

An Introduction to A-Level Media Studies

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A-level in Media in September. It is aimed to be used now and throughout the remainder of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September. **This is not marked work** but underpinning activities that will act as flipped learning to help you understand the topics and concepts we cover in class and to allow you a foundation of media competence. The suggested activities will start to engage with and enjoy the world of Media, informing your future work and understanding!

What is Media?

Media is the most dynamic, innovative and influential method of mass communication of modern times. It has been reported that adults in Great Britain are consuming media for almost 8 hours a day¹. That's 8 hours a day watching films and television, reading newspapers, and sifting through online media. Within that time, we are bombarded by other people's representations of the world and how we respond to these representations can affect our perceptions of people, places and society, of politics and culture, of ourselves and of our place in the world. Studying Media will help you to understand how you can de-bunk the vast amount of information surrounding you.

Media Studies is a vital tool necessary to understanding the media's significance and its power. "In our media-saturated age, it's vital that young people can evaluate competing sources of information, and communicate effectively within a fast-changing digital environment. This isn't just a matter of easy-to-learn skills. They need critical knowledge of media texts, audiences and digital culture, and of the complex political economy and technology which underpin them." PROFESSOR SONIA LIVINGSTONE, OBE, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

What will I study?

You will analyse how media products use language and representations to create meaning. You will learn about the media industry and how the industry affects how media products are made. You will investigate media audiences, exploring who are the people who watch, read and consume the products and considering how different people might respond to products differently, and why. You will explore and apply critical perspectives including those of world-renowned media and cultural theorists, and will examine how social, historical, political and economic contexts affect media production. You will also have the opportunity to apply what you have learned through the production of your own media texts, exploring and creating media forms such as, magazines, and websites

The media forms or areas of study are;

Television
Online Media
Advertising and Marketing
Film Marketing
Magazines
Newspapers
Social and Participatory Media
Music Video
Radio

What skills will I develop?

Media Studies will help you to develop valuable transferable skills such as critical thinking, analysis, research, planning, skills of enquiry and evaluation, practical skills, creativity, time management, essay writing skills and more. Your studies will complement and assist your learning in other subjects such as English Language and Literature, History, Psychology, Sociology, Film, ICT and the Extended Project amongst others.

Assessment

Assessment will comprise of a mixture of examined and non-examined assessment.

Component 1

A Level: Written examination: 2 hours 15 mins, 35% of qualification

Component 2

A Level: Written examination: 2 hours 30 mins, 35% of qualification

Component 3

A Level: Non-exam assessment: Cross-Media Production, 30% of qualification

Where might Media Studies take me?

Over one hundred UK universities offer courses in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies and your A Level will help you to progress onto these, as well as courses in other areas such as English, Humanities and Social Sciences.

There are a variety of diverse career opportunities in the media, which is an industry that is growing at an exponential rate. According to accountancy giant PwC's latest Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2018-2022, *the entertainment and media sector will be worth £76 billion by 2021 and the video games sector is currently valued at more than half the UK's whole entertainment industry.* If you are looking for a job in this area, studying Media at GCE and at degree level is a route into careers such as TV and film production, advertising, journalism, interactive media, marketing, public relations and digital marketing. It could help to provide you with the foundation to secure roles in technical production, special effects, web design and post-production.

There has never been a better time to become a Media Studies student!

If you need any further clarification, do get in touch!: Claire.jackson@chichester.ac.uk

Investigate Media based texts and products!

There is a text book you may wish to purchase before starting the course. I would suggest reading through it to grasp an idea of the areas we cover on the course. This book will also inform and support your lessons throughout the two years of study!

You do not have to purchase this – it is optional!

NEW: WJEC/Eduqas Media Studies For A Level Yr 2 & A2: Student Book ISBN no: **978-1-911208-11-2**

This is available on the WJEC/Eduqas website

https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/media-studies-as-a-level/?sub_nav_level=books#tab_resources

However, I will be going through all this theory with you in class lessons and Media Studies is all about you expanding your knowledge and understanding of the Media (particularly British media) and therefore to prepare for the course I would like you to explore and experience media areas that would usually be outside your 'norm'

Below are some suggestions to broaden your mindsets!

CONSIDERING THE VIEWPOINTS OF OTHERS!

There are many contemporary 'opinion leaders' (people who offer educated viewpoints that some people will adopt as their own viewpoints), however there are three, in particular, that I recommend to either, challenge your present ideas and values or support the way you think. As a champion of equal opportunities myself, each comes from a different background but all have had success within the Media.

Ben Drew – Plan B (singer/actor/director/social commentator) - Ted talk on Youth, Music and London - <https://youtu.be/xhtAflw4qJY>

Akala - (singer/poet /writer/social commentator) – Any of his videos on Youtube

Riz Ahmed/ MC Riz – (Actor/DJ/social commentator) - His Channel 4 Diversity Speech 2017 on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/36bcxDVNr1s> and any of his other work!

You may also want to research each of these people to find out more about them.

See the activity below!

Effective Note Making

Making effective notes in lessons is an essential skill for A-level Media. Although each lesson you will be given handouts of the PowerPoint slides which you are expected to add to. Practice producing notes using this outline by **summarising one of the above talks you have watched**. Keep this to inform and underpin future lessons and concepts – you may wish to expand on this making notes on more than one video

SUBJECT/TOPIC

NOTE TAKING

1. **Record:** *During the lecture/video, use the note-taking column to record key areas/points/ideas by using concise sentences and abbreviations.*
2. **Questions/ queries:** *Make notes of anything you did not understand so you can ask for clarification at a later time*
3. **Reflect/evaluate:** *on what you have written what are the key things you have learnt from this – in your own words.*
4. **Review:** Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your notes and lesson sheets from the week. If you do, you'll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.

Topics to Research

Component 1 topics – Areas to be covered in your first exam

Advertising and Marketing - look at different adverts print, online and Television – consider their approach to ‘selling’ the product/service. What do they claim is their USP (unique selling proposition – what they claim to do that others don’t!)

Film Industry and marketing – consider differences in film production, marketing and distribution between American Block Buster Mainstream films and British Independent films

Newspapers – explore all the different national newspapers available in Britain – ensure you understand the ‘make-up’ of Online Newspapers

Music Video – Music Videos fit 3 main genres – **Narrative** (where they tell a story-like a short film – Hell Yeah by Rag’n’Bone Man (*warning explicit! Bad language!*)), **Performance** (where they feature the artist performing in some scenario – Vossi Bop by Stormzy), **Thematic** (where the imagery accompanying the video follows the theme of the words but does not connect to tell a story – JCB song by Nizlopi) or, a mixture of more than one of these genres (which is more common in later years)

Analyse your own favourite music videos to identify which genre they fall into – develop a skill where you always consider this when looking at music videos.

Video games – Create a timeline of the development of the Games industry – from the first consoles/games through to present day – we do not study different games in depth (therefore you do not need to be a gamer) but more their place in the industry. Therefore it is a benefit to understand the industry a little before we start.

Radio – Explore and investigate radio broadcasting in Britain – write a list of stations you, your family or friends listen to – get an idea of what is available and the platforms they broadcast on!

Component 2 topics – Areas to be covered, in depth, for your second exam

Magazines – Magazines are the media form we create for coursework therefore research and engagement with magazines will be set as transition work.

Online – creating a website for the magazine you produce is also contributes to your coursework therefore it is important for you to understand how different websites are constructed. As prolific users of Online material you will often take layout and design almost for granted. To prepare you for creating your own website and for the study of set websites explore the different layouts and designs of websites and the content of Vlogs and Blogs. What works well for you? And why? What doesn't? why? How does an online Vlogger or blogger captivate their audience? Who are your media influencers? And why? Look at and consider the financing of Online material such as; overt advertising and sponsorship, and what about the more 'hidden' or covert references to products within the text.

Watch the **BBC Panorama broadcast** '*Million Pound Selfie Sell Off*' on YouTube to gain a better understanding of this!

Television – our television study texts are both from the 'Crime' genre. Create a list of the **codes and conventions** of the crime genre. **Codes and conventions** are our expectations of what we see or hear in that genre (such as, sirens, yellow tape) – key elements (such as, Investigations, the team or lone detective, the partnership of contrasting policing styles- one traditional cop the other a rebel) – the expected scenarios (such as; false clues, murders, the chase). I have offered a few examples here, some are quite basic therefore expect your list to be quite long! This will reflect what we, as audiences, expect when we consume anything from the crime genre and can help you identify how well a programme 'fits' the genre or 'challenges' it with a modern or different twist.

As mentioned previously these activities are designed to offer you a foundation of knowledge and understanding to help support your learning on A Level Media. They are to be enjoyed, to try and take you out of your comfort zone to explore areas you may not otherwise think about. Please do not hesitate to email me if you want to discuss anything or want any further clarification.

I'm looking forward to meeting you in September

Claire

LEARNING
IS A TREASURE THAT WILL
FOLLOW ITS OWNER
EVERYWHERE.

Chinese Proverbs
InspirationBoost.com

Good luck and enjoy these activities!