

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

MEDIA STUDIES

J200

For first teaching in 2017

J200/02 Summer 2023 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 2 series overview

Candidates appeared to be well prepared for this examination.

More successful candidates managed their time effectively and answered all the questions, using the space allocated in the booklet for each question to pace their answers effectively. Many of the most successful candidates used only the answer booklet and did not require extra sheets.

Some candidates did not attempt Questions 9 and 10. Running out of time seemed to be a particular issue for candidates who typed responses, who often struggled to follow the guidance of the dotted lines in the exam paper as to how much to write for each question.

Successful responses, in order to gain the most marks in the space provided, would usually avoid lengthy introductions, instead launching straight into answering the question. They would also avoid discussing irrelevant areas of the theoretical framework.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> answered all the questions addressed the question set, using the correct area(s) of the theoretical framework used terminology effectively showed sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the media forms, the set products and the theoretical framework, producing structured responses with nuanced judgements based on this understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not answer all the questions did not address the specific focus of the question and/or discussed the wrong area of the framework (e.g. discussing target audience in Questions 3 and 5, media language instead of representation in Questions 3 and 4, or representation instead of media language in Question 5) described the content of media products showed vague knowledge and made inaccurate judgements about media products.

Assessment for learning



Teach making judgements and reaching conclusions throughout the course as a key evaluation skill and apply to a range of media texts and contexts.

Section A overview

This section comprised of a mix of knowledge and understanding (AO1) and analysis (AO2) questions, including a comparative media language analysis of unseen products. The overwhelming majority of candidates attempted all these questions.

Question 1

1 Identify the regulator for BBC radio in the UK.

..... [1]

Most candidates correctly answered 'Ofcom', with 'IPSO' the most common incorrect response.

Candidates should be advised not to give more than one response to such 1 mark questions, as these are termed as contradictory responses (e.g. both correct and incorrect) by the mark scheme so receive zero marks.

Question 2

2 Explain **one** of the uses and gratifications of radio listening. Use the Radio 1 Live Lounge as an example in your answer.

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..... [4]

Most candidates could state at least one use and gratification. Those choosing 'entertainment' often found it harder to explain and exemplify. Most could show some knowledge of the Radio 1 *Live Lounge* but not all were specific in their example (e.g. naming an artist) or able to clearly link the example to the use and gratification they had explained.

Question 3

3 Explain why music videos often use stereotypes. Give examples from the pair of music videos you have studied from the list below.

- 1 Wheatus – Teenage Dirtbag / Avril Lavigne – Sk8er Boi
- 2 Mark Ronson, Bruno Mars – Uptown Funk / Beyoncé – If I Were a Boy
- 3 The Vamps – Somebody To You ft. Demi Lovato / Little Mix – Black Magic
- 4 Tinie Tempah, Jess Glynne – Not Letting Go / Paloma Faith – Picking Up the Pieces

[10]

This was often the most successfully answered question on the paper.

The vast majority of candidates could discuss the use of stereotypes in their chosen videos, although far fewer could explain why music videos use stereotypes. Many successful responses discussed the inevitability of stereotyping in creating quick messaging, its usefulness in creating simple narratives, or the use of stereotypes to critique them to create a serious message.

Less successful responses might simply narrate the videos, only cover one video, discuss target audience, or discuss representation with little or no explicit reference to stereotypes.

Centres are reminded that there are changes to some of the set music videos for first teaching September 2023, first exams in 2025. Further information can be found in this [subject update](#).

Question 4

4 Refer to **Extracts 1** and **2** in the Insert.

Analyse the representation of gender in these extracts from MOJO and I am Hip-Hop magazines.

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[5]

This question was generally addressed well, as most responses did focus on gender representations with few discussing media language instead. Less successful responses tended towards description. There was much disagreement on Jimi Hendrix: many candidates thought he looked on the verge of tears and discussed his anti-stereotypical vulnerability, while some thought he looked stereotypically strong and dominant.

Question 5*

5* Refer to **Extracts 1** and **2** in the Insert.

How far do **Extracts 1** and **2** use different media language to create different styles?

In your answer you must:

- analyse the media language in **Extracts 1** and **2** from MOJO and I am Hip-Hop magazines
- make judgements and draw conclusions.

[15]

Most responses did compare the media language used in the two extracts, although some repeated representation material from Question 4 which was not relevant. More successful responses often compared the two extracts throughout the response – comparing layout, then use of colour, then typography, for example – and made explicit judgements about difference or similarity in the overall style of media language. Less successful responses were more descriptive, less comparative, and often had no sense of the overall effect of the media language used (except perhaps in irrelevant terms such as appealing to different target audiences). Some minimal responses simply discussed the style of clothing worn by the main cover artists or were highly descriptive about the cover lines and/or images.

Exemplar 1

To an extent, the extracts used media language to create different styles. For example, the language register is different. In extract 1, an informal language register is used, seen through the coverline 'the masters of song'. This connotes sharing and personal ~~to the~~ connection to the reader. This conveys the style of Mojo magazine as it's a rock magazine and therefore attempts to unify its readers in attempt of rebellion and going against the mainstream. Whereas in extract 2, a formal language register is used, seen through the coverline 'Sexism in the industry'. This recognition of serious topics is something not seen in extract 1, and reflects authority and connotes formality, juxtaposing extract one. Moreover, extract one has a cluttered layout. This connotes energy and chaos, which is highly reflective of the rock music culture the magazine is covering. Whereas extract 2 has an ordered layout. This connotes seriousness and organization, something possessed in hip-hop culture, but not rock.

However, to a slight extent, the extracts do not create different styles. For example, they both have a main image of the artist, using direct address. This is a generic convention of all music magazines, which

is why the two extracts share this aspect. This unifies the two styles as it shows how they both have great respect for artists, and believe in their superiority. Similarly, they both have a saturated, primary colour palette. This connotes energy and youthfulness and represents these attributes that are possessed in both hip hop and rock music.

Overall, despite the media language being slightly the same with the main image and colour palette, this is largely due to the ~~genre~~ overall generic conventions of a music magazine. Meaning the differences in their media language, such as the language register and layout, help distinguish the difference in styles between the hip hop and rock genre.

This response gains the full 10 marks for AO2 (1a) – analysis – as it explicitly addresses the style element of the question and analyses at least two detailed examples from each extract. It covers language register (albeit not entirely clearly), layout and use of colour saturation. There are no irrelevant references to audience or representation, instead the analysis is couched in terms of connotation. Although not perfect, this response is at the top end of the range of responses to an unseen analysis found in this exam.

This response gains the full 5 marks for AO2 (1b) – judgements and conclusions – as it is a coherent and logically-structured argument that clearly answers the question and cites relevant evidence.

Section B overview

This section comprises a mix of knowledge and understanding (AO1) and analysis (AO2) questions, including analysis of unseen extracts of tweets of articles from *The Observer* newspaper and Question 10 on the influence of media contexts on changes between historical and present-day print editions of *The Observer*. The most successful candidates performed as well on this section as on section A, but less successful candidates often did not complete all the questions.

Many of the least successful candidates did not identify *The Observer* as a newspaper, referring to it instead as a magazine.

Question 6

6 Identify **one** way a newspaper such as The Guardian/Observer can earn money from audiences outside Britain.

..... [1]

Most candidates could state one source of funding, such as advertising, donations, subscriptions, or paywalls (any source of international funding for any newspaper was allowed, including international sales of print newspapers).

Candidates should be advised not to give more than one response to such 1 mark questions, as these are termed as contradictory responses (e.g. both correct and incorrect) by the mark scheme so receive zero marks.

Question 7

7 Explain **one** way newspapers can encourage audiences to be active when consuming newspapers online. Use the online version of The Guardian/Observer as an example in your answer.

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..... [4]

This question clearly differentiated those who understood the concept of active and passive audiences from those who did not, with successful responses able to exemplify from the online *Observer* (even though many candidates erroneously thought that *The Observer* offered comments on 'all articles').

Candidates could analyse the representations in these tweets, with few exceptions, although the quality of analysis was variable. Those who clearly understood *The Observer's* viewpoint and values were usually able to analyse the tweets and address the question more successfully. Some responses responded to the synoptic element of the question by referring to *The Observer's* ultimate ownership by the Scott Trust and its insistence on liberal journalism or by linking *The Observer's* values to those of its upmarket liberal audience. A number of otherwise excellent responses did not explicitly refer to contexts, as demanded. Top level responses did mention contexts, such as the significance of the Covid pandemic, changing attitudes to gender and multiculturalism.

Some candidates misunderstood the tweet about racism in horticulture, with a number thinking that a wider point about environmentalism was being made. Others, who did follow the point of the tweet, argued that it went against *The Observer's* values to have what they described as a white person discuss racism and complained that there were no ethnic minorities represented in the tweet. The tweets on women distillers and Covid in Southeast Asia were generally more accurately understood by all, although some were led by the word 'poison' to argue that *The Observer* was anti-alcohol and thought that coverage of Southeast Asia was designed to appeal to an audience in that region. Some candidates felt that what they considered to be the lack of hard news in these tweets meant that they were going against *The Observer's* values.

Misconception



The reference to contexts in this question does not signal that the question requires discussion of contexts and newspapers in the 1960s.

Misconception



Some candidates erroneously stated that a key *Observer* value is to be politically impartial and unbiased.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practice analysing *Observer* articles as they may appear online from different sections of the newspaper.

Exemplar 2

To a large extent the extracts reflect The Observer's viewpoints.

One way the extract reflects the observer's viewpoints is by featuring a ~~woman in one of~~ story on women having more control in industries. This is seen in Extract 3 with the mid shot of a woman holding a glass of wine. This ~~connotes~~ reflects The Observer's liberal viewpoints on gender and equality in the modern world as they are displaying stories about women in power and ~~women~~ stories where women are not associated with another man. This is further anchored by the quote 'now women are called the slots' which would appeal to a female audience as they now see that they now have a larger ~~role~~ role in the workforce.

Another way the extracts reflect the Observer's viewpoints is by having a story about race and ethnicity. This is seen in Extract 4 with the

title 'weeding out toxic culture's race problem'. This connotes racial equality and an awareness of society, which is reflective of The Observer's Left wing ideals on ethnicity and multiculturalism as they are discussing problems about racism in modern society. This would appeal to a multicultural audience as they will feel included and listened to because their struggles are actively being discussed by the media.

Another way these extracts reflects The Observer's views is by providing global news. This is seen in Extract S which talks about covid responses in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam. An image of people in a foreign country is also employed, and it has natural lighting, which connotes realism to show how these occurrences are actually happening in other regions of the world. This reflects The Observer's values as they want to provide impartial international news and appeal to a globalised audience. This would appeal to audiences from other nations as they see that their countries are featured on the news.

In conclusion, to a great extent the extracts reflects the observer's viewpoint as they deliver Left-wing, liberal news on societal issues.

To earn the full 10 marks for AO2 (1a) the response needs to analyse the representations in the tweets in terms of how they fit *The Observer's* viewpoint and values and refer to media contexts. In addition, any other synoptic element is rewarded – this was most commonly a reference to media industries or audiences. This response – which earned the full 10 marks for AO2 (1a) – illustrates how to achieve this economically. It links analysis of the first two tweets to *The Observer's* viewpoint on social issues, which are explicitly established as media contexts by phrases such as: 'the newfound power of women in society' and 'prejudicial factors that are underlying in everyday society'. Similarly health issues are established as 'a prevalent topic of the time', although the section on the third tweet is weaker. The final paragraph succinctly answers the question while adding a media industries point which helps meet the question's synoptic requirement.

This strongly evidenced argument also earns the full 5 marks for AO2 (1b).

Question 10

- 10** Explain how media contexts influenced **two** changes in the front pages of *The Observer* between the 1960s and now. Refer to the set products you have studied in your answer. **[10]**

The requirement to cover both 1960s and 2020s *Observer* front pages adds a level of demand to the question than one that asked only for examples from the 1960s, so the mark scheme reflected this. The most successful responses covered two changes brought about by changing contexts with two examples from the 1960s and two from the 2020s. These examples could be less detailed than would be required had the question been about just the 1960s but still had to be specific.

Most responses did not give specific examples from the 2020s but could explain two changes (more or less) explicitly linked to changing contexts with two examples from 1960s front pages followed by a generalised statement about contemporary front pages.

Other less successful responses could describe changes in the newspaper front pages but with no reference to contexts and, in the weakest cases, no reference to specific examples. Some tried to use the tweets from Questions 8 and 9 as examples of the contemporary newspaper despite the fact that these were not front pages.

Exemplar 3

6th NOV 1966 → divorce + lingerie

20th OCT 1968 → case first marriage

In the issue of the Observer from the 20th October 1968, there is a story about ~~the~~ a mixed race marriage where a white man married a black woman. This would have been uncommon in the 1960s as interracial marriage was not considered normal, which is why the story made ^{the} front page ^{of a} newspaper. The Observer was a progressive newspaper in the 1960s so it presented the story in a positive way. ~~for example the~~ for example the quote in the story is from someone who supports the marriage. ~~This~~ This shows that the Observer was a progressive newspaper, but it also represented the views of society at the time, such as the shock of a black woman marrying a white man. Now, interracial marriages are much more common and accepted in society, and there would never be a story about interracial marriage on the front page of the Observer, as it wouldn't be shocking. However, the Observer is still a progressive, left leaning newspaper which represents multiple races on its covers now, such as including stories about multicultural people in the UK and around the world. Another context ^{which} influenced a change in the front page of the Observer is a change in society's views on women. On the front page of the issue of the Observer from the 6th November 1966, there is an advert advertising women's lingerie. This advert would have been used to fund the newspaper and reflects the 1960s views in society that women ~~are~~ were sexualised. Although the 1960s

brought new views on women, ~~and~~ and gender equality was becoming more relevant, ~~the~~ women were still sexualised and this is reflected in the lingerie advert. Now, the Observer would not advertise lingerie on it's ~~of~~ front cover, and would instead print more progressive stories about women, as they are now viewed as

END OF QUESTION PAPER

much more equal socially. This is reflected in modern Observer covers by stories including women in positions of power, such as politicians,

Exemplar 3 is a response that understands the influence of two contextual changes on the change in *The Observer* front pages between the 1960s and now, but can only give specific exemplification from the 1960s. The response reaches the top of the lower half of Level 3 (8 marks) as it does make some reference to coverage in the 2020s *Observer*. Had those references cited specific stories or people from the recent front pages they had studied, as the more successful responses did, then it could have achieved full marks.

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