



## Notice of changes

Question 3 in these Sample Assessment Materials has been revised to reflect the change, made early in 2024, to replace the Close Study Product *Zendaya* with the Close Study Product *Taylor Swift*. **This change will only apply to exams from 2025 onwards.** All other questions apply to exams from 2024 onwards.

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# A-LEVEL MEDIA STUDIES 7572/2

MEDIA TWO (FIRST EXAM IN 2024)

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Mark scheme

v1.3

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

### Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

### Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

When deciding upon a mark in the level, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives and be careful not to over or under reward a particular skill.

Qu	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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01		Assessment objectives – AO2 1  Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media studies to analyse media products through the use of academic theories. (9 marks)	9
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Level	Mark range	Description
3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent and judicious application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source.</li> <li>Excellent, detailed and accurate use of feminist ideas to analyse the unseen source.</li> <li>Analysis is detailed and critically engages with nuanced aspects of male gaze and post-feminism in the advert.</li> <li>Consistently appropriate and effective use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>
2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some satisfactory application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source though this may, in places, be more descriptive than analytical.</li> <li>Satisfactory, generally accurate use of feminist ideas to analyse the unseen source.</li> <li>Analysis is generally sound and engages with the straightforward aspects of male gaze and post-feminism in the advert – answers in this band may not attempt to consider all the ideas.</li> <li>Occasional appropriate use of subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the unseen source.</li> <li>Minimal, if any, use of feminist ideas to analyse the unseen source.</li> <li>Analysis contains multiple inaccuracies or irrelevant points and is almost always descriptive.</li> <li>Minimal, if any, use of subject specific terminology</li> </ul>
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing worthy of credit.</li> </ul>

**Indicative content:**

This question assesses the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of representation to analyse media products, particularly focusing on feminism.

In the analysis of the advert for the television series, *Empire*, students are expected to apply the key feminist ideas of the male gaze and post feminism to the product. Both of these ideas address the changing representation of gender in the media.

Answers in the higher bands are likely to deal critically with the ideas in the question whereas answers in the lower bands are likely to only offer examples from the product.

The content below isn't prescriptive and all valid points should be credited. It isn't expected that responses will include all of the points listed.

In their analysis students should consider:

- how feminism and post-feminism has sought to analyse media representations in terms of inequalities between gender
- the theory of the male gaze argues that that representations position audiences as male
- the male gaze results in images of women as passive objects
- post-feminism focuses on issues of empowerment and independence which may have been misunderstood or side-lined by feminist approaches
- post-feminist analysis tends to see possibilities for independence through consumer culture, fashion, sexuality.

In their analysis of the *Empire* advert, students may discuss:

- the woman as object of the male gaze, coded for sexuality and valued for her appearance (the revealing dress to show parts of her body)
- that the female character refuses the male gaze, looking directly at the viewer, challenging assumptions about objectification
- the female character can be read through post-feminist theories – she is a powerful woman, taking on male characteristics. The image has regal connotations of hierarchy and power
- she is a personification of post-feminist theories of power – women no longer need to challenge patriarchal structures but compete within them
- ideas of intersectionality could also be included here – representation of a powerful, Black woman.

The representation of the male character could also be considered:

- situated behind the woman, the male character takes on a position of subservience
- no evidence of the male character taking up the spectator's gaze and transferring it to the woman (as in the male gaze).

Accept any other valid analytical responses. Answers must link to the feminist ideas in the question.

Qu	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks
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**NOTE: Please note that the indicative content for Q2 only focuses on *The Responder* and *Lupin* because these are the two new television Close Study Projects (CSPs) for 2024 exams and we want to show the type of ideas that could be raised in relation to them. The question can, of course, be equally answered with reference to the other television CSPs.**

02		Assessment Objectives – AO1 1b, AO2 2 and AO2 3  Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework of media. (10 marks)  Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate academic theories (10 marks)</li> <li>• make judgements and draw conclusions. (5 marks)</li> </ul>	25												
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level</th> <th>Mark range</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>21–25</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through critical engagement with the nuanced aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> <li>• Excellent, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory's claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is insightful, thorough and critically informed.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions regarding the validity of cultivation theory's claims are perceptive and fully supported with detailed reference to specific aspects of the set television products.</li> <li>• Consistent highly appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>16–20</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through some engagement with the nuanced aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> <li>• Good, accurate application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory's claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is logical and informed.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions regarding the validity of cultivation theory's claims are logical and well supported with reference to relevant aspects of the set television products.</li> <li>• Frequent appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>11–15</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through engagement with generally obvious or straightforward aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Level	Mark range	Description	5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through critical engagement with the nuanced aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> <li>• Excellent, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory's claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is insightful, thorough and critically informed.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions regarding the validity of cultivation theory's claims are perceptive and fully supported with detailed reference to specific aspects of the set television products.</li> <li>• Consistent highly appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>	4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through some engagement with the nuanced aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> <li>• Good, accurate application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory's claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is logical and informed.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions regarding the validity of cultivation theory's claims are logical and well supported with reference to relevant aspects of the set television products.</li> <li>• Frequent appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>	3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through engagement with generally obvious or straightforward aspects of the claims and how audiences respond.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory, generally accurate application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory’s claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is reasonable and straightforward, although there may be a tendency to apply rather than evaluate cultivation theory’s claims.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions regarding the validity of cultivation theory’s claim are sensible and supported with some appropriate reference to relevant aspects of the set television products.</li> <li>• Generally appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic understanding of the theoretical framework of media that is demonstrated through engagement with more straightforward aspects of the claims and how audiences respond, this is likely to be limited.</li> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory’s claims though there is likely to be a lack of clarity or relevance.</li> <li>• There may be a tendency to simply describe features of the set product rather than evaluate the theory.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions are not developed and only partially supported by reference to the set television products.</li> <li>• Occasional appropriate use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal, if any, understanding of the theoretical framework of media that engages with minimal aspects of the claims or only focuses on how media products shape response in a simple way.</li> <li>• Minimal, if any application of knowledge and understanding to evaluate cultivation theory’s claims.</li> <li>• Evaluation is absent and description is minimal.</li> <li>• Judgements and conclusions drawn are superficial, generalised and lacking supporting evidence from the set television products</li> <li>• Minimal use of subject specific terminology throughout.</li> </ul>
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing worthy of credit.</li> </ul>

**Indicative content:**

This is an extended response question. In order to achieve the highest marks, a response must construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning, which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

This question assesses understanding of theories of audience, specifically cultivation theory, particularly focusing on (though not limited to):

- the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response
- how audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same media in different ways
- how audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital
- the way in which different audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.



The following suggests a range of possible responses. Answers are not expected to cover all the points and credit should be given to alternative, valid answers.

Responses which fail to address both CSPs should not be awarded marks above the top of Level 3 (15 marks).

The key areas that students would be expected to refer to in evaluating the validity of cultivation theory include:

- the idea television is responsible for shaping, or ‘cultivating’ viewers’ conceptions of social reality
- that the combined effect of massive television exposure by viewers over time subtly shapes the perception of social reality for individuals and, ultimately, for our culture as a whole
- the media cultivates attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, a way of binding the culture together
- concept of mainstreaming, the idea that the media cultivates middle-of-the-road political perspectives
- concepts of ‘first order’ and second order effects
- distinctions between heavy and light viewers
- concept of resonance, the intensified effect on the audience when what people see on television is what they have experienced in life.

In considering the validity of these claims, responses are like to focus on the following arguments:

- cultivation theory is a more valid way of looking at the long term effects of the media on society, beyond the claims of the effects debates
- the cumulative aspect of the theory places it in a wider social context of viewership than other theories might
- there are issues around the unknowable nature of audience response, may reference some of the social research done by the original theorists of cultivation theory
- changing media landscape and changing patterns of audience consumption need to be taken into account in evaluating the validity of the theory
- assumes a great deal of power for the media in shaping attitudes, which might not be justified.
- More recent approaches, such as reception theory, see the audience as more active and able to distinguish between representation and reality.

In evaluating the validity of the theory through reference to the television CSPs, students might consider:

### *The Responder*

- *The Responder* constructs a world which seems to be filled with crime and misery, including violence, drug dealing and addiction. This is exacerbated by the borderline corruption of the police who therefore cannot be considered a source of reassurance.
- The central character’s personal life features mental health issues, marriage break down and a mother with dementia, adding to the sense of pessimism about the world.
- However, it could be argued that the representation of some of these issues, such as mental health and dementia, are a positive sign of a more open society.
- Television has always dealt with difficult issues and it could be argued that it is an important part of the way a culture responds and understands these.

- The use of a social realist aesthetic is intended to convince the audience of the authenticity of what they're watching, particularly important in terms of resonance.
- The genre conventions and recognisable motifs of the crime series mean that the audience understand the representation as constructed for suspense and to provoke a response.
- The more expressive aspects of the aesthetic foreground the programme as a construction, not a reflection of reality.

### *Lupin*

- The representation of the Black central character can be read as a more progressive construction than the reality of the debate around ethnicity in contemporary France – challenging the focus on negative effects found in cultivation theory.
- The representation of the family subverts conceptions of the nuclear structure, seeing the contemporary, blended, complicated unit as a more stable framework than the traditional model which is seen as corrupt, presenting a more positive view of the future.
- The intertextual aspects of the programme, particularly its literary references, draws attention to its construction, allowing the audience to receive it as a media text, not a simple reflection of reality.
- Pleasures of the aesthetic and the complex narrative structure reinforce the constructed nature of the programme.
- While the focus on crime might reinforce a 'mean world' reading, this is countered by the clear divide between morally good and bad characters which suggests amore reassuring world.
- *Lupin* can be read as a way of discussing French colonial history through metaphor – assuming an active audience able to decipher complex ideas.

Qu	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks												
03		<p>Assessment objectives – AO2 1 and AO2 3</p> <p>Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to analyse media products, including in relation to their contexts. (15 marks)</p> <p>Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions. (10 marks)</p>	25												
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2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic analysis of the products that is undeveloped and tends towards description of the influence of economic and political contexts on the products.</li> <li>• Basic application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the online, social and participatory products.</li> <li>• Basic judgements and conclusions that are only partially supported by reference to the products. Few links to contexts that may not always be relevant or are undeveloped.</li> <li>• Little appropriate use of subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal analysis that contains multiple inaccuracies or irrelevant points and is almost always descriptive.</li> <li>• Minimal application of knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to analyse the online, social and participatory products.</li> <li>• Limited judgements and conclusions that lack reasoning and are unsupported by examples.</li> <li>• Minimal, if any, use of subject specific terminology.</li> </ul>
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing worthy of credit.</li> </ul>

**Indicative content:**

This question assesses students' ability to analyse online, social and participatory media products in relation to their contexts and the extent to which those contexts are reflected in media products.

Answers are likely to refer to:

- how developing technologies affect media language
- the way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies
- processes of production, distribution and circulation by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context
- the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production, distribution and circulation
- the relationship of recent technological change and media production, distribution and circulation
- the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification
- the significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products
- the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and circulation, including individual producers
- the role of regulation in global production, distribution and circulation.

This question requires students to engage with the way in which media products reflect the political and economic contexts of their production.

There is no requirement to argue that media products reflect the political and economic contexts of their production (although that would be a valid response); students might equally argue they only do to a certain extent or that they do not reflect the political and economic contexts of their production at all. Various conclusions are acceptable, provided they are substantiated through analysis of the set products.

The following suggests a range of possible responses. Answers aren't expected to cover all the points and credit should be given to alternative, valid answers.

Responses which fail to address both CSPs should not be awarded marks above the top of Level 3 (15 marks).

In evaluating the question in relation to the specific CSPs, responses might refer to the following:

Taylor Swift's social media presence:

Points which support the assertion:

- Taylor Swift's social media is characteristic of the branding of contemporary celebrity as part of the wider economic and media landscape – the marketing of an individual
- the focus on social media is indicative of the declining influence of print media in celebrity culture
- developments in technology have shaped the design and consumption of the social media.
- Multiple opportunities for the collecting of data from the audience is characteristic of current media economic contexts
- interactive nature of the social media fulfils the economic need for widespread, viral marketing
- Taylor Swift's construction as a celebrity can be read from a political perspective, for example foregrounding her subversion of traditional gender representations
- • The social media platforms exist in part to sell merchandise and tickets – central to the economic survival of the celebrity.

Points that challenge the assertion:

- the construction of celebrity transcends specific contexts – the desire to elevate individuals as special and different has been evident since the beginning of mass media
- it could be argued that the political aspects of Taylor Swift's social media construction – representations of empowerment and progressive values – transcends the more populist political contexts in which it exists.

*The Voice*

Points that support the assertion:

- *The Voice* is shaped by political contexts as they affect their target audience – discrimination, institutional racism, economic inequality etc
- it could be argued that *The Voice* is also shaped by economic contexts through a main stream coverage of celebrity culture, fashion and sport – required to attract a mainstream audience
- the shift from print newspaper to online edition is characteristic of the way economic contexts have shaped the industry as a whole
- opportunities for audience interactivity as an attempt to develop brand loyalty and the opportunity to collect data – essential aspect of the contemporary economic context

- *The Voice* is characteristic of economic contexts which have led to a decline in distribution of print media – its daily newspaper is now a monthly edition.

Points which challenge the assertion:

- in an economic context of global media conglomerates, *The Voice* is unusual as it is still owned by an independent company
- *The Voice* has a very limited multi-media presence in a period characterised by synergy and convergence
- the representation of political issues challenges the hegemony of coverage in other media outlets, particularly around institutions
- *The Voice* is aimed at a niche audience in a period of global media targeting of mass audiences
- despite declining sales, the continued publication of the print edition of *The Voice* suggests that there is still an audience despite the economic contexts.

Qu	Part	Marking guidance	Total marks															
04		<p>Assessment objectives – AO1 1a, AO1 1b and AO2 3</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework of media. (5 marks)</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of the theoretical framework of media. (10 marks)</p> <p>Apply knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework of media to make judgements and draw conclusions. (10 marks)</p>	25															
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**Indicative content:**

Responses are required to make judgements and draw conclusions about the extent to which producers have targeted audiences through representations. They should refer to the video game CSPs to support their points.

Responses in the higher bands will clearly engage with the ‘to what extent’ element of the argument and will support their points with effective reference to the CSPs. Responses in the middle band will show some engagement with this element of the question and use examples in a straightforward way to support conclusions. Responses in the lower bands may not engage with this element of the question, may not draw conclusions that are substantiated by reference to the CSPs, or may simply describe aspects of representation, audience and/or the set products.

There is no requirement to argue that audiences are targeted through representations (although that would be a valid response); students might equally argue it is only true to a certain extent. Various conclusions are acceptable, provided they are substantiated through reference to the set products.

As a synoptic question, the knowledge and understanding and judgement of the products should also allow students to draw on material from across the framework and media contexts. Responses in the higher bands must draw together elements across the course of study to inform their analysis and judgements (responses do not have to refer to all four areas of the theoretical framework and contexts of the media but should draw from a range of elements from across the course).

This question assesses knowledge and understanding of the theoretical frameworks of audience and industries, particularly focusing on (though not limited to):

**Language:**

- how the different modes and language associated with different media forms communicate multiple meanings
- how the combination of elements of media language influence meaning
- the way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies.



**Representations:**

- the processes which lead media producers to make choices about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups
- how audiences respond to and interpret media representations
- the impact of industry contexts on the choices media producers make about how to represent events, issues, individuals and social groups.

**Industries:**

- how media organisations maintain, including through marketing, varieties of audiences nationally and globally
- how processes of production, distribution and circulation shape media products
- the effect of individual producers on media industries.

**Audiences:**

- how audiences are grouped and categorised by media industries, including by age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste
- how media producers target, attract, reach, address and potentially construct audiences
- how media industries target audiences through the content and appeal of media products and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and circulated
- how specialised audiences can be reached
- how media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting
- how audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and cultural capital.

Responses which fail to address both CSPs should not be awarded marks above the top of Level 3 (15 marks).

The CSPs can be used to discuss the way producers target audiences through changing representations. Some points relevant to all CSPs:

Points that support the assertion:

- Responses are likely to take on the implied assumption of the question, that the CSPs are reflective of progressive, often female friendly representations which will attract a female audience who have been side-lined in the industry.
- The implied assumption of the question is that there is a link between representation and audience through processes of identification.
- Part of an industry response to sexism within the gaming industry which can be linked to changing representations.
- Different types of institutions can be linked to different representations suggesting that they are used as part of industry targeting.
- Theories of representation can be applied to argue that audiences respond positively to recognising themselves in media.

Points that challenge the assertion:

- Responses may challenge the assumption about audiences for games through empirical evidence – arguing that there isn't a direct correlation between audience and groups represented.
- Responses may argue that representation is only one aspect of audience targeting and question the extent to which these change in any fundamental ways.

- Response may argue that other factors, such as the effect of changing technology on game play, introduction of new features etc, has an equal or greater effect in targeting audiences.

### ***The Sims FreePlay***

- Construction of representations is through mise-en-scene, costumes, props etc which can be analysed to provide evidence for the argument about representation and how this is linked to audience.
- Semiotics, particularly denotation, connotation and myth can be used to analyse the representations.
- Concept of targeting can be analysed through narratology and the link to representation: the way in which goals in the game link to stages of development in family, friendship etc which are applicable to the audience.
- *Sims Freeplay* has foregrounded the inclusion of groups (race, sexuality etc) which have been absent or marginalised in games in the past, suggesting that producers do change representation to target audiences.
- The nature of the gameplay, with the focus on constructing an avatar which can evolve, suggests that the ability to change representations is central to the appeal of the game.
- Representations in *The Sims FreePlay* can be read in the context of gender categories in the industry and audience – move by producers to make games appealing beyond the stereotypical young male audience.

### ***Horizon Forbidden West***

- Construction of representations is through mise-en-scene, costumes, props etc which can be analysed to provide evidence for the argument about representation and how this is linked to audience.
- Semiotics, particularly denotation, connotation and myth can be used to analyse the representations – particularly in how the setting of the post-apocalyptic United States is used.
- The use of technology to create a more realistic representation of the diverse characters can be seen as a selling point of the game.
- The focus on Aloy, a female hunter, as the central character can be read as an attempt to appeal to a female audience who may identify with this character, but issues around representation and objectification would complicate the argument.
- While the protagonist is female, the third-person perspective and open world structure allows a looser relationship between audience and representation, allowing for a variety of identificatory positions.
- The controversial aspects of representations in the game, particularly around ethnicity and culture, suggests some of the issues companies face in attempting to target audiences through representations.