

Teaching guide: paper one

This is an overview of GCSE Media Studies Paper One. It outlines the types of questions students can be asked, which areas of the theoretical framework should be covered and a breakdown of the Close Study Products (CSPs). This resource should be considered alongside the latest copy of the specification, the Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMs) and any other past papers, depending upon availability.

Overview

Media One covers all four areas of the theoretical framework and is divided into two sections; Section A – (Media Language and Media Representations) and Section B (Media Industries and Media Audiences). The paper will include at least one unseen source and will ask about some of the Close Study Products (CSPs). Since the AO weighting is more towards knowledge and understanding in this paper, students should expect a slight bias towards questions that focus on knowledge of the theoretical framework and contexts of media, although analysis will also be tested in several questions. Some questions assessing AO1 focus specifically on the theoretical framework while others focus on the contexts of the media. The extended response question will assess both AO1 and AO2.

Students should be taught to ‘decode’ the questions in order to identify which assessment objectives a particular question is focusing on and what an examiner will be looking for. The mark schemes included within the SAMs are very clear about which aspects of the framework specific questions assess.

Questions beginning with ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘state’ or ‘explain’ will require students to meet AO1 and will involve demonstration of detailed knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework and/or contexts of production in order to access the higher mark levels. Answers should focus on presentation of that knowledge and understanding in a clear, unambiguous manner which may refer to specific products or broader aspects of the theoretical framework and/or the contexts of the media.

Questions beginning with ‘analyse’, ‘to what extent’ or ‘how’ will generally require students to meet AO2 and will usually involve application of the theoretical framework and contexts of the media to particular products in a critical and consistent manner in order to access the higher mark levels. It is also crucial that students are encouraged to use specialist media terminology correctly throughout the paper, to access these levels. Students should refer directly and in detail to the product, theory, context or element of the framework outlined in the question.

Question types

Questions will require responses of a variety of lengths, including multiple choice as well as short-response, medium-response and one extended response. The extended response question will be marked on quality of written response as well as content. Students should be encouraged to respond to any of the media forms using any of the question types.

Multiple-choice questions will be worth low tariff marks and will require students to demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical framework, either within the context of a particular media product (either unseen or CSP) or based on an area covered by the theoretical framework. Question 01 in the SAMs demonstrates the typical form for this type of question.

Short-response answer questions will usually require students to demonstrate knowledge of one specific feature of a product (either unseen or CSP) or of a particular element from within one of the areas covered by the theoretical framework. They will require either single-sentence or brief statement answers (students should make sure they are clear on the slightly different demands of different question formats). Such questions will normally be worth one mark per element (so a question identifying two elements would be worth two marks). Questions 04.1 and 06 in the SAMs demonstrate two possible structures for this form of question.

Medium-response answer questions are the most prevalent on the paper and will usually require students to present detailed responses focusing on particular products (unseen, CSP or both), elements of the theoretical framework or elements drawn from the contexts of media. The focus of these will vary depending upon the section of the paper, but may refer to application of particular theories to products, or to a more general area relating to particular media forms. Questions will be worth between 6 and 12 marks and will assess either AO1 or AO2. Questions 02, 03, 04.2, 04.3, 05, 07 and 08 in the SAMs provide a range of examples. Note that (within the SAMs) question 04.3 assesses only knowledge and understanding of the contexts of the media while questions 04.2, 06, 07 and 08 assess only knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework.

The extended response question, which will usually be the last question on the paper, assesses AO1 and AO2. In particular, it is the only question on this paper which assess drawing judgements and coming to conclusions. Students should be encouraged to present a clear, sustained and well-supported argument. The question will generally be based on a statement or assertion, which the student will be encouraged to discuss. Students should be aware that since the bulk of the marks are based on AO2, they do not have to agree with the assertion or statement. They must present a compelling argument backed up by their broader knowledge of audience and industry as well as their knowledge and understanding of the relevant media form(s)/CSP(s) and their associated contexts. Prompts will be given, based on both of the products and students will need to refer to these within their answers since this is a requirement of the question. See below for more information about the possible content of this question. This question will be marked out of 20. Question 09 in the SAMs demonstrates the possible structure of this task.

Section A – Media language and Media representations

Questions in this section can test **any two** of the following forms:

- magazines
- advertising and marketing
- newspapers
- online, social and participatory media and video games.

Unseen products may be featured in this section.

There are likely to be five questions in this section, mainly medium-form answer questions. Questions will focus on a range of products (mainly CSPs) from within two of the four forms identified above. Questions will either focus on media language or media representations, although there may be some crossover.

Section B – Media audiences and Media industries

Questions in this section can test **any two** of the following forms:

- radio
- music video
- newspapers
- online, social and participatory media and video games
- film (industries only).

Unseen products will not be featured in this section.

There are likely to be four questions – one short-form answer question, two medium-form answer questions focusing on one of the forms (one covering audience, the other industry) and an extended response question. Questions will focus on products (mainly CSPs) from within two of the four forms identified above.

The extended response question is likely to cover both media industries and media audiences (unless the focus is film), and will probably require discussion of at least two products from one of the identified forms as well as require a broader knowledge of the products' source industry. As noted above, this question will require students to make judgements and draw conclusions.

Newspapers and online, social and participatory media and video games feature in both Section A and Section B. Students may be asked questions on the same media form in both sections; it is vital that, when CSPs are being studied, students understand on which sections of the paper (and indeed which paper) they are likely to encounter particular forms.