



A-level **Media Studies**

7572/1

Report on the examination

Version: 1.0
June 2025

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Introduction

Once again, we must offer congratulations to teachers and students who are meeting the challenges of this packed but reliable exam head on. There was yet more evidence of sound preparation informed by our feedback on previous 7572/1 papers. The vast majority of students have managed this paper well, attempting to answer the questions set rather than merely trying to display knowledge. They have sound knowledge of the theoretical framework, have produced engaged responses to the CSPs and have things to say about most of the issues.

The CSPs provide security and reassurance because they support practically every question on Media 1, but students are also free to employ other examples as long as the specified CSPs are also addressed. Referring to more examples is not a guarantee of higher marks – students can reach the top levels of the mark scheme only referring to the specified product. The nature of the shorter answer questions here reinforces the need for selectivity in providing evidence for arguments.

Time management, which is key, was unproblematic but there was sadly a return to a rubric infringement in question 2 which we have continually warned against, and which is very clear on this and every paper sat so far. Students are clearly mindful that the mark tariff is also a kind of time tariff. As a suggestion, pro rata, Section A might sensibly need 70 minutes and Section B, 50 minutes.

Section A

Question 1

This is a Media Language question.

This question tested knowledge of anchorage and application of that knowledge to an unseen text. Essentially the job was to show what anchorage is and then to fully justify 'analyse' by saying how anchorage is used. Essentially there are three word phrases and addressing any one of these is enough to meet the requirement. However, most considered more than one and many worked systematically through the set in a kind of rank order from highest and largest. Better answers were those that grasped 'anchorage' as a meaning 'fixing' process, which meant doing more than a simple reading of the language on the text.

The response to this question meant a strong start to the paper for very many candidates and engaging appreciations of the text with really pleasing efficiency in most responses, which kept candidates entirely on the question.

Question 2

This is a Media Representation question.

A significant number of candidates falling foul of a rubric infringement which is so obviously avoidable. The format of this question is fixed, and it ALWAYS requires candidates to respond to the unseen from question one AND a prescribed CSP: the variable is the focus on areas of representation. These requirements are also explicitly stated in the question. However once again a substantial number of candidates had their marks capped by writing only about ONE text (and overwhelmingly this was the CSP *Ghost Town*)

There was certainly no problem with the focus on places or indeed political and historical contexts. Though this will always be more challenging with the unseen than with the prepared CSP, candidates had interesting things to say about both the timelessness of Nature and a more contemporary feeling for conservation. The CSP offered a more straightforward path, with extensive evidence of students' familiarity with the historical and political context of a text produced twenty five years before most candidates were born. There was however some evidence of rote responses where the contexts weren't always integrated into analysis. There was good work here but also a regret that so many failed to fully understand the requirements of the question.

Question 3

This is a Media Language question.

Intertextuality is clearly central to understanding this playful and provocative CSP, therefore it was pleasing that it was generally done well. Candidates certainly understood that elements from other kinds of texts (western films, country and western music, rap music) come together to, at the very least, provide energy to the music video. Those who progressed further through the mark scheme, however, were those who were most able to show how and how heavily the meaning of the product was influenced by these intertextual elements. Knowledge of the CSP and the artist Lil Nas X was put to good use (as opposed to merely recounted). The political and social justice angles were particularly useful ways to keep focus on the question.

Question 4

This is a Media Representation Question

Judith Butler is a challenging theorist and the specification deals with a relatively small part of their work for a pre-university audience. Students are required to deal with a range of complex theories in Media Studies and need to be able to select the most pertinent areas to focus on in response to the question. It is partly the job of the CSPs to mediate this, to provide support and reassurance and enable students to engage with key theoretical points. The longer responses on Media One are a form in-between the shorter answers that dominate this paper and the essay style questions on 7572/2. This question provides a claim,

a proposition to be tested out with reference to two familiar products which you will, in preparation, have considered Butler's work 'against.' With that amount of security, you can expect the proposition to be something that needs to be thought about.

The two texts are about gender (one traditional and the other contemporary/ progressive), and the proposition is that gender (as a category) might be a 'subversive performance'. The key theme in Butler's work is that these performances are non-referential which makes every gendered performance potentially subversive. Students thrived in addressing this question by using the apparent differences between the texts to address the status and function of gender. There is some further discussion of Butler and gender in the indicative content of the mark scheme, demonstrating some ways in which the question might be approached. It was pleasing to see a range of successful approaches to this question from students and it was very well answered overall.

A common approach was to see one of the two texts as 'subversive' (usually Sephora) and the other 'not' (usually Score) and this structure allowed the whole range of marks to be accessed because the understanding was evident in the application and the issue of validity was rarely skipped. A missed opportunity from some students was that Score has often been understood as if it is simply a serious and accurate portrayal of gender relationships in the 1960s. This was particularly evident this year where opportunities for discussing gender as a subversive act were missed due to a lack of engagement with the context of the advert. It is arguable that the seeming bravado of Score is tongue in cheek and not really a reinforcement of traditional gender roles in the 1960s. Indeed this kind of permissiveness was a direct challenge to traditional ideas of the roles of men and women. Of course, one can respond to the objectification of these females, but it would be dispiriting, particularly to Mary Quant, to imagine that the miniskirt was merely designed to satisfy the male gaze

Section B

The transition to Section B is marked by a couple of low tariff questions.

Question 5

This is a Media Audiences question

Q. 5 tests knowledge of key terms from the specification, rather like an old-fashioned subject knowledge test or quiz. This year a variation on the format saw this at its simplest: three terms from the same part of the specification ('End of Audience Theories') and a couple of lines of definition to achieve two marks each. While the format means they are straightforward questions, as with all knowledge recall questions, they are only easy if you know them. In terms of these three, by no mean obscure terms, it was clear that most candidates did not know them or perhaps did not know them in this way.

Question 6

This is a Media Audiences question.

‘Explain’ is the key to making progress with this question (and the 9 mark context implies ‘briefly’), meaning that students are really being asked to say how the cultural contexts of *Newsbeat* provide resonance to audiences. Though the primary intention was to focus on resonance as an element of Cultivation Theory it was also perfectly valid to address ‘resonance’ in a non-technical way. Thus, two definitions appear in the indicative content:

- Resonance is part of cultivation theory, which suggests that long-term exposure to media inculcates us into their cultures and agendas.

But also

- Resonance occurs when a media message is especially noteworthy to an individual because it somehow coincides with the audience’s lived experience.

This question was generally well done and another example of candidates being well-prepared on the CSP but not overprepared so that they were able to select relevant aspects of their encounters with *Newsbeat*, pertinent to this specific question and issue. This showed a secure understanding of the dynamic relationship between a product (its form, content, style, and scheduling) and its intended and developed (cultivated) audience. Responses were able to approach the question through audience targeting as well as through cultivation theory.

Question 7

This is a Media Industries question.

It is somewhat regrettable that the question concerning the film industry was made more challenging by many students’ reluctance to reference the most pertinent contemporary examples that would have effectively supported Hesmondhalgh’s claim. The inclusion of a specific example—such as the widespread prevalence of franchises and remakes—would have offered a valuable means of contextualising the Case Study Product (CSP) as a site where both sides of the argument (or either, as permitted by the question) could be critically examined. The fact that the majority of students refrained from doing so—while by no means constituting a fault—suggests that the perceived authority of the CSP may have been overstated. In a question that afforded greater scope for argument development, this placed an added burden on students to derive all supporting evidence from a single example.

It is perhaps worth reiterating that the examination rubric requires students only to “refer to” the CSP, which does not preclude the inclusion of an additional, student-selected example. While opportunities for this are naturally more limited in shorter questions—particularly those like Question 3, which explicitly names the CSP in the command—this longer-form response offers the necessary space to draw upon alternative texts where they serve to enrich engagement with the theoretical framework.

Significant credit is due, therefore, to those students who, even in the final stages of a demanding examination, demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the industrial

context of the CSP. Their responses often featured detailed knowledge of production processes, budgets, personnel, and marketing strategies. Importantly, this knowledge was not merely reproduced from memorised materials but was clearly internalised and meaningfully applied to the question at hand.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.