



GCSE MEDIA STUDIES

Designing Coursework Tasks – Section A

The specification allows centres a significant degree of freedom in the designing of their coursework assignments. There are however, parameters laid down to ensure that the three assignments in Section A collectively meet the demands of the specification. The main points of these must be borne in mind when assignments are set:

- coverage of the three assessment objectives in each of the assignments
- coverage of the key concepts across the three assignments
- focus on the issue of cultural diversity in at least one assignment
- observation of word limits in each assignment
- coverage of three different media
- focus on moving image when this is not covered by the controlled test topic as is the case in both 2006 and 2007

Experience suggests that the best formula for creating an assignment is as follows:

An initial focus on text based work might ask candidates to explore Media Language and one other key concept. This can be synthesised into production, usually paper based pre-production work such as a storyboard, linked to and developing issues raised in the text based work. There should also be some element of evaluation, linking production work and textual analysis. So an assignment on television advertising might consist of the following tasks:

1. Analyse a current television advertisement paying particular attention to how one of the following is represented:
 - family life
 - young people
 - the elderly.
2. Creation of a storyboard which seeks to offer an alternative representation to the one found above.
3. Some evaluation of how effectively the storyboard challenges existing stereotypes.

Such a formula for the design of assignments should help manage to avoid many of the existing pitfalls that some centres have encountered in designing their assignments. These include:

- Broad essay based assignments that provide little or no opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their own engagement with media texts.

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- Bolt on production activities that have little real connection with the theoretical issues pursued.
- Poor coverage of Assessment Objective 2 (AO2), analysis and interpretation, where candidates have been asked simply to create their own media text, such as a magazine cover. Such productions rarely have the complexity to allow access to the full mark range for AO2.

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