# OxfordAQA International GCSE
## Media Studies (9257)

## Scheme of work

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 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 specification. Each scheme has been produced by a practicing subject expert. There are obviously many other ways of organising the work, 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 and the curriculum time available. Teachers should also aim to balance activities between discussion, notation and practical approaches to provide students with appropriate opportunities to develop the skills they will need both for the written exam and the NEA component of the course. Appropriate practical activities are suggested at the end of each section.

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 glossary on pages 39-48 of the specification throughout their delivery of the course and to make sure that candidates are familiar with the terminology.

## Assumed coverage and teaching hours

This scheme assumes that the GCSE Media Studies (9257) content is a two-year GCSE course, with an assumed 70 taught hours per year (approximately 2 hours per week). Work will 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 assessment and practical activities take place within timetabled lessons.

## National focus

When studying the subject content, students may focus on 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 consider that the prescribed television product is UK-made, albeit internationally available; a knowledge of the UK television industry is therefore essential. All materials for assessment should be submitted in English.

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# Contents

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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# Year One

## Overview for year one

- Introduction to the Media Studies Framework, through discussion and analysis of media products and short practical tasks, followed by a practical project on advertising, focusing on Media Language and Media Representations.
- Introduction to the Selected Media Products (SMPs) - in-depth studies of Advertising, Print, News and Audio SMPs

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# Introduction to Media Studies

# Weeks One to Three – Media Terminology

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.1.1 Media Forms and Meanings
- 3.5.2.1 Representations and the representation of reality
- 3.5.4.4 Theoretical perspectives on the audience

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
    - understand how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related.
    - explore how media language is used to create and communicate media messages.
    - consider how the medium influences the message.
    - learn how to analyse media products to understand the different meanings that are communicated.

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

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
    - learn a range of theoretical perspectives on audience including:
        - effects theory
        - active and passive audiences
        - audience response
        - audience interpretation
        - audience positioning
        - reception theory
        - diffused audience.
        - Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory

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## Suggested timing

6 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to basic media language, representation and audience terminology through analysis of selected relevant media products linked to the film industry. Although the focus here is on marketing materials, if time allows, a complete film could be covered.
- Exercises could include:
  - reviewing marketing materials for one or more films made between 1960-2000 and one contemporary film (e.g. posters, teasers, trailers etc.) to consider how meanings of media products to their audiences are influenced by the media form, language and platform – what are the similarities and differences? How are they trying to persuade their audiences to watch the film(s)?
  - learning the language of semiotic analysis through deconstruction of selected marketing materials (print and/ or moving image) – what elements stand out and why?
  - analysing the representations in the marketing materials in terms of realism and the messages they are sending – how is the message being mediated and constructed to create a particular point of view? Where is the audience positioned in relation to the characters, plot and meaning?
  - exploring how positioning on different media platforms may also influence an audience's perception of a product by exploring different ways in which the films were and are distributed (e.g. when exhibited in a cinema, broadcast on free-to-air television, purchased as a Blu-Ray/DVD or bought via a streaming service). What effect does this have on audience response? Were different marketing materials used?
  - examining how the marketing materials are designed to be persuasive, informative and entertaining; was there an opportunity for audiences to interact e.g. via social media?
  - learning about the cultural contexts which may have influenced the films and their marketing – what was the world like when the films were originally released? How did audiences use knowledge of media language to make value judgements about products (for example, use of special effects or stunts)? Is this different now?
  - discussing the differences in media language when comparing similar media products produced today with those produced in different time periods – students might compare a poster of trailer for a similar film, a remake or film in the same franchise made recently and identify similarities and differences
  - identifying techniques of persuasive communication within the materials – how are they designed to attract an audience (for example, focus on particular stars or features)?
  - analysing how effective different elements of marketing campaigns are to understand that the way a media message is communicated is just as important as what is communicated – what elements do the materials share? What is different?
  - discussing the relationships between representations and dominant values – do there seem to be patterns of dominant representations? Is there evidence of subversion? The term 'cultural hegemony' could also be considered here.

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- understanding the cultural contexts which influence how various groups, issues or events are represented in the media – where are these contexts reflected in film materials studied?
- developing awareness of historical contexts exemplified by the selected products, particularly how have representations have changed and developed over time and which social forces have driven these changes.
- introducing key theories on audience responses to media products such as:
  - the differences between active and passive audiences and how these can be seen by comparing how film marketing has changed over time; is there evidence of changes in response, interpretation and positioning?
  - the relationship between media messages and audiences – what evidence is there that films and film marketing influence audiences?
  - effects theories such as cultivation theory and hypodermic syringe theory – what they are and how they have been applied to film audiences? Is there any evidence to suggest that these theories are valid?
  - reception theory – what might the preferred, negotiated and oppositional audience readings of the films be?
  - Uses and Gratifications theory – how might this be applied to the chosen materials? Where is there evidence that audiences might find entertainment, information, social interaction and a sense of personal identity within the films/ marketing materials studied?
  - discussions relating to audience contexts - how have the audience's needs and expectations changed over the years? What are the social forces that have driven these changes?

- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
  Explain how cultural and historical contexts influence the meanings in two of the film marketing materials studied. (8 marks)

- Practical activity
  - Students could create their own draft/ mock-up poster/ trailer for one of the films studied, with a particular focus on audience appeal.

## Resources

- IMDB movie trailers page
- Movie-List.com trailer archive
- CineMaterial movie poster archive

# Weeks Four and Five – Codes, Conventions and Stereotypes

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.1.2 Codes, Conventions and Genres
- 3.5.2.2 Stereotypes

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - learn the codes and conventions of media language function to create meanings.
  - explore how the choice of elements in a media product can work to create stories, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways.
  - understand how and why codes and conventions are used to establish genres
  - The appeal of genre products to producers and audiences.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - discuss the different functions and uses of stereotypes, including how they become established, how they may vary over time, positive and negative stereotypes and how stereotypes enable audiences to interpret media quickly.

## Suggested timing

4 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to the codes and conventions of media language and the functions and uses of stereotypes through the consideration and analysis of a range of advertising materials.
  - Two marketing campaigns, one from before the 1980s and one from the last six years, should be chosen.
    - These could be for the same product (e.g. a particular brand of chocolate) or covering different products of the same type (e.g. different brands of washing powder).
    - Print and moving image products should be covered; audio products or web-based materials might also be considered.
- Exercises could include:
  - deconstructing the advertising materials to identify the 'rules' of media language. For example:

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- verbal and non-verbal codes (e.g. facial expressions, pose, choice of text etc.)
- technical codes (e.g. use of saturation, cropping etc.)
- symbolic codes (e.g. connotations of colour, setting etc.)
- rules for design, layout and typography (e.g. juxtaposition, overlay, serifs etc.)
- language of moving image and photography (shot types, composition, *mise-en-scène*, digital and post-production codes, CGI etc.)
- sound (diegetic/ non-diegetic).
- examining how technological developments have impacted the relationship between the form, content and meaning in the adverts – how have they become more sophisticated over time?
- considering the ideologies in the marketing materials in terms of how they portray reality:
  - How is the media language being used to make things seem real or unreal?
  - What kinds of situations are featured?
  - How realistic (or otherwise) are they?
- exploring how repetition and variation creates genre:
  - What features do the marketing campaigns share which makes them 'generic'?
  - What might audiences expect to see when faced with adverts for particular kinds of product?
  - Has this changed over time?
- considering the factors which influence how genres develop and change:
  - Are these economic, social or simply due to shifts in audience and ideologies?
  - Where can these changes be seen in the adverts studied?
  - What explains the differences in media language when comparing similar media products produced today with those produced in different time periods?
- identifying where genre influence from other media forms (e.g. TV, film, social media, video games) has affected the adverts – is there evidence of hybridity or intertextuality?
- learning the language of stereotypes, in particular:
  - Ideas surrounding archetypes and role models
  - 'In' and 'out' groups
  - Stock characters as an element of genre
  - Ways in which stereotypes might be used within narratives (particularly in print products and short advertising clips) to create short-cuts.
  - How representations of stereotypes in adverts have changed and developed over time
  - Which social forces have driven these changes.
- analysing where stereotypes appear in the advertising materials; these should be discussed and exemplified in order that students understand the problems with and usefulness of stereotypes. What are the economic advantages for media producers of using stereotypes in adverts?

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- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
      'Adverts always use stereotypes to represent social groups positively.'
      How far do you agree with this statement? (8 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could storyboard their own 30s advert or mock up a print advert for one of the products/ product areas studied, including reference to use of stereotypes/ countertypes/ genre features.

## Resources

- [The Advertising Archives](#)
- [History of Advertising Trust](#)
- [Classic TV Ads](#)

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# Weeks Six and Seven – Narratives and Representations

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.1.3 Narrative
- 3.5.2.3 Representations in the News

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - understand how stories are structured as narratives.
  - learn forms of narrative organisation.
  - consider Propp's theory of narrative.
  - explore how narratives engage audiences.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - learn how the news media construct versions of reality
  - discuss how and why versions of the same event, person or issues may be represented differently by different news media.
  - explore how social media and user-generated material has
  - an impact on news representations

## Suggested timing

4 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to theories of narrative and representations in news through the exploration of a news story or news stories across a range of traditional and online media.
- The same news story or stories should be explored in the context of an article or articles within a print newspaper, a package on a TV news programme, and a feature on a news website operated by a different organisation to the publishers of the newspaper and the producers of the news programme.
- Exercises could include:
  - reviewing the news stories to explore how media products embody narratives by telling a story in a way that organises according to causality (why things happen), time (when things happen) and space (where things happen). Are news stories in different media organised differently?

- analysing how news media mediate the content of the narratives through application of news values, agenda-setting, bias and authenticity. For example:
    - is there any evidence of misinformation, partiality or fake news?
    - how have technological developments impacted the news media?
    - what are the implications for news media of image manipulation, CGI, user generated content and AI?
- considering how stories can be structured using various key narrative features such as exposition/ equilibrium, disruption/ disequilibrium, complication/ recognition, climax/ attempt to restore equilibrium and resolution/ new equilibrium – how do these various elements appear in the chosen news stories? Are the stories told in the same way across different media forms?
- identifying where Propp's character types (hero, villain, princess etc.)/ archetypes appear in the chosen news stories and how these characters are codified through verbal and non-verbal codes (for example, language used to describe particular individuals/ groups, choice of photograph/ moving image clip etc.) – where are the audience positioned?
- understanding how news stories are structured to engage particular audiences through use of narrative devices such as:
    - binary opposites
    - enigma codes
    - action codes
    - resolution/ closure
    - false trails
    - pathetic fallacies
    - subverting narrative expectations by challenging or undermining typical narrative conventions.

    Where can examples of these be seen in the chosen news stories (for example, through use of headlines, captions, anchorage and bias)? Are some more prevalent in specific media forms?

- developing an awareness that news media can be subjective or objective – are particular approaches evident in different media forms?
- researching the role of audiences in news gathering, as citizen journalists and within comments as well as how they can use online tools to customise news feeds (or conversely be attracted by 'clickbait'). How have technological developments influenced the representations of news events and the ability of individuals to represent themselves within news media?

- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
    Analyse how the news stories you have studied study sequence use narrative techniques to engage audiences. In your answer refer to:
        - Binary opposites
        - Resolution/ closure (8 marks).

- Practical activity
    - Students could produce their own news article, including appropriate photographs/ video clips, for use in a specific newspaper or news website.
    - They could create a short news package for a regional or national television news programme.

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# Resources

- [BBC News – newspaper front pages](#)
- [Front Pages.com](#)
- [Press Gazette – popular global news websites](#)

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# Weeks Eight and Nine – Audiences and Identities

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.2.4 Audiences and Representations
- 3.5.4.5 Audience Practices

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Representations**
  Students will:
  - understand how individuals and groups represent themselves to communicate ideas about their identity, values and beliefs.
  - consider why audiences accept or reject versions of reality presented to them by the media.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
  - learn how audience members can be active producers of media products.
  - explore ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self and audience pleasures.

## Suggested timing

4 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to ideas of audience self-representation, interpretation and identity through the consideration of the online presence of a significant person or group **and** a podcast about or produced by that person or group.
- Exercises could include:
  - exploring the roles of individuals as producers (as well as consumers) of media messages in which the self is represented:
    - How does the chosen person or group present themselves through choice of image, language and context?
    - What evidence is there of external influence on either the online presence or the content of the podcast (e.g. from sponsors or producers etc.)?
    - What opportunities exist for consumer/ audience involvement (e.g. comments, messages etc.)
    - How does the person or group respond to audience involvement (e.g. replies to messages, creation of specific content etc?)
  - decoding the social media posts/ podcast content in relation to the assumed/ target audience:

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- What is the influence of demographic variables such as age, class, gender, ethnicity on the interpretation of media representations – are particular cultural or political references used?
- How do elements such as memes, captions, music and references affect interpretation and response?
- considering how self-representation online is influenced by technological developments – how has access to a broad range of technologies allowed for the rise of user-creators?
- understanding how individuals and groups are using the resources of the internet to create products and project personal identity:
  - Are there examples of prosumers or citizen journalism in the online materials considered – do either invite more formal audience involvement than simply asking for comments?
  - How are blogging, vlogging and livestreaming used to engage audiences – are different platforms used in different ways?
  - How have changes in digital technology affected the audience's access to mass media – did the person or persons studied have a media presence which pre-dates their online output (for example, on television or radio); if so, what was it and how did the audience engage with them?
- developing an awareness of how the internet and online resources have allowed for a democratisation of media communication through more control over self-representation and identity, particularly relating to audience membership/ fandoms and the ability to interact on a global basis.
  - Where can this interaction be seen in the online materials studied?
  - How reliant are they on audience response?
- discussing the different types of pleasure audiences can derive from the online presence of individuals or groups; is this:
  - aesthetic (is there an artistic quality to the material?)
  - cerebral (does it make the audience think/ discuss?)
  - visceral (is there a pleasure attached to extreme reactions caused by the material?)
  - voyeuristic (are the audience encouraged to feel they are breaking taboos through looking/ listening to the material?)
  - vicarious (are the audience experiencing the world through the online presence?)
  - cathartic (does the audience feel a sense of emotional relief or resonance after engaging with the online presence?)

  Ultimately, why would an audience follow or even create a podcast about a particular individual/ group online – what is in it for them?

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- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
    "Explain some of the pleasures audiences get from online media products.
    In your answer, refer to at least two different forms of online media." (8 marks).

- Practical activity
  - Students could produce 2/3 posts on a blog/ vlog in role as a social media influencer (either real or fictional).
  - They could create a short podcast (or segment of a podcast) focused on a topic, individual/ group or issue which interests them.

## Resources

- [Wix – website building platform](#)
- [Blogger.com – blogging platform](#)
- [Cyberlink article – free podcasting software](#)

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# Weeks Ten and Eleven – Global Media and Audiences

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.3.3 Globalisation
- 3.5.4.2 Defining and categorising media audiences
- 3.5.4.3 Targeting

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Industries**
  Students will:
    - understand the increasingly multinational nature of media production
    - consider the relationship between national and multinational organisations, including between nation states and global media conglomerates.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
    - learn audience categories used by media industries.
    - explore types of media consumption by audiences.
    - discuss ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing and product design.
    - understanding the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s)

## Suggested timing

4 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to concepts of globalisation, audience categories and targeting of audiences through the consideration of a globally available video game or games.
- Exercises could include:
    - introducing the concept of cultural imperialism through analysis of the game's content, marketing and cultural influence – how have the ideologies and values of the game's producers had a multinational effect?
    - Researching into whether international agreements and regulations have influenced the game's distribution and marketing:
        - Is the same game rated differently in different markets?
        - Has there been any censorship?
        - How have producers made sure their game is acceptable globally?
        - What are the advantages and disadvantages of a global media culture, particularly considering the popularity of video games?

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- exploring audience segmentation in relation to geography, demography and psychography:
    - How has the game been designed to appeal to a specific group or groups?
    - Has regulation/ availability/ content/ distribution been influenced by these considerations?
- discussing how games are targeted at audience:
    - How are genre and narrative used in (for example) marketing materials, adverts, promos on sites such as the App Store, Google Play, Steam, Epic Games etc.
    - Is there any evidence of guerilla or viral marketing and (if so) how has this been used to attract the potential audience?
    - How has digital technology affected the audience's access to video games?
    - How have the conventions of other media (such as teasers, trailers etc.) been used to target audiences?
    - How do video games link with other media forms?

- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
      'Video games producers do not need to worry about international agreements or regulations since their games can be accessed anywhere.'
      How far do you agree with this statement?

      In your answer, refer to:
      - At least one globally available video game
      - Economic and technological contexts of the media. (10 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could produce a storyboard for a teaser trailer or mocked-up poster for a new (or existing) video game.
    - They could create a mocked-up store page promoting the game for an online distribution platform such as Steam or Google Play.

## Resources

- [Steam – online game store](#)
- [GameTrailers – IGN YouTube page focused on video game trailers](#)
- [PEGI homepage – European video game regulator](#)

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# Weeks Twelve to Fourteen –
# Media Organisations and Audiences

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 3.5.3.1 Ownership and Media Production
- 3.5.3.2 Convergence
- 3.5.3.4 Funding and Regulation
- 3.5.4.1 The nature and significance of the audience

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Industries**
  Students will:
  - understand the nature of media production from large and diversified multinational and national companies to smaller and more specialist producers
  - consider the effects of ownership and control of media organisations on media products
  - discuss the role and power of 'media barons'
  - explore different funding models such as state funded, not-for-profit and commercial models
  - learn about the functions and types of regulation of the media, including self-regulation and state regulation

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
  - understand the dependence of media industries on creating and continuing to satisfy audiences
  - discuss the power of audiences and the power of media content to influence audiences
  - consider how and why media products are aimed at a range of audiences, from small, specialised audiences to large mass audiences

## Suggested timing

4 hours

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# Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to the complex relationships between media industries and audiences through a case-study comparing an international media conglomerate such as Disney or Sony with a not-for-profit/ public sector media organisation such as the BBC (or local equivalent).
- Exercises could include:
  - exploring the range of products created by profit-driven conglomerates with those created by Public Service Broadcasters (PSB)/ non-profit producers:
    - Are there differences? If so, what are they and why do they exist? If not, what does this suggest about how local or national media industries compete successfully with economically powerful multinational media conglomerates?
      - For example, how reliant is Disney on franchises such as the *MCU/ Star Wars*?
      - Does the BBC have similar pressures (consider, for example, properties such as *Doctor Who* or formats such as *Strictly Come Dancing/ Dancing With The Stars*)?
  - understanding how media organisations are owned and organised:
    - Where is there evidence of concentration of ownership, diversification, vertical and horizontal integration and the influence of private/ commercial owners within the chosen conglomerate?
    - How is this different to the PSB/ non-profit – what effects does public ownership have on the way this is structured?
      - For example, how does Disney distribute its products?
      - Is the BBC similar or different?
  - learning about cross-media ownership:
    - How has the conglomerate evolved through convergence of providers, mergers/ demergers and takeovers?
    - Was the development of the chosen PSB/ non-profit different?
    - What does this show about how media industries change and develop over time?
    - What social and/or political forces might have driven these changes?
      - For example, how has Disney evolved over time – which other companies has it absorbed and why?
      - How has the BBC changed since its creation by the UK radio industry in the 1920s?
  - discussing how media industries make money through (e.g.) advertising, sponsorship, product placement, direct sales, subscription, franchising etc – where can examples of these be seen within the products created by the chosen conglomerate. How is the PSB/ non-profit funded.
    - For example, a consideration of how Disney's films make money might prove an interesting focus for discussion.
    - What are the debates surrounding the BBC's license fee and its recent move into more commercial funding (partnerships with Disney, adverts on podcasts etc.)
  - researching how are media industries regulated both locally and globally:
    - Which media industries are self-regulated and which are state-regulated?
    - How does regulation of the media industries affect global distribution as well as potential censorship or loss of freedom/ control?

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- Who is responsible for making sure material produced by media organisations is suitable for audiences?
    - For example, a study of Disney might consider the challenges it faces with relation to the growing influence of China.
    - An exploration of the BBC might consider the difficulties of maintaining an unbiased perspective in different locales as well as the requirements of OFCOM, the UK state regulator.
- identifying strategies used by media industries to stimulate and maintain audience demand e.g. creation of ongoing series or genre products.
    - For example, how has Disney used its purchase of studios such as Lucasfilm and Marvel to target audiences?
    - How has the BBC tried to build on successful brands such as *Doctor Who* or build on formats such as *The Traitors*?
- examining the significance of audience behaviour in influencing media industries, including feedback, purchasing or cancelling subscriptions, participation in content creation etc.
    - For example, is there evidence that audience pressure has caused Disney to change or even cancel products (casting decisions relating to the TV series *The Mandalorian* or the recent *Avengers* movies based on the actions of actors within those series).
    - How has the BBC responded to criticisms of its news coverage when particular figures claim bias or partiality?
- reviewing changes in audience size, particularly the shift from mass to niche audiences – why has this happened?
    - For example, recent films in the MCU have not had the same level of success as previously – is there a reason for this?
    - Audiences for BBC TV and radio have shrunk significantly on 'traditional' platforms such as TV and radio; how has the BBC responded by moving into digital and streaming services?
    - Are there still 'shared media moments and media experiences', or is the age of the mass audience over?
    - Do the media industries have a responsibility towards every different sector of society, or should some media forms be abandoned in the face of increased competition and economic viability?

- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
    Explain how media organisations are funded.
    In your answer, refer to both public ownership and private or commercial ownership. (8 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could produce a presentation or audio/ visual documentary feature investigating a chosen media organisation(s), outlining their findings and conclusions.

## Resources

- [Walt Disney Company corporate website](#)
- [About the BBC](#)
- [OFCOM homepage](#) – example of a state media regulator (UK-based).

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## Weeks Fifteen and Sixteen – Introducing Practical Production

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media
- 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
- 3.5.2.2 Stereotypes

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare media products in relation to the cultural, historical, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed.

- **Media Language**
  Students will apply knowledge of:
  - how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related.
  - how media language is used to create and communicate media messages.
  - how the medium influences the message.
  - the meanings that are communicated by media forms.
  - how the codes and conventions of media language function to create meanings.
  - how the choice of elements in a media product can work to create stories, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways.
  - how and why codes and conventions are used to establish genres.
  - how genre products appeal to producers and audiences.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will apply knowledge of:
  - ways in which the media represent (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - the relationship between ideology and representations.
  - theoretical perspectives on representation including the processes of selection, construction and mediation.
  - the ways aspects of reality may be represented differently depending on the purposes of the producers and the choices they make.
  - how and why particular social groups, individuals (including celebrities), places and issues may be under-represented or misrepresented.
  - the different functions and uses of stereotypes, including how they become established, how they may vary over time, positive and negative stereotypes and how stereotypes enable audiences to interpret media quickly.

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## Suggested timing

4 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Students will take one of the mocked-up adverts for films, products or video games created during the first fourteen weeks and develop this into an improved draft or finished product.
- This will include a submission statement which analyses how their product uses conventions appropriate to the chosen media form, and how it uses specific media language/ constructs specific representations to convey meaning to the audience.
- This activity could be expanded to act as a mock-NEA project using the NEA scheme of work by adapting one of the sample NEA briefs (or creating an equivalent), depending upon available time.
- Exercises could include:
    - reviewing the mocked-up adverts in the light of other products studied so far:
        - How do they compare with the professional products?
        - Do they meet the codes and conventions of the chosen form?
        - Is the message clear?
        - Is the narrative obvious?
        - Do they demonstrate genre conventions?
        - Are the representations clear?
        - What ideologies are being communicated – are these appropriate?
        - If stereotypes are being used, are they positive or negative?
    - exploring corporate elements such as logos, slogans, colour palettes and house styles, particularly if an existing brand or organisation is being used.
    - deciding how to improve the mocked-up adverts:
        - Could better images/ visuals be chosen?
        - Is the copy appropriate?
        - Could the layout/ format/ editing be better?
        - How might visuals be used to build representations?
        - Consider *mise-en-scène* and composition; how might this influence interpretation?
    - shooting or developing appropriate materials for a finalised piece; this might involve filming on location, taking photographs or making use of generative AI where it is impractical to acquire appropriate imagery.
    - producing and editing a polished version of the adverts using appropriate software.
    - peer- reviewing work in progress and using feedback to improve the projects.
    - writing an evaluation of the finished project, identifying how it has:
        - met the needs of the intended audience
        - used or subverted existing codes and conventions of the chosen media form
        - used specific media language to convey specific meaning
        - constructed specific representations and what the intended audience is expected to understand from these.

## Resources

- [Canva](#) – offers free online design capabilities, including limited A/V content
- [Adobe](#) Premier Elements trial – 30-day trial of Adobe video editing software. Photoshop Elements trial is also available
- [Photopea](#) – free online photo editing site

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## Selected Media Products (SMPs)

Having introduced students to the Media Studies Framework and given them a general experience of practical media techniques, it is important to focus their knowledge, understanding and analytical skills on the Selected Media Products which will form the basis of both the written examination and NEA components of the GCSE. Although you may have already used some of these during the introductory section of the course, it is essential that students are given the opportunity to explore all required media forms with reference to the Selected Media Products outlined in the specification.

Students must study at least **twelve** Selected Media Products exemplifying **six** media forms: audio, e-media, print, video, news, and advertising. In both the exam and the NEA, students need to draw on their study of these SMPs to show knowledge and understanding of the Media Studies Framework, including contexts of the media, and demonstrate their ability to analyse media products. When selecting the products for close study, schools need to consider the requirement that all four areas of the media studies framework and all four contexts of the media must be addressed across the entire suite of SMPs. See section 3.2 of the specification for further information on contexts and section 3.2.1 for details on selection parameters.

Taken as a whole, SMPs must:

- enable the study of different types of audience and different types of producer.
- provide rich and challenging opportunities for interpretation, analysis and critical understanding.
- enable the study of emerging developments and issues in the media.

When deciding how to deliver each SMP (apart from the prescribed television product), centres should consider which areas of the framework they will chose to concentrate on and how they will use the SMPs to explore content which will allow students to respond to a range of possible questions based on different areas of the specification. This will depend upon local conditions, preference, nature of student cohort and availability of materials/ products. Centres should also consider the specific contexts each set of SMPs covers (these are sometimes different depending upon the SMP).

For example, centres might choose to use the advertising SMPs as an audience-based case study, taking into account the specific cultural and historical contexts influencing the chosen adverts as well as the broader considerations of the relevant audience sections of the Media Studies Framework. However, some elements (such as the prosumer details covered in 3.4.3.5) might lend themselves better to the E-media SMP, so centres should make sure that they have mapped all the areas of coverage in Section 3 of the specification across their chosen SMPs. It is advised that each area of the Media Framework is covered by at least two sets of media forms (as well as the broader television SMP case study) and that all the sub-sections of each area are exemplified at least once.

Unless otherwise stated, all products should be contemporary. For the purposes of this specification, this means the products should have been first made available to the public audience **no more than six years** before the date of examination (e.g. SMPs for students taking their exams in **June 2026** should have been first made available to the public **after June 2020**).

It is **essential** that students study the entire Media Studies Framework through the centre's chosen SMPs, plus the prescribed television product, but it is **advisable** to supplement these

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with examples of other media products to practise analysis and to develop a full knowledge and understanding of the media studies framework including the contexts of the media.

The SMPs together with any supplementary products should be seen as a means of delivering the specification rather than as 'key texts' to be learned in detail. The teaching and learning of SMPs should foster an understanding of the interconnectedness of the four media studies framework elements and the four contexts of the media.

Centres should note that, although the chosen SMPs could be produced in any language, exam responses **must be written in English**, including **references to and quotes from** these products.

Further guidance on the selection and use of SMPs will be made available on the OxfordAQA website, oxfordaqa.com/9257.

**It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the products selected are appropriate to the age and understanding of their International GCSE Media Studies students.**

This scheme of work assumes that between 4-7 weeks (approximately 8-14 hours) will be spent on each media form, depending upon the number of SMPs, contextual considerations and coverage of the Media Studies Framework. The suggested areas for focus here are not prescriptive; centres should adapt and develop the approach which seems best to them. Specific media products have not been suggested (apart from in relation to the prescribed television case study) meaning that only general exercises have been offered.

Centres are advised that far more activities are suggested than would be possible to cover in the time available; centres should choose an approach which is most appropriate to their cohort and circumstances.

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# Weeks Seventeen to Twenty-One - Advertising (suggested areas of focus: Language and Audiences)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural and historical)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.4 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- One print or moving image advert created **before 1980**
- One **contemporary** print or moving image advert

Note: The two adverts should be **for a similar product**, but not necessarily **for the same brand of that product**. For the purposes of this scheme, it is suggested that at least one print and one moving image advert be used; more than two adverts may be studied, but this is not a requirement of this scheme.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare advertising products in relation to the cultural and historical contexts in which they are produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of advertising are outlined below.
    - How can knowledge of media language be used to make value judgements about adverts and their consumers?
    - What explains the differences in media language when comparing adverts produced today with those produced in different time periods?
    - How have the audience's needs and expectations of advertising changed over the years? What are the social forces that have driven these changes?

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
    - understand how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related.
    - consider how media language is used to create and communicate media messages in adverts.
    - discuss how the medium an advert uses influences the message.
    - learn how to analyse adverts to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
    - learn how codes and conventions of adverts function to create meanings.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
    - understand how and why adverts are aimed at a range of audiences, from small, specialised audiences to large mass audiences.
    - learn audience categories used by the advertising industries.

- consider ways in which media organisations target audiences through marketing and product design.
- explore the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s).
- apply theoretical perspectives on audiences to adverts including effects theories (e.g. hypodermic syringe/ cultivation theory), active and passive audiences, audience response and interpretation, audience positioning, reception theory, diffused audiences and Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.

# Suggested timing

10 hours

# Possible teaching and learning activities

- Introduce students to the codes, conventions and language of print and moving mage advertising (e.g. hard sell, soft sell, slogan, call to action, voiceover, jingles etc.)
- Show how adverts are designed to persuade audiences through use of a range of direct and indirect techniques.
- Explore how older adverts assumed a more passive audience model whilst contemporary advertising requires consideration of active audience theories.
- Identify how each advert uses the codes and conventions of media language to create meaning through:
    - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes.
    - consideration of any relevant technical codes.
    - analysis of symbolic codes.
    - exploration of design codes (for print) and video/ photographic codes (for moving image).
    - identifying any use of diegetic or non-diegetic sound.
- Compare the similarities and differences between the two adverts.
- Exercises could include:
    - analysing how meanings of adverts to their audiences are influenced by the media form, language and platform upon which they are found. For example, the language and conventions of print advertising are distinctive, with similarities and differences to moving image adverts. Where can these ideas be found in the SMP adverts? How are they different for the pre-1980s advert compared to the contemporary advert?
    - discussing how a media platform may also influence an audience's perception by considering each advert within its broader context - knowing where each advert was originally positioned (for example, in a particular magazine or broadcast at a particular time) can influence interpretation and meaning.
    - analysing the different messages communicated by each advert:
        - How does it aim to persuade (through verbal and non-verbal codes?)
        - Is it designed to be entertaining?
        - What information is it communicating, and how does it do this?
        - Is there an interactive element to the advert and, if so, how is this designed to 'sell' the product?
    - identifying how each advert's message is being communicated is just as important as what is communicated:
        - Are elements such as hybridity or intertextuality evident?
        - Is a broader cultural or historical knowledge needed to understand how the advert works?

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- undertaking an in-depth semiotic analysis of each advert, taking into account basic principles such as:
  - denotation and connotation
  - broader use of advertising codes
  - the use of signs, icons and symbols
  - the dominant signifiers and use of copy/ anchorage.

  Overall, the question which should be asked is: how does each advert target its audience? What are the similarities and differences?

- researching the target audiences for each advert:
  - Were they mass or niche?
  - How were the adverts designed to appeal to these audiences – should genre and narrative be considered?
  - Is there evidence that guerilla or viral marketing tactics were used?
  - How were the audience positioned?
- applying knowledge of audience categories (geographic, demographic and psychographic) – how might these have influenced the contents and messages of each advert?
- examining how the adverts are designed to appeal to audiences in either an active or a passive way though application of a range of audience theories:
  - Does the older advert demonstrate evidence of effects theories such as hypodermic syringe or cultivation theory?
  - How might a modern audience interpret adverts from this time – what different readings might they have (applying reception theory).
  - Is there any evidence of Uses and Gratifications theory being valid for either advert – how might this be applied to demonstrate how adverts are designed persuade audiences?
  - Is there any evidence of audience response (either positive or negative) – were the adverts successful? What effect, if any, did they have?

- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
    Analyse your two advertising SMP products to show how verbal and non-verbal codes create meaning.

    In your answer, refer to:
    - written or spoken language
    - facial expression. (8 marks)

- Practical activity
  - Students could create an updated version of the pre-1980s advert studied; how might this be made relevant to a 2020s audience?

## Resources

- [The Advertising Archives](#)
- [History of Advertising Trust](#)
- [Classic TV Ads](#)
- [MediaKnowAll - advertising](#)

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## Weeks Twenty-Two to Twenty-Five - Audio (suggested areas of focus: Audiences and Industries)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural, technological and historical)
- 3.5.3 Media Industries
- 3.5.4 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- one **radio station** that incorporates both music and spoken word, and the radio station's online presence
- one **podcast**, unrelated to the radio station, that incorporates both music and spoken word.

Note: at least one of the products selected should be a commercial product, i.e. should carry paid-for advertising, sponsorship or subscription. For the purposes of this scheme, it is suggested that a national PSB-run radio station and an independent commercial podcast distributed by an established podcasting network (including adverts, sponsorship bumpers and premium subscription options) made by semi-professional presenters be used. The podcast does not necessarily need to focus specifically on music (this could be bedding or music used at the beginning and/ or end of the podcast).

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare audio products in relation to the cultural, technological and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of audio are outlined below.

  - Do the audio industries have a responsibility towards every different sector of society?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of a global audio media culture?
  - How do the audio industries control the supply and demand of their products?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of controlling competition between audio industries?
  - How can local or national audio industries compete successfully with economically powerful multinational media conglomerates which produce audio?
  - How have technological developments influenced the ways in which media products are produced and distributed?
  - How have digital technologies affected traditional audio products and platforms as well as the audience's access to audio?

- **Media Industries**
  Students will:
  - understand the nature of audio production, from large and diversified multinational and national companies to smaller and more specialist producers.

- consider the impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms in relation to audio media.
- explore different funding models for the audio industries such as state funded, not-for-profit and commercial models.
- learn about the functions and types of regulation of audio, including self-regulation and state regulation.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
  - understand the dependence of audio industries on creating and continuing to satisfy audiences.
  - discuss the power of audiences and the power of audio content to influence audiences.
  - consider how and why audio products are aimed at a range of audiences, from small, specialised audiences to large mass audiences.
  - apply knowledge of audience categories used by the audio industries.
  - explore types of audio consumption by audiences.
  - review evidence of audience members as active producers of audio products
  - learn about ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self.

## Suggested timing

8 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Choose a relevant music PSB station and a contrasting podcast which includes some music. Listen to several relevant clips (although the focus is not on media language, these are useful for context).
- Research the organisations behind the radio station and the podcast – who are they and how are they funded? What is their global reach?
- Identify how audiences can access the radio station and podcast – how does this demonstrate convergence?
- Compare the industrial similarities and differences between the two audio SMPs.
- Exercises could include:
  - understanding the differences between media organisations driven by profit and those funded by the public sector?
    - Where is there evidence of these differences in the two audio SMPs?
    - What responsibilities do they have when catering to different sectors of society – does one of the audio SMPs have more reach than the other?
  - examining the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms:
    - In which different ways can the two audio SMPs be accessed?
    - Are there advantages or disadvantages to this?
    - Is one more accessible than the other?
    - Does this demonstrate influence in supply and demand of media products?
    - How have technological developments influenced the ways in which audio products are produced and distributed?
    - How have digital technologies affected the traditional radio industry?
  - learning about different funding models:

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- How do the two audio SMPs make money?
- What examples are there of advertising, sponsorship, product placement, direct sales (does the podcast, for example, offer merchandise?), subscription (are some elements of the podcast locked behind a paywall?) or franchising (does the podcast belong to a larger franchise?
- Does the podcast have spin-offs, or is it a spin-off?)
- How does the radio station fund itself?
- discussing regulation in the audio industry:
  - Is this different for the radio station and the podcast?
  - Are they state-regulated or self-regulated – what is the difference?
  - How much freedom do the organisations behind the station and the podcast have as a result?
  - What international considerations does the audio industry need to consider when making content available globally?
  - Is there any evidence of disputes over freedom, censorship and control?
  - What are the advantages and disadvantages of controlling competition?
  - How can local or national media organisations working in the audio sector compete successfully with economically powerful multinational organisations?
- researching the audiences for the radio station and the podcast:
  - What strategies are used by the radio station and podcast producers to stimulate and maintain audience demand (e.g. trailers, teasers, promotional campaigns, creation of ongoing series, competitions, opportunities for audience interaction etc.)?
  - What evidence is there of audience behaviour in influencing the producers (such as feedback, purchasing/ cancelling subscriptions, participation in content creation – can the audience get more involved with one than the other?)
- identifying different ways in which audiences can be identified by the audio industries – how are geographic, demographic and psychographic segmentation evident across the two audio SMPs? Does one have a broader reach than the other?
- examining how the two audio SMPs are consumed – is there evidence that either has a social and shared consumption (e.g. active social media engagement/ live 'listen-alongs' etc.)? Does either have a 'community' associated with it? Is audio a 'personal' rather than shared experience?
- analysing each audio product in terms of active audience engagement and how this links to identity and a sense of self:
  - How have the makers of the podcast demonstrated that they are prosumers?
  - How have the audio SMPs expanded beyond their medium – is there evidence that they have a presence on blogs or vlogs? Are they livestreamed on any platforms?
  - How are audiences provided with a sense of identity? Which fandoms are associated with the two SMPs and what pleasure do they get from the products – which different kinds of pleasure are evident?

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- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
    Explain how economic and technological contexts have influenced audience consumption of your two audio Selected Media Products (SMPs). (8 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could create three-minute pastiche of a segment from either the radio show or the podcast – this could be in the form of a script or a fully-realised audio recording, but should feature knowledge of funding (e.g. advertising/ sponsorship/ public sector responsibilities) and audience (e.g. interactive elements/ competitions/ shout-outs etc.)

## Resources

- [Cyberlink article – free podcasting software](#)
- [Listen Notes – podcast search engine](#)
- [World Radio Map – global AM and FM radio station search engine](#)

## Weeks Twenty-Six to Thirty - News
## (suggested areas of focus:
## Media Language, Representation and Audiences)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural, economic, technological and historical)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.2 Media Representations
- 3.5.4 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- **The same news story** across a range of media, including at least one **national or regional newspaper**, one **television news programme** and **one news website** that is separate and distinct from the newspaper and TV news programme

Note: more than one news story could be covered, although the chosen stories should be followed across the three media forms identified above. Stories should be from within the last six years. More than one example of each form could be considered, although this is not required. Other forms could be considered (e.g. radio news) but again this is not required. For the purposes of this scheme, it is suggested that a national right-wing tabloid newspaper, a national PSB-run (politically unbiased) TV news programme and a globally available left-wing news website with comments and audience interaction be used. The story should include a well-known national figure and has a political dimension.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare news products in relation to the cultural, economic, historical and technological contexts in which they are produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of news are outlined below.
  - How do audiences use knowledge of media language to make value judgements when engaging with news media?
  - What are the economic reasons for the emergence of media language forms in news media that are global rather than regional or local?
  - How have technological developments impacted the relationship between the form, content and meaning of news media?
  - 'Culture wars' are often fought over the ways in which various groups, issues or events are represented in the media. How are these disputes reflected in the news SMPs?
  - What are the economic advantages for news producers of using stereotypes and over-simplified or misleading representations?
  - How have representations in news media changed and developed over time? What are the social forces that have driven these changes?

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- How have technological developments influenced the representations of news events as well as the ability of individuals featured in news stories to represent themselves?
- How have the audience's needs and expectations of news media changed over the years? What are the social forces that have driven these changes?
- How have digital technologies affected traditional media products and platforms as well as the audience's access to news media?

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - understand how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related through the comparison of the three different news stories.
  - consider how the media language of news is used to create and communicate media messages.
  - discuss how the different media used by news influences the message.
  - learn how to analyse news media products to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
  - consider how the choice of elements in a news media product can work to create stories, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways.
  - explore how news stories are structured as narratives, including forms of narrative organisation and applying the ideas of Vladimir Propp.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - understand the ways in which the news media represent (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - explore the relationship between ideology and representations.
  - discuss the power of audiences and the power of news media content to influence audiences.
  - consider theoretical perspectives on representation including the processes of selection, construction and mediation.
  - learn about the ways aspects of reality may be represented differently in news stories depending on the purposes of the producers and the choices they make, including how and why particular social groups, individuals (including celebrities), places and issues may be under-represented or misrepresented.
  - examine the different functions and uses of stereotypes in news media, particularly positive and negative stereotypes and how these enable audiences to interpret news quickly.
  - discover how the news media construct versions of reality and how and why versions of the same event, person or issues may be represented differently by different news media.
  - research how social media and user-generated material has an impact on news representations.
  - learn how individuals and groups represent themselves within news media to communicate ideas about their identity, values and beliefs – what is the role of individuals as producers (as well as consumers) of media messages in which the self is represented?
  - understand why audiences accept or reject versions of reality presented to them by news media.

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- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
  - apply knowledge of audience categories used by news media industries.
  - explore ways in which news media organisations target audiences through marketing and product design, understanding the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s).
  - apply theoretical perspectives on audiences of news including effects theories (e.g. hypodermic syringe/ cultivation theory), active and passive audiences, audience response and interpretation, audience positioning, reception theory, diffused audiences and Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.

# Suggested timing

10 hours

# Possible teaching and learning activities

- Choose an appropriate news story which meets all the parameters outlined in the specification, making sure that this is accessible in your region.
- Introduce students to the codes, conventions and language of news media (e.g. headlines, sub-headings, captions, interviews, scoops, 'below the line' comments) including some consideration of genre (broadsheet, tabloid etc.) and representational issues (bias, objectivity, subjectivity, partiality and 'fake news').
- Learn about news values, news agendas, newsworthiness, gatekeeping and bias in the news as well as how the news used stereotypes in a positive or negative way.
- Examine how news stories are influenced by the values and ideologies of their producers – considering how and why versions of the same event, person or issues may be represented differently by different news media.
- Identify how each version of the story uses the codes and conventions of news media to create meaning through:
  - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes.
  - consideration of any relevant technical codes.
  - analysis of symbolic codes.
  - exploration of design codes (for print) and video/ photographic codes (for moving image).
  - identifying any use of diegetic or non-diegetic sound and interactive features.

  Within this, a review of how different audiences are targeted by different news media should be undertaken – how are the different approaches taken by different news providers designed to attract different groups and what assumptions (e.g. about social interest and political affiliation) are being made?

- Compare the similarities and differences between the three versions of the story, including narrative structure and representations of reality.
- Exercises could include:
  - exploring the differences between the three media forms: which features are shared and which are unique to each platform? How might these influence audiences?  For example:
    - Does the television report have more impact that the newspaper article?
    - Which version of the story provides the most information?
    - How do the print and online versions of the story compare – is one more influential than the other?

- How is meaning affected by the story's positioning on different media – what effect does access to photographs, video, audio or interactive content have on audiences?
- analysing the different ways in which the same message can be communicated in different – is one platform more persuasive, informative, entertaining or interactive than the others?
- undertaking an in-depth semiotic analysis of each version of the story taking into account:
    - basic principles such as denotation and connotation.
    - broader use of news codes and conventions.
    - the use of signs, icons and symbols - do the same things have different meanings in different versions of the story?
    - the dominant signifiers and use of copy/ anchorage.

    Overall, the question which should be asked is: how does each version of the story target its audience? How is ambiguity reduced?

- learning about how the choice of elements in a news story can work to create narratives, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways. For example:
    - How have the different social and political ideological positions of the producers influenced the way the story is told?
    - How trustworthy is the story – how real or unreal does it seem?
    - How is the celebrity represented – what similarities and differences can be identified?
- analysing and comparing each story in relation to its narrative features. For example:
    - Is each version told in the same way (are they organised according to the same combination of causality, time and space, or are there differences?)
    - Are the stories structured in the same way (for example, do they share the same equilibrium/ disequilibrium/ new equilibrium) or has this been influenced by the news provider's ideological stance?
    - Are Propp's character archetypes and quest narratives recognisable within each story and, if so, do they map to the same functions and spheres (e.g. is the hero the same in each story, or is the hero of the right-wing tabloid the villain of the left-wing website?)
- identifying why representations in some versions of the story might seem more truthful or realistic – can any news source be considered to be 'a window on the world'? Are news media ever authentic?
- applying Stuart Hall's encoding/ decoding approach to the stories – what evidence is there of selection and omission when all three versions of the story are considered? How does this demonstrate how the news media mediate reality?
- exploring the use of stereotypes within the articles. For example:
    - Which stereotypes are evident?
    - Are they positive (used as role models or examples of 'in' groups) or are they negative (problematic or representative of 'out' groups)?
    - How might these connect to narrative structure and audience interpretation?
    - Do different news platforms use stereotypes differently?
- researching why the different news providers might represent the same event in different ways. For example:
    - What are the producers' purposes?

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- How and why are they trying to persuade their audiences to have a particular point of view?
- how are they trying to position their audiences?
- how have the stories been structured to achieve this?

As a part of this, a deeper understanding of news values, agenda setting and partiality/ impartiality is essential. There may be scope to discuss fake news and misinformation, depending upon the sources chosen.

- examining how the three versions of the story invite audience interaction.
  - Is there evidence of citizen journalism (are members of the audience invited to contribute through (e.g.) provision of a journalist's email address)?
  - Are RSS/ social media links provided to allow for audiences to customise their news feeds or engage with the story online?
  - Does the news website use 'below the line' comments and, if so, what sort of audience engagement is evident there?
  - Do any of the news sources demonstrate use of 'clickbait' to draw traffic to their online versions?
- identifying examples of individuals as producers (as well as consumers) of news stories in which the self is represented – where have members of the audience responded or had an opportunity to reply? Is this possible with traditional news media?
- considering the influence of demographic variables such as age, class, gender, ethnicity on the interpretation of media representations – are different groups likely to respond differently to news on different platforms?
- applying knowledge of audience categories (geographic, demographic and psychographic) – how might these have influenced the contents and messages of each news story?
- discussing how the news stories were designed to appeal to audiences in either an active or a passive way though application of a range of audience theories. For example:
  - Do any of the stories demonstrate evidence of effects theories such as hypodermic syringe or cultivation theory?
  - What different readings might they have to different audiences (applying reception theory).
  - Is there any evidence of elements of Uses and Gratifications theory being valid for the stories beyond providing information – how might this be applied to demonstrate how the news stories were designed to influence audiences?
  - What was the audience response (either positive or negative)?

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- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
    'The news media depend on audience interaction to remain relevant.'
    How far do you agree with this statement?

        In your answer, refer to:
        - At least two of your news Selected Media Products (SMPs)
        - Historical and technological contexts of the media. (20 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could take a contemporary news story and create two different versions – an article for a left-wing tabloid and a page on a right-wing website (or equivalent TV news programme).

## Resources

- Canva – offers free online design capabilities, including limited A/V content
- Adobe Premier Elements trial – 30-day trial of Adobe video editing software. Photoshop Elements trial is also available
- Photopea – free online photo editing site
- Wix – website building platform
- Front Pages.com
- Press Gazette – popular global news websites

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## Weeks Thirty-One to Thirty-Five – Print
## (suggested areas of focus:
## Media Language, Representation and Industries)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural and economic)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.2 Media Representations
- 3.5.3 Media Industries

Students should cover:

- **One magazine** focusing on **the arts or entertainment** or **lifestyle/leisure**, plus the magazine's online presence represented by **at least one website or two social media feeds**

Note: more than one magazine could be covered, although coverage should include the online presence outlined above. Magazines should have been published within the last six years. It is suggested that the following elements be considered: the front cover, contents page and at least two double page spreads from the same issue; the homepage and at least other page from the magazine's website; the magazine's Instagram and Facebook feeds (at least three posts from each). For the purposes of this scheme, it is suggested that a magazine focusing on entertainment, specifically movies or video games, be used. The magazine should be produced by a media conglomerate or large producer such as Bauer, Hearst or Condé Nast.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse, discuss and compare magazines in relation to the cultural and economic contexts in which they are produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of magazines are outlined below.
  - How do audiences use knowledge of media language to make value judgements when engaging with magazines in print and online?
  - What are the economic reasons for the emergence of media language forms in magazines that are global rather than regional or local?
  - How have technological developments impacted the relationship between the form, content and meaning of news media?
  - 'Culture wars' are often fought over the ways in which various groups, issues or events are represented in the media. How are these disputes reflected in the magazine SMPs (print and online)?
  - What are the economic advantages for magazine producers of using stereotypes and over-simplified or misleading representations?

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- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - understand how media forms, media language, media platforms and media audiences are related through the comparison of the print and online versions of the magazine.
  - discuss how the different media used by magazines influences the message.
  - learn how to analyse magazines in print and online to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
  - consider how the codes and conventions of magazines function to create meanings in print and online.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - understand the ways in which the magazines represent (rather than simply present) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - learn about the ways aspects of reality may be represented differently in print and online versions of magazines depending on the purposes of the producers and the choices they make.

- **Media Industries:**
  Students will:
  - consider the effects of ownership and control of media organisations on magazines.
  - explore the impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms.
  - discuss the increasingly multinational nature of media production.

# Suggested timing

10 hours

# Possible teaching and learning activities

- Choose an appropriate magazine which meets all the parameters outlined in the specification, making sure that this is accessible in your region (including the online presence). In this case, the magazine is a film magazine published by BMG which has an active online presence. *This example is the focus of these activities and not an example that has to be used.*
- Introduce students to the codes, conventions and language of magazines, websites and social media (e.g. mastheads, coverlines, straplines, headings, standfirsts, banners, links, hashtags, likes, shares etc.) including some consideration of industrial contexts (other similar products produced by the publisher).
- Identify how each aspect of the magazine's presence uses the codes and conventions of different media forms to create meaning through:
  - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes.
  - consideration of any relevant technical codes.
  - analysis of symbolic codes.
  - exploration of design codes (for print) and video/ photographic codes (for online)
  - identification of any use of diegetic or non-diegetic sound and interactive features (comments etc.)

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Within this, a consideration of how different audiences are targeted by different platforms should be undertaken – how are the different approaches taken by the publisher designed to attract different groups and what assumptions (e.g. about cultural interest and economic situation) are being made?

- Compare the similarities and differences between the three iterations of the magazine.
- Research the publisher of the magazine – what other media does it operate it in? What reputation does it have?
- Exercises could include:
  - understanding the differences between the three media forms: which features are shared and which are unique to each platform? How might these influence audiences? For example:
    - Does the online version of the magazine have more impact that the print version?
    - How do the print and online versions of the magazine compare – is one more influential than the others?
    - How is meaning affected by the magazine's positioning on different media – what effect does access to photographs, video, audio or interactive content have on audiences?
  - undertaking an in-depth semiotic analysis of each version of the magazine taking into account basic principles such as:
    - denotation and connotation as well as broader use of magazine codes and conventions, particularly how these translate from print media to online.
    - use of signs, icons and symbols -  do the same things have different meanings in different versions of the magazine?
    - dominant signifiers and use of copy/ anchorage.

    Overall, the question which should be asked is: how does each version of the magazine target its audience?

  - analysing why representations in some versions of the magazine might seem more truthful or realistic than others:
    - Can any magazine be 'a window on the world'?
    - Are magazines ever authentic?
    - Do different platforms have more or less authenticity than others?
  - researching why magazines might represent people, places or things in a particular way:
    - What are the producers' purposes?
    - How and why are they trying to persuade their audiences to have a particular point of view?
    - How are they trying to position their audiences?
    - How have the stories been structured to achieve this.
    - Do different platforms have different effects?
  - understanding the effects of ownership and control on magazine production:
    - Is the company behind the magazine a conglomerate?
    - Who is in charge and what influence do they have on the magazine's content?
    - Does it demonstrate evidence of concentration of ownership (e.g. does it publish other magazines of the same type?)
    - Is there any evidence of diversification or horizontal/ vertical integration?

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- discussing the effects of convergence across the different versions of the magazine on different platforms – does the publisher demonstrate evidence of cross-media ownership or provider convergence?
- reviewing the publisher's international profile:
  - What is its global presence?
  - Is there any evidence of cultural imperialism within the magazine (for example, an assumption that the values or media of a particular country should be shared?)
  - Has the publisher ever been involved in any regulatory issues or international disagreements with nation states?

- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
    Explain how cultural and economic contexts influence the meanings in your two print Selected Media Products (SMPs). (8 marks)

- Practical activity
  - Students could mock up the cover of an appropriate magazine and create the equivalent website homepage or relevant posts on a social media platform supporting the magazine's publication.

## 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)

## Year Two

## Overview for year two

- NEA project
- In-depth studies of TV, Film and E-media SMPs

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# Weeks One to Fifteen – NEA

## 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

Students should cover:

- Creation of a media product and Submission Statement based on one of six briefs set by OxfordAQA.

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 which they have the resources to support (e.g. if video editing software is not availed, the video brief should not be chosen). The length or duration of each production will be specified within the brief. Products should be presented as complete – drafts, planning or research should not be submitted.

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.

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 creation of a cohesive series of products, as required by the chosen brief.

A detailed scheme of work is available separately covering the **Print** NEA brief.

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## 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.

## Suggested timing

30 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

This model uses the **Print** NEA brief. A more detailed scheme of work that is based around the below broad model is available separately.

- Weeks One to Three – Research
- Weeks Four to Six – Planning
- Week Seven – Production: Images
- Week Eight – Production: Front Cover
- Week Nine - Production: Contents Page
- Weeks Ten and Eleven – Production: Double Page Spread

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- Week Twelve – Production: Review
- Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen – Submission Statement
- Week Fifteen – Final Amendments

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## Weeks Sixteen to Twenty-Two - TV
## (suggested areas of focus: Media Studies Framework)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural, economic, technological and historical)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.2 Media Representations
- 3.5.3 Media Industries
- 3.5.3 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- *Doctor Who*, 'Kerblam!', Series 11, Episode 7 (BBC, 2018).

Note: This episode will be the focus of the assessment in Section A of the examination. Questions will focus on **both** a selected 2–3-minute study sequence in the episode and the episode in its entirety. Students should therefore be given the opportunity to examine short extracts from the episode as part of their broader studies. Additionally, this Selected Media Product (SMP) fulfils the same role as all other SMPs in Sections B and C, so could be used (or referred to) anywhere in the examination. Although not a requirement, for the purpose of this scheme, there is some consideration of the history of *Doctor Who* and additional extracts from other episodes of the programme are used to add context.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse and discuss *Doctor Who* in relation to the cultural, economic, historical and technological contexts in which it was produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of *Doctor Who* are outlined below.
    - How do audiences use knowledge of media language to make value judgements when engaging with TV dramas?
    - What are the economic reasons for the emergence of media language forms in TV dramas that are global rather than regional or local?
    - How successful (or otherwise) has the BBC been in resisting economic pressures to use global conventions of media language?
    - What explains the differences in media language when comparing *Doctor Who* in 2018 with versions of the programme produced in earlier time periods?
    - How has *Doctor Who* used image manipulation and CGI?
    - What are the economic advantages for the producers of *Doctor Who* of using stereotypes and over-simplified representations?
    - How have representations in TV drama changed and developed over time? What are the social forces that have driven these changes? Do these link to the BBC's responsibility for social inclusion?
    - Has *Doctor Who* benefitted from being part of a global media culture?
    - Does the BBC offer advantages or disadvantages on a global level?

- How has technological development influenced the ways *Doctor Who* is produced and distributed?

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - analyse the episode of *Doctor Who* to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
  - apply codes and conventions of television drama to understand how meaning is created.
  - consider how the choice of elements in *Doctor Who* works to create stories, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways.
  - learn how and why codes and conventions are used to establish genres, including discussion of the appeal of genre products to producers and audiences
  - explore in detail how the narrative of *Doctor Who* is structured, including narrative organisation, applying the ideas of Vladimir Propp and considering how the narrative engages the audience.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - understand the ways in which *Doctor Who* represents (rather than simply presents) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - explore the relationship between ideology and representations within the episode of *Doctor Who*.
  - consider how and why particular social groups, individuals, places and issues are represented (or misrepresented) in *Doctor Who*
  - examine the different functions and uses of stereotypes in the episode of *Doctor Who*, particularly positive and negative stereotypes, how these were established and how they have varied over time

- **Media Industries:**
  Students will:
  - research the BBC as a media producer, considering the importance of *Doctor Who* as a brand and how the BBC functions as a publicly-owner media organisation; how does *Doctor Who* generate income for the BBC through different funding models in different territories?
  - consider the increasingly international nature of the BBC and its relationships with domestic and global states and competitors.
  - explore how the BBC is regulated in the UK – how independent is it?

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
  - consider the BBC's dependence on creating and continuing to satisfy audiences – how does *Doctor Who* fit into this? What power do the audience have over the BBC to influence content?
  - discuss whether *Doctor Who* is an example of a mass or niche product (or, depending on locale, both)
  - apply knowledge of audience categories used by the TV industries – who watches *Doctor Who* and how do the BBC know? How is *Doctor Who* consumed?

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- explore ways in which the BBC targets audiences through marketing and the way *Doctor Who* has been designed (in relation to narrative and genre), understanding the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s).
- apply theoretical perspectives on audiences to *Doctor Who* including effects theories (e.g. hypodermic syringe/ cultivation theory), active and passive audiences, audience response and interpretation, audience positioning, reception theory, diffused audiences and Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.
- research *Doctor Who* in relation to the ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self – what audience pleasures (particularly linked to audience membership and fandom) are evident?

# Suggested timing

14 hours

# Possible teaching and learning activities

- Watch the specified episode and have some understanding of how it fits within the overall franchise/series – a basic overview of the concept of *Doctor Who* would be helpful.
- Understand that TV remains one of the most popular global media forms, with the ability to watch streamed programmes on a variety of devices allowing television to remain an important and highly relevant medium – consider how *Doctor Who* uses convergent technologies to reach a wide audience (for example, the BBC iPlayer, Blu-Ray releases etc.)
- Introduce students to the codes, conventions and language of moving image (e.g. shots, edits, camera movement, *mise-en-scene*, CGI etc.) including some consideration of genre conventions (particularly sci-fi/ fantasy) and representational issues (for example, stereotypes, countertypes, ideologies etc.) This might be achieved through watching and analysing shorter 2–3-minute extracts from the episode.
- Identify how *Doctor Who* uses the codes and conventions of visual media to create meaning through:
    - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes.
    - consideration of relevant technical codes.
    - analysis of symbolic codes
    - exploration of video/ photographic codes
    - identification of diegetic or non-diegetic sound.

    Within this, a consideration of how different audiences are targeted by *Doctor Who* should be undertaken – how is the programme designed to attract different groups and what assumptions (e.g. about cultural interests and social attitudes) are being made? What pleasures might the audience be expected to get from watching *Doctor Who*? This might be achieved through watching and analysing shorter 2–3-minute extracts from the episode.

- Discuss the narrative structure of the story and representations of reality – can science fiction ever be 'realistic'?
- Consider *Doctor Who* in terms of its value as a brand to the BBC – some awareness of *Doctor Who*'s cultural significance and its history might be useful.
- Research the BBC and consider how *Doctor Who* fits its PSB remit. Some awareness of the current partnership between the BBC, Sony and Disney in the current version of

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*Doctor Who* might be considered.

- Exercises could include:
    - briefly considering the unique qualities of television as a form and platform:
        - What are its individual qualities (for example: length of episodes, episodic structure, positioning as an individual/ shared audience experience)
        - What makes TV distinctive from other media?
    - undertaking an in-depth semiotic analysis of the episode considering basic principles such as:
        - denotation and connotation as well as broader use of TV drama codes and conventions.
        - use of signs, icons and symbols; which elements of *Doctor Who* have become iconic?
        - dominant signifiers – how does the episode create meaning.

        Students might also undertake analyses of 2-3-minute extracts in preparation for the exam. Overall, the question which should be asked is: how does the episode target its audience? Is any element ambiguous (e.g. audience response to Kerblam! as a company) and, if so, how is ambiguity reduced?

    - learning about how the choice of elements in a TV drama can work to create narratives, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways. For example:
        - How has the ideological position of the BBC and the programme's producers influenced the narrative and representations?
        - What point of view does the episode appear to present – which characters are we positioned with and how?

        Considering the fantastical nature of *Doctor Who*, how have the producers used media language to make things seem real (or unreal) and why might some of the representations seem more realistic than others?

    - analysing the episode (and shorter extracts from it) in relation to narrative features. For example:
        - How is the story organised (is there a clear sense of causality, time and space, or is this presented in an unusual way – e.g. the lack of context for the dramatic opening?)
        - How is the narrative structured - what is the equilibrium/ disequilibrium/ new equilibrium? Is there more than one complication? Is the resolution satisfying?
        - Are Propp's character archetypes and quest narratives recognisable within the episode and, if so, how are they being used (e.g. who is the hero? Who is the villain? Is the way these characters are presented surprising for the audience?
    - developing an understanding of how codes and conventions establish genre conventions, and why genre appeals to producers and audiences. For example:
        - Where does *Doctor Who* demonstrate principles of repetition and variation (e.g. the sci-fi trope of space travel combined with the unusual setting of a warehouse with robot postmen)?
        - What factors have influenced these changes – are they economic (would this affect the BBC?), cultural (does there seem to be an influence from other genre products?) or audience-led (is there evidence of other similar changes being demanded by sci-fi/ fantasy audiences?).

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- - Is there evidence of hybridity in *Doctor Who* (for example, do the Doctor's younger assistants link the TV show to the teen drama genre?
  - Are there elements of soap opera or comedy?
  - Is there any evidence of intertextuality, either with other TV shows or with earlier versions of *Doctor Who* (for example, the reference to the fez, which is a callback to an episode several years earlier).
- exploring how the narrative is designed to engage the audience through identification of:
  - binary opposites (e.g. the Doctor vs their unknown enemy).
  - exploration of enigma and action codes (e.g. the mystery of who is behind the disappearances, the dramatic ending).
  - discussion of the resolution (and whether this is satisfying for the audience – is the villain's fate deserved?)
  - how false trails are laid (particularly relating to the identity of the villain)
  - the use of pathetic fallacies (particularly through the use of characters and soundtrack).
  - whether or not narrative expectations are subverted – is the episode predictable, or are 'typical' narrative conventions challenged?
- analysing how and why particular social groups (for example, the Kerblam! employees, the Doctor's party), individuals, places and issues are represented in relation to dominant social values (for example, the suspicion of the mega-corp represented by Kerblam! as an Amazon substitute).
  - Where are there examples of dominant representations (for example, the male boss) and subversive representations (for example, the female Doctor)?
  - How does the episode, and *Doctor Who* as a whole, demonstrate cultural hegemony (for example, the use of female, global majority and older characters in contrast with previous versions of the programme).
- reviewing the use of stereotypes within the episode (and within shorter extracts):
  - Which stereotypes are evident?
  - Are they positive (used as role models or examples of 'in' groups, for example the nice HR boss) or are they negative (problematic or representative of 'out' groups, for example, the 'nasty' boss)?
  - How might these connect to narrative structure and audience interpretation?
  - Could any of these characters be regarded as genre stereotypes, or is *Doctor Who* trying to challenge these?
- researching the BBC as an example of a state-funded, not-for-profit national Public Service Broadcaster with global reach.
  - Some consideration might be given to the BBC's more recent collaborations with other companies in the production *Doctor Who* as well as the broader issues arising from the creation of programmes for international audiences and the convergence of broadcast and online platforms for television.
  - What is the BBC's reputation in different global markets, and how does *Doctor Who* fit into that?
  - How does *Doctor Who* generate income for the BBC in the UK (through merchandising and licensing) and globally (through sales and opportunities for franchising)?
- identifying how television programmes such as *Doctor Who* are regulated on different platforms and for different markets (e.g. broadcast, on-demand, video, internationally) in a multi-channel, multi-platform TV landscape

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- examining how *Doctor Who* demonstrates the relationship between audiences and media industries:
    - Why has the BBC continued to produce *Doctor Who* after 60 years?
    - What strategies has the BBC used to stimulate and maintain audience demand (publicity materials as well as spin-offs and other related products might be reviewed)?
    - Does *Doctor Who*'s audience influence its content, and if so, how?
- applying knowledge of audience categories (geographic, demographic and psychographic):
    - how might these have influenced the contents and messages of *Doctor Who*?
    - how is *Doctor Who* consumed by its audience – what evidence is there of social and shared consumption (e.g. theatrical screenings, watch parties)?
- researching the ways in which the BBC target *Doctor Who*'s audience through marketing and product design – are any trailers or teasers available for the episode? Is there any evidence of guerilla or viral marketing?
- identifying how the episode is designed to appeal to audiences in either an active or a passive way though application of a range of audience theories. For example:
    - Is there any evidence of effects theories such as hypodermic syringe or cultivation theory?
    - What different readings might *Doctor Who* have to different audiences (applying reception theory)?
    - How might Uses and Gratifications theory be applied when considering audience pleasures, particularly entertainment and personal identity?
    - What other pleasures might the audience get from *Doctor Who* (aesthetic, cerebral etc.)
- researching *Doctor Who* fandom, audience membership and identity.
    - Why is the programme so popular?
    - How does fandom express itself when discussing *Doctor Who*?
    - How was this episode received by fans? Chris Chibnall, the showrunner, was a professed fan of *Doctor Who* before taking over the show – does *Doctor Who* have a history of fans being involved in its production?
    - How has *Doctor Who* inspired a broader prosumer culture – what evidence is there of blogs, vlogs and podcasts dedicated to the show, or even the episode?

- Written activity
    - Students could answer the following question:
    'Media products always present a mediated version of reality.'
    How far do you agree with this statement?
    In your answer, refer to:
        - The representations in the *Doctor Who* episode 'Kerblam!'
        - The representations in any one of your other Selected Media Products (SMPs). (20 marks)

- Practical activity
    - Students could create a short documentary/ article focused on the history of *Doctor Who*, or a 'behind the scenes' feature/ video review of *'Kerblam!'*

# Resources

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- *Doctor Who* – 'Kerblam!' (BBC iPlayer – may not be available internationally)
- Official BBC Doctor Who website
- Doctor Who fansite overview of 'Kerblam!'
- Doctor Who fansite history of *Doctor Who*

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# Weeks Twenty-Three to Twenty-Six - Film
# (suggested areas of focus: Media Studies Framework)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural, economic, technological and historical)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.2 Media Representations
- 3.5.3 Media Industries
- 3.5.3 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- One film produced and made available to the public between 1960 and 2000

Note: this is effectively a historical case study and some elements will naturally present themselves in contrast to other SMPs, particularly in relation to considerations of representations and audiences. Although any film from the relevant period could be chosen, it is suggested that a film of a similar genre to *Doctor Who* (e.g. science fiction/ fantasy) be chosen. It is also suggested (although again not a requirement) that the film chosen has a relevance for a 21st Century audience (for example, part of a continuing franchise or original version of a subsequent remake). For the purpose of this scheme, the film chosen is a classic 1970s science fiction movie which started a franchise still popular at the current time; the film will be screened in its entirety outside of lessons and there will be some tangential consideration of the film's ongoing appeal as part of broader contextual understanding.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse and discuss the selected film in relation to the cultural, economic, historical and technological contexts in which it was produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study of the film are outlined below.
  - How does the film use media language to create identities for different groups and cultures?
  - What are the economic reasons for the emergence of media language forms in films that are global rather than regional or local?
  - How successful (or otherwise) has the film industry been in resisting economic pressures to use global conventions of media language?
  - What explains the differences in media language when comparing the selected film with similar media products produced today?
  - How does the technology used in the film effect audience response?
  - How does the representations of groups, issues and events in the film compare to issues raised during to modern 'culture wars'?
  - What economic advantages might the producers of the film have had through the use of stereotypes and over-simplified representations?

- How have the representations seen in the film changed and developed over time? Are the representations in the film now out of date? What were the social forces that have driven these changes?
- Has the film benefitted from being part of, or even contributed to, a global media culture?
- How has the film industry changed since the chosen film was released? What social and political forces drove these changes?
- How were films produced and distributed when the chosen film was released? How is this different now?
- How did the film contribute to global culture and values? Does it have the same effect now?
- Does the film demonstrate audience control of media industries through economic power or exploitation of audiences by profit-hungry media conglomerates?
- What were the audience's needs and expectations when the film was released, how have these changed over time and what social forces drove these changes?
- How has digital technology affected the audience's access to the film?

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - understand audience expectations of film as a form and platform.
  - analyse the film to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
  - apply codes and conventions of film to understand how meaning is created.
  - consider how the choice of elements in the film work to create stories, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways.
  - learn how and why codes and conventions are used to establish genres, including discussion of the appeal of genre products to producers and audiences.
  - explore in detail how the narrative of the film is structured, including narrative organisation, applying the ideas of Vladimir Propp and consideration of how the narrative engages the audience.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - understand the ways in which the film represents (rather than simply presents) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - explore the relationship between ideology and representations within the film.
  - consider how and why particular social groups, individuals, places and issues are represented (or misrepresented) in the film.
  - examine the different functions and uses of stereotypes in the film, particularly positive and negative stereotypes, how these were established and how they have varied over time.

- **Media Industries:**
  Students will:
  - research the studio behind the film; does it still exist and if so how does it fit into the current media landscape? Was it or is it part of a conglomerate? How does this demonstrate concentration of ownership and horizontal/ vertical integration? Is there any evidence of the influence of 'media barons'?
  - consider whether the film offers any insight into the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms.

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- explore how the film demonstrates the increasingly multinational nature of media production, particularly evidence of cultural imperialism.
- understand how films are regulated in different territories.
- learn how films are funded and how they generate income.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
    - consider how the film demonstrated the industries dependence on creating and continuing to satisfy audiences – how did the film achieve this? What is the relationship between film studios and audiences, and how does the film fit into this?
    - discuss whether the film is an example of a mass or niche product (or if, since its release, its audience profile has changed).
    - explore ways in which the film targeted audiences through marketing and the way it was designed (in relation to narrative and genre), understanding the assumptions the film industry made about its audience at the time the film was produced.
    - apply theoretical perspectives on audiences to the film including effects theories (e.g. hypodermic syringe/ cultivation theory), active and passive audiences, audience response and interpretation, audience positioning, reception theory, diffused audiences and Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.
    - research the film in relation to the ways in which people's media practices are connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self – what audience pleasures (particularly linked to audience membership and fandom) are evident?

## Suggested timing

8 hours (plus time to watch the film)

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Watch the film (or selected moments), and have some understanding of its historical importance:
    - How has it contributed to film and the wider media (for example, was it part of or did it launch an ongoing franchise?)
    - Has it been remade, or has it developed a cross-media presence in other forms such as TV, gaming etc?
- Understand that film remains one of the most popular global media forms, with the ability to watch streamed movies on a variety of devices allowing film to remain an important and highly relevant medium – consider how the film industry uses convergent technologies to reach a wide audience (for example, streaming platforms, Blu-Ray releases etc.)
- Allow students to apply their knowledge of the codes, conventions and language of moving image (e.g. shots, edits, camera movement, *mise-en-scene*, CGI etc.) to an analysis of sequences from the film, including some consideration of genre conventions (in this case sci-fi/ fantasy) and representational issues (for example, stereotypes, countertypes, ideologies etc.)
- Identify how the film uses the codes and conventions of visual media to create meaning through:
    - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes
    - consideration of relevant technical codes

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- analysis of symbolic codes
- exploration of video/ photographic codes
- identification of any use of diegetic or non-diegetic sound.

Within this, a consideration of how different audiences were (and are) targeted by the film should be undertaken – how was the film designed to attract different groups and what assumptions (e.g. about cultural interests and social attitudes) were made? What pleasures might the audience have been expected to get from watching the film? Are these different now?

- Discuss the narrative structure of the story and representations of reality – can genre movies (in this case science fiction) ever be 'realistic'?
- Review the film in terms of its value as a brand to the studio which made it – how has this value evolved over time? How significant is the brand in the 21st century?
- Research the studio which made the film and consider how it has changed since the film was released – does it still exist? Has it become part of a bigger conglomerate? What did the film contribute to the studio's reputation? Were particular 'media barons' involved in the creation and development of the film?
- Exercises could include:
  - briefly considering the unique qualities of film as a form and platform:
    - What are its identifying qualities (for example, length, structure, positioning as a shared audience experience)
    - What makes film distinctive from other media?
  - undertaking an in-depth semiotic analysis of the film using basic principles such as:
    - denotation and connotation
    - film codes and conventions
    - signs, icons and symbols - what elements of the film have become iconic, if any?
    - dominant signifiers should be discussed – how does the film create meaning? Is the meaning to a 21st century audience the same as it had for its original audience?

      Overall, the question which should be asked is: how did the film target its audience and how is it received now? Is any element ambiguous and, if so, how is ambiguity reduced? Does it have the same effect now as it had when first released? Why?

  - learning about how the choice of elements in a film can work to create narratives, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways. For example:
    - How did the ideological position of the producers influence the narrative and representations?
    - What point of view does the film appear to present – which characters are we positioned with and how?
    - How was this influenced by the film's historical context – how might it be different now?
    - Considering the sci-fi nature of the chosen film, how did the producers used media language to make things seem real (or unreal) and why might some of the representations seem more realistic than others?
    - What limitations faced the producers in terms of technology (e.g. reliance on models rather than CGI) – how does this effect the 'reality' of the film?

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- developing an understanding of how codes and conventions establish genre conventions, and why genre appeals to producers and audiences. For example:
  - Where does the film demonstrate principles of repetition and variation (influences of earlier sci-fi films such as 1930s serials and 1950s 'red scare' movies?)
  - How does the film demonstrate the dynamic nature of genre – how has the franchise changed over time to reflect genre fashions (e.g. going from a male to a female hero)?
  - What factors have influenced these changes – are they economic (how popular or otherwise has the film/ franchise been?), cultural (does there seem to be an influence from or on other genre products?) or audience-led (is there evidence of changes being demanded by the film's audiences?).
  - Is there indication of hybridity in the film (for example, are there plot or design elements which seem to be inspired by other genres such as westerns, war movies, samurai movies etc.?)
  - Is there any evidence of intertextuality (for example, characters or shots which explicitly reference other films which may have influenced the director)?
- analysing the film in relation to its narrative features. For example:
  - How is the story organised (is there a clear sense of causality, time and space, or is this presented in an unusual way –the use of expositional text to provide story information as if the audience already know the story?)
  - How is the narrative organised? What is the equilibrium/ disequilibrium/ new equilibrium? Is there more than one complication? Is the resolution satisfying?
  - Are Propp's character archetypes and quest narratives recognisable within the episode and, if so, how are they being used (e.g. who is the hero? Who is the villain? Is the way these characters are presented surprising for the audience?)
- examining how the narrative is designed to engage the audience through identification of:
  - binary opposites (particularly 'goodies' and 'baddies')
  - enigma and action codes (how are mysteries set up, particularly relating to the backgrounds of the main characters? How are action sequences used to drive the narrative forward?)
  - the resolution (and whether this is satisfying for the audience)
  - how false trails are laid (particularly relating to the hero's journey to success)
  - the use of pathetic fallacies (particularly through the use of characters and soundtrack) and whether or not narrative expectations are subverted – is the film predictable, or are 'typical' narrative conventions challenged?
  - whether the film was innovative when it was released; has it become more cliched over time?
- analysing how and why particular social groups, individuals, places and issues are represented in relation to dominant cultural and economic values of the time. For example:
  - Are there examples of dominant representations and subversive representations?
  - Does the film, and its impact, demonstrate cultural hegemony? Is there any evidence of under-representation, misrepresentation or selective

representation (e.g. use/ lack of Global majority characters, female characters etc)and has the film's legacy addressed this?

- reviewing the use of stereotypes within the film. For example:
    - Which stereotypes are evident? Are they positive (used as role models or examples of 'in' groups) or are they negative (problematic or representative of 'out' groups)?
    - How might use of stereotypes connect to narrative structure and audience interpretation?
    - Could any of these characters be regarded as genre stereotypes, or is the film trying to challenge these?
    - Was the film actually responsible for establishing stereotypes which were subsequently used or challenged by other films?
- researching the studio which made the film as an example of a historical media organisation:
    - How does the studio's development prior to the film's release and its subsequent rise (or fall) demonstrate the nature of media production/ media organisations and the role/ power of 'media barons'?
    - Are any particular individuals closely linked to the film's production?
    - What evidence is there of conglomerate ownership, concentration of ownership, diversification and vertical/ horizontal integration as well as cross-media ownership, convergence and mergers/ demerger/ takeovers.
    - How were films were funded at the time – has this changed?
    - Did the film demonstrate any examples of product placement, franchising or merchandising?
    - Has it subsequently been monetised (for example, used to persuade audiences to subscribe to a streaming service or within advertising campaigns)?
- briefly exploring how the film demonstrates convergence – how has it developed across different forms and platforms?
- examining the film's multi-national impact – what effect did it have outside its home territory? Does it demonstrate any evidence of cultural imperialism?
- learning how films were regulated at the time and whether this has changed – how is film regulation different in different parts of the world and how does this effect film production?
- examining how the film demonstrates the relationship between audiences and media industries. For example:
    - Why has the film remained relevant over 20 years after first release?
    - What strategies did the film's producer use to stimulate and maintain audience demand at the time (trailers, teasers, promotional campaigns) and How did this develop (e.g. ongoing series, spin-offs).
    - What influence did the film have on its audience (e.g. creating a fandom, inspiring other films/ TV shows/ games etc.)?
- researching whether the film was successful at the time of release. For example:
    - Was the audience mass or niche?
    - Has the audience grown or shrunk over time?
    - Did the film reach its intended audience, or did it appeal to unintended secondary audiences?
- applying knowledge of audience categories (geographic, demographic and psychographic).
    - How might these have influenced the contents and messages of the film?

- - How was the film consumed at the time (likely through social and shared consumption, e.g. theatrical screenings)?
    - Has this consumption changed over time?
  - exploring the ways in which the film was targeted at an audience through marketing and product design, for example:
    - Are any trailers or teasers available from the film's original release?
    - Was there any evidence of guerilla or viral marketing?
    - Did the publicity campaign change during the film's run and if so why?
    - how has the marketing of the film changed over time – posters and trailers for subsequent releases might be examined.
  - discussing how the film was designed to appeal to audiences in either an active or a passive way though application of a range of audience theories. For example:
    - Is there any evidence of effects theories such as hypodermic syringe or cultivation theory.
    - What different readings might the film have to different audiences (applying reception theory)
    - How might Uses and Gratifications theory be applied when considering audience pleasures, particularly entertainment and personal identity?
    - What other pleasures might the audience get from the film (aesthetic, cerebral etc.)
  - researching the film's fandom, audience membership and identity.
    - Why is the programme so popular?
    - Has the fandom changed over time – is the film regarded in the same way now as it was when first released?
    - How does fandom express itself when discussing the film?
    - How have fans become involved in the film's legacy?
    - How has the film inspired a broader prosumer culture – what evidence is there of blogs, vlogs and podcasts dedicated to the film?

- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
    Explain how cultural and historical contexts influenced the use of stereotypes in your film Selected Media Product (SMP). (8 marks)

- Practical activity
  - Students could create their own modernised versions of the film's publicity materials (posters, storyboarding trailers etc.) They could create a short documentary feature (audio or video) exploring the studio behind the film or examining its legacy.

## Resources

- [MediaKnowAll overview of film analysis links](#)
- [MediaKnowAll guide to film genre](#)
- [Internet Movie Database](#)
- [Box Office Mojo](#) – film box office information

# Weeks Twenty-Seven to Thirty-Two - E-media (suggested areas of focus: Media Studies Framework)

## Specification content

- 3.3 Contexts of the media (cultural, economic and technological)
- 3.5.1 Media Language
- 3.5.2 Media Representations
- 3.5.3 Media Industries
- 3.5.3 Media Audiences

Students should cover:

- One video game playable on a mobile phone and/or tablet
- The online presence of a significant person or group with multimillion social media followers. The person or group may be a celebrity, opinion leader, influencer, blogger or similar but not a company, government department or other large organisation. The study should focus on three postings in the space of a single week

Note: although they do not need to be linked, for the purpose of this scheme, the game chosen is a mobile game created in association with and featuring the group which is the focus of the online study, in this case a successful K-Pop act with a huge following on Instagram and TikTok.

## Learning outcomes

- **Contexts of the media**
  Students need to analyse and discuss the E-media products in relation to the cultural, economic, and technological contexts in which they were produced and consumed. Some contexts which might be considered in relation to the study E-media are outlined below.
  - How do audiences use knowledge of media language to make value judgements when engaging with E-media?
  - What are the economic reasons for the emergence of media language forms in E-media that are global rather than regional or local?
  - How have technological developments impacted the relationship between the form, content and meaning of E-media products?
  - How does E-media exemplify technological elements such as image manipulation, CGI and user generated content? Is there any evidence of AI being used?
  - 'Culture wars' are often fought over the ways in which various groups, issues or events are represented in the media. How are these disputes reflected in the E-media products studied?
  - What are the economic advantages for the producers of E-media products of using stereotypes and over-simplified representations?
  - How have technological developments in E-media influenced the ability of individuals to represent themselves?
  - Do either of the E-media products demonstrate advantages or disadvantages of a global media culture?

- How have technological developments influenced the ways in which E-media products are produced, distributed and accessed by audiences?
- Do either the game or the online presence provide evidence of shared media moments and experiences?
- Is there evidence on either platform of audiences controlling media industries through their economic power or of audiences being exploited by profit-hungry media conglomerates?

- **Media Language**
  Students will:
  - consider the unique qualities of each E-media form as well as how they are related.
  - understand how the language of E-media, particularly social media, is used to create and communicate messages.
  - explore how the interactive qualities of E-media influence the messages within E-media products.
  - analyse the E-media products to understand the different meanings that are communicated.
  - apply codes and conventions of media language to understand how meaning is created within E-media products, particularly in relation to portraying reality, communicating ideologies and representing the world in different ways.
  - learn how and why codes and conventions are used to establish genres within E-media, including discussion of the appeal of genre products to producers and audiences.
  - explore in detail how the narratives within the two E-media products are structured, including narrative organisation, applying the ideas of Vladimir Propp and considering how the narrative engages the audience.

- **Media Representations:**
  Students will:
  - understand the ways in which E-media represents (rather than simply presents) the world, and construct versions of reality.
  - explore the relationship between ideology and representations within the E-media products.
  - apply reception theory to the E-media products, considering processes of selection, construction and mediation.
  - identify ways aspects of reality may be represented differently within E-media products depending on the purposes of the producers and the choices they make.
  - consider how and why particular social groups, individuals, places and issues are represented (or misrepresented) in the E-media SMPs.
  - examine the different functions and uses of stereotypes in the E-media SMPs, particularly positive and negative stereotypes, how these were established and how they have varied over time.
  - learn how individuals and groups represent themselves within social media to communicate ideas about their identity, values and beliefs – what is the role of individuals as producers (as well as consumers) of media messages in which the self is represented?
  - understand why audiences accept or reject versions of reality presented to them in video games and by social media.

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- **Media Industries:**
  Students will:
    - explore the impact of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms – how can this be seen in a comparison of the two E-media SMPs?
    - consider the multinational nature of E-media.
    - understand how E-media generates income.
    - research how E-media is regulated nationally and globally.

- **Media Audiences:**
  Students will:
    - consider how E-media producers create and satisfy audiences – what influence does E-media have on its audience?
    - discuss who the E-media products are aimed at: could either be said to be for mass or niche audiences?)
    - apply knowledge of audience categories used within E-media – how is the audience segmented and how do producers track this? How are E-media products consumed?
    - explore ways in which E-media producers target audiences through marketing and the ways in which products/ posts have been designed (in relation to narrative and genre), understanding the assumptions organisations make about their target audience(s).
    - apply theoretical perspectives on audiences to E-media products including effects theories (e.g. hypodermic syringe/ cultivation theory), active and passive audiences, audience response and interpretation, audience positioning, reception theory, diffused audiences and Blumler & Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory.
    - understand how E-media products can allow audience members to become active producers of media products.
    - examine the ways in which people's use of E-media is connected to their identity, including their sense of actual and desired self – what audience pleasures (particularly linked to audience membership and fandom) are evident?

## Suggested timing

12 hours

## Possible teaching and learning activities

- Play or watch extracts from the chosen game and review several weeks' worth of social media posts on at least two different platforms (providing a range of options for more detailed study as well as broader context).
- Explore how video games and social media are two hugely popular and influential media forms – consider the reach and profitability of both industries. How do the SMPs demonstrate the influence of the forms?
- Introduce students to the codes, conventions and language of mobile video games (e.g. levels, NPCs, microtransactions, behaviour shaping, gameplay, immersion) as well as how the language of moving image (e.g. shots, edits, camera movement, *mise-en-scene* etc.) might be applied including some consideration of genre conventions (particularly role-playing games). Compare these to the codes and conventions of social media (e.g. comments, likes, shares, followers etc.) – although both forms are interactive, there are

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obvious differences. Explore representational issues (for example, stereotypes, countertypes, ideologies etc.)

- Identify how both mobile games and social media use codes and conventions of print and visual media to create meaning through:
    - understanding of verbal and non-verbal codes.
    - consideration of relevant technical codes.
    - analysis of symbolic codes
    - exploration of video/ photographic codes, design and layout of gaming environments and social media feeds
    - identifying use of diegetic or non-diegetic sound.

    Within this, a consideration of whether and how different audiences are targeted by the two SMPs should be undertaken – are the game and social media posts designed to attract similar or different groups and what assumptions (e.g. about cultural interests and social attitudes) are being made? Is there convergence between the two? What pleasures might the audience be expected to get from playing the game or interacting with the social media posts?

- Analyse the narrative structure of the game and the social media posts – can a video game ever be 'realistic'? Can the audience ever trust the 'reality' of posts on social media?
- Examine the brand of the chosen group – how is this positioned and promoted on social media? How is the game designed to enhance and develop the brand?
- Research the media organisations behind the group – did the same organisation develop the game? Does the organisation influence the group's presence on social media?
- Exercises could include:
    - reviewing the genre conventions of the social media platforms used by the group (in this case their TikTok and Instagram accounts), identifying the technical codes, genre features and social media conventions used in the feeds and the ways in which they create meaning.
    - analysing the components of the posts including use of still and moving images, colour palettes and different typefaces.
    - examining symbolic, verbal and nonverbal codes, especially in relation to the group and the individual members using techniques of semiotic analysis to understand the meanings of these components and the style/tone of the posts – do different posts have different tones?
    - identifying whether there is any pattern to the frequency or content of posts - how does the group's TikTok feed compare to their Instagram postings? How is the audience positioned? What image of the group is projected?
    - understanding which conventions of video games the game includes and how this influences gameplay; how does the gameplay drive the narrative and how does the player impact on the action?
    - analysing the appeal of the game:
        - What does a semiotic analysis using basic principles such as denotation and connotation as well as broader use of gaming codes and conventions show?
        - How do signs, icons and symbols link to the group's social media and its brand?
        - What are the dominant signifiers? How does the game create meaning, and how does this link with the social media posts?

        Overall, the question which should be asked is: how do the E-media SMPs target the group's audience? Is any element ambiguous and, if so, how is ambiguity reduced? Do different forms have different effects? Why?

- discussing how the choice of elements in the game represent the group's brand in a way that puts over messages and values.
- analysing examples of different narrative structures in the group's posts – how are the genre features of social media platforms to project the group's brand and lifestyle?
- learning about how the choice of elements in a game or a social media post can work to create narratives, portray different aspects of reality, put over points of view and represent the world in different ways. For example:
    - How has the ideological position of the group influenced the narrative and representations?
    - What points of view do the game and the posts appear to present – where are the audience positioned with and how?
    - How is this influenced by contexts of the game and the posts – are these linked?
- analysing the game and social media posts in relation to their narrative features, for example:
    - How are stories organised (is there a clear sense of causality, time and space, or are this presented in an unusual way?)
    - How are the narratives organised?
    - What are the equilibria/ disequilibria/ new equilibria? Are the resolutions satisfying?
    - Are Propp's character archetypes and quest narratives recognisable within the game/ posts and, if so, how are they being used (e.g. are the members of the group heroes? Who is the villain? Are the ways these characters are presented surprising for the audience?
- applying understanding of how codes and conventions establish genre conventions, and why genre appeals to producers and audiences. For example:
    - Where does the game demonstrate principles of repetition and variation? Is it derivative of or linked to other similar games?
    - How do the social media posts demonstrate the dynamic nature of genre – do they reflect genre fashions (e.g. memes or hashtags)?
    - What factors might have influenced these changes – are they economic (how does the game make money), cultural (does there seem to be an influence from other genre products?) or audience-led (is there evidence of other similar changes being demanded by the group's audiences?).
    - Is there evidence of hybridity in the game (does it demonstrate conventions of different genres?)
    - Are there examples of intertextuality within the game or the posts (either referencing each other or other media?)
- identifying how the narratives within the game and the posts are designed to engage the audience through identification of:
    - binary opposites (how is the game won or lost?)
    - exploration of enigma and action codes (do the social media posts create a sense of mystery? How do players progress in the game?
    - the resolution (how do the stories in the posts or the action of the game end – is this satisfying for the audience?)
    - how false trails are laid (does the game involve any of these), the use of pathetic fallacies (are these evident within the game or any of the social media posts) and whether narrative expectations are subverted – is the game predictable? Are 'typical' narrative conventions challenged in the social media posts?

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- analysing the representations within the game and on the social media posts taking into account realism. For example:
  - Why might some representations seem more truthful or realistic than others?
  - Are social media posts a realistic representation of the group compared to the game?
  - Do either of the E-media products provide a 'window on the world' or are they just messages themselves with no realistic meaning?
- researching who chooses the content for the game and why (selection), how the representations are put together (construction) and how the meanings of representations influenced using different platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and the game (mediation).
- analysing how and why particular social groups, individuals, places and issues are represented in relation to dominant social values).
  - Are there examples of dominant representations and subversive representations?
  - Do the E-media SMPs demonstrate cultural hegemony?
- reviewing the use of stereotypes within the game and the social media posts: which stereotypes are evident?
  - Are they positive (used as role models or examples of 'in' groups) or are they negative (problematic or representative of 'out' groups)?
  - How might these connect to narrative structure and audience interpretation?
  - Could any of these 'characters' (either real or fictional) be regarded as genre stereotypes, or is the group's E-media presence trying to challenge these?
- analysing how the group represents itself (directly on social media, indirectly in the game) – what is its role as producers? What control does the group have its own image?
- reviewing audience responses to the game and the social media posts:
  - Do they accept or reject the reality presented by the group?
  - Is there any difference when considering the influence of demographic variables such as age, class, gender, ethnicity on the interpretation of these representations?
- researching patterns of ownership among social media platform providers, including mergers, takeovers and concentration of ownership – has this affected the group at all?
- understanding how the group's social media posts are regulated. For example:
  - What controls do platform providers exercise over content?
  - What are the implications for regulation and control when global organisations operate in different countries?
  - How are governments trying to work with, or against, social media companies?
- examining the influence the organisation responsible for the game had on the product as well as the influence of the gaming industry. For example:
  - How much input did the group actually have?
  - How does the game demonstrate convergence the group's online presence?
  - How are video games such as the one being studied regulated and rated – are these ratings different in different territories and, if so, why?
  - Is the game commercially successful?

- What does a study of the game show about the ways in which the video game industry is changing and developing?
- discussing the convergent nature of the game and the social media posts – how does this demonstrate convergence across content, network and platform?
- reviewing the multinational nature of the game and the social media posts – does either SMP demonstrate cultural imperialism?
- understanding how the group generate income from the game and the social media feeds – do profits come from advertisement, sponsorship, product placement, subscriptions or other sources?
- examining how the game and the social media posts address different audiences in different ways and for different reasons. For example:
  - How does the Instagram feed fit the profile of the target audience?
  - What is the apparent demographic? How are they addressed by the group's posts?
  - How is this similar (or different) to the mode of address on TikTok and via the game.
  - What is the nature of the group's appeal?
- exploring how are audiences invited to engage with the social media posts and the game:
  - How do they feel about themselves, as they connect with the group via its online presence?
  - How do the comments on posts reflect the nature of her audience?
- identifying the target audience for the game or the pleasures that the group's social media presence provides for its audience. For example:
  - Applying Uses and Gratifications theory – is this useful in understanding the game's appeal or the popularity of the social media feed?
  - Considering any evidence of direct effects on the audience, especially in relation to persuasive messages, particularly in promotional or sponsored posts or within the game.
  - Opportunities for audience participation and interaction.
  - Application of reception theory– what negotiated and oppositional readings might be well as the preferred readings the group would wish to communicate
  - Other pleasures might the audience get from either the game or the social media posts (aesthetic, cerebral etc.)
  - The types of influence these products might have on audiences. Critics of gaming and social media often point to their negative influence on audiences – is there any evidence of this.  Examine the material used to advertise and market the game or the social media account.  What does this tell you about the intended target audience?
- examining how both E-media SMPS demonstrate the relationship between audiences and media industries:
  - Why does the group post on social media?
  - Why did it release the game?
  - What strategies have been used to stimulate and maintain audience demand?
  - Do either the social media posts or the game demonstrate influence over the audience, or any evidence of audience influence on the group (for example, in comments)
- applying knowledge of audience categories (geographic, demographic and psychographic):

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- - How might these have influenced the contents and messages of the game or the focus of the social media posts?
    - How is the group's E-media output consumed by its audience – what evidence is there of social and shared consumption (e.g. forums or wikis, comments, leader boards etc.)?
  - exploring the ways in which the group targets its audience through marketing and product design. For example:
    - Are any trailers or teasers available for the game (or on the social media feeds)?
    - Is there any evidence of guerilla or viral marketing?
  - researching the group's fandom, audience membership and identity.
    - Why is the group so popular?
    - How does fandom express itself when discussing the group (particularly online)?
    - How were the game and the social media posts received by fans?
    - Does the group's game or social media posts demonstrate a lot of fan interaction?
    - How has the group inspired a broader prosumer culture – what evidence is there of blogs, vlogs and podcasts dedicated to the game, or even the group's social media presence?

- Written activity
  - Students could answer the following question:
    How useful is an understanding of the increasingly convergent nature of media industries across different forms and platforms in explaining the audience appeal of your two E-media Selected Media Products (SMPs)?

    In your answer refer to:
    - Cross-media ownership.
    - Convergence of content providers, network providers and platform providers.

- Practical activity
  - Students could create advertising materials for the game or a series of social media posts in the style of those created by the group.

## Weeks Thirty-Three to Thirty-Five: Revision (suggested areas of focus - Media Studies Framework)

Approximately 3 weeks prior to exams.

Revision of the four areas of the Media Studies Framework, plus each of the SMPs.

## Specification content

- Week One – Advertising and Audio
- Week Two – News and Video
- Week Three - Print and E-Media

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