



Updated indicative content

Assessment Materials, Sample Set 1

This document contains new mark scheme indicative content for some of the questions in the Assessment Materials Sample Set 1 where the Close Study Projects (CSPs) have since been replaced.

Paper 1

Original question 3

To what extent can Michael Jackson's Billie Jean video be seen as an example of intertextuality?

New indicative content:

Ghost Town

In applying their knowledge and understanding of intertextuality, students may refer to:

- References to social realism – location shooting, natural lighting, handheld, mobile camera, urban setting of tower blocks, deserted, deprived city, connoting social issues.
- Crime iconography of the 'gang' travelling through threatening locations (towering buildings, underpasses) – to a job?
- Horror film conventions through lighting and sound (the 'screams' and eerie melody). Extreme low angle and claustrophobic shots.
- A film noir aesthetic is constructed through low key, chiaroscuro lighting, city setting, canted angled shots and atmosphere of paranoia.
- Responses may argue that Ghost Town is characteristic of the music video form – the band performs the song over images which provide a literal interpretation of the lyrics – rather than being intertextual.

Original question 4

Steve Neale argues that the appeal of genres is that they are 'instances of repetition and difference'.

How valid is Neale's claim?

In your response, you should refer to your music video close study products, Billie Jean and Letter to the Free.

New indicative content:

Old Town Road and Ghost Town

Elements of familiarity evident in the CSPs, suggesting the validity of Neale's claim that similarity is part of the appeal to audiences:

- Average length of a music video 4 minutes – evident in Ghost Town.
- Certain visual and technical codes of media language – types of shots (close ups, canted angles, overhead shots etc) and editing (changing pace, cuts in time to the rhythm of the music etc) – are conventional to the music video and evident in these examples.
- Both are examples of the sub-genre of performance videos – this can be seen as an enduring pattern of music video which links to the use of recognisable stars in media products.

Elements of difference are evident in the CSP music videos, suggesting the validity of Neale's claim that difference is part of the appeal to the audience:

- Rather than conforming to the standard duration, the Old Town Road video exists in various forms from 2 minutes to just over 5 minutes.
- Ghost Town uses a realist aesthetic to construct a political commentary on Thatcherism which is in contrast to the connotations of glamour and marketing more often associated with music videos.
- Similarly, Old Town Road inserts an analysis of race in the US into the country music genre – challenging the form and content of the genre.
- Both videos make reference to traditional music video forms – the performance and narrative music video – to convey political and social messages, supporting Neale's argument that genres evolve.
- The cinematic style of Old Town Road in aesthetic and subject matter can be seen as a development in the form – a difference in Neale's terms.
- Both videos attempt to construct a new type of relationship with the audience for music video – demanding an active viewer who will engage with the issues presented.
- Responses may refer to the way audiences receive the videos in the context of repetition and difference eg reading Old Town Road as a conventional music video relying on star performance or as a political commentary on African American history and contemporary experience – that a music video can do both is explained through repetition and difference.
- Responses may consider that music videos are evidence of a form which relies on repetition – music, performance, visual and editing techniques, purpose etc to suggest that some genre forms change very little.
- Neale's central thesis that repetition and difference lead to genres changing over time could be questioned through the clear similarities between the two videos, despite the difference in periods of production.

Original question 6

Explain the influence of economic factors on the production and content of newspapers. In your response, you should refer to your Close Study Products The i and The Daily Mail.

New indicative content:

(Note: content relating to The Daily Mail is already in the existing mark scheme)

The Guardian

- The Guardian targets readers through progressive, left-wing coverage which is a unique selling point within a right wing dominated market in the UK.
- The Guardian is unique in British newspaper publishing because it is owned by a Trust rather than a commercial media company. Because the only shareholder is a Trust, profits are reinvested rather than paid in dividends.
- The Guardian has a commitment to uphold the values of its Trust – honesty, integrity, courage, fairness and a sense of duty to the reader and to the community – which suggest it isn't just driven by economic factors.

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- Declining sales across the newspaper sector affect The Guardian's production, responses to this would include the move to multiple platforms, subscription models, redesign of the newspaper.
- Campaigns for justice – such as coverage of the Windrush scandal and their work on the Panama Papers leaks – are a selling point and part of the construction of the brand.
- It is unusual in not introducing a pay wall – but does have a range of memberships, subscription packages etc. to increase income.
- The Guardian brand is exploited globally with the launch of Guardian US and Guardian Australia.

Paper 2

Original question 2

According to reception theory, 'the media attempts to transmit specific messages to audiences, but audiences are free to interpret these messages in a variety of ways – or even reject them'.

How valid are reception theory's claims about audience responses?

You should refer to the CSPs Oh Comely and Men's Health in your answer.

New indicative content:

GQ magazine

- Preferred, encoded reading is the celebration of individuality and diversity across men's fashion, art, careers and personal life.
- Preferred – or negotiated – reading might shift the focus to an interpretation based on the importance of appearance and how that confers status.
- The preferred reading overlaps with a particular representation of masculinity as subverting traditional gender roles – emphasis on the fluidity of masculinity.
- There may be a conflict between the producer's intention and reader response to the glamorised images constructed – seeing them as an impossible goal.
- Influence of audience's situated culture on readings – including gender, age, lifestyle, etc- in interpreting readings, which may lead to rejection or acceptance.
- Role of magazine in promoting a particular view of masculinity which is relatively alternative within the wider context of mainstream media – how influential can these messages be?
- Responses may evaluate the whether the media is likely to alter or merely reinforce ideologies of the reader.

The Gentlewoman

- Preferred, encoded reading is of female empowerment linked to the arts, creativity and fashion based on the importance of the intellect rather than appearance.
- Resistance from the audience is likely to be found in a rejection of assumptions about social class, niche aspect of the representations based on income and lifestyle.
- Negotiated readings may come through the audience's agreement with feminist approach of the magazine but resist its focus on niche, culturally privileged demographics.
- The Gentlewoman's content focus suggests the need for cultural capital – responses may discuss whether or not an audience can resist or negotiate a reading that isn't clearly available to them.
- Representations of femininity can be read as natural, challenging the women's magazine industry's standards of beauty, or merely a different ideal of feminine beauty.
- Mode of address assumes sympathy for the subjects covered (environmental issues, women in sport etc) and students may discuss the extent to which it is possible to have meaningful resistance to this and still consume the magazine.

Original question 3

'Television dramas reflect the social and cultural contexts of their production'.

To what extent does an analysis of your television Close Study Products support this view?

New indicative content:

The Responder

- The representation of the main character draws on stereotypical characteristics of masculinity – to what extent does this reflect social and cultural contexts?
- The representation of the police force as corrupt could be defined as realism or a genre convention.
- The focus on the family draws on a range of contemporary issues around divorce and care for older people.
- The drama is situated in Liverpool using real locations and issues facing the contemporary city.
- The victimisation of women which is central to the plot can be viewed as a realistic reflection of society and/or voyeuristic.
- The marketing of the series focused on its realism in terms of representation of contemporary Britain as a selling point.

Lupin

- Focus of the representation is on Paris as a multi racial, multi ethnic city, setting it up in contrast to more conventional representations.
- The narrative focus draws on references to France's past as a colonial power and the continuing effect of that on contemporary French culture.
- The crime narrative is used to explore social and cultural contexts – an attempt to right past wrongs.
- The almost magical powers demonstrated by Lupin are in contrast to the reflective aspects of the programme.
- The representation of the family reflects recognisable issues but within a fantastical framework.
- The narrative developments in the series are often unrealistic and draw on conventions of a fairy tale – rather than reflecting social and cultural contexts.

Original question 4

To what extent have digitally convergent media platforms had an impact on the production, distribution and consumption of media products?

Refer to The Voice and Teen Vogue to support your answer.

New indicative content:

(Note: content relating to The Voice is already in the existing mark scheme)

(Note: the content below relating to Taylor Swift is for exams from 2025 onwards)

Taylor Swift

- Digitally convergent media platforms have changed how media companies and audiences control representations and revenue in the media industry.
- Taylor Swift's dominance across social media platforms is in part made possible by convergence – through the re-posting of repeated images and content across social media platforms (eg official website, TikTok, Instagram).
- Convergence across digital media platforms increases opportunities for revenue in the media industry – selling tickets, product, merchandising etc across platforms.
- Posts can be shaped to address the different audiences targeted by different platforms, enabling a greater reach for the artist.
- Convergence in digital media has been central to the creation of a new type of pop star icon as it balances corporate, official representations with a range of more alternative and diverse versions of the persona.
- Digital convergence allows for ease of sharing posts across a range of platforms, encouraging viral posts (examples would include both the official content advertising Taylor Swift's Super Bowl appearance but also viral memes speculating on her relationships and content of conversations with friends etc).
- The increased presence of celebrities across convergent media can provoke a backlash due to overexposure (an apparent factor in Taylor Swift's decline in popularity in 2017).
- Consumption of content on social media is less controlled by producers than content in traditional media – audiences are able to change the meaning of content and repost in a way not possible in traditional media. This may have a range of consequences for audiences and the star.
- The possibility of audience interactivity has been increased by digitally convergent media – the extent to which this validates theories of active audiences can be evaluated.
- Media effects theories may be evaluated through the effects of consumption on audiences – something that 'Swifties' have discussed in positive and negative ways.
- Digital media convergence allows (to a greater or lesser extent) audience interactivity and the changing relationship between audience and producer (examples would include fan TikToks, Instagram posts and memes).