

Teacher Resource Bank

A-level Communication and Culture

COMM1: Exemplar Script June 2011

Candidate 5 – Grade A





General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
June 2011

Communication and Culture COMM1

Unit 1 Understanding Communication and Culture

Friday 20 May 2011 9.00 am to 10.45 am

You will need no other materials.

Time allowed

- 1 hour 45 minutes

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes at the top of this page.
- Answer **all** questions.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided. Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- This paper tests:
 - your ability to communicate in the register of the subject
 - your understanding of concepts and debates in Communication and Culture.

For Examiner's Use	
(71)	
Examiner's Initials	
Question	Mark
1	c 18
2	a 18
4 3	s 18
4	q 17
Total	(71)

COMM1



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SA1012/Jun11/COMM1

COMM1

Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.

- 1 Teenagers get attracted to sub-cultural groups for a number of reasons. Which **one** of the following explanations do you find the most convincing and why?

EITHER

- 1 (a) Sub-cultural groups are places where different identities can be explored in a creative way. (20 marks)

OR

- 1 (b) Sub-cultural groups offer a safe haven from the dangers of being an individual. (20 marks)

OR

- 1 (c) Sub-cultural groups are sensitive to contemporary trends in fashion, style and music. (20 marks)

Planning

- define sub-cultures ✓
- (c) ◦ why we join groups ✓
- ✓ ◦ norms, values, ideologies, attitudes shared
- ✓ ◦ how we represent ourselves through fashion style & music
- ✓ ◦ Goffman self identity, acting as a part-persona and our teams.
- ✓ ◦ example, myself as a prep



Write the question part reference in the box provided.

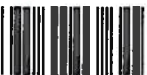
1 C

A subculture is a smaller group within a culture which we choose to belong to - it is usually an informal group with unconsciously ascribed roles to members within it.

We join a group such as a subculture to give us a sense of belonging or well being, as we can identify with those who we share a lot in common with, and look up to common role ~~model~~ models within a subculture. Members all have shared norms, values, beliefs, ideologies and attitudes which act as a common ground, ~~and~~ or a basis for which the subculture is formed and the ways in which these values and ideologies can be represented is through fashion, style and music - subcultures carefully pick their preferences in these as they ~~may~~ serve as a representation of the groups beliefs. Goffman suggested that we act a part in life, and that life itself is a performance. The person who we choose to be, or our persona, is dependant on what traits are valued within the subculture we belong to - and our teams are the people who we act alongside, the company we keep, which contributes to our overall performance.

Question 1 continues on the next page

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Personally, I would say that I belong to a sub-culture often called "preps" or "prepsters". The values and ideologies of my sub-culture revolve around education and social desirability. Preps value their education highly, as most of us conform to the middle class norm of going into higher education. We associate a good education with wealth, and we associate wealth with social elitism.

The ideologies are all conveyed through the styles we favour as a sub-culture. An example of a brand that is popular amongst preps is Jack Wills. Jack Wills can be considered exclusive to the middle class not only because of its expensive price tag, but also because of the lifestyle and set of ideologies the brand sells. Firstly, the brand describes itself as "Peburiously British", which represents how preps value tradition, patriotism, heritage and old money. The brand also describes itself as "university wear" which not only implies the casual style the clothes have, but also encompasses how the aspirations of going into higher education.

Music, also, signifies our group ideologies. Preps tend to listen to a mixture of mainstream pop and indie-rock. The indie-rock genre is highly thought of as ~~the~~ the lyrics generally



tend to convey more meaning. A band preps
 like to be associated with is Vampire Weekend,
 an indie rock band formed of ivy league
 college graduates. Their education sets them
 aside as people preps want to identify
 with, as they act as role models and we
 can look up to. They are also considered
 fairly elite as their lyrics can't ^{be} decoded
 by the majority of people. So all these
 attitudes & values represented by their
 music are all ones which my subculture like
 to associate with.

LL4=

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Turn over ▶



- 2 Self-concept can be defined as the idea we have of ourselves as individuals. Explore **one** of the following statements about self-concept, using examples drawn from your studies and experience.

EITHER

- 2 (a) Our self-concept relies heavily on the feedback we receive from others. (20 marks)

OR

- 2 (b) Our self-concept reflects our levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. (20 marks)

OR

- 2 (c) Our self-concept is significantly affected by our hopes and expectations. (20 marks)

Planning

2a). self concept, why it's good to have high
✓ self esteem

✓ Coorey's looking glass theory

• self maintenance strategies

✓ • non verbal feedback (leakage) indirect

✓ • paralanguage

✓ • proxemic

✓ • non verbal communication



Write the question part reference in the box provided.

2 a

self-concept and the idea that we have of ourselves is important personally as it contributes to our self-esteem, and having high self-esteem is important as it gives an individual confidence.

One way in which we can understand what our self identity is, is through feedback from others. Cooley's looking glass theory encompasses this idea - he suggested that we understand our self identity by looking at how others perceive us; we try to see how we are as an individual by someone else's feedback and then internalise this self image, or try to change it.

There are a number of ways in which we can understand how people perceive us, the majority of which is through non-verbal communication. Whilst having a conversation with someone, things such as proxemics, body language, eye contact, paralanguage, posture and gestures can all signify how the person perceives you. For example, eye contact plays a huge role in feedback - if a person cannot sustain eye contact, it

Question 2 continues on the next page

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usually indicates that the person feels uncomfortable around you, or they are indifferent to what you are saying. Maintained eye contact suggests interest and attention. There are other types of eye contact, such as the enemy's stare, which may come across intense or hostile.

Another example is proxemics, which is how you orientate yourself around your peers - being close to someone whilst in conversation suggests they are comfortable around you, as opposed to distancing yourself from someone.

These are all forms of direct feedback, however they are mainly subconscious, and act as non-verbal leakage.

I have noticed, that sometimes people use what is called self maintenance strategies in order to confirm the self concept they idealise, for example, ~~it~~ on many occasions my choice of clothing has been scrutinised by my parents, but I ignore their opinion and discredit the source, because I form a low opinion on them so I don't value their

feedback. I might then prefer to ask one of my friends how I look as they would be more likely to confirm my self image - this is described as biased attention.



A more common example could be seen in people who smoke - smokers tend to seek company in other people that smoke also, because they know they approve of this area of their self concept - whereas non-smokers usually fervently disagree with this lifestyle choice. This is called selective affiliation.

L4=

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Turn over ▶



Total for this question: 20 marks

- 3** This photograph of a telephone box of traditional design was selected from an internet image bank.



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- 3 (a) Do you consider this image of a telephone box as an open or closed text? Give reasons for your answer.

(4 marks)

A closed text - the telephone box has an obvious meaning, that is use of communication. It has specific connotations too, such as patriotism, Britain, tradition. An open text would indicate that its meaning is open to interpretation, but in this case, a telephone box's preferred reading, which is understood by the significant majority, is that it is a means of communication.

- 3 (b) Choose two signs within the image and explain what each sign both denotes and connotes.

(6 marks)

^{picture of}
The telephone box is an iconic sign of what it actually is - on a connotative level, it is a red telephone box - and it is a high motivation image of a public telephone box as it clearly represents that. It is also an indexical sign of communication - we naturally associate a telephone box with sociability & talking. Finally, it is a symbolic sign of English tradition, patriotism and of heritage; these are all learnt connotations between the object & the reader. The rural scenery is an iconic sign of the English countryside; on a denotative level, it represents the green areas of a town. The connotations of this

Question 3 continues on the next page

Turn over ►



Signs are serenity, peace and nature - which are all indexical signs as they have a natural association.

- 3 (c) This traditional design of a telephone box has been retained in some UK locations because of its cultural significance. Using the concepts of signification and myth, explore the meanings of this traditional design in contemporary culture. (10 marks)

Planning ✓ connotations - other countries associate England with
 ✓ tradition, been around for centuries
 ✓ Our past contributes to our contemporary culture, part of who we are
 • mythological status as ~~they~~ they are rarely used, but ~~at~~ foreigners would assume they're used all the time
 • don't serve us a purpose, just are symbolic

A traditional telephone box holds cultural significance for Britain because of how commonly associated the two are - other countries can immediately associate both, just as we could associate Mexico with sombreros. In our case, a public telephone box holds cultural significance for us because they are so traditional - they have been around for such a long time that they are considered part of our cultural history - which contributes largely to our modern day culture, because it's



part of one's culture. A public telephone box signifies English tradition, which should be valued greatly within a culture.

A traditional public telephone box has achieved some form of mythological status amongst other cultures when they try and identify ours - it is fair to say that phone boxes are rarely used, as in our contemporary culture, the vast majority of the population has access to a mobile phone - however foreigners would assume we use them all the time purely because it stands as such a symbolic sign of our country and heritage, but in reality, they no longer serve us a functional purpose; they are merely retained because of their cultural significance and symbolism of English tradition.

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4

When A-level Communication and Culture was launched in 2008, it was not well received in all quarters. Several newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, questioned the legitimacy of an A-level dealing with popular culture and everyday life. Read the extract from the *Daily Mail*, 26 May 2008, before attempting the task below.

For anyone who spent two years poring over the intricacies of the War of the Spanish Succession to scrape an A-level in foreign history, it may be best to look away now.

You might have felt duty bound in those days to ration the time you spent shopping, listening to pop music or discussing dates.

But there is no such problem for today's teenagers...because they can get a qualification in it.

As part of a controversial A-level in popular culture, pupils will learn about the tradition of kissing in cinemas and ponder such questions as 'is skateboarding better than polo?'

The qualification, being offered by the country's biggest exam board from September, also entails a study of celebrity body images and allows pupils to write about clothes and hairstyles.

One assignment requires them to 'explore the relationships between cinema-going and dating' with the aid of source material like *The Drifters* hit *Kissin' in the Back Row of the Movies*.

Another asks students to describe the cultural significance of their bedrooms and friends.

The A-level in 'communication and culture' is billed by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance as 'excellent preparation' for higher study.

The course spec insists the 'everyday is worthy of study' but critics are concerned it will lack academic rigour.

They also warn it could help schools maintain strong league table positions while sidelining disciplines such as history and English literature.

Task:

How do you respond, as a student of this AS level, to the *Daily Mail's* attack?

(20 marks)

Planning

- high culture is preferred here = standing test of time, high cultural capital
- comm's deals with popular & modern culture as some people consider it worthy of study as it's more relevant.



This article suggests that the source is biased to high culture and elitism - they seem to value subjects which have high cultural capital and that stand the test of time.

The journalist comes across as quite oblivious to the significance popular culture has.

Traditionally, elitists in society decide on what is part of high culture or part of the canon, as proposed by White's gatekeeping model, which in turn helps decide what should be worthy of study, as people who are considered as an elitist are usually university professors or people of high social status and high intellect.

However, one of the key deciding factors in what should go in the canon is standing the test of time - but this makes the canon and most things high culture and fashioned. It is a relevant point that ~~these~~ modern works is the minority in the canon.

As the journalist has quoted in their article "everyday is worthy of study", and to an extent this is true. More modern issues are more culturally relevant to our contemporary society, as they deal with experiences we can relate to, and also

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are more accessible to the majority as they are more easily understood.

An example of high vs. popular culture in terms of whether it is worthy of study, is the work of Charles Dickens compared to Eastenders. Charles Dickens was an 18th century writer, whose work can be seen in the canon, for example, Great Expectations. This work is considered an elite form of literature and is studied across many exam boards, however the issues he deals with are no longer relatable to us as they aren't relevant to our modern society. Eastenders, however deals with ~~the~~ everyday issues that the public can relate to. It even uses the technique of sensationalism, which Dickens used when he wrote for the newspaper - which seems to be a popular and traditional technique of maintaining an audience.

Communications and Culture deals with the studies of everyday life but is focused on the application of the knowledge and theories taught to personal experiences - proving its relevance and more personal value a student would receive from studying it, compared to a subject such as History which tests a student's memory as opposed to



their understanding of the subject.

It is, in this way, that communication and culture can be defined as a different approach to a qualification and serves more relevance in a student's education.

END OF QUESTIONS

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ANSWER IN THE SPACES PROVIDED**



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