

A Level **Media Studies**



Knowledge **Booklet:** **Component 1**

Tide print advert

(1950s)

No wonder you women buy more **TIDE** than any other washday product!

TIDE'S GOT WHAT WOMEN WANT!

NO SOAP-NO OTHER "SUDS"-NO OTHER WASHING PRODUCT KNOWN-WILL GET YOUR WASH AS **CLEAN** AS **TIDE!**

ONLY TIDE DOES ALL THREE:

- 1. World's CLEANEST wash!**
Yes, Tide will get your wash cleaner than any other washing product! (Tide, unlike soap, removes both dirt and soap film.) No wonder more Tide goes into American homes than any other washday product!
- 2. World's WHITEST wash!**
It's a miracle! In *hardest* water, Tide will get your shirts, sheets, towels whiter—yes, *whiter*—than any soap or any other washing product known!
- 3. Actually BRIGHTENS colors!**
Trust all your washable colors to Tide. With all its terrific cleaning power, Tide is truly safe . . . and actually brightens soap-dulled colors.

REMEMBER!
TIDE GETS CLOTHES CLEANER THAN ANY OTHER WASHDAY PRODUCT YOU CAN BUY!

Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Tide print advert

(1950s)

AS Component 1: Investigating the Media A level Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences

Focus areas: Media language Representation Audiences Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Designed specifically for heavy-duty, machine cleaning, Procter & Gamble launched *Tide* in 1946 and it quickly became the brand leader in America, a position it maintains today.
- The D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles* (DMB&B) advertising agency handled P&G's accounts throughout the 1950s. Its campaigns for *Tide* referred explicitly to P&G because their market research showed that consumers had high levels of confidence in the company.
- Uniquely, DMB&B used print and radio advertising campaigns concurrently in order to quickly build audience familiarity with the brand. Both media forms used the "housewife" character and the ideology that its customers "loved" and "adored" *Tide*.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Historical context:

The post-WWII consumer boom of the 1950s included the rapid development of new technologies for the home, designed to make domestic chores easier. Vacuum cleaners, fridge-freezers, microwave ovens and washing machines all become desirable products for the 1950s consumer. Products linked to these new technologies also developed during this time, for example, washing powder.

Cultural context:

Print adverts from the 1950s conventionally used more **copy** than we're used to seeing today. Consumer culture was in its early stages of

development and, with so many 'new' **brands** and products entering markets, potential customers typically needed more information about them than a modern **audience**, more used to **advertising**, **marketing** and **branding**, might need. **Conventions** of print-based advertising are still recognisable in this text however, as detailed below.

Consider codes and conventions, and how media language influences meaning:

- Z-line** and a rough **rule of thirds** can be applied to its **composition**.
- Bright, **primary colours** connote the positive associations the producers want the audience to make with the product.
- Headings**, **subheadings** and **slogans** are written in **sans-serif font**, **connoting** an informal **mode of address**.
- This is reinforced with the comic strip style image in the bottom right-hand corner with two women 'talking' about the product using informal **lexis** ("sudsing whizz").
- The more 'technical' details of the product are written in a **serif font**, **connoting** the more 'serious' or 'factual' information that the '1, 2, 3' bullet point list includes.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- Suspense is created through the **enigma** of "what women want" (**Barthes' Hermeneutic Code**) and emphasised by the tension-building use of multiple exclamation marks (**Barthes' Proairetic Code**).
- Barthes' Semantic Code** could be applied to the use of hearts above the main image. The hearts and the woman's **gesture codes** have **connotations** of love and relationships. It's **connoted** that this is "what women want" (in addition to clean laundry!).
- Hyperbole** and **superlatives** ("Miracle", "World's cleanest wash!", "World's whitest wash!") as well as **tripling** ("No other...") are used to oppose the **connoted** superior cleaning power of *Tide* to its competitors.

This **Symbolic Code (Barthes)** was clearly successful as Procter and Gamble's competitor products were rapidly overtaken, making *Tide* the brand leader by the mid-1950s.

A level only:

Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

- The latter point above links to **Lévi-Strauss' theory**, whereby texts are constructed through the use of **binary oppositions**, and meaning is made by audiences understanding these conflicts.
- In this text, “*Tide* gets clothes cleaner than any other washday product you can buy!” and “There's nothing like Procter and Gamble's *Tide*”, reinforces the **conceptual binary opposition** between *Tide* and its commercial rivals.
- It's also “unlike soap,” gets laundry “whiter... than any soap or washing product known” and is “truly safe” – all of which **connotes** that other, inferior products do not offer what *Tide* does.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and political contexts:

Interesting **intertexts** to consider would be WWII adverts for the ‘Women's Land Army’ and J. Howard Miller's ‘Rosie The Riveter – We Can Do It!’ advert for the War Production Co-Ordinating Committee.

The **representations** in these adverts challenge **stereotypical** views of women being confined to the domestic sphere, something society needed at the time as traditional ‘male roles’ were vacated as men left to fight.

In the 1950s, while men were being targeted for the post-war boom in America's car industry, women were the primary market for the technologies and products being developed for the home. In **advertising** for these types of texts, **stereotypical representations** of domestic perfection, caring for the family and servitude to the ‘man of the house’ became linked to a more modern need for speed, convenience and a better standard of living than the women experienced in the pre-war era.

Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:

- The **dress code** of the advert's main female character include a **stereotypical** 1950s hairstyle incorporating waves, curls and rolls made fashionable by contemporary film stars such as Veronica Lake, Betty Grable and Rita Hayworth. The fashion for women having shorter hair had a practical catalyst as long hair was hazardous for women working with machinery on farms or in factories during the war.
- The headband or scarf worn by the woman also links to the practicalities of **dress code** for



<http://www.womenslandarmy.co.uk/ww2-womens-land-army-newspaper-recruitment-campaign/>

http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_538122

women developed during this time. For this advert, having her hair held back **connotes** she's focused on her work, though this is perhaps **binary opposed** to the full make-up that she's wearing.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

- **Stuart Hall’s theory of representation** – the images of domesticity (including the two women hanging out the laundry) form part of the “shared conceptual road map” that give meaning to the “world” of the advert. Despite its comic strip visual construction, the scenario **represented** is familiar to the **audience** as a representation of their own lives.
- **David Gauntlett’s theory of identity** – women represented in the advert act as **role models** of domestic perfection that the audience may want to construct their own sense of identity against.

A level only:

- **Liesbet Van Zoonen’s feminist theory** – while their role socially and politically may have changed in the proceeding war years, the advert perhaps contradicts **Van Zoonen’s** theory that the media contribute to social change by representing women in non-traditional roles and using non-sexist language.
- **bell hooks’ feminist theory** argues that lighter skinned women are considered more desirable and fit better into the western ideology of beauty, and the advert could be seen to reinforce this by only representing “modern”, white women. This could also be linked to **Gilroy’s ethnicity and post-colonial theories** that media texts reinforce colonial power. Contextually, this power has perhaps been challenged at this moment in American history by the events of WWII.

PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

Social context:

Despite women having seen their roles in society change during the War (where they were needed in medical, military support and other roles outside of the home) domestic products of the 1950s continued to be aimed at female audiences.

The likely **target audience** of increasingly affluent lower-middle class women were, at this point in the 1950s, being appealed to because of their supposed need for innovative domestic technologies and products. The increasing popularity during the 1950s of supermarkets stocking a wider range of products led to an increased focus by corporations on brands and their **unique selling points**.

Consider how industries target audiences, and how audiences interpret and use the media:

- The likely **audience demographic** is constructed through the advert’s use of women with whom they might **personally identify (Uses and Gratifications Theory)**. These young women are likely to be newly married and with young families (clothing belonging to men and children on the washing line creates these **connotations**).
- The endorsement from *Good Housekeeping Magazine* makes them an **Opinion Leader** for the **target audience**, reinforcing the repeated assertion that *Tide* is the market-leading product.
- The **preferred reading (Stuart Hall)** of the advert’s reassuring **lexical fields** (“trust”, “truly safe”, “miracle”, “nothing like”) is that, despite being a “new” product, *Tide* provides solutions to the audience’s domestic chores needs.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Reception theory – Stuart Hall

- The **indirect mode of address** made by the woman in the main image **connotes** that her relationship with the product is of prime importance (*Tide* has what she wants). This, according to **Hall**, is the dominant or **hegemonic encoding** of the advert’s primary message that should be received by “you women.”
- The **direct mode of address** of the images in the top right and bottom left-hand corner link to the **imperative** “Remember!” and the use of **personal pronouns** (“your wash”, “you can buy”).

Cultivation theory – George Gerbner

- Advertising developed significantly during the 1950s and this theory, developed by **Gerbner** in the early 1970s, explains some of the ways in which audiences may be influenced by media texts such as adverts.
- The *Tide* advert aims to **cultivate** the ideas that: this is the brand leader; nothing else washes to the same standard as *Tide*; it’s a desirable product for its female audience; and its “miracle suds” are an innovation for the domestic washing market. **Gerbner’s** theory would argue that the repetition of these key messages causes **audiences** to increasingly align their own **ideologies** with them (in this case positively, creating a product that “goes into more American homes than any other washday product”).

Kiss of the Vampire

(1963)



Everett Collection, Inc. / Alamy Stock Photo

Kiss of the Vampire

film poster

(1963)

**AS Component 1:
Investigating the Media**
**A Level Component 1: Media
Products, Industries and Audiences**

**Focus area:
Media language
Representation
Media contexts**

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Produced by Hammer Film Productions and distributed by J. Arthur Rank and Universal, *Kiss of the Vampire* was intended to be the second sequel to 1958's *Dracula*, although the film's script actually makes no reference to Stoker's character. This is perhaps to distance itself from unfavourable comparisons to the superior Christopher Lee who starred in the original film.
- In addition to *Dracula*, Hammer had, by 1963, success with other 'monster movie' franchises such as *The Mummy* and *Frankenstein*. Distributors Universal also saw early success with films in this genre.
- Historically, 1963 saw the early stages of 'Beatlemania' and the so-called 'swinging sixties', the assassination of JFK and the Soviet Union launching the first woman into space.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Cultural context:

The 1960s **audience** for this advert could be assumed to be familiar with the **codes and conventions** of 'monster movie' film posters – such as its **composition, fonts and representations** of 'the monster' and its (usually female) victims. Interesting **intertexts** for comparative study might include:

The Evil of Frankenstein (1964)
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0058073/mediaviewer/rm2054095104>

Blood From The Mummy's Tomb (1971)
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0068290/mediaviewer/rm892444416>

Consider codes and conventions, and how media language influences meaning:

- The capitalised, **serif font** of the title creates **connotations** linked to the vampire film **genre** with its 'wooden' styling (referencing the vampire's coffin or the stake needed to kill him perhaps) and the blood dripping from the letter V's 'fang.'
- The use of a 'painted' main image is highly **conventional** of films of the period and links to the poster for Christopher Lee's *Dracula*, but the fact that it's in colour (**anchored** by the text "In Eastman Color") **connotes** that this is a modern telling of an older story.
- The gloomy grey, black and brown **colour palette** reinforces the film's dark, scary **conventions** while the red highlight colour draws attention to the attacking bats, the vampire and the blood – all key **visual signifiers** for the genre.
- Conventionally**, the stars are listed with the more highly paid male actors first and in order of fame, Clifford Evans having starred in Hammer's 1961 hit *Curse of the Werewolf*.

Consider theoretical perspectives
Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- Suspense is created through the **enigmas** surrounding the **connoted** relationship between the male and female vampires (emphasised by the "kiss" of the title) and the fate of their two victims (**Barthes' Hermeneutic Code**).
- Barthes' Semantic Code** could be applied to images of the bats and their conventional association with vampirism and horror in general.

- The **Symbolic Codes (Barthes)** of horror, darkness and fear are more widely reinforced through **signifiers** such as the moon and the male victim's 'submissive sacrifice' **gesture code**.

A level only:

Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

- The idea that texts are constructed through the use of **binary oppositions** could be applied to the opposing **representations** of the vampires and their victims, and the romantic **connotations** of "kiss" opposed in the film's title to the **stereotypical** "vampire" monster.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Political and social contexts:

The 1960s is often seen as the start of women's sexual liberation, aided by events such as the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1960. More women than ever were entering the paid workforce and sixties feminists were campaigning for equal pay, an end to sexual harassment and more equality between men and women in wider society. In America, equal pay legislation was passed in 1963.

'Older' **stereotypes** of women as passive victims of men and more modern 'male fears' of women challenging male dominance could both be seen to be encoded in this film poster.

Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:

- Both women wear pale dresses made of light materials and these **dress codes** serve to reinforce their femininity by highlighting the curves of their bodies and revealing the flesh of their upper chests and arms.
- The **gesture code** of the woman on the left is that of the **stereotypical** passive victim of the 'monster', his power highlighted by the fact that he's holding her by just one arm.
- Baring her teeth and with her arm raised almost fist-like as she's being bitten by the bat, the second woman's gesture codes are more aggressive, and the submissive pose of her male 'victim' (including being on his knees with his head back and throat exposed) represent her in a non-stereotypically dominant way.

- The vampire himself seems uncharacteristically fearful in his **gesture codes** with his arm thrown across his body in a defensive gesture, perhaps protecting himself from the female vampire.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

- **Stuart Hall's theory of representation** – the images of a castle, bats, the vampire's cape and dripping blood form part of the "shared conceptual road map" that give meaning to the "world" of the poster. The **audience** is actively encouraged to **decode** this familiar **generic iconography**.
- **David Gauntlett's theory of identity** – perhaps the female vampire acts as a **role model** for women struggling against male oppression or desperate to be seen as the equals of men, whatever the narrative or environment.

A level only:

- **Liesbet Van Zoonen's feminist theory** – by assuming this '**co-antagonist**' role, the female vampire is perhaps contributing to social change by representing women in non-traditional roles (**Van Zoonen, 1989**) though the passive female victim does reinforce these.

Super. Human.

Tokyo 2020

Paralympic Games

audio-visual advert

(2020)

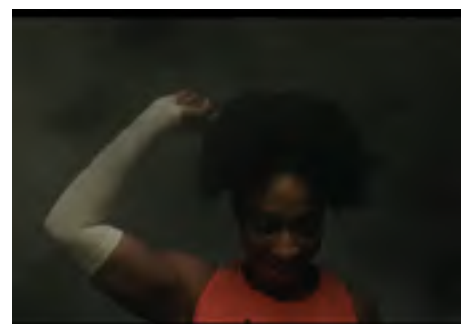


Image from Super. Human. Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games Trailer / Channel 4 / youtube.com

AS component 1: Investigating the media

A level component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

Focus areas:

- **Media language**
- **Representation**
- **Audiences**
- **Media contexts**

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- The advertisement *Super. Human.* was created to promote the 2020 Paralympic Games by Bradford Young, the Oscar nominated cinematographer and the first African American cinematographer to be nominated for an award in 2017 for his work on the film *Arrival*.
- It was devised and created by Channel 4's in-

house creative agency 4Creative and produced by Serial Pictures and Somesuch, a global production company. The trailer is the third campaign for the Paralympics undertaken by Channel 4, who were broadcasting the event, and was part of a bigger campaign including posters and social media.

- The advertisement explores the sacrifices made and the trials endured by Paralympic athletes in preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Consider the codes and conventions of the advertising form and how media language influences meaning:

- All advertisements employ a recognisable repertoire of elements of the advertising form but will also have a set of conventions

specific to their sub-genre. The aim of charity advertisements, and those designed to raise awareness of issues and events, is to have an immediate impact upon the audience to make them take notice; therefore, these advertisements need to be more memorable and hard-hitting.

- The producers of this sub-genre of advertisements are very aware of **compassion fatigue** and so will often aim to make advertisements that offer a different perspective on the issue or event, usually one that is more positive and upbeat. This approach is evident in *Super. Human.* with the use of **audio codes**. The choice of the soundtrack of *So You Want to be a Boxer* from Bussy Malone effectively communicates the struggles of the disabled athletes whilst giving the advertisement a positive feel. The more typical conventions, for example a voice-over and dramatic music, appear at the start of the advertisement, but rapidly change to the alarm and the realities of daily life. Sound effects underscore the music, emphasising the battle of training including grunts, groans and tape being applied.
- Advertisements have a limited amount of time to convey their message and so rely on **technical codes** and **editing** to do this rapidly. This advertisement uses close-up shots of expressions to engage the audience and to portray aspects of disability in a non-victim way, emphasising that this is part of their lives. For example, a range of shots are used to convey the strength and determination of the swimmer Ellie Simmonds, cutting between an establishing shot showing her alone in the pool, a close-up of her putting on her swimming goggles, a low angle shot creating power and an extreme close-up of her eyes connoting concentration. **Slow motion** is also used to show the cycling track crash combined with muting the sound for a more dramatic effect.
- **Visual codes** also communicate meanings. The **iconography and settings** are related to the athlete and the sport, for example Ellie Simmonds putting on her goggles in the pool, or training in the gym, but these settings are juxtaposed with domestic scenes of everyday life as a disabled person, suggesting the normality of their situation. **Gestures** communicate frustration, competition and celebration, visually

highlighting the result of the hard work.

- The **narrative** follows the lives of the Paralympians and their battles through training. The sequence where the athlete is trying to sing 'Happy Birthday' to his daughter on a mobile phone whilst training on a bike reinforces the clash between the sport and the family and further establishes the athletes as real people.
- There are also some more stylised sequences constructed to convey meaning. The dream sequence reappears later in the advert and is edited with a Channel 4 news clip announcing the postponement of the Games. The impact of this is shown as the athletes fall 'over the edge'.
- The advert also uses **humour** to convey information, for example, the image of the hamster on the wheel and the 'puke bucket' are recognisable visual signifiers of struggle. The animated sequences also insert aspects of the comic into what is a gruelling regime.

Consider theoretical perspectives Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- As advertisements have to communicate meaning rapidly, they use recognisable codes and conventions that signify messages for audiences to decode. In this advertisement, consider the connotations of the signs used. Clothing is used to rapidly place the athletes within their sport, for example, the track cyclist's clothing or the swimming costumes contrast with the athletes in their everyday life, such as the hospital clothing when the woman is giving birth or casual clothing when the wheelchair user tries to access the café. These signs serve to illustrate aspects of the lives of the people and creates realism.
- Consider how the advertisement also uses signs and codes to challenge the creation of myths around disability.

A level only:

Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

- How texts are constructed using **binary oppositions**. The images of gruelling training regimes are contrasted with the celebratory images at the end of the advertisement when success is achieved.

- A further **visual binary opposition** is created between the dreamlike sequences with dramatic images, music and the rich colour palette, and the reality conveyed through ambient lighting and the strident sound of the alarm clock.
- Animated and archive footage are included in opposition to real-life actions to introduce humour and reinforce the narrative.
- The **on-screen graphic** ‘To be a Paralympian there’s got to be something wrong with you’ creates a **conceptual binary opposition** between audience perception of Paralympic athletes and the reality. It challenges how language is used set against the reality of the positive images in the advertisement. It is this opposition that the audience is encouraged to reflect upon. ‘The juxtaposition between being a Paralympic athlete at the peak of your powers and being unable to get in a cafe for a drink is pretty shocking. And tells the story in a very simple way.’

(<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/theyve-nailed-again-channel-4-unveils-super-human-campaign-tokyo-paralympics/1722076>)

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Product context:

Super: Human. is the third of Channel 4’s advertising campaigns for the Paralympic Games. It will be useful to look at the other two campaigns and consider the different approaches that have been taken by the channel in their representation of disability.

Launching the campaign, Lynsey Atkin, 4Creative’s Executive Creative Director, said: ‘Following the last two Paralympics adverts was no small task – they exploded attitudes around disability Yet we spotted an opportunity to present Paralympians in a way they hadn’t been shown before – by pointing a camera at the realities of their lives, and, as with any elite athlete, the sacrifices they make in pursuit of greatness. collectively these choices paint a story of mental determination, not of disability.’

(<https://www.televisual.com/news/watch-c4s-paralympics-campaign-super-human/>)

The decision was therefore made to change the focus of a previous campaign ‘Meet the Superhumans’ and instead in the 2020 campaign to emphasise the ‘Human’ rather than the ‘Super’ and to juxtapose the images of the training regime with those of the everyday lives of the athletes, with the intention of making them relatable to audiences.

Consider how and why particular social groups may be under-represented or misrepresented.

- Dominant groups in society largely control what is produced and as a result, minority groups tend to be marginalised, creating an unrealistic view of the contemporary world. This advertisement attempts to address the marginalisation of certain social groups, in this case, those with disabilities. Its aim, reflecting the ideology and ethos of Channel 4, is to give a voice to those who are not usually represented positively in other areas of the media.
- The positive representation of disability in the advertisement and the coverage of the games changed attitudes. According to YouGov research, 65% of viewers felt that the coverage of the Paralympics had a positive impact on their perceptions of disabled people. 82% of viewers agreed disabled athletes were as talented as able-bodied athletes (<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/theyve-nailed-again-channel-4-unveils-super-human-campaign-tokyo-paralympics/1722076>).

Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:

- Choices have been made by the producers of the advertisement to create representations that challenge accepted ideas regarding disability and disabled athletes in particular.
- The advertisement actively avoids negative stereotypical representations of Paralympians as victims to be pitied, or heroes, ‘superhumans’, to be viewed in awe. Instead, the representations create a realistic, ‘blood and guts’ feel to the advertisement. The representations cover both genders and give a different view of the world of disability to that of ‘having something wrong with you’.

- The narratives are centred around real people, but through re-presentation, a **representation of reality** is constructed focusing specifically on the challenges that the athletes face. The filming, editing and audio codes combine to construct a representation of this social group, raising awareness and creating positive representations of the Paralympians as athletes first, rather than disabled people ‘doing their best’.
- In constructing the representations as they have in *Super. Human.*, the producers have aimed to avoid the stereotypes of disabled athletes as having to ‘overcome’ their disability in order to achieve success, instead celebrating them as high-performance athletes in their own right.
- Consider how the representations are constructed through media language. **Close-up shots** of the athletes and their challenges during training and their home lives create positive representations of ordinary people who eat their breakfast, give birth, and play the drums, with whom the **audience** can positively associate. The fast-paced editing enables the advertisement to highlight a range of narratives and athletes with different disabilities, disciplines, and challenges.

Consider theoretical perspectives: Stuart Hall’s theory of representation

According to Hall, meanings are communicated through signs. This is very true of the advertising form where easily recognisable signs rapidly communicate meaning to an audience in a short space of time. For example, expressions of endurance and struggle are easily recognisable and understood.

This advertisement goes some way to address Hall’s assertions that stereotyping occurs when there are inequalities of power, and that excluded groups, such as the disabled, are constructed as different. In the advertisement, the focus is on the athletes as ordinary sports men and women striving to achieve a goal. The athletes are three dimensional and distinct from each other; therefore, the advertisement avoids simplifying their representations.

David Gauntlett’s theory of identity

In addressing an under-represented social group, the advertisement gives visible recognition to those with disabilities and allows disabled people to see themselves represented positively in the media.

Super. Human. offers audiences a more **diverse and inclusive range of identities** and broadens general understanding of what it means to be disabled as an athlete and in everyday life.

However, many would argue that the Paralympics in itself is not enough to redress the balance and indeed, many disabilities are not featured in the games.

PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

The target audience for this advertisement is a relatively broad demographic, including Channel 4 viewers who largely fall into the 16–34 age bracket; fans of sport; and those who desire to see more inclusive representations of social groups, of which they may be a member, from a channel whose remit states that it ‘appeals to the tastes and interests of a culturally diverse society’ (www.ofcom.org.uk).

Consider how the advertisement targets, reaches and addresses its audience.

- The use of **personalisation** will reach the audience. *Super.Human.* deals with real, human stories focusing on the day-to-day struggles of being an athlete in training and disabled. The individual narratives are constructed to encourage the audience to identify with the athletes and their lives.
- The **technical codes** include a lot of close-up shots, some of which are uncomfortable, for example, the popping of the blister. It also gives the audience access to views with which they may be unfamiliar, such as the attaching of a prosthetic blade, all of which hold their attention. The editing cuts between the athletes’ gruelling routines and clips of cartoon moments, lightening the mood and engaging the audience through humour.
- The **audio codes** address the audience. The soundtrack is a recognisable song from the musical Bugsy Malone, *So You Want To Be a Boxer*. The choice of this upbeat, stirring tune grabs the audience’s attention with its connotations of struggle and hard work paying off. Older audiences will be familiar with the film from which it is taken. Other audio codes suggest struggle, heavy breathing and grunting and these are juxtaposed with sounds from

everyday life, such as a woman in childbirth and a baby crying.

- The **unique selling point** is the ‘showing’ of the athletes’ stories. There is no voice-over and no graphics moralising on the plight of the disabled. Instead, there is an attempt to give a realistic portrayal of the lives of disabled athletes. The audience are left towards the end of the advertisement with the words ‘To be a Paralympian there’s got to be something wrong with you’, encouraging them to examine their own misconceptions of disability in the light of what they have just viewed.
- The advertisement was successful in reaching its audience. Channel 4’s Paralympic coverage was viewed by 20 million people, a third of the UK population, 22% of whom were 16-34 years of age. The marketing campaign reached 81% of the UK population. The Paralympic Games attracted 2.6 million viewers accounting for the biggest Channel 4 weekly share of TV viewing since 2016 and the largest daytime share since 2012 (<https://www.channel4.com/press/news/channel-4s-coverage-tokyo-2020-paralympic-games-reaches-20-million-viewers>).

Consider how audiences may interpret this advertisement in different ways.

- The *Super. Human.* advertisement sets out to challenge audiences’ perceptions of disability.
- Regular audiences of Channel 4 may be familiar with the approach taken by the broadcaster when promoting the Paralympics as the other two campaigns were successes in their own right. Alex Brooker, co-presenter of *The Last Leg*, who has disabilities himself, said: “For me, waiting for the Channel 4 Paralympics advert every four years is like waiting for the John Lewis Christmas advert.”
- Audiences would expect the advertisement to raise the profile of the event. Zaid Al-Qassab, chief marketing officer of Channel 4, said of the thinking behind the campaign, ‘The Paralympics has always been an afterthought of the Olympics. It was the first time that any broadcaster was making a meaningful attempt to elevate the Paralympics on an equal footing. And the only way of doing that was to land it in public consciousness through something that would make you sit up and think totally differently.’ (<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/theyve-nailed-again-channel-4-unveils-super-human-campaign-tokyo-paralympics/1722076>)
- The advertisement may make some audiences feel uncomfortable as it uses shock tactics to make audiences aware of the issues facing disabled people in their sport as well as in their everyday lives. For example, time lapse photography is used to show a bruise developing and there is a close-up shot of a blister being popped. Audiences may also be affected by seeing disabled rugby player Kylie Grimes unable to enter a café as her wheelchair cannot get over the step.
- The advertisement also challenged audiences to examine how they may use outdated language to categorise disabled people by the on-screen slogan at the end of the advertisement ‘To be a Paralympian there’s got to be something wrong with you’. The aim of this is to encourage audiences to see this as something positive and that being a Paralympian is something of which to be proud.

CONTEXTS

Social and Cultural

- Advertising campaigns, whether for consumable products, events or charities, reflect the concerns and issues of the society that produces them. In promoting the Paralympics and creating the trailer, Channel 4 is seeking to address the under-representation or misrepresentation of a particular social group.
- The advertisement seeks to focus on the fact that these are real people – ‘Human’ rather than ‘Super’ – which makes them more accessible to the audience.
- The representation of disability in this advertisement is affected by social and cultural circumstances. Channel 4 has taken the active decision to present the athletes neither as victims or as heroes, but just ordinary sports men and

women facing extraordinary challenges. This constructs a more compelling social narrative reflecting the appetite of the time for success stories that are accessible. This is evident at the beginning of the advert when the dream sequence is shattered, and real life begins.

question their assumptions and be more open to the representations in advertisements like *Super: Human.*, which offers a refreshing and more realistic perception of what it means to be disabled and one that challenges common preconceptions and mainstream values.

Consider theoretical perspectives: Reception theory – Stuart Hall

- The upbeat soundtrack, use of personalisation and positive representations of the event and the athletes as both ‘Super’ and ‘Human’, encourages an audience to accept the ideologies and **intended meaning** of Channel 4, the encoder, in creating the advertisement. The use of real people creates a preferred reading that the audience should invest in their narratives and subsequently watch the Paralympic Games.
- Some audiences may adopt a **negotiated position**, acknowledging the legitimacy of the encoder’s position, but may feel more distanced from the sporting theme of the event. However, this audience may be more open to the positive approach of the advertisement and examine their misconceptions about disabled people and their lives more generally.
- **Oppositional responses** may come from those who are not supporters of Channel 4 and its ethos of giving voice to those who are under-represented. They may be older, not regular viewers of Channel 4 or not interested in sport of any kind.

Cultivation theory – George Gerbner

- This theory suggests that audiences may have become used to the conventions of this sub-genre of advertising which raises awareness of a particular social group. Due to the repetition of certain codes and conventions, for example, the focus on the specific disability accompanied by a voice-over with serious mode of address, they may accept this view of the world and perhaps be somewhat ‘immune’ to their purpose.
- Alternatively, this advertisement can also be said to challenge Gerbner’s assertions. As a result of viewing advertisements whose aim is to raise awareness and give a voice to previously under-represented groups, audiences may

Turntables

(By Janelle Monáe)



Image screenshot from Janelle Monáe – Turntables [Emotion Picture] / [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3vR8D8v8v8)

AS Component 1: Investigating the media

A level Component 1: media products, industries and audiences

Subject content:

Media language

representation

media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Janelle Monáe (who goes by both they/them and she/her pronouns) is an American singer, songwriter, author and actor. They have won several awards during their career; in 2015, *Billboard* gave them the Women in Music Rising Star Award and they have received 8 Grammy Awards. They also starred in the films *Hidden Figures*, a box office success about black women mathematicians who worked for NASA, and *Moonlight*, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture. The song *Turntables* was nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Song in 2021.
- Janelle Monáe is signed to Atlantic Records but also has their own independent label Wondaland Arts Society. They are one of the few black women to run their own independent record label. In 2021, they and their company signed to Sony Music Publishing.
- Turntables* was written by Monáe, Nathaniel Irvin III, and George A. Peters, with production by Nate “Rocket” Wonder and Roman Gian Arthur. It marked Monáe’s first new original music since their Grammy Award-nominated third solo album, 2018’s *Dirty Computer*.

- *Turntables* is a protest song that was initially written to appear in the 2020 Amazon documentary *All In: The Fight for Democracy*, which focuses on the issue of voter suppression and the fight for democracy. The film's subject is the 2018 elections for the Governor of Georgia. It drew attention to the tactics used to suppress voting rights to ensure the election of the Republican candidate Brian Kemp at the expense of Stacey Abrams, the black Democrat candidate. In the documentary, the tactics used to suppress the voting right of minorities were exposed. During the run up to the election, 1.4 million under-represented minorities disappeared from the electoral roll and 300,000 Georgians were incorrectly deemed ineligible to vote.
- The music video was inspired by this erosion of democracy and goes further, highlighting Monáe's concerns about other social inequalities in America and globally, thus demonstrating the power of the music video form to raise awareness of social issues:

My responsibility as an artist is to reflect the times. And I wish these were not the times we lived in. I wish that I didn't have to write a song fighting against voter suppression and drawing attention to the injustices of marginalized people. I wish I didn't have to do that. And I wish that the other artists didn't have to do that, but we felt a responsibility to it.

- Read the rest of this interview with Janelle Monáe in *Variety* magazine: <https://bit.ly/3ADUGcO>
- The title of the track *Turntables* refers to Monáe's assertion that action needs to be taken to turn things around and tackle injustice across society. They refer to the music video as an emotion picture and a chronicler of social issues; it is important in drawing attention to the truth so that change could happen.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – media language

Consider the codes and conventions of media forms and products

Consider how *Turntables* conforms to the codes and conventions of the **narrative/performance video**. The aim of the performer is to interpret the lyrics through a narrative, of which they are an integral part. The artist in performance sings directly to camera, involving the audience in the story and leading them through the narrative. The involvement of the artist in this style of music video allows them to establish their star persona. In the case of Janelle Monáe, the use of the music video form raises awareness of societal inequalities and issues that are of concern to them and black Americans. This is a protest song and as such employs the codes and conventions of this sub-genre, including a strong beat that Monáe describes as similar to a march and a powerful, uplifting chorus, typical of a power ballad. The aim of the song and its inclusion in the documentary film is to offer an audio contribution to the movement. This is then reinforced by the choice of images used in the music video to reflect the issues and events.

Consider how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning

Consider how elements of media language, including technical and visual codes, work together to communicate meaning in the music video.

Visual codes:

- **Clothing:** different cultural codes are established through clothing styles and colours, suggesting the inclusivity and diversity of the community. For example, the young girl and the black womens' hairstyles carry **cultural connotations**. Monáe themselves wears a 1940's army uniform relating to national identity.
- **Settings and iconography:** the music video locations move between archive footage locations, surreal settings and iconography and the ordinary home of a family having breakfast. The setting of the family living room shows a young girl with an iconic, cultural hairstyle watching the archive news footage through a VR headset. This *mise-en-scène* communicates

a positive message that the scenes she is witnessing on the screen are consigned to history and she will not have to live through them as things will change. The lyrics state:

*Got a new agenda
With a new dream
I'm kicking out the old regime*

Some of the iconography in the music video has very literal connections with the lyrics, such as the turntable at the start, whereas other examples of iconography are more surreal. For example, Monáe dragging the statue of the warrior queen out of the sea and then standing beside it, reinforcing the idea of minorities standing up to injustice. Similarly, the juxtaposition of the American flag with the lyrics:

*America, you a lie
But the whole world 'bout to testify*

suggesting that America has let down its people. Simpler but important messages are communicated through iconography, for example the young girl having a choice over the dolls suggests that inequalities extend to the toy industry.

- **Expressions and gestures:** the main audio in the music video is the song lyrics and Monáe's rapping. Other elements of the narrative are constructed through expressions and gestures. For example, the gestures of protest in the archive footage, including the iconic and globally recognised Black Power raised fists of Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics; these are replicated in the more contemporary images of protest. Similarly, the upbeat atmosphere of the music video during the chorus sections is reinforced by waving, smiling and dancing, which are recognisable **signifiers** of positivity.

Technical codes:

Consider how the technical codes, including camera shots, movement and editing, work together to create meaning.

- The establishing shots of the beach at the beginning and end of the music video constructs the idea of freedom. The final shot of Monáe with the warrior queen statue, combined with the audio of the sea, leaves the audience calm and

feeling confident that change will happen.

- The use of **close-up shots** of Janelle Monáe in the music video and their determined expressions create an upbeat feeling and an engagement with the audience.
- The **long shot** of Monáe with their back turned and gesticulating to the American flag connotes the idea of the flag as a symbol of oppression for some areas of American society. On the other hand, the long shot of the smiling face of the young girl when she picks up the doll, which represents her culture, is positive and uplifting in its simplicity.
- The **canted angles** combined with fast editing towards the end of the video as the music builds creates a sense of disorientation reflecting the need to disrupt the status quo.
- The **bird's eye view** shots of the Black Lives Matter protests and the colourful Pride march signify the strength of feeling about inequality across America.
- The **editing** cuts between the black and white archive footage, the contemporary news clips and the performance of the artist in various settings, establishing a cohesive message reinforcing the ideology of the music video through **visual signifiers**.

Audio:

As well as the song itself, the music video starts with the voice of black American writer James Baldwin from 1968 and featured in the 2016 documentary film based on his work, *I Am Not Your Negro*: 'I can't be a pessimist because I'm alive... I am forced to believe that we can survive whatever we must survive...' It is used here to remind audiences how long the suppression of minority groups has been happening.

(Watch the full clip of James Baldwin speaking here: <https://bit.ly/2VbPkjd>)

Narrative:

- The **narrative** is **non-linear**. Monáe combines elements of the past, present and the future; they use the archive footage to highlight the injustices of the past and those still perpetrated in the present but, through the inclusion of happy

children, looks to more positive future. The different **narrative strands** featuring as a series of clips are held together by the artist performing the song and engaging in direct mode of address with the audience, thus forcing them to engage with the issues. The artist acts as the storyteller, a typical convention of music videos. The repetitive lyrics of the chorus reinforce the narrative:

*No stoppin' 'til
Turn, turn, turn (turn)
We can't wait for it
Turn, turn, turn
Yeah, the tables 'bout to turn*

- There is a **structure** to the narrative as the music video starts and ends in the same location. The narrative focuses on the central premise that there is a need for change and for the tables to turn:

*We are in the middle of a revolution right?
What's a revolution without a song and a song
without a revolution. Tables are turning. The
people will always be the saviors of the people.*

*Music speaks to everyone and of course, has a
huge influence in the way we think, things we do,
and how we move. Lyrics to our favorite songs
replay in our heads and I hope my words stick in
the ears that listen to it.*

(<https://bit.ly/3CG506P>)

- The narrative moves between reminders of the injustices dispensed out over time to minority and subordinate groups, to more positive statements about how change can happen.
- A further narrative focus is related to the documentary for which the track was written and on voter suppression in Georgia. Visual signifiers of this event include images of black people casting their votes and Stacey Abrams speaking.
- The images are at times highly **illustrative**, often featuring a literal interpretation of the lyrics. This adds to the sense that a vivid story is being told with a clear message and the fictional elements are supported by the factual visual information.

Consider how media language conveys viewpoints and ideologies

Consider how the elements of media language mentioned here communicate the artist's viewpoint reinforcing the ideology, gained from their own and past experiences, that contemporary society must learn from past mistakes:

*I'm simply watching, examining, and wanting to
highlight all of the people who are on the front-
lines fighting for our democracy, fighting against
racial inequalities, fighting against white
supremacy, fighting against systemic racism, and
systemic oppression.*

(<https://bit.ly/3RqRW9t>)

Consider theoretical approaches

Semiotics – Barthes:

- The selected images do not only illustrate the lyrics but connote deeper meanings in relation to the more abstract notion of challenging injustice and inequality.
- Certain visual signifiers, for example the American flag and the raised fist, connote more complex meanings according to the context in which they appear and can achieve the status of myth through a process of naturalisation.
- Consider the signification of clothing, iconography, gesture and expression in the music video *Turntables*.

Structuralism – Levi-Strauss (A Level):

- Music videos create meanings through a structure that is recognisable to audiences. The form has a repertoire of familiar elements regardless of the music genre. This music video employs the codes and conventions of the narrative/performance form, cutting between the chosen archive clips, the constructed narrative and the performance of the artist. Music videos have a set time, the length of the song, to construct meaning and therefore use recognisable conventions, including clothing and iconography, to convey messages rapidly.

- The resolution of opposites can have ideological significance, particularly in music videos that encode social messages. Consider how this music video brings together individuals, groups and events to create a cohesive ideological message related to the need for social and political change.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

PRODUCT CONTEXT

Janelle Monáe is an influential artist who has played powerful roles on screen and in their music videos. As a musician, they tend to blend and bend genres in their music, including rap and jazz; these music sub-genres typically cover themes related to the experiences of Afro-Americans. Monáe uses the conventions of the music and its historical roots to explore social inequalities and the suppression of minority groups. As a black, female and non-binary artist in this genre, they are also concerned to project a positive representation of gender and, in particular, black women through their music:

A lot of us live this experience. This is not something we get to turn off and turn off. This is life for us. This is a life for our family. This is a life for our friends. This has been the life for our ancestors. (<https://variety.com>)

Consider processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent events, issues and social groups

Representations of gender and ethnicity:

- Turntables* constructs a **version of reality** using real locations and believable characters combined with actual protestors, sports personalities, leaders and politicians who have spoken out and taken action against oppression. One example is Muhammad Ali, who throughout his life challenged white supremacy, segregation and all forms of racism. This is combined with a more surreal aesthetic using the music video form to engage the audience with the issues. The **paradigmatic choices** of visual and technical codes work together to convey a point of view about society.
- Janelle Monáe refuses to accept that certain areas of society, including ethnicity, gender and social class, should continue to be **misrepresented and under-represented**. Whilst some of the images used highlight negative representations of ethnicity, there is also positivity and hope with the inclusion of **cultural iconography**, such as the uplifting shots of groups dancing and singing together and interesting, iconic shots of young black women. Positive **messages and values** are embedded in these representations and, through the music video form, the audience is informed about the injustices of the past and present and encouraged to be active in seeking change.
- Consider how this is achieved through the processes of selection and combination.

How representations invoke discourses and ideologies and position audiences (A Level only)

- Different music videos will construct representations of gender, issues, social groups and ethnicity in diverse ways, according to the conventions of the music genre. Consider how the representations in this music video are constructed by the artist to convey a viewpoint and instigate discourse around a social issue. Janelle Monáe is politically active and understands how dominant groups in society control what is produced, how representations are constructed and stereotypes reinforced. As part of her activism, they are a co-chair of When We All Vote, a non-profit organisation whose aim is to increase voting participation for all Americans.
- Consider how they use the music video form to invoke discussion around social inequality, ethnicity and identity and is not afraid to point the finger of blame and suggest change is coming:

*I'm kicking out the old regime
Liberation, elevation, education
America, you a lie
But the whole world 'bout to testify.*

The change in the lyrics from 'I' to 'we' reinforces the collective responsibility for what is happening in society.

- The music video serves both to amplify the lyrics and to engage the audience to empathise with the situations and issues, both real and imagined by the artist in *Turntables*.

Consider theoretical approaches

Theories of representation – Hall:

- This music video deliberately avoids constructing stereotypical representations and presenting subordinate groups as ‘other’, instead representing them as powerful and active as a result constructing a more positive representation.
- Consider how this is achieved in *Turntables* through recognisable signs and codes that are decoded by audiences and interpreted to produce a positive, hopeful reading of the music video.

Feminist theories – Van Zoonen (A Level):

- Consider how in *Turntables*, Janelle Monáe has created a political music video positioning the audience to engage with a discourse around the representation of issues related to ethnicity and identity. Their agenda is clearly centred around their own concerns and experiences stemming from their background and the experiences of black people in the past and present. Their aim is to raise awareness of these issues.

bell hooks

Consider how you can apply hooks’ assertion that race and class, as well as sex, determine the extent to which individuals are exploited and discriminated against. How far does this music video challenge stereotypical representations of ethnicity and gender?

Consider how Monáe, as an activist, demonstrates feminism as a political commitment rather than a lifestyle choice in attempting to challenge the under-representation and misrepresentation of social groups in this music video.

Theories of ethnicity and postcolonial theory – Gilroy (A level):

- The narrative embeds positive messages and values, constructing representations of a successful black, female and non-binary music artist to subvert negative stereotypes of ethnicity.

- Consider the way in which representations of race and ethnicity are constructed in the music video in order to challenge the under-representation and misrepresentation of particular ethnic groups that may originally stem from colonial attitudes.
- Consider how Monáe uses this music video to reinforce similarities rather than cultural differences in the creation of a common purpose to be successful and defy the odds against them. The representation of ethnic groups as victims and the notion of ‘**otherness**’ is avoided and replaced by more positive representations of power through protest.

CONTEXTS

Social, cultural and political

Consider how *Turntables* reflects the time in which it was made:

The representations in this music video have been affected by social and cultural contexts, for example the issues of voter suppression, the Black Lives Matter movement and the growing awareness of global social inequality. The narrative constructed by the music video offers social commentary and challenges audience perceptions of particular social groups, positioning them to view them differently.

Consider how the responses of different audiences may reflect social and cultural circumstances. Audiences who may feel under-represented may be empowered by the messages encoded in this music video. The music video explores issues related to the experience of living in contemporary America as a member of an under-represented social group.

Other political issues and events are alluded to in the music video, for example the protests after the killing of George Floyd and the Families Belong Together campaign, whose aim was to reunite immigrant families separated at the US-Mexican border by a policy initiated during the Trump administration.

Watch Janelle Monáe discuss the political and social background to the creation of *Turntables* here:

<https://bit.ly/3pXqxjZ>

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Riptide music video, Vance Joy (2013)



Used with permission from UNIFIED

Riptide music video, Vance Joy (2013)

<http://www.vancejoy.com/video>

**AS Component 1:
Investigating the Media**
**A level Component 1: Media Products,
Industries and Audiences**

Subject Content: Media Language
**Focus Area: Representation,
Media contexts**

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Vance Joy is an Australian singer-songwriter signed to Atlantic records (a subsidiary of major label, Warner). His music can be categorised as fitting into indie folk-pop genre.
- *Riptide* was Vance Joy's first single to be released in the USA, following his debut EP, "God Loves You When You're Dancing". It became a platinum selling single.
- The video was directed by Dimitri Basil and Laura Gorun and has had nearly 100 million views on YouTube.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Language

Economic Contexts:

Consider whether the seemingly low budget, unique style of the music video was an artistic decision or an **economic** one. Later Vance Joy music videos such as "Georgia" make use of larger budgets, special effects and elaborate, coherent narratives. **Funding** could be discussed in relation to music video in terms of the way that bands might start out with small low budget productions which increase in scope and budget as they gain popularity and fans. Consider the extent to which **budget** impacts artistic decisions and the visual **style** of music videos. An extension of this discussion might explore whether music videos are in themselves an **advert** for the band or a representation of how "valuable" the band are to

producers. Are mainstream **audiences** impressed by larger budget music videos and attracted to the apparent implied "quality" of that band?

Consider how the combination of elements of media language influences meaning and intertextuality:

- The video makes **intertextual** references to different media forms (see below) and offers a wide variety of seemingly disparate elements.
- **Montage editing** is used in an overt way - a wide range of contrasting shots juxtaposed (often through hard jump cuts) to convey a large amount of information:
 - » The editing together of seemingly disparate images invites audience **interpretation** and candidates could consider Eisenstein's concept of "intellectual montage" where new ideas emerge from the collision of images and generate new meanings that might not otherwise exist:
 - * For example the sequence where a male and a female suddenly turn their heads to look at something off-screen and the next shot shows a seemingly unrelated pile of dollar bills - consider the **connections** audiences are being asked to make through this use of montage.
 - * Many of these cuts also have a clear link to the **lyrics** themselves and candidates might explore the visual metaphors and possible significance of these edits in relation to the lyrics.
 - » The music video for the most part rejects a clearly defined **narrative**. There are some short coherent narrative sequences (such as the scene where the girl goes missing in the graveyard) but for the most part the sequences deliberately lack narrative coherence.
 - * Candidates might explore the way in which the music video seems to reference **surrealist** or avant-garde cinema (such

as the work of Luis Buñuel) and discuss the impact these references might have on the meaning of the video.

Consider the codes and conventions of media forms and products:

- Ways in which the music video seems to defy or **subvert music video conventions**:
 - » Whilst it is a convention of the music video form to have song **lyrics interpreted** on screen, the overt and deliberate way the lyrics are interpreted in this music video might be subverting this convention:
 - * The opening line “*I was scared of dentists and the dark*” is interpreted explicitly with a shot of a female looking “scared” with a metallic contraption in her mouth that suggests she is in a dentist’s chair and followed by a shot of a light swinging in a darkened room. This **overt graphical representation** of the lyrics is largely repeated throughout the video. Consider whether this is following or subverting the convention of lyrical interpretation.
 - » The music video seems to explicitly reference **feature films**:
 - * The **opening shot** makes use of cinematic style credits and information about the music is presented with a title at the bottom of the screen. This title is graphically similar to a “**billing block**” or “**credit block**” which is often seen on film posters or in trailers. Consider why this style of presentation might have been appropriated from the film genre and how this might frame an audience response. Is the video presenting itself as a short film or a music video?
 - * The video frequently references the Western and Thriller **genres** (and arguably the hipster style of Wes Anderson films), but most notably uses **Horror genre iconography**, e.g. females repeatedly dragged off screen by unseen forces and a character going missing in a dark graveyard.
 - * Consider whether the overt use of **references to film** is attempting to offer an implied artistic value that transcends the music video form.

Consider the significance of challenging and/or subverting genre conventions:

- *Riptide* is relatively **unusual** both as a music video and specifically as a text within the indie folk genre in terms of its style, rejection of narrative and lack of spectacle or special effects.
- Comparison could be made with a later Vance Joy video *Georgia* (2015), which follows many more conventions, to consider why *Riptide* **challenges or subverts** the conventions of the genre.
- Candidates might explore the way in which the video might have been designed to confer a sense of **uniqueness** or intrigue to the band. Consider the **purpose** of music videos and the way that Vance Joy are been marketed to audiences through the style of the video.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Semiotics – Roland Barthes

- Explore the concept of **signifier/signified** using specific signification in the music video and how this might be interpreted according to social convention, for example the pile of dollar bills which accompanies the line “*Oh, all my friends are turning green*”.
 - » Explore Barthes idea that **constructed meanings can come to seem self-evident** by discussing the connotations of the colour green in relation to both money and envy - this could be said to have achieved Barthes’ status of **myth** through a process of **naturalisation** which might allow for complicated readings of the image.
 - » This example of **polysemy** could be **interpreted** in a variety of ways e.g. is it implying that friends (possibly in other bands) have “sold out” by giving into money? Or might instead these friends be turning green with envy at the success of Vance Joy?

Genre Theory – Steve Neale

- Use the video to explore Neale’s idea that genres may be dominated by **repetition**, but are also marked by **difference, variation, and change**.
- Discuss the ways in which the indie folk music video **genre** is dominated by **repetition** (low-fi videos with bands playing instruments etc.) and the extent to which *Riptide* offers **variation** to these aspects.
- An extension of this discussion might explore the way that the video fits into the wider **economic and institutional context** of the music

industry. Candidates might explore the purpose of the music video and ask whether *Riptide* is offering variation for artistic reasons or to generate interest in the band to make a profit.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and Cultural Contexts:

Consider the context of the music video in terms of the **texts** and media **forms** it **references** and explore the significance of these texts in relation to the way women in particular are represented. Candidates could watch sequences from Buñuel and Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) to explore surrealist film, considering the way this film explores violence and sexual desire in a way that might **inform the music video**. The infamous eye cutting scene in *Un Chien Andalou* for instance could be compared to the hand stabbing scene the music video. A brief exploration of the **subconscious** might also afford the chance to add depth to a discussion of the representation issues in the video and its sometimes dream-like logic.

Consider how media representations convey values, attitudes and beliefs about the world:

- The video offers many interesting examples of the representation of women - consider whether or not the video reinforces a **patriarchal** world view or is **subverting** the objectification of women in media.
- **Women** in the video are repeatedly presented as an **object** to be watched:
 - » In one shot a woman with her back to the camera undresses out of her swimming costume and there are a number of instances where we see disembodied, isolated sections of women's bodies such as bare feet running away or feminine hands being dragged out of shot.
 - » Consider whether these images of women are **sexualised** and offered to audiences for their pleasure (scopophilia) or presented in a way that **challenges** the sexualisation of women in many music videos.
 - » Explore the **lip-synch sections** where a woman sings the lyrics of the song into a microphone. At first she has immaculate

make-up and is framed and lit in a flattering way arguably **conforming to social norms** of beauty and glamour associated with mainstream media texts. As we repeatedly return to this character she becomes increasingly dishevelled, her make-up smudges and her expression becomes more and more vacant as she sings "*the words wrong*". Discuss the extent to which this representation **challenges gender representation** in music video and how it sits with the other representations of women in the video.

- Along with the representations of women the music video also presents a number of scenes that offer images of **violence**, such as a female hand being stabbed by a knife and a gun being pointed off screen. The lip-synching woman also clutches at her own neck and we see what seems to be blood over her hand. Candidates may discuss why these images are used in the video and whether they may be **trivialising or normalising** violence.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Theories of Identity – David Gauntlett

- Use Gauntlett to explore complex and diverse representations in the music video - his concept of the **pick and mix** seems particularly relevant to the style of the video which constructs a range of different stimuli that the audience are invited to interpret. The video rejects singular, straightforward messages and instead invites a **variety of different responses and interpretations**.

A level only:

Feminist Theory – bell hooks

- Hooks could be used as a stimulus to explore the seemingly **contradictory messages** about **gender** in the video. Is the video **objectifying** women in an ironic or knowing way or is it instead feeding into the **oppression** of women in a patriarchal society? Use hooks' position that **feminism is a struggle to end sexist/patriarchal oppression** to ask whether the video is part of that struggle or part of the oppression.

The Daily Mirror

(1 February 2022)



GRAY REPORT FALLOUT

12 parties now probed
by cops, 3 attended
by the PM, 1 was in his
own flat, 300 pictures
handed over... and still



CRUSHING Mr Starmer yesterday

BY PIPPA CRERAR Political Editor

SHAMELESS Boris Johnson again refused to quit over Partygate despite Sue Gray revealing police are probing 12 lockdown bashes at No10.

The civil servant issued an update on her inquiry, confirming the PM attended at least three, possibly six events. One was at the flat he shares with wife Carrie. And Scotland Yard announced they have more than 300 photographs of gatherings held in Whitehall while the rest of the nation was diligently sticking to the rules.

Mr Johnson snubbed calls to go and brashly insisted he would "fix it". Keir Starmer warned him the public think he "should do the decent thing and resign" but added: "He won't. Because he is a man without shame."

FULL STORY: PAGES 4,5,6,7,8 & 9



I'M NOT GOING
PM leaves No10 to give statement yesterday

ZERO SHAME

Image from Tomorrows Papers / tomorrowpapers.com

AS Level Component 1: Investigating the media

A Level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

Focus areas:

Media language

Representation

Media industries

Audiences

Media contexts

THE PRODUCT

- The *Daily Mirror* is a British daily national tabloid newspaper. Established in 1903, it is targeted at a predominantly working-class readership and adopts a traditional left-wing political stance.
- One of the *Mirror*'s main competitors is *The Sun* newspaper which targets a similar socio-economic demographic but usually adopts a more traditional right-wing stance. The *Daily Mirror* is one of the only newspapers that consistently supports the Labour Party and their policies.
- The newspaper's slogan 'The Heart of Britain' suggests that the newspaper stands up for the ordinary person and is a key part of the social and cultural life of the UK.
- The set edition for Section A was published on February 1st, 2022. As a mostly left-wing newspaper, the *Daily Mirror* has been critical of the way the Conservative government has been handling the Coronavirus pandemic.

COMPONENT 1: SECTION A

Media language representation contexts

Political context

- This edition of the newspaper deals with the scandal surrounding allegations regarding parties and social gatherings held by the Conservative Party at a time when its leaders had enforced

strict restrictions on the people of England that prohibited such gatherings. The story was first reported by the *Daily Mirror* in November 2021 and alleged that during the lockdown over the Christmas period in 2020, parties had been held at Downing Street, some of which had been attended by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson. This led to an inquiry being undertaken by senior civil servant Sue Gray, the results of which were published in January 2022.

- The scandal surrounding these allegations came to be commonly known in the media as 'Partygate'. The suffix 'gate' was first used in the 'Watergate' scandal in the US in the early 1970s which resulted in the resignation of President Richard Nixon. It has since been used to suggest a far-reaching scandal, usually related to politics or government.
- On the date this edition of the newspaper was published, it was reported that Sue Gray had revealed that the Metropolitan Police were investigating several possible breaches of lockdown by No 10 and Boris Johnson had refused calls for his resignation.

Social and cultural contexts

- All newspapers, including the *Daily Mirror*, reflect the social and cultural contexts of the time in which they were produced. The *Daily Mirror* largely targets a lower middle class/working class readership and does so through the news values of the paper, the selection of stories and how particular social groups are represented.
- The choice to focus on this particular story also reinforces a common social theme for this newspaper – 'us VS them', the idea that the government has issued rules that they feel they do not have to abide by.
- In the editorial, the newspaper asserts itself as the voice of 'the British people', allying with them using the personal pronoun 'us' in 'it makes us look cheap and nasty'.
- The newspaper's plug also reflects a cultural context, advertising a feature on the Platinum Jubilee and reinforcing the cultural heritage of the UK.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language and representation

Front page:

Consider the different ways in which the paradigmatic choices of media language including visual codes, written language and mode of address communicate meanings on this front page:

- The page is split between the political story and a **plug** promoting the Platinum Jubilee feature, with the political story taking prominence.
- The layout and design are conventional of this style of newspaper, which is generally image led rather than text led. The **masthead** is bold and recognisable as a red top, tabloid newspaper. The typography chosen is strong, and the name of the newspaper conveys messages about how the paper may ‘hold a mirror’ up to what is taking place in society.
- The **slogan** within the masthead ‘Heart of Britain’ suggests the role the newspaper has in society and that it cares about what is happening to the people of the UK.
- The **headline** is brief and dramatic, typical of the paper’s style, and uses emotive language such as ‘Zero Shame’. The **strapline** ‘Gray Report Fallout’ sums up the context of the story with negative connotations.
- The **sub-headings** provide more information through the employment of numbers for dramatic impact.
- The image of Boris Johnson dominates the front page and **anchors** the headline – he appears unconcerned. The newspaper reinforces this viewpoint with the inclusion of the **caption** ‘I’M NOT GOING’ suggesting his failure to take responsibility for what has happened. The caption accompanying the image of the Labour leader Keir Starmer is ‘Crushing’, reinforcing the left-wing stance of the newspaper.
- The language used is emotive and reflects the values and attitudes of the newspaper and their political allegiance, referring to Boris Johnson as ‘shameless’.
- The mode of address is direct, using colloquialisms such as ‘cops’ and ‘lockdown bashes’ to engage with the target readership.

Double page spread (see appendix 1):

- The double page spread is busy and eye-catching; it incorporates a range of different newspaper features including the editorial, a letter, personal direct quotations, a cartoon, and large images, as well as the central story. It is relatively unusual to have all these features on the same page, suggesting the story’s importance.
- The branding of the newspaper continues onto these pages with the use of the colour red linking to the ‘red top’ masthead. The subheading, **pull quote** and Kier Starmer’s name are also in a red palette, connoting the political allegiance of the newspaper.
- The headline is large and emotive echoing the front-page headline with the repetition of the word ‘shame’ conveying the values and beliefs of the newspaper and its opinion of what has happened.
- The central images are emotive and dramatic, juxtaposing the scene from the hospital ward with one of the prime minister smirking, looking furtive and holding a glass of wine. The selection of these particular images further reinforces the point that members of the government broke the rules while people were suffering.
- This tone is supported using direct quotations from ordinary people (who this newspaper represents) telling their own tragic Covid-19 stories. The pull quotes in this section, emphasised using large quotation marks, use language that conveys the feeling of the newspaper: ‘continues to lie,’ ‘a mockery’.
- The language used across the double page spread vilifies the government and their actions. Binary opposites are used to reinforce the point – ‘quiet dignity’ set against ‘lying bombast’. The editorial ‘The Voice of The Mirror’ is more opinion led, which can be seen in the standfirst: ‘Boris Johnson is prepared to destroy everything

and everybody around him to survive at all costs.'

Theoretical perspectives: structuralism – Levi-Strauss

- There is a **binary opposition** between the government, Boris Johnson and 'the people' which feeds into the 'us VS them' ideology of '**populism**'.
- The newspaper pages use **signs** that are recognisable to audiences and connote meanings. Consider how the use of the colour red and the codes of clothing, including the nurses' protective clothing and the wine glass, convey meaning in relation to the story.

Starting points: representation

Consider how representations are constructed through a process of selection and combination

Newspapers have access to the same stories daily but will choose how to represent events and issues in a way that reflects the **values, attitudes and beliefs** of the paper and their readers. The way in which the event / issue / social group is represented will affect the audience response. Newspapers are **opinion leaders** and will influence how audiences may respond to the issue / event. Consider how issues, events and social groups are represented across these newspaper pages:

Front page:

- The construction of the representation of the event and the key players on the front page is dominated by the large image of Boris Johnson, anchored by the dramatic headline and sub-headings. The choice of the image of Boris Johnson focuses on his code of expression and the anchor of the caption. He has been criticised previously for his 'smirk' and here the newspaper has selected an image with this expression, reinforced by the caption 'I'm Not Going' which connotes his seemingly uncaring attitude. This selection and combination of images and text conveys the attitudes and beliefs of the newspaper whose political allegiance of left wing is suggested by the more active image of Kier Starmer and the anchor 'Crushing',

referring to the way he dealt with Boris Johnson in the House of Commons.

- The sub-heading uses numbers to highlight the misdemeanours that Johnson was said to be involved in along with the evidence to support this – '300 pictures handed over'. The inclusion of the ellipsis constructs a dramatic pause before 'and still,', suggesting the weight of evidence against him should be enough but he does not take responsibility. The combination of images, layout and language choices construct a negative representation of the event and the prime minister's role in it.
- The response of the readers to the representation of the event would be to accept the newspaper's view as it reinforces their own ideas about the government.

Double page spread:

- The newspaper has made decisions regarding how the story will be **mediated** and what the focus will be. In the case of this double page spread, the focus of the representation is on a range of different responses to 'Partygate', all of which construct a negative representation of the government and, in particular, the prime minister. This mediation of the story is to be expected from a left-wing publication.
- The use of the direct quotations and the inclusion of individual stories and representations of ordinary people **personalises** the story by making it about the experiences of individuals, rather than a complicated political progress involving subjects distanced from the newspaper's readers. This technique is used by the news media to help audiences build **emotional engagement** with political stories and is a technique particularly used by tabloid newspapers.
- A similar technique is used through the inclusion of the open letter from Kier Starmer, 'Dear Mirror Readers,', which strikes a personal tone and reinforces the values and beliefs of the newspaper and the expectations of the readers.
- The **selection and combination** of images contributes to the construction of the

representations of the issue and the people involved. The choice of the image of Boris Johnson, accompanied by the anchor ‘Rule Breaker’, directly contrasts with the image from the hospital and that of the ‘voice of reason’ Kier Starmer with the anchor: ‘he should do the decent thing and resign.’ This constructs a representation of the issue from a left-wing perspective.

- The **language and mode of address** used also contributes to the construction of representations; the use of emotive and declamatory language constructs a negative representation of Boris Johnson – ‘disgraced country’s highest office,’ ‘fiasco’ and ‘stain on our great nation’. The use of ‘our’ encourages the audience to join with the newspaper in condemning these actions.

Theoretical perspectives: representation – Stuart Hall

- The *Daily Mirror* uses **stereotypical representations** of the prime minister and other members of the government to convey its left-wing agenda and to raise awareness of inequalities in society. This is particularly pertinent with this story through which the inequalities in power are highlighted – those in power have been seen to flout the rules they themselves set, whilst the ‘ordinary person’ conformed to the restrictions and suffered as a result.
- The representation of the event and of those involved in it are constructed through the language of recognisable signs. Codes of clothing are used to convey messages about social standing. Similarly, the sign of the glass of fizz in the hand of Boris Johnson connotes a party and is juxtaposed against the signs that suggest the ‘Critical care’ ward, leading the audience to draw negative conclusions about his behaviour.

COMPONENT 1 SECTION B: MEDIA INDUSTRIES AUDIENCES

For this section you will be using the issue of *Daily Mirror* that you have

studied in class. This will be different from the set pages studied for Section A.

STARTING POINTS – Media industry

Industry context

The *Daily Mirror* was first published in 1903 as a newspaper for women ‘to act as a mirror on feminine life’. However, the newspaper was quickly redesigned to appeal to a broader audience. Owned by the Reach plc, the *Daily Mirror* was once the most popular tabloid in the UK. However, as is the case with other daily newspapers, the sales have been falling year on year. The average daily sales in February 2022 were 329,485 (www.abc.org.uk/data), down 9%. Consider the fact that the most circulated newspaper is the *Metro* free paper at 1,066,327, almost double its circulation in 2021.

Recent technological change, in particular online media, has largely been responsible for the downturn in print sales; the *Daily Mirror* responded to this by launching ‘Mirror Online’ and establishing a presence on social media sites. However, this technology has given the newspaper the ability to produce up-to-the-minute national and global news and to update this content regularly.

The website produces accessible content whereby it breaks down the key stories into ‘bitesize’ chunks, for example ‘6 Key Details in new Tory schools plan...’. This reinforces the *Daily Mirror*’s brand claim to being the ‘Intelligent Tabloid’. There are also opinion pieces by journalists and free-lance commentators which reinforce the left-wing agenda of the newspaper – ‘Kevin Maguire: Squeezing Everybody and plunging 1.3 million into absolute poverty, is a political choice’ (28/03/2022).

Reach plc is the largest commercial, national and regional publisher in the UK. The group publishes more than 130 national and local media brands from the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Record*, the *Daily Express*, to local newspapers such as the *Manchester Evening News* and *Nottingham Post*. Reach plc states that they are: ‘Champions, Campaigners and ChangemakersAt Reach, we have a clear core purpose: speaking up and shining a light on the truth.’

The *Daily Mirror* is part of a **regulatory framework** known as the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) – an independent body which is not backed by the government and is fully funded by the industry itself. This is a regulatory body that maintains press standards but is anti-Leveson in its approach.

Theoretical approaches: Power and media industries – Curran and Seaton

The newspaper industry is dominated by a small number of powerful companies. Initially, there were concerns about the deal that brought about the new company Reach plc, which was investigated by the Competition and Markets Authority. The concentrated ownership model of the newspaper industry means that audiences receive a narrow range of viewpoints; indeed, the *Daily Mirror* is a relatively lone voice in a largely right-wing press.

Reach plc has maintained their position in the UK market despite falling sales of the *Daily Mirror* and other mainstream titles by diversifying into regional news. This diverse pattern of ownership has allowed them to create the conditions for more varied and adventurous media products.

Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (A Level)

Reach plc is facing increasing pressure alongside the rest of the UK press industry to adhere to strict rules and regulations on industry practice. This pressure arose after the phone hacking scandal and subsequent Leveson enquiry into the industry. There is an underlying issue of protecting citizens from harmful material while ensuring choice and press freedom.

Cultural industries – David Hesmondhalgh (A Level)

Reach plc is one of the UK's largest newspaper publishers and has become a horizontally integrated company with a wide range of titles in order to maximise audiences and minimise risks. Rather than seeing digital media as a threat, the company has embraced its digital expansion and now offers digital marketing as well as digital classifieds to generate additional income. They have also introduced a subscription of £6.99 for a tablet edition of the newspaper with an introductory offer of two free months.

Starting points: Audience

Consider the following points in relation to the issue of the newspaper you have studied in class.

How are audiences grouped and categorised?

It is important that newspapers have a clear idea of their audience demographic in order to produce content that will appeal to the target audience and their ideas and beliefs. Newspaper audiences, similarly, to other media products, can be categorised in terms of age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste. Regarding newspapers, the political allegiance of the audience is also a key factor.

The *Daily Mirror*'s target audience, according to ABC data, is predominantly C2DE, over 35 and are working class Labour supporters.

How do newspaper producers target audiences?

- The front page of the newspaper is important in attracting an audience, particularly regarding tabloid newspapers. The choice and style of the main headline and central image are important in attracting the reader and in communicating the view the newspaper is taking on the particular story featured. For example, the headline 'Thanks for Nothing' and the sub-heading 'Sunak's Sickener' used emotive language and alliteration to make its views clear about the mini budget in March 2022.
- Other pages in the newspaper and on digital platforms will reinforce the ideology of the newspaper including the editorial 'The Voice of the Mirror', the letters pages and opinion pieces.
- The values, attitudes and beliefs of the newspaper and the way in which they represent particular stories will resonate with like-minded readers who may have chosen this newspaper because of its left-wing stance. Readers will be made to feel part of the newspaper's community and that the stories and articles reflect their views. This audience will accept the **preferred reading** of the newspaper.
- Newspapers have had to adapt to survive, and the *Daily Mirror* has achieved this using new

technologies. In May 2021, it became the UK's number one website with 32 million monthly readers across all digital platforms (www.mirror.co.uk). The digital platforms also enable the readers to **interact** with the newspaper and encourages them to post comments on the stories featured. Distributing the publication across digital platforms which allow it to be interactive and immediate will also appeal to younger audiences.

Theoretical approaches:

Cultivation theory – Gerbner

Audience exposure to **repeated patterns** of representation, such as that of Brexit, the economy or of the government in power by newspapers may shape and influence their views and opinions of the world around them. Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. Newspapers function as opinion leaders and **mediate** the news for the readers with their political allegiance in mind. These views will be cultivated and reinforced by the newspaper and its content. The messages, such as that of the government being corrupt and elitist, need to **resonate** with an established belief in the audience of working-class left-wing men and women, such as that of Boris Johnson not being fit to govern.

Reception theory – Stuart Hall

The producers of newspapers encode ideas in their publications that are to be decoded by their readers. Active audiences who agree with the ideology of the newspaper will accept the viewpoint of the newspaper that is evident in its approach to stories. Those readers who have a different political allegiance will have an **oppositional response**, disagreeing with the messages constructed by the newspaper and will not buy/read a publication that does not reflect their ideas and opinions.

End of audience – Clay Shirky (A Level)

The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of digital technologies. This is because they have enabled the rise of the **prosumer** who can create their own content submitting stories as a citizen journalist, offering an immediate perspective on news stories.

Consumers can also actively engage and 'speak back' to the news media. The *Daily Mirror* website offers opportunities for readers to comment on stories and features, thus giving them a voice as part of the newspaper's community.

CONTEXTS

Social and cultural

Newspapers reflect the society and culture in which they are produced. The *Daily Mirror* is a left-wing publication in a largely right-wing press. The newspaper is known for its support of the ordinary working-class person and regularly runs stories and campaigns related to social issues and inequalities. Consider how this context is evident in the issue of the newspaper you have studied.

Economic

The newspaper industry has faced economic pressure in recent years as the sale of print copies has steadily fallen. Newspapers like the *Daily Mirror*, which are part of larger conglomerates, are more protected from economic risks. Some newspaper titles have introduced subscriptions for some or all of their digital products. For example, there is a subscription for the tablet version of the *Daily Mirror*.

Political

The political context of newspapers is reflected in the way in which stories are selected and how issues, events and social groups are represented. As a left-wing publication and a tabloid, the *Daily Mirror* will be openly critical of the Conservative government and supportive of Labour. It will also raise awareness of the effect of the Conservative policies on their working-class readers. For example, the newspaper actively supported footballer Marcus Rashford's campaign to force the government to give extra help for struggling families: 'Marcus: Don't Abandon Hungry Kids' (May 2021).

Appendix 1.

8 DAILY MIRROR TUESDAY 01.02.2022

VOICE OF THE

Stain on our great nation

BORIS Johnson is prepared to destroy everything and everybody around him to survive at all costs.

He is an embarrassment to our great nation. The world thinks worse of Britain because we're led by a reckless liar.

The Prime Minister is a charlatan who makes us look cheap and nasty.

The police inquiry into Downing Street's lockdown parties, followed by damning evidence in Sue Gray's limited report and a risible response in Parliament demonstrate why Johnson is uniquely unfit for high office.

Labour leader Keir Starmer was pitch perfect in his condemnation.

And even more telling for Johnson were the assaults from his own side, particularly Theresa May, former Cabinet minister Andrew Mitchell and MP Aaron Bell who asked if he is a fool for obeying the rules at his gran's funeral.

The Russians, Ukrainians, Americans and Chinese – in fact, leaders of every nation – know Johnson is a vastly diminished Premier.

Tory MPs should do their patriotic duty and immediately remove this ghastly stain.

Vaccines fiasco

BACKING down on mandatory jabs-for-jobs for England's health and care workers saves the NHS from mass sackings but many thousands of care home staff were forced out last year.

Luring them back won't be easy but the Government could help by offering compensation and improved wages. Despite being so valuable, these jobs are horribly underpaid.

The Mirror has consistently urged everyone to get vaccinated, but regular tests were always preferable to showing objectors the door.

Once again the Tories got it wrong. In future, they should try thinking before going down the wrong road and having to do a U-turn.

Charm & a Legg

LEONARD Fenton's role as Dr Legg in EastEnders made him a household name.

The charming actor had a fine career. We thank the good doctor for the great memories.

HELLO, KREMLIN SWITCHBOARD

Boris? Boris who? That one! No, no, don't put him through. I can't be seen to associate with that sort



DMIST

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DMIST

TUESDAY 01.02.2022 DAILY MIRROR 9

PARTYGATE: LABOUR

LEADER'S MESSAGE TO YOU

A man with no shame



CRITICAL CARE
Medics at King's College Hospital, London, treat Covid victim



RULE-BREAKER Boris Johnson took us for fools

Johnson has disgraced country's highest office

BY LOUIE SMITH

DAD-OF-FIVE Rex Williams, 85, died of Covid-19 at a care home in Coventry, Warks, on April 20 last year.

The retired factory manager's son Charlie, pictured, is part of the campaigners Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK.

Charlie, 53, said the PM "believes he and his office are

"He needs to go

above the rules". He added: "Families like mine are absolutely livid. We were bewildered with grief and in a state of trauma but they were having a party."

"He has disgraced our highest office."

"Us bereaved families are not going to forget, it's unforgivable, he has got to go."



BY LUCY THORNTON

A MAN unable to see his 89-year-old mum who died after getting Covid called the findings "an insult".

Ex-nurse Kaye Forrest, a foster parent to 87 children, died at her care home in Cottingham, East Yorks, in May.

Son Matt Forrest, 53, of Doncaster, South Yorks, last saw her on Mother's Day

"It's an insult

in March. He said: "It's an insult to all families who lost relatives. She made sacrifices all her life to look after 87 foster children."

"It's appalling the Prime Minister cannot follow his own rules."

"If you're in leadership you should lead by example. I don't feel I can trust him now."



BY LUCY THORNTON

BORIS Johnson should be kicked out now, says Simone Casey whose mum Susan died "alone and petrified" of Covid at 60 last November.

"I can't believe he still won't own up to it and give a sincere apology to the families who continue to suffer," said Simone, 37, of Stockton-on-Tees.

"With the amount of parties there's no way he could not know. I think this will anger people even more, that he continues to lie."

"Continues to lie

"He's a rich schoolboy whose dad's always told him he's untouchable and that's what he thinks."

"If anyone else was being investigated by the police at work we would be suspended."



BY DAVID BURKE

TIFFANY Jones, whose dad Colin died aged 61 on December 18, 2020 – the day a party was held in Downing Street – told The Mirror she is furious the PM has not quit.

She said: "It's like Boris Johnson is dancing on my dad's grave."

"My dad was the kindest man you could meet, but people like him mean

"A mockery

nothing to Boris, yet this country is founded on people like him. It's an insult, it makes a mockery of everything families have gone through."

Tiffany, 41, continued: "He's not a leader we can trust, he's just sorry he got caught."

"All he's doing is inflicting pain on people that lost someone."



BY DAVID BURKE

RIVKA Gottlieb, who lost her father Michael aged 73 during the first lockdown in April 2020, said Mr Johnson's "position is untenable" and he "cannot be taken seriously".

The 50-year-old from North London said: "I feel disgusted, nothing short of his resignation will be enough."

"It feels like he's

"I feel disgusted

abdicating responsibility again. And his apology is worthless because I don't believe a word he says."

Rivka praised Sue Gray for her report, but said she found it "shocking to see it in black and white".

She said: "It's a very damning report of how people in high office should not behave."



Dear Mirror readers

THE British people should feel pride in our response to Covid.

When we were tested we stood up.

It wasn't easy. We weren't able to visit elderly relatives or hug loved ones.

Many of us missed funerals and births.

Those heart-wrenching sacrifices were for a reason. In making them, we saved the lives of people we will probably never meet.

That deep public spirit, that

love and respect for others has always characterised our nation at its best.

It's what patriotism is really about.

I know the real anger people feel about how the Prime Minister behaved.

He set the rules then he broke them repeatedly.

And when he was caught he did what

he always does – deny, pretend and then blame someone else.

Even now, he's saying he's going to sack the people that work for him just to save himself.

His latest argument is that he couldn't possibly know if there was a party in his house or his office or if he was there when it happened – that he needs the police to tell him.

But his behaviour doesn't lessen what we have achieved as a country. It only lessens him and those who continue to parrot his nonsense.

My message to the Prime Minister is simple – the British people aren't fools. They never believed any of it.

He should do the decent thing and resign.

Of course, he won't. He is a man without shame.

When the Queen mourned her husband alone, we saw what leadership looks like.

It is an act of service to you, the British people.

That is the least you deserve from a Prime Minister. Because whoever you are and whatever party you vote for, behaviour and character matter.

That's why I have committed to a contract with you.

Because, while this Prime Minister has been proven as totally unworthy of his office, the Labour Party I lead will focus on restoring decency, honour and integrity to public life.

No more treating your hard-earned money as if it's the personal cash machine of the Tory party to hand out to its friends and donors.

No more embarrassing our country. No more lies. I know that things are tough at the moment. The cost of living is increasing for all of us.

Energy bills are going up but wages aren't matching them.

Boris Johnson's tax rises will hit in April.

Too many people do not feel safe on their streets.

GP appointments are hard to come by.

That's why, while the Tories have been distracted by their own chaos, Labour has been busy setting out plans – to bring down your energy bills, to tackle crime, to renew our NHS. I promise that when this

KEIR STARMER



Compare Hannah's quiet dignity with his lying bombast

AS Boris Johnson faced the Commons yesterday over the shock findings in Sue Gray's interim report, it fell to Tory Aaron Bell to deliver the most painful blow.

The MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme told the House that he didn't hug his parents at his grandmother's funeral.

"Am I a fool?" he asked the Prime Minister. The windows in the chamber are too high for the Prime Minister to see out to the River Thames. But across that river, the sea of red hearts painted on the south side of the river are visible from Parliament's terraces. Every

Last summer, I walked the Covid Memorial Wall with the two bereaved young people behind it, Hannah Brady and Matt Fowler.

On May 20, 2020, when No10 was holding a Bring Your Own Bottle party, Hannah was registering her beloved father Shaun's death.

Later, as part of a Covid-19 Bereaved Families

ROS WYNNE-JONES

heart represents a life lost to Covid. And now, 16 parties later, every heart is a reproach. A reminder that while those in No10 partied, everyday people died alone.

Johnson even stooped so low as to fling us: "People shouldn't feel us: "People shouldn't feel

HEARTS FOR THE LOST Hannah at the Covid wall

delegation to Downing Street, Hannah sat in that back garden. A few days later, the infamous case full of booze was again being wheeled into position for yet another party.

Hannah and Matt have shown nothing but dignity in their fight for justice.

The contrast with yesterday's bombastic performance by the Prime Minister in the Commons could not be more shameful.

But his behaviour

doesn't lessen what we have achieved as a country. It only lessens him and those who continue to parrot his nonsense.

My message to the Prime Minister is simple – the British people aren't fools. They never believed any of it.

He should do the decent thing and resign.

Of course, he won't. He is a man without shame.

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from a Prime Minister. Because whoever you are and whatever party you vote for, behaviour and character matter.

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Too many people do not feel safe on their streets.

GP appointments are hard to come by.

That's why, while the Tories have been distracted by their own chaos, Labour has been busy setting out plans – to bring down your energy bills, to tackle crime, to renew our NHS. I promise that when this

complacent government pays the price for its actions, my Labour government will be inspired by the way our country came together to get through the pandemic.

And I promise that our priorities will be delivering the security, prosperity and respect you and your family deserve.

Yours, Keir Starmer, Leader of the Labour Party

guilty. They should feel pride. By abiding by the rules, they have saved the lives of people they will probably never meet."

One allegation is that pals of Johnson's wife Carrie Symonds held a party when Dominic Cummings quit, playing Abba's The Winner Takes It All.

Tonight, it's SOS the couple in the Downing Street flat should play. Because the question is, after today, how can he... even try... to go on?

HEARTS FOR THE LOST Hannah at the Covid wall

The Times

(1 February 2022)



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How to be fit?
Do the bare minimum

Anna Murphy
I was bitten by a pandemic puppy

INSIDE TIMES2



“

There was too little thought given to what was happening across the country...

There were failures of leadership and judgment by different parts of No 10...

Sue Gray

Passengers face years of masks on flights

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Masks on flights will be one of the last coronavirus restrictions to be dropped globally and could remain policy for years, experts have said.

Different rules around the world will make it “nigh-on impossible” for airlines to move individually in allowing passengers to travel without coverings. The Times understands that UK carriers are seeking “international consistency” before changing the policy and will “act as one” when easing measures.

A senior aviation source said: “Until there is a harmonised lifting of mask mandates on flights by governments worldwide it is simpler for airlines to keep the rules in place.”

Neil Sorahan, Ryanair’s chief financial officer, said that there were no plans to change the rules. He said: “Masks will be something that will be with us for a while longer to come. If that is the price we have to pay for the next few months, into summer — it’s a small price to pay.”

Sorahan said that masks would linger in a similar way as rules on passengers removing liquids from hand luggage at security. The emergency measures were introduced in 2006 when police foiled a plot to blow up airliners using liquid explosives. They remain in force.

Most British airlines are following guidelines from bodies including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and the International Civil Aviation Organisation, which say that masks should be worn for the duration of flights, except when eating and drinking.

When international travel resumed after the first lockdowns airlines initially feared they were going to have to fly with vacant middle seats. It was decided that masks offered enough protection.

An airline source said: “A bit like supermarkets, we’ll almost certainly keep the same policy until it is safe to move. For example, the rules in the US are very clear on masks. It would be ridiculous of us to ask passengers to put them on when we enter their airspace.”

Another source said that although there were “hopes that one day we will have a world with no masks... they are going to be with us for a long time.”

Coronavirus reports, pages 16-17

Police investigate PM’s four lockdown parties

● Detectives examining hundreds of photos ● Gray criticises leadership and drinking culture

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Boris Johnson is facing a police investigation over at least four lockdown parties he was directly involved in as detectives examine more than 300 photographs connected to the events.

Sue Gray, a senior civil servant, accused Downing Street yesterday of serious failures of “leadership and judgment” over some of the events, at which “excessive quantities” of alcohol were drunk.

She said that staff in No 10 had not met the “high standards expected of the

entire British population” as she disclosed that she had investigated 16 alleged parties, 12 of which are being looked at by the police. Four of them involve the prime minister directly.

Her report disclosed almost no details of the parties, the content having been pared down after the Metropolitan Police told her last week to make “minimal reference” to them.

Gray made clear to Johnson in a call on Sunday that she expected her findings to be published in full once the police had completed their inquiries.

Johnson initially declined to do so even after senior aides in No 10 said it

The Times’ verdict
Full analysis and comment inside

News, pages 6-9
William Hague, Comment, page 25
Leading article, page 29

would look like a cover-up. He conceded yesterday evening after interventions by Conservative MPs.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, leader of the Commons, said last night that the whole report, including all the photographs,

should be published. “I think the more people see, the more understanding there will be about precisely what went wrong,” he said.

Angela Richardson, a government aide, announced that she had resigned, citing her “deep disappointment” in Johnson. She said that “tailings at No 10 let us all down”.

In the Commons, Johnson faced cross-party criticism. Andrew Mitchell, the former international development secretary, called on him to quit. “I have to tell him he no longer enjoys my support,” the MP said. Theresa May

Continued on page 2, col 3

IN THE NEWS

Putin call cancelled

Boris Johnson was forced to cancel a planned call with President Putin yesterday to discuss the Ukraine crisis as he responded to the release of the Gray report. **Page 10**

VAT cut ‘is too risky’

Cutting taxes when finances are so vulnerable would be a huge risk, the chief secretary to the Treasury said, pouring cold water on the idea of reducing VAT on fuel. **Page 4**

Migrant crossings up

Six times as many migrants crossed the Channel in small boats in January as in the same month last year. A total of 1,341 people made the journey in 46 vessels. **Page 2**

Biden offer to Taliban

President Biden appeared to offer the Taliban a path towards legitimacy if they freed the last American hostage, a US navy veteran, in Afghanistan. **Page 30**

Rate rise predicted

Financial markets are betting that the Bank of England will implement back-to-back interest rate rises for the first time since 2004, in response to soaring prices. **Page 35**

New start for Dele

Frank Lampard, the new Everton manager, has won his club’s backing to give the Spurs midfielder Dele Alli the chance to resurrect his career in a 2½-year deal. **Page 72**

A Level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

Focus areas:

- **Media language**
- **Representation**
- **Media industries**
- **Audiences**
- **Media contexts**

THE PRODUCT

- *The Times* newspaper is a British national ‘**quality**’ newspaper, first published in 1785. These newspapers can also be referred to as ‘broadsheets’, derived from their original larger size. *The Times* has been published by Times Newspapers since 1981, a subsidiary of News UK which is wholly owned by News Corp, Rupert Murdoch’s company. The company also publishes the *Sunday Times*, the *Sun*, the *Sun on Sunday* and until recently, the *News of The World*.
- Politically, *The Times* adopts a more neutral position compared to the explicit political allegiance of the tabloid press. However, it does have a right-wing allegiance and supports the Conservative party at key times, such as when there is a general election. *The Times* is famous for having a range of journalists with varied political viewpoints which allows the newspaper to offer a more neutral and balanced political stance on some issues.
- The newspaper describes itself as the following: ‘A faithful recorder of the times for more than 200 years. It is authoritative, credible, responsible, trusted and a part of the nation’s cultural heritage. A premium British brand, recognised the world over.’ (www.news.co.uk)
- The set edition was published on February 1st, 2022 and focuses on the report into the investigation into parties held at Downing Street while the country was under lockdown restrictions.

COMPONENT 1: SECTION A

Starting points: Media language, representation and contexts

Political context

- This edition of the newspaper deals with the scandal surrounding allegations regarding parties and social gatherings held by the Conservative Party at a time when its leaders had enforced strict restrictions on the people of England that prohibited such gatherings.
- The story was first reported in November 2021 and alleged that during the lockdown Christmas of 2020, parties had been held at Downing Street, some of which had been attended by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson. This led to an inquiry being undertaken by senior civil servant Sue Gray, the results of which were published in January 2022.
- On the date this edition was published, Boris Johnson was due to give a statement to the Commons about what had happened. It was reported in the newspaper that Sue Gray had revealed that the Metropolitan Police were investigating several possible breaches of lockdown by No 10 and Boris Johnson had refused calls for his resignation.

Social and cultural contexts

- All newspapers, including *The Times*, reflect the social and cultural contexts of the time in which they were produced. *The Times* largely targets a ABC1 demographic with cultural capital and an interest in news and analysis in detail. This demographic is targeted through the news values of the paper, the selection of stories and how particular social groups and issues are represented.
- The choice to focus on this particular story also reinforces a common theme for this newspaper – to accurately present the news and its effect on society. Whilst it is not explicitly critical of the government on this front page, this story cut across political divides with many members of the Conservative party as well as Labour shocked by the revelations.

- The newspaper's **plug** also reflects a cultural context with a lifestyle focus intended to broaden the appeal of the newspaper.

Front page:

Consider the different ways in which the paradigmatic choices of media language including visual codes, written language and mode of address communicate meanings on this front page:

- The page is split between political stories and a plug promoting *Times2*, the lifestyle supplement of the paper which in this instance features an article on fitness and a personal story about being bitten by a puppy.
- The layout and design of the front page is conventional of this style of broadsheet, quality newspaper, which is generally text led rather than image led. *The Times* usually has an image, which may be a **standalone**, a main story, a secondary story (usually in a right-hand column) and a plug. There is also often an 'In the News' section at the bottom of the page with **jump lines** linked to the main inside stories.
- The **masthead** is bold and recognisable and effectively signifies the ideology of the paper, suggesting that it reports and reflects upon the issues of the time. The typography chosen is strong and commands the front page and is placed either side of the crest and logo. The lion and the unicorn are symbols appearing on heraldic crests, and the slogan *Dieu et Mon Droit* – God and My Right – dates to King Richard 1st. The fact that this has remained unchanged by the newspaper suggests that they intend to reinforce their longevity and traditional values.
- The **headline** 'Police investigate PM's four lockdown parties' is informative rather than dramatic and enigmatic. The same is true of the sub-heading 'Gray criticises leadership and drinking culture'. However, there is subtle, implicit criticism through the selection and use of language, for example including the number 'four' and choosing the specific aspect of the report that comments on a 'drinking culture'.
- Similarly, the **pull quotes** that accompany the central image are direct quotations from Sue Gray's report, denoted by the large quotation mark to emphasise their importance. Positioning them in white on the black background gives them prominence and means that they function as an anchor for the image of the Prime Minister.
- The central image is a **close-up** photograph of Boris Johnson with an indirect mode of address. His code of expression shows some trepidation of what is to come as he goes to the Commons. The newspaper has selected this photograph to suggest that he does have questions to answer, whilst not explicitly criticising him.
- The caption is long and gives information based on facts, placing the photograph in a context rather than taking an active stance. This is a typical convention of this style of newspaper.
- The 'In the News' section at the bottom of the page offers a brief summary of other content in the newspaper including a global aspect. The mode of address is serious and formal.
- The **language and mode of address** used for the stories on the front page are formal. The text is compact and detailed; subheadings are not generally used to split up the stories into sections, suggesting that the readers are comfortable with detailed information and analysis. There is a sub-heading 'The Times Verdict' with jump lines to the analysis of the story on the inner pages, establishing the newspaper as an opinion leader.
- The **plug** is constructed differently, using a bright colour palette to differentiate between the serious and lighter elements of the newspaper's content.

Theoretical perspectives: structuralism – Levi-Strauss

- Newspapers, like other media products, create meaning through the way in which they are structured. Their use of typical codes and conventions fulfil audience expectations and appeal to loyal readers. However, the way in which the conventions are employed across newspapers will communicate different meanings; for example, the use of headlines, language and mode of address differs between popular and quality newspapers.

- Meaning is dependent on pairs of oppositions; the way these oppositions are used and resolved reflects the ideology of the newspaper.
- *The Times* demonstrates less explicit political allegiance compared to a tabloid publication and therefore may offer more than one viewpoint on an issue. The resolution of oppositions may only be evident and more explicit in something such as an editorial or an opinion piece, where the political allegiance of the paper may be more obvious.
- Similarly, the construction and choice of language in the headlines and subheadings represent the event and the PM in a negative way – ‘PM’s four lockdown parties’ implies Boris Johnson’s involvement and the use of ‘four’ points out the seriousness of the event. The use of the phrase ‘drinking culture’ also constructs a negative representation of the event.
- This construction of the representation of the event does not reflect the newspaper’s usual political allegiance, which would be to support the government. It may be that the newspaper feels responsible as an **opinion leader** to reflect the reactions of many people with differing political views to the transgresses of the government.

Starting points: representation

Consider how representations are constructed through a process of selection and combination.

Newspapers have access to the same stories daily but will choose how to represent events and issues in a way that reflects the values, attitudes and beliefs of the paper and their readers. The way in which the event / issue / social group is represented will affect the audience response. Newspapers are opinion leaders and will influence how audiences may respond to the issue/event. Consider how issues, events and social groups are represented in the newspaper front page:

Front page:

- The construction of the representation of the event and the key player on the front page is dominated by the central image of Boris Johnson, anchored by a headline, sub-headings and pull quotes.
- The choice of the image of Boris Johnson focuses on his code of expression of trepidation on his way to the Commons, **anchored** by the caption and the large quote from Sue Gray’s report. Unlike a tabloid newspaper, the representation of the event and Boris Johnson’s role in it is more implicit. However, the **selection and combination** of images and language constructs a subtly negative representation. The choice of pull quotes from the report, placed next to the image of the PM, implicitly directs blame at his behaviour: ‘There were failures of leadership and judgment by different parts of number 10 ...’. The inclusion of the ellipsis creates an enigma suggesting that there is more to be seen in the report.

- The construction of the representation of the event **positions** the audience to consider the facts about the event, which are presented in an informative way, and to make their decision about it. Within the readership of *The Times*, although it is a right-wing publication, there will be those who are shocked by the revelations of the breaking of lockdown restrictions by those in positions of power and then there will be those who remain supportive of the government. The sub-heading ‘The Times verdict. Full analysis and comment inside’ suggests that these binary oppositions may be resolved by the newspaper’s opinion contained in these inner pages.

Theoretical perspectives: representation – Stuart Hall

- The front page of *The Times* produces meaning through the language used, by using recognisable signs that will be interpreted by the audience, for example, headlines, image choices, language, and mode of address.
- These choices contribute to the construction of the event and encode meanings that are to be decoded by the audience.

COMPONENT 1 SECTION B: Media industries and audiences

For this section you will be using the issue of *The Times* that you have studied in class. This will be different from the set pages studied for Section A.

Starting points: Media industry

Industry context

The significance of patterns of ownership and control

The Times was first published in 1785 and is part of *The Times* newspaper group which is a subsidiary of News UK. News UK is a British-based, American-owned newspaper publisher, and a subsidiary of the American **mass media conglomerate** News Corp. News Corp is a newly formed company that concentrates on newspapers and publishing. The company was formed following a split from News Corporation, a powerful conglomerate with interests in film and broadcasting in addition to newspapers and publishing. The company also produces *The Sun* newspaper and previously the *News of the World*, which ceased production following the **phone hacking scandal** of 2011. The company has demonstrated a predominantly **right-wing** political allegiance with *The Sun* newspaper, backing the Conservative government in recent elections. However, *The Times* has maintained a more **neutral** stance, particularly in its coverage of the Brexit debate as its readers are comprised of ‘Remainers’ and ‘Leavers’.

The interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response

Consider how the website for *The Times* (www.thetimes.co.uk) has addressed the changes in technology and audience consumption of news. The group was one of the first companies in the UK to introduce an **online** newspaper but also introduced **paywalls** requiring readers to pay a subscription to use the site. This was introduced in response to the fall in print sales within the group.

In 2016, *The Times* and *Sunday Times* launched a combined website and made the decision to move from a rolling news to an **edition-based digital format**, updated three times a day to

match the reading patterns of their audience more effectively. In 2020, News UK launched *Times Radio* in an attempt to increase the take-up of digital subscriptions for the newspaper. However, *The Times* continues to have a higher reach in print sales than online

The Times is part of a **regulatory framework** known as the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) – an independent body which is not backed by the government and is fully funded by the industry itself. This is a regulatory body that maintains press standards but is anti-Leveson in its approach.

Theoretical approaches: Power and media industries – Curran and Seaton

The newspaper industry is dominated by a small number of powerful companies. *The Times* is part of a **horizontally and vertically integrated** company and subsequently a large conglomerate. Being part of a huge press organisation could limit or inhibit creativity and journalists’ freedom. Rupert Murdoch is often accused of controlling his newspaper content and editorial teams which would support this point. However, it could also be suggested that by having a more diverse pattern of ownership, a more pluralistic approach could create conditions for more varied and adventurous media productions.

Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt (A Level)

The Times Newspaper Group and News Corp are facing increased pressure alongside the rest of the UK press industry to adhere to strict rules and regulations on industry practice. This has arisen after the phone hacking scandal and subsequent Leveson enquiry into the industry. There is an underlying issue of protecting citizens from harmful, or more recently, ‘fake’ material while maintaining choice and the freedom of the press to expose wrongdoing and injustice through responsible journalism. The increasing power of companies like News Corp and their expansion into digital media has also placed traditional approaches to regulation at risk.

Cultural industries – David Hesmondhalgh (A Level)

The Times Newspaper group is part of a vertically and horizontally integrated company with a wide range of titles on offer in order to maximise

audiences and minimise risks. The reach of News Corp spans a range of different cultural industries enhancing their global power. By association, *The Times* benefits from access to other cultural industries and is therefore financially protected. Rather than seeing digital media as a threat, the company has embraced its digital expansion and introduced paywalls to allow for online content to be viewed while still generating income. As part of News Corp, the company is part of a wide organisation responsible for different cultural industries. This can benefit the newspaper greatly in terms of production and promotion.

Starting points: Audience

Consider the following points in relation to the edition of the newspaper you have studied in class.

How are audiences grouped and categorised?

The Times' target audience, according to ABC data, is predominantly ABC1, over 35 and has a **liberal/right-wing** political stance. This **well-educated** and **middle-class** audience take an interest in national and global affairs and can understand and engage with detailed political reporting.

How do newspaper producers target audiences?

- The front page of the newspaper is important in targeting the audience. The choice and style of the main headline and central image are important in attracting the reader and in communicating the view the newspaper is taking on the particular story featured.
- The newspaper appeals to the audience through its content and the inclusion of hard and soft news items, for example the lifestyle supplement 'times2'.
- The launch of the edition-based digital format addressed both the need to target a broader audience and understanding that readers of *The Times* preferred a digital edition that, whilst having some daily updates, closely resembled the print format. Distributing the publication across digital platforms allows it to be updated, which will appeal to younger audiences, as will the launch of *Times Radio*.
- Whilst the front page of the newspaper may be less explicit in its political allegiance, other pages in the newspaper and on digital platforms reinforce the right-wing ideology of the newspaper, for example the editorial and opinion pieces and political cartoons.
- *The Times* **letters page** is culturally iconic and offers readers an opportunity to air their views and interact with the community of the newspaper. This page and the 'Comment' section of the newspaper reflect the readership and their interests and concerns.
- The **values, attitudes and beliefs** of the newspaper and the way in which they represent particular stories will resonate with like-minded readers who may have chosen this newspaper because of its right-wing stance. Readers will be made to feel part of the newspaper's community and that the stories and articles reflect their views. This audience will accept the **preferred reading** of the newspaper.

Theoretical approaches: Cultivation theory – Gerbner

- Audience exposure to **repeated patterns** of representation, such as that of Brexit, the economy, or the government in power, by newspapers may shape and influence their views and opinions of the world around them. Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. Newspapers function as opinion leaders and **mediate** the news for the readers with their political allegiance in mind. These views will therefore be cultivated and reinforced by the newspaper and its content.

Reception theory – Stuart Hall

The producers of newspapers encode ideas in their publications that are to be decoded by their readers. Active audiences who agree with the ideology of the newspaper will accept the viewpoint of the newspaper that is evident in its approach to stories and editorial and opinion pieces. Those readers who have a different political allegiance will have an **oppositional response**, disagreeing with the messages constructed by the newspaper and will not buy nor read a publication that does not reflect their ideas and opinions.

End of audience – Clay Shirky (A Level)

The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of digital technologies. This is because they have enabled the rise of the **prosumer** who can create their own content submitting stories as a **citizen journalist**, offering an immediate perspective on news stories. Consumers can also actively engage and ‘speak back’ to the news media. *The Times* newspaper and website offers interactive opportunities for readers to comment on stories and features, thus giving them a voice as part of the newspaper’s community.

CONTEXTS

Social and cultural

Newspapers reflect the society and culture in which they are produced, but they are not windows into the world. *The Times* is a right-wing publication in a largely right-wing press. Issues and events will be represented differently in different newspapers according to their ideology and the expectations of their audience. *The Times*, although generally neutral in its stance, will tend to implicitly favour the government and its policies. Their content will also reflect the needs of their ABC1 audience demographic.

Consider how this context is evident in the issue of the newspaper you have studied.

Economic

The newspaper industry has faced economic pressure in recent years as the sale of print copies has steadily fallen. Ownership is hugely significant in relation to the newspaper industry, particularly when print sales are on the decline and advertising revenue is falling. Newspapers such as *The Times*, which are part of larger, powerful conglomerates, are more protected from economic risks. Some newspaper titles including *The Times* have introduced subscriptions to access their digital products and to secure an income.

Political

The political context of newspapers shapes the product and is reflected in the way in which stories are selected and how issues, events and social groups are represented. As a right-wing publication and a quality broadsheet, *The Times* will select stories and present them in a way that reflects their political ideology and appeals to their right-leaning readership. The news agenda will reflect the needs of the readers for detailed, informative reporting.

Black Panther (2018)



Black Panther (2018)

AS Component 1: Investigating the Media A level Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences

Focus areas: Media Industries Media Contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Black Panther is the 17th film in the 'Marvel Cinematic Universe', the highest-grossing film **franchise** in history. It was directed by Ryan Coogler (Creed) and released in February 2018.
- The film shows us the fictional African kingdom of **Wakanda**, which has avoided European colonisation and achieved a technological superiority through the use of a mineral called Vibranium. T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman) must fight a number of foes who oppose him becoming king after the death of his father.
- Black Panther (T'Challa) first appeared in Fantastic Four #62, released July 1966.
- The film was produced by Marvel Studios, a famous comic book **brand** that is also a **subsidiary** of the Walt Disney Company.
- Black Panther was extremely successful, broke records for the highest opening weekend in the USA, and also performed well globally. The film has grossed well over \$1 billion worldwide, with 48% in non-US countries.
- It was also one of the only superhero films to be nominated for a 'Best Picture' **Academy Award**. It won three Oscars for Costume, Production Design, and Original Soundtrack.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Industries

Historical Context:

- From 15th-20th century, European powers **colonised** African countries and exploited the continent for both resources and slave labour. Africans were branded 'savages' by the European invaders, their cultures dismissed as 'primitive'.
- During the early 20th century, African-Americans attempted to establish a new black **cultural identity** with movements such as the Harlem Renaissance.

- The Black Panther Party (October 1966-82) was a **political activist** group established initially to provide armed monitoring of police behaviour and prevent police brutality in the US. It was controversial, with many Panthers being arrested or killed in confrontations with police.

Cultural context:

- The science fiction blockbuster and superhero **genres** have traditionally been dominated by white, male characters. In the 1990s, actors like Will Smith and Wesley Snipes did break ground playing black characters, but recent action films and especially superhero films have rarely featured African-American actors in lead roles.
- For the last 15 years, Marvel films have topped the box office. Though these regularly featured non-white characters, they were often sidekicks (e.g. The Falcon in the Captain America films). There have also been very few superhero films with a female lead (Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel being exceptions).
- Black cinema has traditionally consisted of issues-based **social realism** (e.g. the films of Spike Lee) or have been '**arthouse**/'**prestige**' pictures (e.g. Moonlight, 2016). Blade (1998) is one of the few superhero films to have a black main character.
- In 2016, the #oscarssowhite meme drew attention to the **lack of diversity** in the films nominated.
- US/European news media tends to portray Africa as an under-privileged, developing country, focusing on civil wars, famine and terrorism. The Victorian branding of Africa as '**the Dark Continent**' has not evolved very far. Very few feature films from Africa reach the Western mainstream, and films like Blood Diamond (2006) and Captain Phillips (2013), though featuring sympathetic African characters, still portray Africa as a dangerous and barbaric place.
- Further study: research the cultural movement of '**Afrofuturism**'. What does this term mean? How have artists explored the idea in music, art, film and other media? To what extent is Black Panther an Afrofuturist film?

Economic and Political Contexts:

- Barack Obama (2009-2017), America's first African-American president, created many initiatives that aided minority

and women's groups: from universal healthcare, to college and entrepreneurship access funds for the under-privileged.

- Donald Trump, the current president, has vowed to reverse many of these, winning support from mostly white, right wing Americans who consider such initiatives unfair. In addition, Trump has insulted other countries (including many in Africa), and refused to condemn violent racist attacks in American cities.
- Worrying statistics about the amount of unarmed 'people of colour' (POC) shot by US police led to the **#blacklivesmatter** campaign, which has utilised **social media** to raise awareness of an issue that has often been ignored by **mainstream media**.

Consider the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification:

- *Black Panther* was produced by Marvel Studios, who became a subsidiary of Disney in 2008. They are also the film's **distributor**, which makes this a good example of **vertical integration**.
- Marvel has historically sold **options** on individual characters or comicbook titles e.g. Spiderman to TV and then to Paramount (and who is still partly owned by Sony). *Black Panther* was one of those owned fully by Marvel; in 2009 a new team began developing T'Challa and lesser known characters.
- In early 2000s, Marvel Studios began to **produce** films, starting with *Blade* (1998) and the *X-Men* films (2000).
- When Disney bought Marvel, they agreed to minimal creative influence over Marvel products.
- in 2013, Marvel also signed a deal with **streaming** service Netflix to develop TV series for six more characters (including *Daredevil* and *Punisher* who had already been made into films). This may have caused conflict with Disney, who has their own streaming channel, and in 2019 Netflix cancelled their Marvel shows.

Consider how media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally:

- Disney, the film's **distributor** adopted a '360-degree consumer experience' to their marketing (i.e. wherever you look, there's *Black Panther*!)
- The concept was to make the film into

a '**cultural event**' across a variety of media and platforms and raising its profile from being 'another superhero' film into something more **politically resonant**.

- Here are some of the **brand association** deals Disney used to target a **diverse audience** who may not be 'fanboys'. How do these a.) appeal to a different spectator than other Marvel films?: Hasbro toys <https://io9.gizmodo.com/this-black-panther-toy-commercial-is-moreimportant-tha-1821802836> ; Lexus cars <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/lexus-introduces-two-newvehicles-inspired-by-marvel-studios-black-panther-ahead-of-sema-2017-300542095.html> Interscope records (Universal Music) <https://www.factmag.com/2018/02/13/ryancoogler-kendrick-lamar-black-panther/> and b.) how do they combine in a **synergy** to make *Black Panther* 'more' than a superhero film?
- Black Panther's teaser trailers were shown between NBA games and a special collaboration with Lexus called 'Long Live The King' was shown during the Superbowl. What kind of audiences normally watch these programmes? How are they different to the usual Marvel **fanbase**?
- The film's release also harnessed a political element to add gravitas. **Crowd-funding** projects to buy under-privileged children a ticket won support from celebrities; the film was released during **Black History Month**; plus Coogler, the stars and the costume, hair/make-up, production designers all gave detailed interviews about how the film celebrates African culture. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2018/02/why-fashion-is-key-to-understanding-the-world-of-black-panther/553157/>
- There was also a 'Welcome to Wakanda' catwalk show at New York Fashion Week and features in numerous fashion magazines. (On opening weekend 44% of ticket buyers were female)
- Look at the preview posters and the trailer - (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjDjIWPwcPU>) - how does the film celebrate African culture? Why might it be important to black children to have characters like Black Panther? How does it also represent black women in a powerful way? How does it also appeal to fans of blockbusters?
- Disney are adept at identifying **nuanced demographic** groups and strategies for targeting them. Many of their products are '**intercultural**' i.e. they strongly represent one cultural tradition

but in a way that resonates with audiences from other cultural / national / ethnic backgrounds.

- Disney has used recent Nielsen research to challenge conventional ideas about the ethnic diversity in mainstream America. 53% of Americans live in a multicultural or 'blended' household. 67% indicated they were enthusiastic about encountering and experimenting with '**diverse cultures**'.
- Think about recent Disney releases like *Moana* (2016) or *Coco* (2017): how do they represent a **cultural tradition** positively? What **universal** themes or story elements would audiences not from that culture still engage with?

Consider the regulatory framework of contemporary media in the UK and the role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation:

- The **BBFC** (an independent, non-governmental body) **classifies** film and video releases in the UK. However, local councils have the power to overrule BBFC decisions and rate films differently (e.g. *This is England* was rated 18 by the BBFC but several councils rated it 15).
- The theatrical release of *Black Panther* gained a **12a certificate**. Look at the BBFC website for what constitutes a 12a - why do you think they awarded this to *Black Panther*? (<http://www.bbfc.co.uk/>)
- The film, like many recent Marvel films, features very little romantic drama and no sex or nudity. It is fairly violent, but the combat is fantastical (hard to imitate) and there is a strong **moral code** to most of the conflict. The film was classified as PG-13 in USA, and similarly in other territories. Why do you think the film was regulated this way, even in countries with stricter rules and censorship like China or India?

Consider processes of production, distribution and circulation and the impact of digitally convergent platforms:

- The **teaser trailer** was released in June 2017 by Disney's sister channel ABC, during NBA Finals. Within 24 hours it had been viewed 89 million times on Youtube.
- Just before release, *Black Panther* was the most-tweeted about film of 2018 with more

than 5 million tweets globally. In mid-March 2018, it became the most-tweeted about film ever with 35 million tweets.

Consider how film/film marketing is circulated and distributed:

- Where and how is film/film marketing most likely to be **consumed** by audiences?
- How has this **consumption** changed/ been impacted by the internet, including YouTube and smartphones?
- Are audiences now more likely to seek out, for example, new trailers online as **active consumers**? (Think about 'reaction' videos of people watching trailers!)
- Consider the way people **share** trailers or movie gossip (casting decisions, plot elements etc.) especially those with a strong **fan community**. How is this an example of '**word-of-mouth**' marketing.
- How does this impact the relationship between audience and product?
- How did *Black Panther* harness other, more political **social media campaigns** to create a 'cultural event' rather than just another summer blockbuster?

Theoretical perspectives:

A level only:

Cultural industries - David Hesmondhalgh

- Further explore the concept of profit in relation to the film industry and in this case specifically to the film **franchises**. Often films within a series can become formulaic and lack risk. Is this the case with Marvel Studios? Or Disney?
- Explore Hesmondhalgh's idea that media conglomerates operate across a range of cultural industries by considering the way the film was released as part of a **synergy** - with fashion, music, videogames, sports tie-ins, even a car!
- You might also usefully introduce the idea that this film has a very low risk for the producers. The character of T'Challa and Wakanda were introduced in *Captain America: Civil War*, the comic is over 50 years old, and all previous Marvel films have been hugely successful. On the other hand, having such an **Afrocentric**

film could have been seen as a commercial risk, especially outside the USA and Africa.

Curran and Seaton - Media and power

- How does the film's much celebrated diversity challenge Curran and Seaton's idea that domination by a small number of media institutions limits creativity and variety?
- How could the **conglomerate model**

(Marvel as a separate brand to Disney)
offer a more complex pattern of ownership than Curran and Seaton describe?

- To what extent does the dominance of Marvel in the sci-fi/superhero genre limit the opportunities for alternative, riskier **independent** films in these genres?

I, Daniel Blake

(2016)



I, Daniel Blake

(2016)

AS Component 1: Investigating the Media A level Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences

Subject Content: Media Industries Focus Area: Media Contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *I, Daniel Blake* is an independent social realist film directed by renowned filmmaker Ken Loach (*Kes*, *Raining Stones*, *Sweet Sixteen* etc.).
- A UK/French co-production, it received funding from the BFI and BBC Films.
- It became Ken Loach's largest grossing film at the box office (taking over \$8 million), was highly critically acclaimed and generated much debate due to the contemporary social and political issues addressed in the film.
- *I, Daniel Blake* was exhibited at many film festivals, won the Palme d'Or at Cannes, and was nominated for many awards including several BAFTAs.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS - Media Industries

Social and Political Contexts:

I, Daniel Blake addresses contemporary British social issues such as poverty, the welfare system and the Work Capability Assessment. The film portrays a group of traditionally underrepresented characters in Newcastle struggling in poverty to gain benefits and support. *I, Daniel Blake* conveys a clear left-wing political message and criticises specific government policies. Consideration of the wider economic context and concept of "austerity" might be useful in exploring how changes to benefit policy had been justified.

Much of Ken Loach's work has addressed similar issues (*Cathy Come Home*, *Raining Stones*) and he is a social campaigner, known for his socialist political views. This is important to consider in terms of film production and maintaining audiences (arguably the intended audience for this film is

educated, media literate and socially aware).

Consider the significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products:

- Economic factors including **funding** are extremely significant to this independent British co-production. The funding bodies are the BFI (through National Lottery Funding) and the BBC.
 - » Consider the ways in which this film is funded differently from many mainstream films, exploring **Public Service Broadcasting** and the respective remits of the BBC and the BFI.
- Discuss why vast financial **profits** might be less important for practitioners working in this genre of film.

Consider processes of production, distribution and circulation and the impact of digitally convergent platforms:

- *I, Daniel Blake* is a low **budget** social realist film, funded by the BFI and BBC. It was filmed largely on location (hospital, job centre etc.), features lesser known actors and does not rely on special effects.
- Consider how films and their marketing are **distributed and circulated**:
 - » Where and how are films and their marketing most likely to be **consumed** by audiences?
 - » How has this consumption changed/ been impacted by the ubiquity of **online and social media**?
 - » Are audiences now more likely to seek out marketing (e.g. new trailers) online as **active consumers**?
 - » How does this impact the **relationship** between audience and product?
- The *I, Daniel Blake* website includes links to **social media** and the trailer offers a hashtag (#idanielblake) suggesting links with Twitter, but it is worth considering the ways in which the marketing might be more likely to be consumed in more traditional ways. Might an assumed older audience be more likely to see the trailer

at the cinema and less likely to search for it on the internet? Consider how the film was **marketed** more traditionally (poster campaign, trailer in cinemas etc.) as well as online.

- The film was **exhibited** at various film festivals and received a **theatrical release** in Britain and various other countries (including France, Spain, Brazil and Japan – although not in the USA). It was later released on **digital download** and **DVD/Blu-ray**.

Consider the effect of individual producers on media industries:

- It may be useful to explore Ken Loach and his significance as a practitioner in British and Global cinema - how Loach has been able to repeatedly secure **funding** for social realist films and the extent to which the **genre** itself exists in its current form due to his work.
- Consider the extent to which *I, Daniel Blake* can be described as a **mainstream** product. Loach is a well-known and successful figure in the UK and Europe but is his work mainstream? Does the fact he is challenging governmental policy mean he is also challenging mainstream opinions?
- It might also be interesting to consider whether there exists a pre-sold **audience** of Loach fans who are eager to watch his films and the extent to which this gives him license to make films that might not otherwise secure finance.

Consider how media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally:

- The **marketing** materials establish the status and reputation of film – positive critical comments on the poster, reference to the Palme d'Or award in the trailer etc.
- The **genre** (British social realist film) and **director** Ken Loach are important factors in maintaining an audience. Loach has a long history of directing work in the genre (*Kes* from

1969 might be a useful specific comparison) and, unlike some film genres which have been impacted by technical developments and special effects, might this genre be particular in its tendency to resist change?

- There are specific and distinct **potential audiences** that the film is attempting to target through its **marketing**:
 - » The trailer references the BBC, BFI and the Palme d'Or. Discuss the extent to which these references suggest an assumed education and level of media literacy in the **target audience**.
 - » The **trailer** explores specific governmental policy which also may suggest audiences will have an awareness of political and social issues in the UK.
 - » The only specific “star” identified in the trailer using intertitles is the **director** Ken Loach. Loach’s work whilst having broad appeal sits firmly within the niche of social realism and candidates may discuss the extent to which the fans of his work are pre-sold based on his name alone.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Power and media industries – Curran and Seaton

- Consider the extent to which the trailer is a **challenge** to ideas set out by Curran and Seaton.
 - » The trailer seems to offer an experience that sits outside the logic of **profit and power** and may arguably also demonstrate a level of variety and creativity that does not reflect Curran and Seaton’s ideas about the impact of media concentration.
 - » Candidates might also consider whether the trailer is able to offer a more adventurous production due to socially diverse patterns of **ownership** or (as above) Loach’s own pre-sold **audience**.

ASSASSIN'S CREED FRANCHISE



Flickr CC; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/53921113@N02/5386499447>

Assassin's Creed Franchise

AS Component 1: Investigating the Media

A Level Component 1: Media Products, Industries and Audiences

Subject Content:

Media Industries

Audiences

Media Contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- From 2022 the requirement is to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the *Assassin's Creed* franchise in terms of the relevant video games industry and audience issues it illustrates.
- At least one extract from a chosen game from the franchise must be studied in relation to industry and audience.
- The *Assassin's Creed* franchise is published by Ubisoft and encompasses 12 incarnations of the game, plus spin-offs. It is an action adventure, open world game, played from a third person perspective; each game is set in a historical setting with a new story and time period.
- In 2021 the franchise recorded sales of 155 million units since its introduction in 2007. This was helped by the launch of *Assassin's Creed Valhalla* in 2020 which sold more units in its first week than any other game in the series. However, games in the back catalogue of the franchise continue to be popular.
(www.videogameschronicle.com)

PART 1: STARTING POINTS - MEDIA INDUSTRIES

Historical Contexts:

Video games are a relatively **new media form**. Consider the exponential **growth** of this form since the 1970s, the rapid **technological development**, the construction of "the gamer" and the difficulty of **regulating** or monitoring the impact of such a fast paced industry.

Economic Contexts:

- Video games are culturally and financially significant across three major territories (Japan, Europe and the USA). The release of new gaming **technology** or games from popular franchises can be major **economic events**. It would be useful to explore the way that games and technology (and specifically those from within the *Assassin's Creed* game **franchise**) have been marketed and received across the three major territories.
- In 2021 the value of the global video games market was estimated to be \$138.4 billion increasing from \$52.8 billion in 2012. Mobile gaming is the fastest growing area. (www.statista.com).
- Other strategies, in addition to games sales are employed to increase revenue including production and distribution models.
- Ownership is another significant element related to the financial success of a games franchise.

Consider processes of production, distribution and circulation and how they shape media products:

- Video games' production techniques have evolved and become increasingly innovative as the industry has become more competitive and the demand for games has increased.
- Being part of a franchise is a production model that both increases economic viability and establishes a brand identity for the audience.
- Advances in technology have shaped video games by the inclusion of more complex gameplay, highly developed graphics and advanced CGI.
- In terms of **production** the games in the franchise are part of a multinational development which is typical of game production in larger studios such as Ubisoft.

Consider the relationship of recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation:

- Video games develop and expand to reflect advances in technology. The decision to release *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* on PS Vita was to

A Level Media Studies - Set Product Fact Sheet

tap into the increasing popularity of **mobile gaming** (smart phones, tablets etc.). The PS Vita was designed with many features usually associated with smart phones (touchscreen as well as Wi-Fi, 3G and Bluetooth capability).

- This release of this game, as part of a well-known and popular **franchise**, may be seen as an attempt to bring high game **production values** to the burgeoning new mobile gaming arena. The game was originally exclusive to the PS Vita but was later (2014) released in a modified HD version across a large range of consoles and **platforms** (including PS3, Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows).
- Other games in the franchise have also adapted to technological developments. For example, *Assassin's Creed Valhalla* was released in 2020 to coincide with the launch of new consoles including PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X.
- Newer games in the franchise have introduced cross-generational gaming enabling data to be transferred from earlier generation consoles and cross-play and progression carrying progress between different platforms.
- The opportunities to distribute and circulate games and to distribute additional content have expanded, leading to increased revenue for the franchise.
- The games themselves have also developed in line with changes in technology. For example, *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* offered a more immersive experience for players than previous games.
- In 2021 it was announced that the new game to be released in the franchise, *Assassin's Creed Infinity*, inspired by the success of games like *Fortnite*, would be a fully live service game. This would expand the franchise and enable the games to time jump and include multiple historical settings rather than the single setting of the existing games. This would also ensure the longevity of the franchise and the ability to add new content rather than launching a completely new game.

Consider the regulatory framework and the role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation:

- **Video game regulation** differs around the world but is becoming standardised across many European countries.
- In the **UK** until July 2012 video games had been regulated by the BBFC. They are now largely regulated by the **Video Standards Council (VSC)** applying the **PEGI** system (Pan European Game Information). The PEGI system can be discussed in terms of its process (age ratings as well as visual

descriptors of content) and also its attempt to harmonise

- the protection of children across Europe.
- Consider the effectiveness of PEGI (possibly in comparison with the BBFC or the American ESRB system in terms of authority and compliance).

Consider the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and circulation, including individual producers:

- *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*, a **handheld game** could be linked to the full PS3 **console version** of the game (owning both versions would unlock additional game content).
- The use of **convergence** has developed further across the most recent games in the franchise. This is significant in terms of promotion/marketing and circulation and facilitates the development and re-release of games incorporating more complex elements.
- The convergence between social media platforms promotes gamer engagement and identification with the game across the fan community.
- Digital convergence is important to Ubisoft as an individual producer in a competitive market, it also benefits fans as individual producers of game content, for example through gameplay videos.
- However, there are some possible risks including piracy and leaked content.

A Level Only

Consider theoretical perspectives:

Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt

- Consider the impact of **convergence** and **diversification** in media on regulatory practices. New technology opens up new opportunities and arguably new risks that complicate regulation.
- Questions that might be discussed in relation to Livingstone and Lunt include:
 - Should regulation be more flexible?
 - Should industries self-regulate?
 - Should individuals be empowered to make their own decisions about the products?
 - How might regulation become problematic where individuals lack the required media literacy to make informed decisions?
 - How can the consumer-based and citizen-based regulatory model be applied to the video games industry?

A Level Media Studies - Set Product Fact Sheet

Cultural Industries – David Hesmondhalgh

Use Hesmondhalgh to explore the way in which cultural industry companies might attempt to **minimise risk and maximise audiences**:

- The video games industry is designed to make a profit, they operate in a competitive market. One of the ways they minimise risk is through genre-formatting, this is evident in the *Assassin's Creed* franchise. The marketing of a new game uses audience recognition of the game and the brand as part of the franchise. Audiences therefore know what to expect.
- The sequel formula of the franchise model gives audiences clues of what to expect, but enough differences through themes and setting to ensure anticipation and buzz around the launch of a new game.

Hesmondhalgh also put forward the idea that the largest companies operate across a number of different cultural industries:

- The video games industry is dominated by large multi-national conglomerates. Ubisoft is the fifth largest video game company but is now also in competition with tech companies including Facebook, Google and Amazon who have recently become major players in the games industry backed by huge financial reserves.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS - AUDIENCES

Social and Cultural Context:

- Considering video games in relation to how they reflect **society** is a useful way of exploring them in terms of **social and cultural significance**. The representation of female characters, under-representation of women in video game development and an assumed minority of female video games players are areas that could be explored.
- The *Assassin's Creed* franchise has made adaptations over the different versions of the game to address changes in society and culture and audience expectations. There are examples of **female protagonists** in the later games (Aveline and Cassandra). Consider whether they subvert or reinforce expectations of female characters in games and how audiences may **respond** to this.

Consider how the producers of your chosen game from the franchise target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences:

- The brand identity of the *Assassin's Creed* franchise is a key strategy for targeting audiences. A fan community already exists and gaming audiences have a preconceived idea of what to expect from a game in this franchise. This will be used in the marketing of a new game.

- As a result of developments in technology, the games are distributed across a range of different media platforms which facilitate the targeting of diverse audiences.
- Games in the franchise may attract audiences through creating a sense of identity, for example through identification with characters in the game or interacting with online fan communities.
- Games producers construct audiences through the decisions they make about characters, narratives and gameplay. For example, *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* offers players a choice between playing as a male or female character, Alexios or Cassandra, allowing for different interpretations of the narrative.
- Games in this franchise have broadened their appeal, by, for example the inclusion of female protagonists and different historical settings.

Consider the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response:

- The distribution of games in the franchise across different platforms is a strategy to increase audience consumption. This might be also considered as an attempt to draw gamers from different **platforms** to purchase additional hardware and adopt new gaming habits.
- Gamers might be being encouraged to have a more complete or satisfying experience by using a range of interlinked products that offer exclusive downloadable content. This is only made possible through **convergent technology** and gamer "buy-in" to the value of the exclusive content.
- The franchise has a well-established fan community enhanced by digital convergent platforms facilitating interaction and responses to the game to be shared. Fans can play a role in the future development of the franchise.

A Level Only Consider the way in which different audience interpretations may reflect social and cultural circumstances:

- The unique interactive and escapist experience provided by video games influences interpretations as gamers are part of a fan community made up of participants from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.
- Players may also make choices about video games selecting those that reflect aspects of their identity, for example in relation to the *Assassins Creed* franchise, those that feature a female avatar, or that take place in a particular historical setting that is of interest to the gamer.

Consider theoretical perspectives: Media effects – Albert Bandura

- Several games in the franchise have received an 18 rating from PEGI due largely to violent content.
- Consider audience response to violent video games in terms of Bandura's arguments about observation and imitation and vicarious consequences. Explore the "Bobo Doll Experiment" and discuss how relevant this is to the audiences targeted by the game. Are audiences likely to imitate the behaviours portrayed in the games? What might be imitated?
- A useful discussion might be had in relation to the active role adopted by a player of video games. Question whether Bandura's conclusions are invalidated or made more relevant if audiences are choosing to commit acts of violence in a video game rather than watching/imitating violent acts.

A Level Only

Fandom - Henry Jenkins:

- Discuss the significance of **fan culture** (and in particular **online fan communities**) when exploring the success of video games. This discussion may focus on the way video games have evolved closely alongside the **internet**. Video games offer **social experiences** (online multiplayer options) as well as communities outside of the core game experience. Fans may be passionate exponents of a game or
- the harshest critics and can often impact the development of games directly.
- The developments in video games technology have expanded the ways in which fans can interact with games producers and the fan community, creating a **participatory culture**.
- Video games are interactive, enabling fans to construct their identities through the participatory online experience and the role-playing environment.

Woman's Hour

– BBC Radio 4



Image from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007qlvb>

AS Component 1: Investigating the Media

A level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences

Focus areas:

- **Media industries**
- **Audiences**
- **Media contexts**

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Woman's Hour* is a long-running BBC Radio 4 daily **magazine programme**. The first edition was broadcast in October 1946 on the BBC's Light Programme. This was a station which broadcast entertainment programmes and music from 1945 to 1967 and was originally presented by a man, Alan Ivimey. Early episodes were thought by some women to be patronising,

focusing on the role of the housewife with features including 'mother's midday meal' and 'how to hang your husband's suit'. The programme has evolved to cover hard-hitting topics including abortion, domestic violence and equal pay, alongside lighter elements including why there is no body hair on *Bridgeton* and changing trends in maternity fashion. Notable recent guests have included Angelina Jolie, Oprah Winfrey and Hilary Clinton.

- *Woman's Hour* has had many changes of presenters over the years but has continued to track the changes and report on the issues that have affected women since the Second World War. There was a significant change of presenters in 2020 when long-running presenters Jenni Murray (33 years) and Jane Garvey (13 years) left to be replaced by Emma Barnett and subsequently Anita Rani.

- *Woman's Hour* is the cornerstone of the BBC Radio 4 weekly schedule, with new episodes being broadcast every day at 10am for an hour. There is also an omnibus edition broadcast on a Saturday afternoon at 4pm.
- All episodes of the programme are also available as podcasts on BBC Sounds.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media industries

Historical Contexts:

Woman's Hour was first broadcast in the 1940s, so it's worth considering the **historical and social shifts** that have occurred since the show's inception. The original show could be said to reflect **tokenism** (a show set aside for women might imply all other radio content was oriented towards men). However, this format has continued and has developed into an important part of Radio 4's schedule.

Consider the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production and the significance of economic factors to media industries and their products:

- The BBC is the most-used brand in the UK for media. 'It is used by 90% of UK adults and 80% of young adults on average per week. Used by an average of five million adults every single minute of the day and night, across TV, radio and online, and by a total of 45 million people across all ages over 24 hours.'
(<https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualreport/2020-21.pdf>)
- The BBC is a **public service broadcaster (PSB)** and has a remit to **inform, educate and entertain**. Consider whether *Woman's Hour* is typical of products created for BBC Radio along with what makes a programme distinctively a Radio 4 broadcast.
- It is significant and of continued debate that the BBC is funded by the **licence fee**, a very different funding model from commercial radio that relies on advertising and sponsorship. In 2022, the debate about the licence fee was heightened when Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries announced that the licence fee would be frozen for the next two years,

effectively forcing the BBC to make cuts to their programming. There is a demand in some quarters of government for the licence fee model to be reviewed. Others stress the importance of maintaining an independent, impartial broadcaster that is not under pressure to appeal to advertisers. The BBC is considered by many to be a pillar of British life – a reliable and trustworthy source, particularly in the days of 'fake news', whose high-quality products are exported globally.

- Programmes like *Woman's Hour* may be deemed too 'niche' and specifically targeted for commercial radio. The broadcast has largely female contributors, is predominantly made up of unadorned dialogue (without music, sound effects etc.) and the topics are explored using intellectual and specialised vocabulary. Consider why commercial institutions would be less likely to produce similar products.

Consider recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation and the impact of digitally convergent media platforms:

- The programme and its **podcasts** offer a number of ways to explore recent changes to the radio industry in relation to digital technology, such as the profound changes that have been brought about by switching from **analogue FM** radio to **digital audio** broadcasting (DAB), and the boom in downloading and streaming.
- A significant recent change that has impacted the radio industry is podcasting and listening to broadcasts on **digitally convergent** platforms such as computers and smartphones. In November 2018, the BBC launched BBC Sounds, a **walled garden** streaming service featuring live broadcasting, audio-on-demand and podcasts. This a good example of **technological convergence** as Sounds is available on PCs, laptops, tablets and phones. The slogan 'Listen without Limits' reflects the fact that the way in which the BBC distributes its content has changed in order to address developments in technology and audience consumption of content.

- In 2020/21, there were close to 1.3 billion UK plays of radio, music and podcasts on BBC Sounds. In the six months up to March 2021, 900,000 more accounts were used by those aged between 16-34 to stream BBC Sounds for the first time (BBC annual report).

Consider how media producers maintain varieties of audiences:

- The current presenters are Emma Barnett and Anita Rani. Emma is a journalist and broadcaster who previously presented the BBC Radio 5 Live late morning show and BBC Newsnight. She has also written the 'Tough Love' 'Agony Aunt' advice column in the *Sunday Times Magazine*, where she explored extremes of peoples' personal lives. Her style is therefore light-hearted yet unafraid to explore emotionally sensitive and controversial issues: 'her iron confidence is reassuring for the listeners ... Barnett gave every impression of effortlessly owning the programme' (www.theguardian.co.uk Jan 2021). This suits the *Woman's Hour* format.
 - Anita is an established and popular presenter on television. She is one of the lead presenters on BBC One's *Countryfile* and has become a familiar face on British television, presenting a range of explorative documentaries for the BBC including *Bollywood: The World's Biggest Film Industry* and *My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947*. The choice of Anita Rani addresses one of the key purposes in the creative remit of the BBC – 'To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions' (BBC annual report 2021/22).
 - The topics discussed on *Woman's Hour* are not strictly based around female experiences. Although subjects like IVF, mastectomy and women's safety are female-centric, other discussions about grief, adult literacy and disaster planning offer a **female perspective** on issues that would also interest male listeners.
- the idea that the media is controlled by a small number of companies driven by the logic of profit and power.
- Whilst the BBC is inarguably a large, significant company, the nature of PSB (discussed above) and the content of the broadcast seem to be at odds with the 'logic of profit and power'. Consider the funding of the BBC in comparison with commercial organisations. The significance of the licence fee is that it frees BBC producers from the pressure to generate profit which in turn impacts the content of their broadcasts.
 - The *Woman's Hour* podcast format may also be used to support Curran and Seaton's idea that **socially diverse patterns of ownership** help create conditions for varied and adventurous productions. The fact that this programme continues to be an important part of the channel's schedule illustrates the broadcaster's willingness to produce a programme targeting a specific social group.
 - Consider the proliferation of podcasts across a wide range of topics and genres in recent years and whether the relative **low production costs** of this medium and the inexpensive hosting/**digital distribution** costs offer producers (and often **prosumers**) opportunities to take risks and develop adventurous content that still manages to reach diverse international audiences.

Regulation – Livingston and Lunt (A level)

The BBC is regulated by Ofcom as established in the Communication Act of 2003. The role of Ofcom includes ensuring that services such as radio are of high quality and appeal to a wide audience and to protect audiences from offensive or harmful material. Anyone can complain to Ofcom about a programme.

The BBC operates both a **consumer-based** regulatory model offering choice for audiences and a **citizen-based** one, taking responsibility to self-regulate its content. As a PSB, the BBC has strict **guidelines** about what content can be broadcast or published. BBC1 for instance rarely features sex, nudity or swearing, and all the broadcast channels (TV and radio) follow the '**watershed**'.

Consider theoretical approaches: Power and media industries – Curran and 'Seaton

- It could be argued that *Woman's Hour* challenges

The developments in technology with content distributed across different digital platforms has made regulation more complex. However, the BBC's role as a self-regulator seemingly challenges Livingston and Lunt's assumption that 'new media' is harder to regulate. The BBC has considered the access of potential audiences and regulated within the institution. For example, in February 2021, the BBC received 564 complaints regarding a *Woman's Hour* interview with Zara Mohammed, the first female leader of the Muslim Council of Great Britain. The main issue was an accusation of bias and the hostile questioning style of presenter Emma Barnett. The BBC subsequently removed the clip of the interview from digital platforms.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

The RAJAR figures for radio for 2021 showed that 34.51 million people tuned in each week across all radio stations. There were 257 million downloads of BBC podcasts and on-demand radio programmes on third-party platforms globally. Radio 4 had 10.48 million listeners each week. 'These figures show the important role that BBC Radio plays in people's lives, with 34.5m tuning in to listen live each week to our much loved stations. We also continue to see on-demand listening grow for both our radio programmes and podcasts, as audiences come to BBC Sounds to discover content to listen to whenever they want to'. – Charlotte Moore, BBC Chief Content Officer

(<https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2022/live-listening-figures-revealed-with-34m-tuning-in-to-bbc-radio-each-week>)

Consider how audiences interpret the media, including how and why audiences may interpret the same media in different ways:

- Consider, for example, a **male response** to the content of the show. Think about how many other media texts are composed of only female members (*Loose Women*, for instance, has male guests) and how this might be unsettling or alienating for male listeners. Compare this to a **female audience** and consider whether or not this same gender composition might be appealing to some female audiences who feel their concerns are underrepresented.
- Woman's Hour* encourages an interactive relationship with their listeners. Audiences can respond to *Woman's Hour* on Twitter, through the website and on other **social media platforms**. The broadcast has been designed to invite audience members to enter the discussion through social media platforms. Audience's often offer very different viewpoints in their responses, which are read out at the end of sections of the programme during the live broadcast and at the end of the Saturday omnibus edition. This creates additional discussion and debate around topics which may continue on social media platforms.

Consider how media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting:

- As a **PSB**, the BBC has a **remit** to produce content for all audience **demographics**. Consider whether *Woman's Hour* has been designed to explicitly appeal to a **specialised** female audience as part of the remit of the organisation itself. An extension of this discussion might consider whether there are any other media products that appeal to this specific target audience on the radio (BBC or otherwise).
- Specialised audiences contribute to the diversity of the BBC and enhance the profile of Radio 4 as a station that caters for a broader demographic. In the case of *Woman's Hour*, it is through the choice of presenters, guests and topics selected.
- The programme airs a range of serious and more light-hearted stories to appeal to the demographic. In one week in March 2022, content included the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Radcliffe, body hair in history, growing up in poverty, domestic abuse and the first black Superwoman.
- Advances in technology have enabled radio audiences to access content across a range of digital platforms to suit their needs. Some audiences will loyally listen to the daily programme whilst others will 'catch-up', selecting the episodes that match their interest and concerns. Audiences can subscribe to the podcast '*Woman's Hour Daily*' to catchup on episodes and be notified when new ones are released.

Consider theoretical approaches:

Reception theory – Stuart Hall

- The choice of presenters, guests, topics and scheduling time encodes messages about the ethos of the BBC and its commitment to provide content for a range of audiences. Some audiences will welcome a programme dedicated to pertinent issues relevant to women today, while others may question the need for such a specialised product.
- Consider possible different readings of the broadcast. What is the **intended** meaning and the **preferred reading**? What might be a **negotiated** meaning (e.g. from a male audience member)? What might be an **oppositional** response (e.g. from a sexist male listener)?

Feminist theory – Van Zoonen (A level)

Consider to what extent *Woman's Hour* achieves Van Zoonen's assertion that **gender stereotypes** in the media can only change if more women produce and appear in the media?

Feminist theory – bell hooks

Radio 4's audience is often pigeonholed as being white and middle class. bell hooks has written about how women of lower class or different ethnicity are even more oppressed by **patriarchy**. Consider how *Woman's Hour* challenges this by featuring guests and issues that reflect **diversity** in the female audience.

CONTEXTS

Social and cultural:

Consider the role of the programme in reflecting the changing roles of women in the UK over the past 70 years. *Woman's Hour* was originally broadcast in the 1940s, so it is relevant to consider how different life in the UK is for women now (possibly focusing on shifts from the 1950s housewife towards the independence of young women in the 1960s and comparing this with the present day.) Also consider the changes to a male's role in society and their representation in the media. Think about the way that audience responses to, and interpretations of, media products reflect social and cultural circumstances.

There has been a raised awareness about inequality between males and females in the media, and the BBC has made efforts to address gender imbalance. With a range of female presenters across its radio channels, some people have questioned the relevance of a show just dedicated to women. The impact of the #MeToo campaign, along with other social media campaigns highlighting sexism, and the popularity of women's podcasts show there is a diverse and engaged audience for 'women's media'. The continued production of *Woman's Hour* and the change in presenters sends a positive message to listeners about how the BBC is actively considering the way in which women are represented by the institution.

Economic

Consider how a programme like *Woman's Hour* reflects the ethos of the BBC as a public service broadcaster. Think about how the BBC's not-for-profit, licence fee-funded model influences how its products are produced, distributed and consumed by audiences.