A Level Media Studies

Knowledge Booklet

Component 1

Tide print advert

(1950s)

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").

Water Aid audio-visual advert

(2016)

© Water Aid; http://www.wateraid.org/uk

Water Aid audio-visual advert (2016)

PRODUCT CONTEXT

• The charity *Water Aid* was established in 1981 as a response to a United Nations campaign for clean water, sanitation and water hygiene education. It now works with organisations in 37 African, Asian and Central American countries plus the Pacific region. Since

1991 its patron has been Prince Charles.

• Created by *Atomic London* in October 2016, this advert (titled *Rain For Good*) stars

16 year-old Zambian student Claudia and aims to show how communities benefit from clean water by depicting everyday chores such as farming and laundry.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Cultural context:

Following 1984's *Do They Know It's Christmas?* single for *Band Aid*, 1985's *Live Aid* was the first global charity event aiming to raise funds for relief of the ongoing famine in Ethiopia. The *Comic Relief* telethon was launched by Richard Curtis and Lenny Henry in 1985 with the same initial famine relief aim, and went on to raise over £1bn for charitable causes across Africa and in the UK. The contemporary **audience** for this advert could be assumed to be familiar with the **codes and conventions** of both audio-visual adverts and those for charitable organisations in particular.

Consider genre – and the significance of subverting genre conventions:

• The *Water Aid* advert reinforces charity advertisement **conventions** by including key information about the concern, a personalised narrative to which this information is relevant, and a direct appeal to the audience for money.

• However, the fact it lacks a **non-diegetic voiceover**, melancholic **audio codes** and black and white **visual codes** could all be seen as **unconventional** of this advertising **sub-genre**.

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

• The opening **medium shot** with a **pull focus** between the digital radio and the rain against the window establishes the advert in a modern, British setting (the **audio codes** are of an announcer with an English **accent**). It's **connoted** that the scenes that follow (in an unnamed but likely African country) are happening at the same time.

• The **visual and audio** codes work together to construct the narrative of "sunshine" (in Africa) "on a rainy day" (in Britain) with the associated problems of drought and "lack of access to clean drinking water" that the charity is aiming to relieve.

Consider theoretical perspectives Semiotics – Roland Barthes

• Suspense is created through the **enigmatic** use of the **slow-motion, medium close-up, low-angle tracking shot** of Claudia's feet and the swinging bucket (Barthes' Hermeneutic Code) and emphasised by the crescendo of the song in the scene at the water pump over which the informative **on-screen graphic** appears (**Barthes' Proairetic Code**).

• **Barthes' Semantic Code** could be applied to the lines from the song used from 00.34 **diegetically** and then as a **sound bridge** over the **medium**

shot of a group of women carrying water buckets on their heads: "make me feel, make me feel like I belong… don't leave me, won't leave me here". The **connotation** here being that the text's audience can help Claudia "feel like she belongs" and "won't leave" her there / in that situation if they donate to *Water Aid*.

• The **Symbolic Codes (Barthes)** of drought-ridden African countries are reinforced both visually and through the advert's **audio codes** up until about 00.47.

A level only:
Structuralism – Claude Lévi-Strauss

• How texts are constructed through the use of **binary oppositions** – at 00.47, the song's title line "sunshine on a rainy day" is used over shots of children running, playing, laughing and the more positive **connotations** of this section of the advert are emphasised by the **high key lighting** used.

• A further **visual binary opposition** is created between the arid, washed-out, primarily beige and brown **colour palette** of the advert's first third and the more vibrant colours used at 01.02.

• The **on-screen graphic** ("650 million people still don't have access to clean drinking water") creates a **conceptual binary opposition** between Claudia's positive story and that of other, less fortunate people. It's this opposition that the audience is encouraged to be part

of the solution to by giving "£3 today".

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social context:
An interesting intertext to consider would be *Water Aid's 'No Choice'* TV advert from 2013 which is more **conventionally** constructed and **represents** the suffering of its main 'character' in a more explicit and emotive way (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szT7grQnHRU).

Launching the *Rain For Good* campaign, *Water Aid* said that it had "deliberately broken away from the traditional charity ad formula" in response to the public's desensitisation to traditional fundraising tactics. The **stereotypical** 'victim' needing our help is an **archetype** with which the **audience** would be familiar from many other charity adverts. This would perhaps make the more positive representation of Claudia as a healthy, independent and musically talented woman stand out to an

audience who might otherwise have become immune to the emotive representations **conventionally** deployed by this advertising **sub-genre**.

Consider how representations are constructed through processes of selection and combination:
• The **dress codes** of the advert's main female character include a **stereotypical** knee-length skirt and pink **colour palette** in both her top and shoes.

• Her age is similar to the other young women she walks past at 00.30 and those who join her at the water pump at 01.00. This **connotes** that she has perhaps had to "grow up too quickly" because of the tough environment in which she lives. Her independence is **connoted** by the **wide-angled shot** at 00.18 in which she is **denoted** on her own on a long and empty dust road.

• **Close-up shots** using **handheld cameras** (00.16), her open, confident **gesture codes** (00.51) and her **smiling gesture code** (01.09) **represent** her as the advert's **protagonist** and a 'character' with whom the **audience** can positively associate.

Consider theoretical perspectives:
• **Stuart Hall's theory of representation** – the images of a dry, dusty African environment in which people may be struggling to survive form part of the "shared conceptual road map" that give meaning to the "world" of the advert. The more positive **audio codes** then work to challenge these **stereotypical representations**, creating **enigmas** around why Claudia appears to be so positive. The solution to these enigmas is given to the **audience** at

01.00 when we first see the water pump.

• **David Gauntlett's theory of identity** – Claudia acts as a **role model** for the type of lifestyle changes that the **audience** could be responsible for creating if they donate to *Water Aid*.

A level only:
• **Liesbet Van Zoonen's feminist theory** – by assuming the **stereotypically** male roles of '**protagonist**' and 'provider', Claudia is perhaps contributing to social change by representing women in non-traditional roles. The work involved in collecting the water is physically challenging (non-traditional for female roles) though the advert does reinforce stereotypes of women being associated with care of children.

• **Gilroy's ethnicity and post-colonial theories** that media texts reinforce colonial power could

be applied, as *Water Aid* is encouraging its British audience to 'help' those like Claudia who live in 'less developed' countries.

PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

Social/cultural context:

In December 2016, this advert had been viewed about 47 000 times on *Water Aid's* YouTube channel and this page also actively encourages the sharing of the advert through social networks. Further evidence that the likely **target audience** are literate with technology is that donations are encouraged through the **imperative** "Text SUNNY to 70555" and the use on the YouTube page of a twitter hashtag (#ShareSunshine).

The advert's cover of Zoe's 1990 song *Sunshine On A Rainy Day* could indicate that the **target audience** are in their 30s–40s as they're likely to remember the original and get pleasure from the nostalgic value of hearing a song with which they're familiar.

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 a young woman with whom they might **personally identify (Uses and Gratifications Theory)**. Parents might make similar readings, identifying empathetically with the 'better life' that *Water Aid's* clean water provides for the children represented in the advert.

• *Water Aid* acts as an **Opinion Leader** for the **target audience** who would assume the "650 million people…" statistic (01.14) is true and reliable.

• The **unconventionally** positive **visual codes, audio codes** and **representations** would, the producers hope, give the advert **unique selling points** compared to other charity appeals and therefore make the **audience** more likely to donate.

Consider theoretical perspectives: Reception theory – Stuart Hall

• The use of **handheld camera shots** and **indirect mode of address** made by Claudia **connote** that the audience is following her story, but *Water Aid* rather than she herself have constructed this **narrative** for us. This, according to Hall, is the dominant or **hegemonic encoding** created by *Water Aid*.

• The fact that she's named creates the **preferred reading** that she is a real person and that the **audience** should invest in her narrative, sharing *Water Aid's* **ideologies**.

Cultivation theory – George Gerbner

• This theory might suggest that audiences have become used to the **conventions** of this **sub-genre** of advertising and perhaps somewhat 'immune' to pleading, earnest **non-diegetic voiceovers** by well-known voices and black and white, slow-motion, emotive **representations** of people suffering.

• The **target audience's** likely liberal political perspectives will have been shaped by exposure to previous, generically similar adverts, shaping their world view that the suffering of people less fortunate than themselves can be alleviated by charitable donations.

Kiss of the Vampire film poster
(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*. Distributers 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.

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.

• 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 (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-priviliged, 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-tounderstanding-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 is 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?
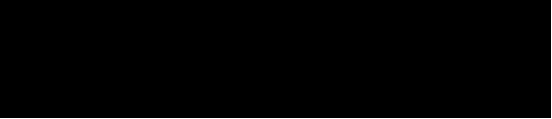
Theoretical perspectives:

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 theopportunities 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**.

The Times

(13 March 2019)

Fashion 8 best styling tricks for your spring wardrobe
Times2

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Driven to despair

● Britain in crisis as May plan crushed again ● MPs vote today on no-deal Brexit ● Prime minister may face resignation calls

Francis Elliott Political Editor
Oliver Wright, Sam Coates
Bruno Waterfield Brussels

Britain was plunged into political crisis last night as Theresa May all but lost control of Brexit after a second huge Commons defeat for her deal.

The prime minister will confront MPs today with the consequences of leaving the EU without a deal, including new tariffs and plans for the border in Ireland. Parliament will then vote on whether the country should leave without an agreement on March 29.

If MPs block no-deal they will be asked tomorrow whether Britain should seek an Article 50 extension from the EU, for how long and for what purpose.

The cabinet is meeting early today amid speculation that a delegation of senior Tories may ask Mrs May to resign this week, raising the prospect of another election to break the impasse.

Downing Street is also ready for another attempt by a cross-party group of MPs led by Yvette Cooper to seize control of the Brexit timetable. The

How the Commons voted

Yes 242
No 391

move, which could allow MPs to dictate government business to soften or even halt Brexit, could deliver a terminal blow to Mrs May's authority.

A group of Tory MPs is also preparing to revive the so-called Malthouse plan for Britain to offer an extended transition followed by a no-deal Brexit. Figures such as Damian Green and Nicky Morgan from the Remain wing of the party and the Brexiteers Steve Baker and Jacob Rees-Mogg put down the amendment outlining the plan last night, with ministers understood to be indicating backing. It requires new negotiations with the EU because it does not involve passing the withdrawal agreement, something both Brussels and No 10 are likely to resist.

Mrs May, her voice failing, told MPs, who had rejected her deal by a margin of 149 votes, that they now faced a series of unenviable choices, including whether to cancel Brexit. The prime

TOLGA AKMEN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Theresa May leaving parliament last night after her heavy defeat. She told MPs that they had to face unenviable choices

minister announced she would grant a free vote to MPs on no-deal today and heavily hinted that she would oppose leaving without an agreement. No 10 was unable to say what would happen if MPs voted to take no-deal of the table but also voted against an extension.

Business leaders called on parliament to "end the circus". Carolyn Fairbairn, the CBI director-general, said: "Enough is enough. This must be the last day of failed politics. A new approach is needed by all parties. Jobs and livelihoods depend on it."

Sterling fell against the euro and dollar. Today the markets will examine previously secret no-deal tariffs, which place tens of thousands of jobs at risk. The government will also publish sensitive plans for the Irish border in a no-deal exit. The disclosure of both is likely to weaken Britain's position in any further negotiations.

The fate of Mrs May's second attempt to pass the deal was sealed when Geoffrey Cox's legal advice was published. The attorney-general ruled that changes to her Brexit deal had left the legal risk of Britain being stuck in the backstop unchanged. This contradicted Mrs May, who claimed to have secured changes that ensured Britain could not be trapped in it.

Matt Hancock, the health secretary, criticised Mr Cox at cabinet for undermining her, and other cabinet ministers were privately withering.

The DUP again opposed the deal and the scale of the defeat — the fourth largest by a sitting government — led many in the EU to conclude that the agreement negotiated over two years was dead. Mrs May warned MPs that the EU would demand to "know what use we mean to make of such an extension". "Does it wish to revoke Article 50? Does it want to hold a second referendum? Or does it want to leave with a deal but not this deal? These are unenviable choices, but thanks to the decision the House has made this evening they must now be faced."

The rejection darkened the mood of EU leaders before a summit next week at which they will have to agree unanimously to any request for a delay. One diplomat warned that some were prepared to cut Britain loose. "Behind the scenes people are increasingly saying that it is better to call it quits, to have a clean break and start again," the diplomat said.

Full reports and analysis, pages 6-9
Daniel Finkelstein, page 25
Leading article, page 29

IN THE NEWS ◆

Boeings grounded
The Boeing 737 Max has been banned in Europe and many other countries worldwide after the crash in Ethiopia on Sunday. More British victims have been named. **Pages 14-15**

Lethal air pollution
Air pollution causes more deaths globally than smoking, a study has found. There were 8.8 million deaths a year from pollution, including 64,000 in Britain, researchers said. **Page 4**

Maduro rallies thugs
President Maduro has called on pro-government gangs to begin "the resistance" as he blamed the US for blackouts that have threatened to plunge Venezuela into chaos. **Page 30**

Bank 'must do better'
The Bank of England is "years out of date" in how it works and its credibility is at risk, the public accounts committee has said in a blow for Mark Carney, the governor. **Page 37**

Cheltenham Festival
8-page pullout

The Times

(13 March 2019)

A Level Component 1: Media products, industries and audiences.

Focus areas:
Media language
Representation
Media industries
Audiences
Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT
• The Times newspaper is a British national **'quality'** newspaper first published in
1785. The Times has been published by Times Newspapers since 1981, a subsidiary of News UK, wholly owned by News Corp, Rupert Murdoch's company.
• This edition was published on March 13th, 2019, after Theresa May had encountered another Commons defeat over her Brexit proposals.
• The Times is famous for having a range of journalists with varied political viewpoints which allows the newspaper to offer a more neutral political stance on Brexit negotiations.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS –
Media language and representation
Media Language

Political context
On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU). This was nicknamed **'Brexit'**. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting leave and 48.1% voting remain. The controversies from the campaign continued even after the vote. Remainers accused leave voters of xenophobia and racism; leavers accused remainers of being unpatriotic and un-democratic. The period since the referendum has been one of political turmoil. Following the resignation of David Cameron shortly after the vote, Theresa May has faced regular leadership challenges from within her own party, and a snap general election in 2017 in which her party suffered heavy losses. Meanwhile, she had been regularly visiting Brussels and other EU countries in an effort to create a **Brexit deal** that will satisfy both the EU and the UK parliament On the date this edition of the *Mirror* was published, MPs had **voted against** the deal she had negotiated with the EU. This was very serious as the UK was scheduled to be leaving the EU in just ten days. Withdrawing from the EU with **'no deal'** could have catastrophic consequences on trade, immigration, healthcare etc., affecting all UK citizens.

Cultural context
Horse racing meets like Ascot and Cheltenham are an **iconic** part of British culture, often associated with the upper classes.
The contemporary audience can be assumed to be familiar with the **codes and conventions** of newspaper front pages and the **mode of address** that these newspapers present to their readers. The layout of the **broadsheet** newspaper usually has one main story, with lots of details, then smaller headlines at the bottom.

Front page:
• The central image is a **close-up** photograph of Theresa May looking distraught. She has a pained facial expression and dark rings under her eyes which **denote** high emotions and possible lack of sleep.
• The headline **anchors** this by making the defeat of her Brexit proposals into something more personal and emotional than political and factual. This is an attempt to narrate what is a quite 'dry' story. It fulfils the **news value** of **'personalisation'** where politicians become **characters** we may empathise with (even if we don't agree with their politics).
• Though the smaller headlines above the main offer a bigger picture, the last still focuses on May as an individual.
• The 'In the news' stories at the bottom of the page also supply some **global context** for the main story: financial,

environmental and travel news are topics *The Times'* audience is interested in.

• Most of the print is black on white, which **connotes** the seriousness of the content. The fashion feature 'puff box' at the top of the page is in a paler, pastel colour that is more feminine and also less serious.

• The strapline 'Britain's Most Trusted Newspaper' draws on *the Times'* long history and reputation as a quality brand that will give readers a range of viewpoints on serious issues. The heraldic style logo reinforces this.

Theoretical perspectives:

Semiotics – Saussure

The photograph appears to be taken through a car window (there is a shadow of a rearview mirror in the foreground and the 'Driven To Despair' is a pun). The connotation of this kind of shot is that they are un-posed and often private situations that the photographer has managed to capture. The framing suggests a candor to the photo. This emphasises the emotional and personalised framing for the story.

Narrative - Propp

This style takes a complex political debate (described in factual detail in the body of the text) and turns into a dramatic incident, an emotional incident for a 'character' (May). Candidates could look at Vladmir Propp's 32 'narratemes' and select those which this story seem to be playing out.

Starting Points: representation

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

• The photograph could be interpreted as representing May as a **stereotypical**

• **woman**: emotional, vulnerable and easily upset. However, the 'candid' (almost invasive) framing of the photo also suggests she is allowing her feelings to show in private, whereas in public she is more controlled.

• Female politicians often find it challenging to show they are both strong, capable leaders and caring and warm human beings. One rival MP said May wouldn't make a good Prime Minister because she doesn't have children! If they come across as too 'masculine' female politicians can lose supporters, something male politicians don't seem to worry about.

• The language of the headline also focuses on May's emotions rather than her political

achievements. However, the tone suggests that she is justified in feeling this way.

• Learners might want to look at photos of male politicians - how many show them expressing emotions? How many are constructed to show strength, confidence, defiance and other stereotypically 'masculine' traits?

Theoretical perspectives:
Feminist theory - Van Zoonen

Van Zoonen suggested that women are often portrayed as sexualised, weak or vulnerable in the media. Though Theresa May is shown as vulnerable, the image used also suggests defiance in the face of adversity; she is not sexualised (compare to the infamous *Daily Mail* 'legs-it' headline). Also, even though the reader may not agree with her political actions, May is a high profile, very powerful woman who is often portrayed battling against privileged male politicians. This kind of woman is rarely seen in the media, especially within current affairs, and Van Zoonen would suggest that despite her politics many women would aspire to her status. The personal tone of the headline and photo build this sense of intimacy.

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

Industry context

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, which concentrates on newspapers and publishing. The company 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. The group was one of the first companies in the UK to introduce an **online** newspaper but also **paywalls** which required readers to pay for use of the site. This was introduced in response

to the fall in print sales within the group. However, The Times is the only national **quality** newspaper to show year-on-year growth for **print sales** (407, 566 daily average). The Times is part of 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 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

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 material while ensuring choice and press freedom. The increasing power of companies like News Corp and their expansion into digital media has also placed traditional approaches to media at risk.

Cultural industries – David Hesmondhalgh

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. 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 finds itself part of a wide organisation responsible for different cultural industries. This can benefit the newspaper

greatly in terms of production and promotion.

The Times' target audience, according to NRS and ABC data, is predominantly ABC1, over 35 and has a liberal/right-wing political stance.

Starting points: Audience

How are audiences grouped and categorised?

The Times' target audience, according to NRS and 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 global affairs and can understand detailed political reporting

How do audiences interpret the product?

The Brexit chaos edition will target this group as it takes a fairly **neutral** approach which will allow readers to construct their own opinion and negotiate their own response to the Outcome of the Commons vote. The close-up photo of May's despairing face may build empathy and a sense of **identification**: the audience feels similar to May about the tedious Brexit process.

Theoretical approaches:

Cultivation theory – Gerbner

Exposure to repeated patterns of representation (of May struggling to reach a deal, of Brexit chaos generally) by newspapers can shape and influence an audience's views and opinions. Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. The messages (e.g. politicians are ineffectual) need to resonate with an established belief (e.g. Brexit is a chaotic mess) in the audience (e.g. middle class, middle-right wing).

Reception theory - Stuart Hall

The Times has portrayed May and the vote in a way that encourages a negotiated reading. By focusing on the emotional state of May and the general despair at the progress of negotiations, it is asking readers to reflect on their own emotional response to the situation.

End of audience – Clay Shirky

The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of the internet with the rise of the prosumer who can create their own content such as submitting

stories and being part of forums. Many broadsheet newspapers like *The Times* have embraced this, taking popular **'below-the-line'** (i.e. non-professional) commentators and offering them **'above-the-line'** columns in their on-line editions.

The Mirror

(13 March 2019)

eduqas
Part of WJEC

The Mirror

(13 March 2019)

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

PRODUCT CONTEXT

• The *Daily Mirror* is a British daily national tabloid newspaper. Established in 1903, it is aimed at predominantly working class readership. It follows a traditionally 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 traditionally right wing stance.

• This edition was published on March 13th, 2019, after Theresa May had encountered another Commons defeat over her Brexit proposals. As a mostly left-wing newspaper, the *Mirror* has been critical of the way the conservative government has been handling the Brexit negotiations.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS –
Media language and representation

Political context

On 23rd June 2016, citizens of the UK voted to leave the European Union (EU). This was nicknamed **'Brexit'**. The vote was very close with 51.9% voting to leave and 48.1% voting remain. The controversies from the campaign continued even after the vote. Remainers accused leave voters of xenophobia and racism; leavers accused remainers of being unpatriotic and un-democratic. The period since the referendum has been one of political turmoil. Following the resignation of David

Cameron shortly after the vote, Theresa May has faced regular leadership challenges from within her own party, and a snap general election in 2017 in which her party suffered heavy losses. Meanwhile, she had been regularly visiting Brussels and other EU countries in an effort to create a **Brexit deal** that would satisfy both the EU and the UK parliament. On the date this edition of the *Mirror* was published, MPs had **voted against** the deal she had negotiated with the EU. This was very serious as the UK was scheduled to be leaving the EU just ten days after. Withdrawing from the EU with **'no deal'** could have catastrophic consequences on trade, immigration, healthcare etc., affecting all UK citizens.

Cultural context

Eastenders is one of the UK's most popular **soap operas**, with a reputation for featuring hard-hitting storylines that often feature issues such as rape, domestic violence and homophobia. Since 1985, it has been regularly watched by audiences of up to 20 million people. This has turned the actors into celebrities and - like **Dyer's 'Star Theory'** suggests • tabloid newspapers often run stories about the actor's lives mirroring their *Eastenders'* storylines. Traditionally, one of the *Mirror's* (and other tabloids') main elements is **sports reporting** - often over half the paper is dedicated to sport. The **'back pages'** often feature the betting odds for horse races and will have special 'pull out' features when there is a major racing event. Racing 'meets' like Ascot and Cheltenham have upper class associations, but have increasingly become popular days out for the less wealthy audiences.

Front page:

• The page is split between the political story, a **'puff box'** promoting the pull-out **supplement**, and an advert for a betting service (that obviously links to the Cheltenham pull-out). The headline 'Brexit Delay Mayhem' and

the use of the emotive words 'surrender', 'defeat' and 'chaos' suggest the negotiations for Britain leaving the EU are disastrous.

• The image of May looking very serious **anchors** the headline - that fact the image is tiny (smaller than the photo of attacked actor in the top right) shows how little respect or faith the *Mirror* has in May's abilities.

• The **strapline** 'Fighting for you' provides solidarity for people confused or worried about the political turmoil of Brexit.

• The Cheltenham Festival pull-out actually dominates the page - with bright green font and background, combined with an exciting **action shot** of a horse and rider, it grabs the attention more than the political story. The puff box "All the tips! All the form!" offers practical advice and the offer of a free bet will also entice the reader. The use of these terms **positions** the reader as someone already knowledgeable about racing.

• The advert at the base of the page also uses brightly coloured graphics, the greens linking it to the racing feature above.

• The article about the assault on the actor is a close-up of her upset face, to create empathy and the reader feel closer to this 'character'. The headline uses emotive slang like 'glassed' and 'thug' to condemn the attack. It also doesn't use the real actor's name (Katie Jarvis) instead addressing her as her character's name. The abbreviation of *Eastenders* along with the slang suggests this story is less important and more 'gossipy'.

Article:

• The central image is a medium shot of Theresa May: her hands are raised which could connote defeat. It could also indicate conciliation or resistance.

• The text of the article shows it is a mixture of all of these! May is portrayed as someone who is losing, but who is also bravely fighting on against the odds.

• The language of the whole article is **allegorical**: portraying the debate in Parliament as if it is a horse race. "A Faller At The 2nd" is racing track slang for a poorly performing horse, and there is even a book-keeper character at the bottom of the page, offering odds for the different Brexit outcomes.

• Throughout the main article, May is described using light-hearted derogatory language ("tottering Theresa"). Though her "dwindling authority" is ridiculed, at some points her efforts sound almost heroic ("dashing to Brussels").

• On either side of the double page there are two rival columns offering opposing viewpoints on the proceedings. The style of these is similar to that of **sports journalism**, and there are numerous light-hearted **pop culture** references (e.g. comparing one man to Gandalf from *Lord Of The Rings* and including his famous line "You shall not pass").

Theoretical perspectives:
Structuralism - Levi – Strauss

There is a **binary opposition** between the MPs and "the Nation" which feeds into the 'us vs them' ideology of **'populism'.** There is also an opposition between the two political pundits on the double page piece. The language in the headlines (plus the odds from 'Honest Jason') also explains some quite complex political debates in using the allegory of a horse race - this dramatises the details (and also links to the paper's main **advertisers**!)

Starting points: Representation

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

Front page:

• By reducing Theresa May to the smallest image on the page, the *Mirror* is sending a clear message about the way she is seen by her fellow MPs and by the newspaper's target audience.

• The headline focuses on her **defeat** and implies the whole situation is her fault - there is very little description of the MPs who have challenged her.

• This **personalises** a complex story by making it about the experiences of one **individual** rather than a complicated political progress involving hundreds of people. This is a technique used by news media to help audiences build **emotional engagement** about 'dry' political or economic stories.

• The small amount of space given to the whole story - along with the "...Loses Key Vote Again' headline - suggests that, these political conflicts have become almost commonplace, and this is all part of the **ongoing Brexit 'chaos'**.

• Both this and the *Eastenders* story could suggest women are weak and **vulnerable**: May 'surrenders', 'Hayley' has been physically assaulted. Yet the images - May in mid-argument, 'Hayley' looking **defiant** - give the impression of inner strength despite the attacks they have experienced. The *Mirror* has an even gender split in their audience, which may explain this more **complex portrayal** of women.

Article:

• The portrayal of May as embattled continues with a blow by blow account of the debate. The detail of her losing her voice again represents her as both weak, but also relentless in her aims.

• The image of her dominates the page, whilst the male politicians are in far smaller photo-boxes. There is a sense that even though she is failing, she is going down fighting. Though this seems at odds with the Mirror's political bias, it does fit with the large female market who may admire May's tenacity even if they don't like her politics.

Theoretical perspectives:

Feminist theory - Van Zoonen

Van Zoonen suggested that women are often portrayed as sexualised, weak or vulnerable in the media. Though the two women featured on the *Mirror*'s cover are from stories that seem to portray them as vulnerable, the images used connote strength and defiance in the face of adversity; also neither are sexualised (almost a genre convention in many other UK tabloids!)

PART 2: UNDERSTANDING MEDIA INDUSTRIES AND AUDIENCES

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, it has had the largest year on year fall in sales of any national print newspaper in recent years with a current average daily sales of just 509, 000 copies (Jan 2019).
Online media has largely been responsible for the downturn in print sales and the Daily Mirror has responded to this by launching 'Mirror Online' and having a presence on social media sites. The website offers interactive opportunities for its readers with competitions, polls and a 'Got a story?' feature which invites readers to submit their own stories. Though it doesn't invite users' comments on political issues, it does have accessible stories breaking down the key events into 'bitesize' chunks (e.g. "5 Facts About…"). This reinforces

the *Mirror*'s brand being the "Intelligent Tabloid". Reach plc is the largest national and regional multimedia content publisher in the UK, comprising national and regional news brands across the country. The group publishes more than 150 newspaper titles across the UK and Ireland, from the national presence of the Daily Mirror, the Daily Record, the Daily Express, to local newspapers such as the Manchester Evening News and Nottingham Post. The Daily Mirror is part of 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

Reach plc has maintained their position in the UK market despite falling sales of the *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

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 has arisen 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

Reach plc 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.

Starting points: Audience

How are audiences grouped and categorised?
The Daily Mirror's target audience, according to NRS and ABC data is predominantly C2DE, over 35 and are working class Labour supporters.

How do audiences interpret the product?
• The audience is **positioned** as being disapproving of May, a Tory PM, and towards the other MPs.

The use of despairing, defeated language would **resonate** with their cynicism towards politicians, and their fears about the 'chaos' of Brexit.

- The red font and central positioning of the headline indicates that this story is important, but the sandwiching between adverts for gambling, along with the 'Loses Again' indicates this is just another installment in a long, tedious process, and that it is advisable to focus on more entertaining experiences.
- The use of horse-racing **terminology** in the main article's headlines relates to the audience's interest in racing, and the rival political columnists describe the day's events in the opinionated and emotive style of a sports 'pundit'.
- Despite much emotive and symbolic language (that also references popular culture) there is actually a lot of factual detail about the Commons debate. The 'cut and thrust' of the proceedings **narrates** what could be quite a dry and inaccessible series of arguments.

How do different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances?

- The tone of the article - and the prominence of more stereotypical working class entertainment like soap operas and horse-racing - link to ideology of 'populism' that has become more prevalent in mainstream politics over the past five years. Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' and Nigel Farage's attack on the 'elite' encourage the view that mainstream politicians are hopelessly out of touch with the 'common people'.

Theoretical approaches:

Cultivation theory – Gerbner
Audience exposure to **repeated patterns** of representation (of May, of Brexit, or of modern politics) by newspapers may shape and influence their views and opinions**.** Gerbner went on to say that this is not like 'hypodermic model' but rather depends on what the audience already believes. The messages (e.g. politicians are ineffectual) need to **resonate** with an established belief (e.g. Brexit is a chaotic mess) in the audience (e.g. working class, left-wing men and women).

Reception theory - Stuart Hall
There is an ambiguous representation of women on the front page. Some may **decode** the stories as portraying women as defeated and vulnerable, others may **negotiate** a meaning as these women being defiant in the face of adversity.

End of audience – Clay Shirky
The concept of audience members as passive consumers is no longer tenable in the age of the internet with the rise of the prosumer who can create their own content such as submitting stories and being part of forums. Newspapers like *The Guardian* have embraced this, taking popular **'below-the-line'** (i.e. non-professional) commentators and offering them **'above-the-line'** columns. The *Mirror* does offer some opportunities for 'citizen journalism' (e.g. the "What's Your Story?" section of their website) the majority of content is still written by journalists.

Dream
by Dizzee Rascal

This image is used for review purposes under the fair dealings policy.

Dream by Dizzee Rascal

**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

• Dizzee Rascal is a solo rap artist within the genre of garage/ grime who won the Mercury Music Prize for his debut album, *Boy in da Corner,* in 2003.

• *Dream* was released as a single in 2004, taken from Dizzee Rascal's second album *Showtime.*

• *Dream* samples lines from *Happy Talk,* a single that was released in 1982 by Captain Sensible and originally featured in the musical *South Pacific* (a Broadway stage show in

1949, film version released in 1958).

• The video for Dream was directed by Dougal Wilson for the Colonel Blimp production company. Wilson is an award-winning director of commercials and music videos.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Language
Cultural Contexts:

The video references 1950s children's television, most specifically *Muffin the Mule,* which was aired on the BBC from 1946 until 1955 (when it switched to ITV). The BBC programme was presented by Annette Mills who sang and interacted with a puppet mule and other characters who appeared on her grand piano. The programme was broadcast live and was hugely successful, becoming the first children's television programme to have its own merchandise. The actress who plays studes female pianist in *Dream* bears a clear resemblance to Annette Mills, the puppet mule is also featured, and the set is similar to *Muffin the Mule*.

The use of these references creates an innocent, child-like backdrop to the video and contrasts with the contemporary issues and problems depicted. An example from Muffin the Mule can be viewed via this link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spQY2FbCUtM

Consider the codes and conventions of media language:

• *Dream* combines elements of **performance and narrative**, typical of the music video form.

»» Two '**worlds'** are constructed – the salubrious 1950s sitting room and the contemporary city setting, established through the set, props and puppets on the grand piano.

»» The video features a female pianist who directly addresses the audience, introducing Dizzee Rascal and singing some lines from *Happy Talk. S*he acts as a **presenter**/**narrator** and reacts to the action, arguably reflecting the 'typical' or 'expected' response of an older audience to rap music.

»» Dizzee Rascal **performs** and directly addresses the audience, also commenting on the narrative and actions of the puppet characters.

»» The **narrative** is linear, featuring disruptions and a resolution that reflects the dominant message of triumph over adversity through commitment to a dream.

• The video features many **postmodern** elements, juxtaposing 1950s children's television characters with familiar contemporary iconography such as the nightclub and off-licence, and a matriarchal older female with a young male grime artist. This creates a fable-like quality to the video, as Dizzee Rascal tells the story of the development of a successful career.

• The images are highly **illustrative**, often featuring a literal interpretation of the lyrics e.g. 'off licence', 'young babymothers'. This adds to the sense that a vivid story is being told.

Consider how elements of media language influence meaning:

• The period setting of the sitting room is established through the **mise-en-scène** of the striped wallpaper, floral curtains and grand piano, connoting a middle-class environment that contrasts dramatically with the contemporary setting of the narrative. The stereotypically socially deprived, inner-city environment is constructed through the set and props on the piano (e.g. off licence building with letters missing, graffiti).

• There are many **props** that reference childhood:

>» Pastel coloured building blocks at the beginning and end of the video.

>» Musical box from which Dizzee Rascal emerges – and returns to at the end of the video when it is covered in stars, connoting his success as a music artist.

>» Toy police car and helicopter.

>» Puppets – Muffin the Mule, youths, policeman etc.

>» The use of this iconography of childhood establishes a sense that the video is a fable with a clear moral message. This, coupled with the juxtaposition of the 1950s references, helps to distance the audience – there is little attempt to create verisimilitude or the illusion of reality – it is clear that it is a constructed narrative.

• Dizzee Rascal begins to use the **microphone prop** at the point where he talks about discovering music and gaining air time.

The microphone **connotes power** – Dizzee Rascal's voice can now be heard (literally and metaphorically), and this signifies a move away from deprivation and rebellion towards achieving his dream and becoming a respected member of society.

• The use of simple **props and iconography**, such as the nightclub signified by the disco ball and dimmed lights, constructs distinct and recognisable settings to illustrate the lyrics and communicate meanings.

Consider how developing technologies affect media language:

• The video makes use of green screen technologies to allow Dizzee Rascal to perform on the piano and interact with the puppet characters. The following article gives further information about the process:

http://www.studiodaily.com/2005/02/something-old-something-new-in-dizzee-rascal-video/

Consider how meanings are established through intertextuality:

• The **references to 1950s children's television**, especially the use of direct address by the pianist, ironically **position the audience** as children being told a story. The puppet characters are interwoven into the narrative e.g. Muffin the Mule operating the sound recording desk and the Lord Charles puppet in the pram – this juxtaposition potentially creates a sense of surprise or unease, provoking the audience to think about the narrative and messages in the video.

• Dizzee Rascal also **intertextually references Captain Sensible**, who recorded *Happy Talk* in the 1980s, when he says 'This is too sensible for me, man' as he climbs out of the musical box.

• These references could create a sense of **nostalgia** and **pleasure** for viewers who recognise them.

Consider theoretical approaches:

Semiotics – Barthes

• Many of the images illustrate the lyrics but connote deeper meanings in relation to the more abstract notion of working to achieve a 'dream'.

• The idea of 'myth' relates to the use of iconography such as the 'hoodie' which, over time, has become recognisable as a symbol of youthful rebellion.

Structuralism – Levi-Strauss (A level)

• Many binary oppositions are evident, most prominently that of the young black male v older white female which reflects the idea of hierarchies of power in society. The female is physically bigger than Dizzee Rascal, due to the difference in scale, and she shows disapproval of the anti-social behaviour and approval of the positive actions. Despite Dizzee's success, she arguably retains the power as he gets back into the box at the end.

• Other oppositions include youth v police/authority – with some sense of resolution as they all dance together towards the end of the video.

• Anti-social behaviour v hard work and dedication - the central message of working hard to achieve a 'dream' reflects a dominant ideological message that hard work offers an 'escape' from social deprivation.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and Cultural Context

The representation of the white, upper middle class pianist reflects **1950s Britain** when people in positions of **power** tended to belong to hegemonic social groups. *Dream* is also interesting to consider in the context of the **post-war period** in Britain when many people from the Caribbean, as well as from India and Pakistan, moved to Britain to work and British society was becoming more **ethnically diverse** as a result of this period of **immigration**.

The 1950s references create a sense of **distance** and allow the audience to view the video as an **allegory** and understand the use of quite extreme **stereotypes** as a way of exploring contemporary issues. For example, police brutality may be considered as something that would have occurred more frequently in the past, but there are cases of this happening in contemporary society.

Dream is also interesting to consider in the **context of the early 2000s** when it was released, in relation to concerns about antisocial behaviour amongst inner-city youths. The decision by Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent to ban '**hoodies'** in 2005 received widespread media coverage. 'Hoodies' have been worn by hip hop artists since the 1980s and have become to be associated with **rebellion and antisocial behaviour**. The following article gives some further background information on the topic: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/aug/09/power-of-the-hoodie

Consider the way social groups are represented through processes of selection and combination:

Representations of gender, age and ethnicity.
- The **pianist** is constructed as a **stereotypical 1950s white, middle-aged, middle-class woman** through the mise-en-scène of her upright posture, formal jacket with large floral brooch and hair style.
  - »» She fulfils a **matriarchal** role and uses quite a patronising mode of address ('Hello boys and girls'), especially as she introduces Dizzee ('he's such a rascal').
  - »» This creates **humour**, especially as the video progresses and reaction shots reveal her shock and disapproval of the actions of the 'youths'.
  - »» Her horror as the helicopter flies past her face connotes her **stereotypical British reserve** – she does not like this invasion of her personal space and is not used to encountering antisocial behaviour.
  - »» She **reinforces dominant messages and ideologies**, smiling her approval on the positive elements of the narrative, for example holding up Dizzee Rascal's album and singing 'just do it'.
- **Dizzee Rascal** is constructed as a **rebellious young black male** through the dress codes of red tracksuit with a 'hoodie' top and trainers**. »»** He appears to be a **stereotypically defiant youth who challenges authority** at the beginning of the video, reinforced by the lyrics e.g. 'reckless with no shame'.
  - »» As the narrative progresses, a more **positive representation** of Dizzee Rascal is constructed as he describes his strong sense of purpose, hard work and achievement.
  - »» Later in the video, following Dizzee's transformation, the **youths** also partake of more creative and less destructive behaviour (e.g. kicking a football, break-dancing), establishing him as a **role-model**.
  - »» This **positive representation** of a young black rapper **challenges** many negative stereotypes of this social group.
- **Positive messages and values** are embedded in the representations e.g. the power of pursuing a 'dream' is connoted when Dizzee Rascal is inside the recording studio and the policeman is battering on the window, but cannot reach him – perhaps suggesting that music offers a 'protection' from the harsh realities of the outside world. Similarly in the nightclub scene, the puppet characters, including the policeman, dance harmoniously, connoting the power of music to bring people together.
- Many clear **stereotypes** are constructed through the 'puppets' to create recognition and humour, and also convey messages and values:
  - »» **Youths** are constructed as irresponsible and having no purpose in life – skateboarding, spraying graffiti, stealing the TV.
  - »» The **Scots character** (red hair, tartan) is constructed as a drunk with a lager bottle.
  - »» The **police officer** is constructed as a brutal, baton-wielding white male, beating a youth in a style that references 'Punch and Judy'.

The puppets are attached to strings, linking to the notion that this story is a fable, but also suggesting hierarchies of power and control – they are conforming to stereotypical, possibly pre-ordained roles. This raises questions about key issues in contemporary society such as crime, antisocial behaviour, underage sex etc. and how these can be tackled.

Consider theoretical approaches:

Theories of representation – Hall
• The video deliberately constructs the puppet characters as stereotypes to exemplify the way in which these social groups are often represented
  – and to demonstrate that these stereotypes can misrepresent individuals from these groups.

Theories of ethnicity and postcolonial theory - Gilroy (A level)
• The construction of the white matriarchal children's TV presenter and the young black male 'rascal' is interesting to explore in relation to postcolonial theory, especially in the social and historical context of the 1950s and increasing ethnic diversity in Britain.
• The narrative embeds positive messages and values, constructing a representation of a successful rapper and subverting negative stereotypes of ethnicity. However, the female can be seen to be in control, especially as Dizzee Rascal is diminutive, arguably depends on her for 'endorsement' of his album and returns to the box at the end.
• While the story suggests that 21st century Britain is an inclusive and multicultural society, the repeated shots of the TV presenter looking shocked and her patronising tone towards Dizzee Rascal imply that society is not yet fully integrated.

Riptide music video, Vance Joy (2013)

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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 Dali'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.

Assassin's Creed III: Liberation

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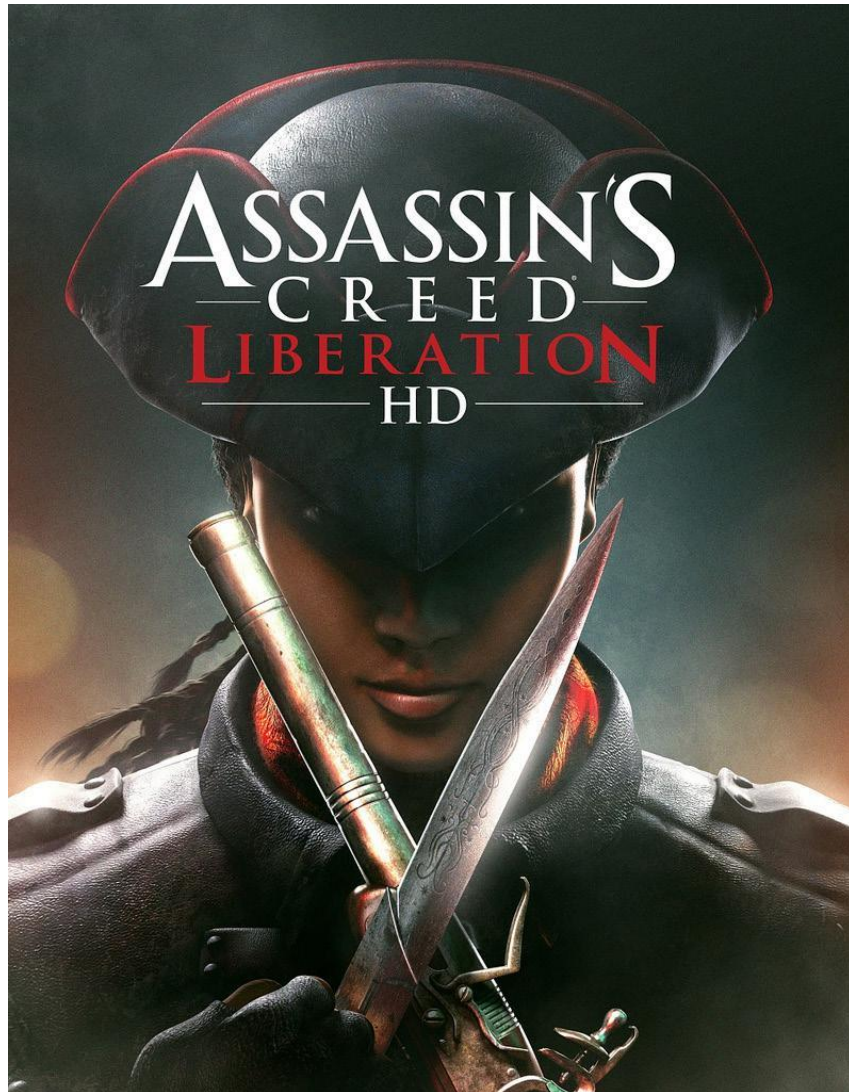
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Assassin's Creed III: Liberation

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

Subject Content: Media Industries
Focus Area: Audiences, Media Contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

• *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation,* part of the very successful games franchise, was developed by Ubisoft and released on October 30 2012, along with *Assassin's Creed III*.

• 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).

• *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* offers familiar pleasures to existing fans (narrative situation of the Assassins v the Templars, open world gameplay etc.) along with new elements to target a wider audience (e.g. the use of a strong female protagonist).

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 and Political Contexts:

Video games are culturally and financially significant across three major territories (Japan, Europe and the USA). The release of new gaming **technology** (PS Vita is considered part of the 8th generation of game 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.

Consider processes of production, distribution and circulation:

• The game was **released** on the Sony hand held device PlayStation Vita. It was developed by Ubisoft and released alongside *Assassin's Creed III* on the PlayStation 3.

• This **simultaneous release** might be discussed in terms of an attempt to have maximum impact on the three **major markets** for console and video game release (Japan, North America and Europe).

• In terms of **production** the game was 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:

• The ways in which the PS Vita was attempting to tap into the increasing success 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).

• The game itself 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.

It is significant that 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).

• In terms of **distribution** these versions of the game could be purchased over the internet using such outlets as Steam, the Playstation Network or Xbox Live Arcade.

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).

• The game was **classified** 18 by PEGI and this in itself may be a good area for discussion.

Consider the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on global production, distribution and circulation:

• It is significant that the *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* **hand held game** could be linked to the full PS3 **console version** of the game (owning both versions would unlock additional game content). This use of **convergence** is relevant in terms of promotion/marketing and circulation.

• The **internet/Wi-Fi functionality** of the PS Vita allows users opportunities to download additional content (DLC) such as weapons, characters and "skins" or outfits.

It also affords users the chance to engage in **multiplayer versions** of the game. These features promote gamer engagement and identification with the game.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

A level only:
Regulation – Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt

• Consider the impact of **convergence** and **diversification** in media on regulatory practices. New technology (in this case the convergent PS Vita with access to internet etc.) 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?
    »» Should individuals be expected to develop 'media literacy' and make informed decisions for themselves?

Cultural Industries – David Hesmondhalgh:

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

• The game is part of an established **franchise** with a large **fan-base**. Producers are clearly attempting to harness the popularity of this franchise to encourage **sales** both of the game itself and the hand-held device the PS Vita.

• The video game industry offers many comparable examples of attempts to use **software** (games) to sell **hardware** (games systems and platforms).

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

Social and Cultural Contexts:
Considering video games in relation to **gender issues** may be a useful way to explore 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. This game has a **female protagonist** and it may be useful to consider whether she subverts or reinforces expectations of female characters in games and how audiences may **respond** to this.

Consider how producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences:
There are many aspects of the game that are significant in relation to audience **targeting** and **construction**:
  »» The game is for a **hand held device**. This may imply it is aimed at a more casual or mobile gamer (a discussion here about "on the go" gamers playing mobile games versus traditional console and PC gamers may be useful).
  »» The game features a female protagonist. This is unusual in the franchise and may be considered in terms of **appealing to a different demographic** (possibly linked to the "on the go" gamers discussion above). The existence of a female protagonist may also be discussed in terms of constructing audiences by asking whether this game might offer a platform for female gamer identification.

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

• The game is linked to a more traditional **console** version and which was simultaneously released with this game. This might be considered as an attempt to draw gamers from different **platforms** to purchase additional hardware and adopt new gaming habits.

• The two versions of the game are also linked in terms of **downloadable content and special features**. This relates to changing patterns of **consumption**. 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.

Consider theoretical perspectives:
Media effects – Albert Bandura

• The game 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 game? 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 *Assassin's Creed* **franchise** has a strong, well developed **fan-base** that could be researched and discussed in relation to Jenkins' ideas.

Late Night Woman's Hour
- BBC Radio 4 podcast
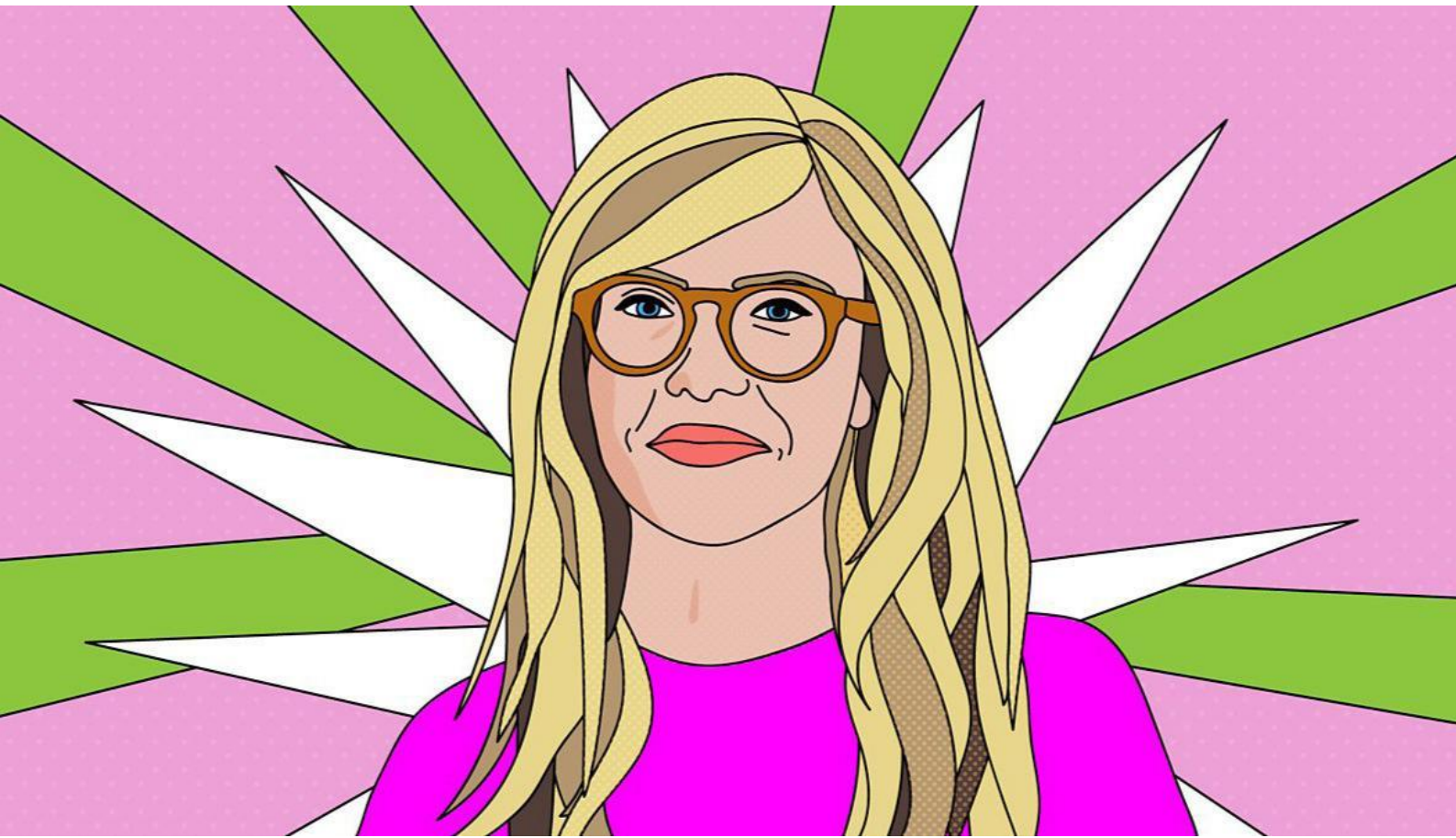
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Focus areas:
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PRODUCT CONTEXT

• *Late Night Woman's Hour* is a **spin-off** from the long-running BBC Radio 4 daily **magazine** programme, **Woman's Hour**. It began broadcasting in 2015 on a limited basis but was so popular that it began a permanent run as a monthly, then in 2018, a weekly podcast.

• *Late Night Woman's Hour* is recorded weekly, hosted by Emma Barnett (occasionally with founder Lauren Laverne) and features female guests from a range of backgrounds including science, health and entertainment.

• Each episode focuses on a particular theme relevant to its female audience e.g. 'Lost Friends' and 'Extreme Breastfeeding'. The original broadcast was at 11pm on Thursday nights, which meant explicit and honest discussions could be had. Since becoming a podcast, the show has been less controversial.

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 reflects possible **tokenism** (a show set aside for women might imply all other radio content was oriented towards men). *Late Night Woman's Hour* features frank and open discussions and demonstrates societal shifts and increased gender equality although some of the issues raised reflect the fact that society is not yet completely equal.

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

• Explore issues relating to **public service broadcasting** and consider the extent to which *Late Night Woman's Hour* meets the BBC remit to **inform, educate and entertain**. Consider whether the broadcast is typical of products created for the BBC and explore the hallmarks of productions made for this institution.

• Consider the significance of **license fee** funding and compare this to the financial considerations of commercial radio e.g. would this podcast be too "niche" for commercial radio? The broadcast has only female contributors, is made up predominantly of unadorned dialogue (without music, sound effects etc.) and the topic is explored using intellectual and **specialised vocabulary**. Learners might discuss why purely **commercial** institutions would be less likely to produce similar products.

• How significant is the move from broadcast to podcast? What could this tell us about the changes in the media forms the BBC is producing and the way they distribute them?

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

• The **podcast** offers 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 brief history of radio before the mid-1990s should allow learners to appreciate the significance of podcasting and listening to broadcasts on digitally **convergent** platforms such as computers and smartphones.

• In November 2018, the BBC launched its BBC Sounds 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, phones.

• *Late Night Woman's Hour* used to have an 11pm broadcast time that was suitable for the adult discussions taking place. The switch to weekly podcast gives the producers more time to discuss a greater range of issues, but the topics and discussion are less explicit. Episodes can be any length, usually 10-30 minutes.

• Podcasts have soared in popularity in the past few years, with many - such as *Serial* - becoming cultural events in their own right. **Minority groups** who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream radio have used podcasts
> to **find a voice**, and producers have utilised the lack of regulation to discuss controversial issues, especially personal or sexual matters.

• Female-produced podcasts such as *The High Low* and *The Broad Experience* not only explore issues affecting women in society, they also attract high profile guests that rival those of traditional radio. Comedy podcast *Dope Queens* even had Michelle Obama as a guest!

• BBC Radio, whilst being a **traditional media institution**, does not treat these independent podcasts as **competition.** Rather they build a **symbiotic** relationship with the presenters, often inviting them to guest on BBC Radio programmes (Radio 1, 4 and 6 particularly do this). This could be seen as an example of **cross-media convergence**.

• A good example of this is regular *LNWH* guest Chidera Eggerue, who writes and presents *The Slumflower* blog and podcast. Controversial comments she made about race and feminism were re-tweeted and shared across **social media**, creating debate and promoting the 'edgy and candid' **brand identity** of both *The Slumflower* and *LNWH*.

Consider how media producers maintain varieties of audiences:

• The current presenter is Emma Barnett, a journalist and broadcaster, who also presents the BBC Radio 5 Live late morning show. She also writes the 'Tough Love' **'agony aunt'** advice column in the Sunday Times Magazine, where she explores extremes of peoples' personal lives. Her style therefore is light-hearted yet unafraid to explore emotionally sensitive issues. This suits the *LNWM* format.

• Barnett took over from founding presenter Lauren Laverne, who was renowned for bringing controversial, adult and explicit

content to the *Woman's Hour* brand, which previously had a 'safe' reputation.

• The podcast format - available without age restrictions or post-watershed scheduling - may have needed a less controversial host.

• The topics are not strictly based around female experiences. Though topics like 'extreme breast-feeding' are female-centric, other discussions about grief, male/female friendships and modern slavery offer a **female perspective** on issues that would also interest male listeners.

Consider theoretical approaches:
Power and media industries - Curran and Seaton

• It could be argued that *Late Night Woman's Hour* challenges the idea that 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. Candidates might explore the extent to which the license fee frees BBC producers from the pressure
> to generate profit and the way in which this impacts the content of their broadcasts.

• *Late Night Woman's Hour* podcast format might also be used to support Curran and Seaton's idea that **socially diverse patterns of ownership** help create conditions for varied and adventurous productions.

• Candidates might consider the proliferation of podcasts across a wide range of topics and genres in recent years. Do 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

• As a PSB, the BBC has quite 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'**.

• The original *LNWH* was broadcast at 11pm on Radio 4, where shocking discussions and swearing were acceptable. The podcast version
> is somewhat 'safer' and less controversial, whilst having uncompromising and honest discussion.

• This seems to **challenge** 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.

• The sacking of Radio 2 DJ Danny Baker in May 2019 after an inappropriate tweet shows how strictly the BBC regulates their content.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

Social and cultural contexts:

A gendered discussion of the podcast is likely to benefit from some context regarding the **changing roles of women** in the UK over the past 70 years. *Woman's Hour* was originally broadcast in the 1940s and candidates might 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 present day). What about the changes to **a male's role** in society and their representation in the media? Candidates may use this information to consider 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 roster of female presenters across it's radio channels, some people have questioned the relevance of a show just dedicated to women, and then having a 'late night' spin-off. The impact of the **#MeToo** campaign and 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'.

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

• Candidates might consider a **male response** to the content of the show. They might consider how many other media texts are composed of only female members (even Loose Women, for instance, has male guests) and how this might be unsettling or alienating for male listeners. They might compare this to a **female audience** and question whether or not this same gender composition might be appealing to some female audiences.

• Explore responses to *Late Night Woman's Hour* on Twitter and other **social media platforms.** *The Spectator* described the initial response to the show as a "twitter storm" and candidates might discuss the ways in which the broadcast has been designed to invite audience members to enter the discussion through social media platforms.

• The topics in the podcast tend to be more focused on personal experiences, some serious (e.g. 'taking your child to work') some more light-hearted (e.g. 'objects you just can't throw away') compared to the broadcast version. This may be intended to create discussion on social media.

• Candidates could conduct some **audience research** into male and female responses to the podcast - what do male audiences find interesting (or not)? Does it make a difference if the guests are all women?

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

• A return to the remit of **PSB** here could invite discussion about the BBC and attempts to produce content for all audience **demographics**. Candidates might ask whether the broadcast has been designed to explicitly appeal to a **specialised** (educated, female) audience as part of the remit of the organisation itself. An extension of this discussion might explore whether there are any other media products that appeal to this specific target audience on the radio (BBC or otherwise).

• In 2014 the BBC famously introduced a ban on all-male TV and radio panels to offset this dominance. Candidates might use this as a discussion point to consider preferred readings of *Late Night Woman's Hour* and why it might be particularly welcome to some audiences.

Consider theoretical approaches:

Reception theory - Stuart Hall

• Discuss possible different readings of the broadcast. What is the **intended** meaning? What might be a **negotiated** meaning (e.g. from a male audience member)? What might be an **oppositiona**l response (e.g. from a sexist male listener)?

Feminist theory - Van Zoonen

- To what extent does *LNWH* achieve Van Zoonen's suggestion that **gender stereotype**s 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 conservative middle class. Bell Hooks has written about how women of lower class or different ethnicity are even more oppressed by **patriarchy.** To what extent does *LNWH* challenge this by featuring guests and issues that reflect the **diversity** in the female audience? Think about regular guests Chidera Eggerue and Ambreen Razia.