



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

January 2003

GCE

Media Studies

Unit MED6

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Unit 6: Comparative Critical Analysis

Introduction

In this synoptic unit candidates must demonstrate their understanding of the connections between the different elements of the specification. In order to do this candidates will be expected to produce evidence of their attainment of the broad objectives of the specification – critical autonomy and media literacy – through the comparative analysis of texts. They will be required to analyse, explain and account for the similarities and differences between media texts. To do this satisfactorily candidates will need to:

- (i) demonstrate their critical reading abilities using the Key Concepts
- (ii) draw upon their knowledge of major ideas, theories, debates and information
- (iii) use their knowledge of a range of relevant contextual factors.

The aim of this unit, is to provide candidates with the opportunity to draw together, and make connections between, the different elements of their course of study. This will be necessary in order to achieve the required depth of analysis demanded by this module, and in order to explain and account for the similarities and differences between media texts.

This unit is assessed through the following Assessment Objectives:

- A01** demonstrate knowledge and application of the Key Concepts employed within Media Studies and the evaluation of texts and ideas using the Key Concepts
- A02** demonstrate knowledge and application of the wider contexts (historical, social, political, economic) relevant to Media Studies
- A03i** demonstrate knowledge, application and evaluation of major ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media
- A03ii** demonstrate the ability to analyse critically and comparatively a range of texts to determine and account for their similarities and differences

The weighting for these assessment objectives is as follows:

A01	5%
A02	2½%
A03i	2½%
A03ii	5%%

These weightings are reflected in this mark scheme and should be borne in mind when marking candidates' scripts.

The categories which follow are those which candidates are asked to consider on the examination paper.

- **Media language**
- **Genre**
- **Narrative**
- **Representation/ideology**
- **Audience/institution**
- **Relevant contexts**

These might include:

- the **institutional** context of production of the two texts. Each targets the audience differently and operates within and is defined by this context. This difference in context is a key factor for the target audiences and impacts on their very different production values, media language, generic conventions, ideologies and audience expectations
- audience responses to each edition – and how they may have changed
- the **representations** employed in each edition
- contrasts in ideology between the two texts relating to form and function
- exploitation of genre expectations
- the expectations that the texts establish about the audience
- the **ideological position** signified by each edition. Each edition locates its ideological position explicitly
- historical context for local and national newspapers
- social agenda defined by each text
- form and function in relation to each text

- **Relevant ideas, theories, debates and information**

Candidates might be expected to draw upon their wider knowledge of:

- **Segmentation** e.g. debates regarding how audiences are created and addressed by institutions; interpellation; audience identification
- **Discourse & address** e.g. typical conventions and their parody; use of images; use of headlines; production values; institutional codes; audience expectations and targeting; distribution and marketing
- **Narrative** narrative theory; different methods of constructing narrative; implicit values; enigma codes etc.
- **Institution** codes and conventions for tabloid newspapers; contrasts between local and national newspapers; creation and exploitation of target markets; each text as exemplification of its institution

- **Elaborating and accounting for similarities and differences**

The **elaboration** of similarities and differences should inform candidates' discussions of most of the previous categories. Points of **similarity** are likely to revolve around the use of the typical codes and conventions for tabloid newspapers. **Differences** are likely to centre upon the obvious differences in content despite this similarity in form. **The Sun** has defined its own position within the genre of tabloid newspapers, defining and exploiting its own particular codes and conventions within the genre of national tabloid newspaper. It remains secure within its own, clearly established, ideological position now. **The Wiltshire Times** is a local newspaper yet attempts to employ the codes and conventions of national tabloid newspapers, to try and create a particular identity within its local market. There is a conflict between this attempt to operate as a national tabloid and its identity as a local newspaper, reporting on local issues. The audience for **The Sun** and **The Wiltshire Times** may overlap but the audience for **The Wiltshire Times** may be seen as older, more traditional and possibly more affluent.

Any **accounting** for similarities and difference should be fully rewarded – answers which move beyond simplistic local/national newspaper comparisons should be rewarded more highly, as should those which are aware of the exploitation of the genre. Relevant areas here are issues of form and function, layout, production values, representations employed and ideologies established, the different appeal of each newspaper for their audience; mode of address and generic conventions; wider context and social expectations implicit in the two texts (representational and ideological features of each one); audience expectations of and responses to the texts, each within its local or national context and the cultural capital embodied in the texts. Both depend to some degree on audience identification. Unless the audience are competent with the institution and mode of address, they would find it difficult to engage with the texts.

Scripts must be marked in conjunction with the grade descriptors.

Valid points not listed above must be credited.

General marking criteria**Level 6 51 – 60 marks**

At this level, candidates will show a sophisticated identification of the similarities and differences between the two texts showing a very clear understanding of the form and function of the different materials. There is evidence of a very good synoptic ability (drawing together concepts, arguments, ideas, theories and information from different parts of the specification) in making effective textual readings and comparisons based on a comprehensive understanding and application of all relevant Key Concepts.

Candidates will make good use of their learning at AS and A2 levels in responding to the texts, with sophisticated knowledge and application of the wider contexts relevant to the materials. There will also be very good evidence of critical autonomy - the ability to make individual judgements informed by relevant ideas, theories and information.

Overall, at this level, there should be a well structured and engaged debate, supported by confident and detailed reference to the texts with a fluent and mature writing style.

Level 5 41 – 50 marks

At this level there will be good identification of similarities and differences between the two texts and a clear understanding of the form and function of the different materials offered. The candidate is able to make some comparisons across the full range of material offered and there will be evidence of a good synoptic ability (drawing together concepts, arguments, ideas, theories and information from different parts of the specification) in making effective textual readings and comparisons. This will be supported by good understanding and application of relevant Key Concepts, using these Key Concepts to directly underpin the evaluation.

There will be evidence of good knowledge and application of the wider contexts relevant to the materials and a good sense of critical autonomy – the ability to make individual judgements informed by relevant ideas, theories and information.

The answer makes detailed reference to the texts to support the debate and engages well with the materials with clear and reasonably fluent expression.

Level 4 31 – 40 marks

At this level there will be a sound identification of similarities and differences between the different texts and a sound understanding of the relationship between the different texts. There will be some evidence of synoptic ability (drawing together concepts, arguments, ideas, theories and information from different parts of the specification) in making effective textual readings and comparisons, although these may not be fully developed. There will be some evidence of understanding and application of most relevant Key Concepts and the evaluation will make use of these Key Concepts.

There will be some knowledge and application of the wider contexts relevant to the texts and a reasonable sense of critical autonomy – candidates will probably offer some valid opinions, which may be individual but are equally valid if justified. The analysis is likely to be methodical in approach to analysis but may lack a critical edge. There will be a sense of detailed comparison although candidates may concentrate on some parts of the texts to the exclusion of others.

The candidate will have a clear written style in which technical errors do not obscure meaning.

Level 3 21 – 30 marks

At level 3 there will be some identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. The answer will show some understanding of the different materials and understanding of the relationship between them. There will be some limited evidence of synoptic ability when making textual comparisons. This may be sketchy and limited but is present. There will be evidence of understanding and application of some relevant Key Concepts, though these may sometimes be implicit. There should be some evaluation which makes reference to the Key Concepts.

A knowledge and application of wider contexts may be implicit although not explored in any depth. Textual references may be descriptive or insufficiently detailed. Some sound arguments will be presented though they may not be sustained and there may be some irrelevance.

Straightforward ideas will be expressed clearly, if not fluently. There may be errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling but these will not obscure meaning.

Level 2 11 – 20 marks

The candidate is able to identify the basis for comparison of the two texts to some degree. There is weak evidence of synoptic ability in making textual comparisons, which may be confined to descriptive and simplistic points. There will be little evidence of synoptic ability in accounting for similarities and differences however there will be a basic understanding of some Key Concepts. References to texts will lack detail. Some irrelevant and inaccurate detail may be included.

Some comment will be included – more than just narrative and description, and there should be some discussion of ideas but this will be simplistic. The written style will be generally clear though technical errors and faulty syntax may sometimes obscure meaning.

Level 1 0 – 10 marks

Although there may be some points to credit here, the overall standard of the answer will fall below the threshold to move into Level 2. Such answers may be primarily descriptive or may fail to engage with the materials clearly or give little sense of identification of similarities and differences between the materials.**Assessment Grid**

Level	A01	A02	A03i	A03ii
	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the Key Concepts employed within Media Studies and the evaluation of texts and ideas using the Key Concepts</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the wider contexts (historical, social, political, economic) relevant to Media Studies</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge, application and evaluation of major ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media</i>	<i>Demonstrate the ability to analyse critically and comparatively a range of texts to determine and account for their similarities and differences</i>
6 51-60 marks	Sophisticated understanding of the media language used in these texts. Detailed analysis of the texts with good illustration and exemplification. Confident conceptual exploration. Confident use of appropriate terminology. Confident and evident understanding of Key Concepts.	Very good synoptic ability, drawing on a wide range of contextual references. Evident ability to draw out form and function of each text. Clear awareness of the institutional issues relating to these texts. Evident awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis.	Consistent ability to analyse texts in relation to ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media. Evident understanding of these texts as print products.	Sophisticated identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Confident critical voice and clear evidence of critical autonomy and engagement with the texts in response. Evident ability to identify target audience(s) for the texts and evaluate them in relation to audience, form and function. Balanced analysis with wide ranging focus on all stimulus materials.
5 41-50 marks	Good understanding of the media language used in these texts. Reasonably detailed analysis of the texts with good illustration and exemplification. Appropriate conceptual exploration. Competent use of appropriate terminology. Confident and evident understanding of Key Concepts.	Good synoptic ability, drawing on a reasonably wide range of contextual references. Clear ability to draw out form and function of each text. Good awareness of institutional issues relating to these texts. Awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis.	Consistent ability to analyse texts in relation to ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media. Understanding of these texts as print products.	Good identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Identifiable critical voice and clear evidence of critical autonomy and engagement with the texts in response. Clear ability to identify target audience(s) for the texts and evaluate them in relation to audience, form and function. Balanced analysis with focus on all stimulus materials.

Level	A01	A02	A03i	A03ii
	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the Key Concepts employed within Media Studies and the evaluation of texts and ideas using the Key Concepts</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the wider contexts (historical, social, political, economic) relevant to Media Studies</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge, application and evaluation of major ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media</i>	<i>Demonstrate the ability to analyse critically and comparatively a range of texts to determine and account for their similarities and differences</i>
4 31-40 marks	Secure understanding of the media language used in these texts. Reasonably detailed analysis of the texts with appropriate examples and use of detail. Conceptual exploration undertaken. Reasonable use of appropriate terminology. Appropriate use and understanding of Key Concepts.	Secure synoptic ability, drawing on contextual references. Ability to draw out form and function of each text. Secure awareness of institutional issues relating to these texts. Reasonable awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis.	Analysis of texts in relation to ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media. Awareness of these texts as print products.	Appropriate identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Emerging critical voice with some evidence of critical autonomy and engagement with the texts in response. Sound ability to identify target audience(s) for the texts and evaluate them in relation to audience, form and function. Some analysis with reference to all stimulus materials.
3 21-30 marks	Some understanding of the media language used in these texts. Basic analysis of the texts with little use of illustration and examples. Simplistic conceptual exploration but evidence of conceptual understanding. Basic use of appropriate terminology. Some understanding of Key Concepts.	Some synoptic ability, drawing on some contextual references. Some attempt to draw out form and function of each text. Some awareness of institutional issues relating to these texts. Some awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis.	Some attempt to analyse texts in relation to some ideas, theories, debates and/or information relevant to the study of contemporary media. Some awareness of these texts as print products.	Basic identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Basic evidence of critical autonomy and engagement with the texts in response. Identifies target audience(s) for the texts and evaluates them with some mention of audience/form/function.

Level	A01	A02	A03i	A03ii
	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the Key Concepts employed within Media Studies and the evaluation of texts and ideas using the Key Concepts</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge and application of the wider contexts (historical, social, political, economic) relevant to Media Studies</i>	<i>Demonstrate knowledge, application and evaluation of major ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media</i>	<i>Demonstrate the ability to analyse critically and comparatively a range of texts to determine and account for their similarities and differences</i>
2 11-20 marks	Limited understanding of the media language used in these texts. Limited analysis of the texts with few illustrations or examples – tendency to description evident. Limited conceptual exploration or developed argument. Limited use of appropriate terminology. Simplistic or unclear understanding of Key Concepts.	Weak synoptic ability, maybe drawing on limited contextual reference. Largely unable to draw out form and function of each text. Limited awareness of institutional issues relating to these texts. Implicit basic awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis, although this may not be directly explored.	Limited ability to analyse texts in relation to ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media. Limited understanding of these texts as print products.	Limited identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Limited attempt at critical autonomy and engagement with texts in response. Identifies target audience for text(s).
1 0-10 marks	Little relevant understanding of the media language used in these texts. Describes texts without analysis. Little use of appropriate terminology and response falls below A2 expectations for understanding of Key Concepts.	Response does not move beyond texts provided. Very little or no sense of institutional context for these texts. Very little awareness of generic and cultural modes of comparison for these texts and how this impacts on textual analysis.	Little or no evidence of analysis in relation to ideas, theories, debates and information relevant to the study of contemporary media.	Little if any identification of similarities and differences between the two texts. Little, if any, sense of critical autonomy or critical voice. Limited awareness of target audience for texts.