation of reality
- 3.5.4.1 The nature and significance of the audience
- 3.5.4.2 Defining and categorising media audiences
- 3.5.4.3 Targeting

Learning outcomes

- **Media Language**

Students will:

- demonstrate how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related.
- demonstrate how media language is used to create and communicate messages.
- demonstrate how the medium influences the message.
- demonstrate how appropriate media products to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
- demonstrate how codes and conventions of media language create meaning.

- **Media Representations:**

Students will:

- apply knowledge of ways in which the media represent (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality.
- demonstrate the relationship between ideology and representations.
- apply knowledge of theoretical perspectives on representation including the processes of selection, construction and mediation.
- demonstrate ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers and the choices they make.
- demonstrate how and why particular social groups, individuals (including celebrities), places and issues may be under-represented or misrepresented.

- **Media Audiences:**

Students will:

- demonstrate how media industries create and continue to satisfy audiences.
- demonstrate the importance of audiences and the power of media content to influence audiences.
- demonstrate understanding of audience categories used by media industries.
- demonstrate understanding of ways in which media organisations target audiences through product design and the assumptions they make about audiences.

Resources

- [Canva](#) – offers free online design capabilities, including limited A/V content
- [Photopea](#) – free online photo editing site
- [Wix – website building platform](#)
- [Press Reader – online newspapers and magazines \(subscription needed\)](#)

Contents – if appropriate

You can use the title links to jump directly to the different sections of this scheme of work
(Use Ctrl and click to follow the link)

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NEA Project

Weeks One to Three - Research

Suggested timing

6 hours

Possible teaching and learning activities

Review the magazine Selected Media Product (SMP) covered in the Print case study as well as research into other equivalent magazines and identifying relevant 'persons of importance' featuring in such magazines.

- Magazine front covers: Conventions
 - Review the front covers of magazines, 'naming the parts' to re-establish the conventions and the use of subject specific terminology.
 - Look at a range of different editions of the SMP magazine to determine what makes a house style that is repeated and recognisable from issue to issue (e.g. masthead, colour scheme, choice of typeface). Could students write a 'style guide' for a cover designer to follow?
 - Use a range of front covers from other similar magazines with different styles to establish the choices that might be made. What does each style suggest about the target audience and the magazine's appeal?
- Magazine front covers: Target audience
 - Review a wide-ranging selection of magazine covers, including the SMP, targeted at different audiences. Identify different audience demographics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age etc.).
 - Students should consider the selection of content for one specific audiences, identifying how the covers target that audience (aim for 2-3 different covers).
 - They might also identify where the magazines focus on individuals who might be regarded as 'persons of importance' for the target audience and note down relevant information about them – how they are represented, kinds of images used etc.
- Pre-production task: Devising a magazine
 - Devise and sketch the cover of a new magazine, focusing on **different** subject matter (e.g. gaming, health or fashion), that would target **the same** audience considered in the previous task. Ensure students all use the elements that will be required when they do the non-examined assessment (NEA) (title/masthead, selling line, cover price, dateline, main image, cover lines etc.)
- Magazine contents pages: Conventions and content
 - Review the contents page from the selected SMP magazine. Identify and label the relevant parts (e.g. headings, captions, graphics) to revise subject terminology.
 - Identify how the contents page fits with the front cover's house style discussed previously.
 - Compare the SMP contents page with examples from other similar magazines. Can the students spot the same features in use? What are the overall conventions of a contents page (e.g. use of images, page numbers, teasers, frames etc.?)

- Identify how the contents pages present relevant 'persons of importance' – what sort of copy is used? Are they featured in photographs?
- Magazine double page spreads: Conventions
 - Look at the double page spreads studied from the selected SMP. Identify and label the relevant parts in order to revise subject terminology.
 - Identify how the double page spreads fit with the front cover and contents page house styles.
 - Compare the SMP double page spreads with examples from other similar magazines which focus on a person or persons 'of importance'. Can the students spot the same features being used? What are the general conventions of a double page spread (e.g. headline, columns, captions, pull-quotes etc.)?
- Magazine double page spreads: Copy
 - What do students know about how magazine copy is structured?
 - Using different magazines, students should read examples of double page spread articles and consider how they compare. What are the similarities and differences?
 - Analyse the articles for evidence of modes of address and audience positioning (e.g. style/ tone of writing, length and complexity of sentences, vocabulary, use of pronouns, point of view etc.)
 - Identify how 'persons of importance' are being represented both verbally (in the copy) and non-verbally (in the images). How is media language used to create a representation which would appeal to the target audience?
- Magazines: Images
 - Use the SMP front cover and analyse the main cover image(s) in detail. How have they been composed to attract the audience? Consider the photographic codes:
 - Where were they taken – what is the *mise-en-scène*?
 - How were they lit?
 - How is the subject posed?
 - What is the subject wearing?
 - What kind of shot distance has been used?
 - What angle has been chosen?
 - How saturated/ desaturated is the image?
 - What is the intended representation of the subject?
 - Using the same magazines as in previous exercises, students should examine the images on the front covers, contents pages and double page spreads applying the questions above. They should also consider the following:
 - How do these images work within the overall layout of the covers/ pages – how are they angled/ cropped/ framed?
 - What information do they add to the copy?
 - How are captions used to create anchorage?
 - How is the 'person of importance' represented?
 - Compare the magazines – consider differences in style of photos and the ways they are used within the layout.
- Pre-production task – magazine layout
 - Using the magazines considered previously as models, continue with the design of the magazine from earlier by adding sketches for a mocked-up contents page and double page spread. Include each aspect to be considered in the design, ensuring

students all use the elements that will be required when they do the NEA: masthead (logo), titles, references to articles, headline, standfirst, subheadings, original copy, main image, additional images.

- Persons of Importance: relevant lifestyles
 - Research some of the 'persons of importance' identified in the magazines previously explored by reviewing their online media presence (articles about them, social media feeds etc.) How would students describe the lifestyles of these individuals – why would the readers of the magazines be interested in them?
 - Which other 'persons of importance' within the arts or lifestyle spheres are students aware of? Students could work in pairs to write lists naming 'persons of importance', briefly noting what makes them important. Create a collective list, with each pair contributing at least two ideas.
- Persons of Importance: Constructing representations
 - Students should choose one of the 'persons of importance' identified previously (either from the magazines studied or the pairs exercise). They should note down what they think that person and their lifestyle are like and why they might be regarded as important.
 - Students should then research their chosen 'person of importance' in detail and analyse their significance/ importance – consider mediation through selection and omission. What is shared? What is never mentioned?
 - Students might also consider mode of address and how representations are constructed using media language such as camera angles, *mise-en-scène*, choice of verbal codes, selection of images etc. What are the similarities and differences between the person's social media feeds and articles written about them?
- Persons of Importance: Relevance to the audience
 - Considering the same 'person of importance' researched previously, students should identify their appeal to audiences. Why are they popular? Do they work in only one medium or area of the arts/ lifestyle sphere, or have they a broader appeal?
 - Students should look for the opportunities for audience engagement, including in different aspects of the media. Can they use this information to identify who the target audience is and how they can engage with the person of importance? What are the main issues/topics the audience enjoy seeing explored by the person?
- Pre-production task – person of importance
 - Using the research undertaken, identify an appropriate person of importance who might feature in the final magazine, or devise the persona of a new person of importance who would fit the arts/ lifestyle focus of the magazine.

Weeks Four to Six - Planning

Suggested timing

6 hours

Possible teaching and learning activities

Plan the magazine and make notes for the Supporting Statement identifying how the plan meets both the production requirements of the brief and the needs of the intended audience.

- Read through brief and clarify any points.
 - Give out copies of the **NEA Brief: Print**. It might be useful to create a checklist of the minimum requirements linked to the commission and tasks to assure coverage.
 - Review the brief with students to ensure they understand each aspect that is being asked for (including the 'further ideas'), in particular the need to focus on a 'person of importance' as the basis for the magazine (this could be use the person of importance researched or devised previously).
- Initial rough planning:
 - Overall concept for the magazine (arts or lifestyle).
 - Name of magazine (and possibly selling line).
 - Intended representation of person of importance, including possible focus for article.
 - Possible cover lines and features for contents page.
 - Possible images which might be featured.
- Plan and relate each item to target audience
 - Draft front cover, contents page and double page spreads (either by hand or using software), laying out and labelling each aspect to add detail, identifying how each idea meets the brief/ minimum requirements and explain how it relates to the target audience.
- Check plan against brief
 - Compare plans and sketches against the brief, ensuring these have fulfilled the minimum requirements. Amend if necessary.
- Draft the first parts of the Supporting Statement ('Examples of how production meets both the production requirements of the brief and the needs of the intended audience' and 'Examples of the production uses or subverts existing codes and conventions of the media form').
 - Each should be around 150-200 words.
- Check the drafts against the marking criteria
 - Review the drafts in comparison with the wording at the start of the NEA Briefs booklet, and possibly against the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Highlight in different colours use of:
 - subject specific terminology.
 - references to the brief.
 - references to the needs of the audience.
 - references to codes and conventions of magazines.

- Identify any areas which need to be improved.
- Does any of the original magazine design need to be altered?

Week Seven – Production: Images

Suggested timing

2 hours (plus work outside of lessons)

Possible teaching and learning activities

Take photographs for magazine and make notes for the Supporting Statement explaining how the photographs convey meaning (considering media language and genre) and construct representations, identifying what the intended audience is supposed to understand from these.

- Take photographs for magazine.
 - Use of images within magazine should be carefully planned, applying the research and planning completed during the previous weeks.
 - How can images be used to build representations?
 - How can *mise-en-scène* and composition be controlled?
 - Students can take several approaches to taking photographs. They could:
 - draft ideas they want to use, then take photographs using these as a guide.
 - find similar images on the internet, then re-create these themselves (they must use original images in their piece).
 - explore settings and acquire costumes with their models, find the best locations and angles as well as considering lighting (not to mention safety and practicality).
 - The week might involve some planning, some photographing, and some editing.
 - Students should be advised to take many more photographs that they will need, to give themselves a range of options when completing their production.
 - Students should also make notes of unassessed participants and how these were directed
- Review the photographs
 - Students should identify which images (at least six) they will use in their magazines.
 - They should make brief notes for use in the Supporting Statement outlining how the photographs convey meaning (considering media language and genre) and construct representations, identifying what the intended audience is supposed to understand from these.
- Check the photographs and notes against the marking criteria
 - Review the photographs in comparison with the brief and the notes against the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Highlight in different colours use of:
 - references to media language
 - references to representations
 - references to targeting of intended audiences
 - Identify any areas which need to be improved
 - Are the photographs fit for purpose? Do any need to be re-edited or re-taken?

Week Eight – Production: Front Cover

Suggested timing

2 hours (plus work outside of lessons)

Possible teaching and learning activities

Create the final version of the front cover.

- Select the main photograph (or photographs) to be used for the front cover
- Using the drafts/ plans created previously:
 - Select typeface(s) and specific colour palette.
 - Finalise the logo/ masthead/ selling line.
 - Edit and position the image.
 - Position the masthead and the selling line.
 - Add in the main cover line (usually linked to the main image).
 - Add in at least three other cover lines.
 - Add other graphic features if necessary.
 - Lay out the cover.
 - Add in the cover price/ dateline/ other relevant features.
- Review the front cover in comparison with the brief and the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Have all the needs of the brief in relation to the front cover minimum requirements been met?
 - Has the brief been correctly interpreted?
 - Are the selection and combination of elements appropriate and effective?
 - Is meaning being clearly communicated?
 - Have excellent technical skills been used – does the cover have a sense of authenticity? Does it resemble the magazines researched?
 - Does the cover include appropriate representations of (or subversions of) stereotypes which are appropriate for the intended audience?
 - Are the representations creatively constructed and apt for the intended meanings? Do they communicate the meanings clearly?
 - Would the cover engage the target audience? Does it employ an effective mode of address?
 - Does the cover use (or effectively subvert) relevant conventions of genre and form to convey meanings which are appropriate to the intended audience?

Week Nine - Production: Contents Page

Suggested timing

2 hours (plus work outside of lessons)

Possible teaching and learning activities

Create the final version of the contents page.

- Select the main photograph (or photographs) to be used for the contents page, making sure this is different to the image(s) used on the front cover.
- Using the drafts/ plans created previously:
 - Use typeface(s) and specific colour palette as appropriate (use front cover as guide).
 - Use the logo/ masthead/ selling line as appropriate to the front cover.
 - Edit and position the image(s).
 - Position the titles and descriptions of the articles (at least eight):
 - Make sure each of the cover lines are referenced.
 - Make sure the page numbers make sense.
 - Add other graphic features if necessary.
 - Lay out the contents in an appropriate format.
 - Add in any other relevant features (e.g. page numbers, website address etc.)
- Review the contents page in comparison with the brief and the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Have all the needs of the brief in relation to the contents page minimum requirements been met?
 - Has the brief been correctly interpreted?
 - Are the selection and combination of elements appropriate and effective?
 - Is meaning being clearly communicated?
 - Have excellent technical skills been used – does the contents page have a sense of authenticity? Does it resemble the magazines researched?
 - Does the contents page include appropriate representations of (or subversions of) stereotypes which are appropriate for the intended audience?
 - Are the representations creatively constructed and apt for the intended meanings? Do they communicate the meanings clearly?
 - Would the contents page engage the target audience? Does it employ an effective mode of address?
 - Does the contents page use (or effectively subvert) relevant conventions of genre and form to convey meanings which are appropriate to the intended audience?

Weeks Ten and Eleven – Production: Double Page Spread

Suggested timing

4 hours (plus work outside of lessons)

Possible teaching and learning activities

Write the copy for the article and create the final version of the double page spread.

- Review the research undertaken into double page spreads and articles with a particular focus on the copy.
- Select appropriate images (at least four, one of which will be the main image).
- Write appropriate copy for the article (at least 350 words) using the research to structure the piece, considering how the article represents the person of importance to the target audience as well as how it links to the images. This might be drafted and reviewed.
- Use the article to create a headline, standfirst and subheadings as well as appropriate captions for the chosen images.
- Using the drafts/ plans created previously:
 - Use typeface(s) and specific colour palette as appropriate to the front cover and the contents page – is the house style consistent?
 - Use the logo/ masthead as appropriate to the front cover and contents page.
 - Edit and position the images.
 - Position the headline, standfirst and copy:
 - Make sure layout is appropriate (e.g. in columns, with gutters/ margins etc.)
 - Make sure copy fits into the allocated space (consider widows/ orphans, use of pull quotes within subheadings etc.)
 - Make sure the page numbers match the contents page listing for the article.
 - Add other graphic features if necessary (e.g. borders, frames).
 - Layout the copy in an appropriate format.
 - Add in any other relevant features (e.g. page numbers, website address etc.)
- Review the DPS in comparison with the brief and the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Have all the needs of the brief in relation to the DPS minimum requirements been met?
 - Has the brief been correctly interpreted?
 - Are the selection and combination of elements appropriate and effective?
 - Is meaning being clearly communicated?
 - Have excellent technical skills been used – does the DPS have a sense of authenticity? Does it resemble the magazines researched?
 - Does the DPS include appropriate representations of (or subversions of) stereotypes which are appropriate for the intended audience?
 - Are the representations creatively constructed and apt for the intended meanings? Do they communicate the meanings clearly?
 - Would the DPS engage the target audience? Does it employ an effective mode of address?
 - Does the DPS use (or effectively subvert) relevant conventions of genre and form to convey meanings which are appropriate to the intended audience?

Week Twelve – Production: Review

Suggested timing

2 hours

Possible teaching and learning activities

Review the completed magazine, identifying areas for improvements.

- Review the magazine in comparison with the brief and ensure the minimum requirements/ tasks have been met.
- Have the pages reviewed by other students or members of the target audience to gather feedback.
- Check the pages against the original plan, the marks schemes and the professional magazines used for research.
- Make improvements based on these reviews and finalise the magazine prior to finalising the Submission Statement and completion of the project.

Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen – Submission Statement

Suggested timing

4 hours

Possible teaching and learning activities

Complete first draft of the Submission Statement, including ideas for two further features to be included in the magazine.

- Review the completed magazine, and the notes made during production, considering:
 - examples of how the production meets both the production requirements of the brief and the needs of the intended audience.
 - examples of how codes and conventions of magazines have been used or subverted (through reference to existing magazines researched).
 - examples of how media language has been used to convey specific meanings.
 - examples of how specific representations have been constructed and what the intended audience is expected to understand from these.
- Use the notes to draft an analysis of the magazine, referring to specific examples from the project and explaining the decisions made. This should be **no longer than** 700 words (approximately 150-200 per section).
- Draft a response to the 'further ideas in support of your submission' section of the Statement. This should focus on ideas for two further features to be included within the magazine, explaining how these would fit the genre of the magazine and appeal to the educated and relatively wealthy audience. Each idea should be between 150-200 words (overall, **no longer than** 300 words in total).
 - These **should not** be referred to on the contents page, since this has already been covered within the 'minimum requirements' for the overall task.
- Review the Submission Statement in comparison with the brief and the marking criteria in the specification.
 - Have all the needs of the brief in relation to the Submission Statement been met?
 - Is the statement detailed?
 - Does it analyse directly and effectively how media language and representations create meanings in the magazine?
 - Does it explain deliberate, highly appropriate uses or subversions of codes and conventions?
 - Are the decisions outlined in the statement consistently appropriate to the brief – are the requirements of the brief appropriately referred to?
 - Do the decisions outlined in the statement target the intended audience in a clear and direct way – are references to the audience relevant to the brief and the magazine content?
 - Do the ideas for further examples in the statement clearly link to the needs of the brief?

Week Fifteen – Final Amendments

Suggested timing

2 hours

Possible teaching and learning activities

Complete final amendments to the Submission Statement and any final improvements to the magazines which have been identified.

Submit the final magazine and completed Submission Statement.