



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Level Examination

**COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE**  
**Unit 3 Communicating Culture**

**COMM3**

**Specimen paper for examinations in June 2010 onwards**  
**This question paper uses the [new numbering system](#) and [new AQA answer book](#)**

**For this paper you must have:**

- An AQA 12-page answer book.

**Time allowed**

- 2 hours

**Instructions**

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Examining Body** for this paper is AQA. The **Paper Reference** is COMM3.
- Answer **two** questions: the compulsory question from Section A and one question from Section B.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.

**Information**

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- All questions carry equal marks.
- 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 the following **Assessment Objectives**:
  - your ability to communicate in the register of Communication and Culture (AO1)
  - your understanding of the content and concepts of Communication and Culture (AO2)
  - your ability to apply your knowledge in the context of the questions (AO3).
- The **Cultural Sites** referred to in this paper are:
  - Spaces and Places
  - Fictions
  - Objects of Desire

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**Section A**

Answer the **one** compulsory question from this section.

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**Question 1**

**0 1** Both traditional media and 'new' media such as the internet have made increasing use of user-generated material. This material is contributed by amateurs rather than media professionals and covers every topic imaginable.

Opinion is divided on the implications of this development for contemporary culture. Carefully examine **Argument A** and **Argument B** (opposite) before attempting the task below.

**Task:**

Use your knowledge of theoretical approaches and key concepts to evaluate the contrasting views of user-generated material expressed here. *(40 marks)*

**Section A (continued)**

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**Argument A**

“New technology has seen a massive shift of power from producers to consumers, to such an extent that we can say that consumers *are* the new producers. In the bad old days it needed a massive capital investment to produce, record and distribute music, moving images and even the printed word. Today, cheap and easily available hardware together with the capacity of the internet has given all of us the capacity to be our own music producers, movie makers or newspaper editors.

The creative potential is fantastic and amounts to nothing less than a cultural revolution. It is democratic, liberating and personally fulfilling.”

**Argument B**

“Recent trends towards user-generated material in cultural production may seem to change the balance of power between producer and consumer, but a close look shows this to be an illusion. Look at how the big corporations have moved in. In 2006, Google snapped up YouTube for £850 million, MySpace became part of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation empire in a £295 million deal and Friends Reunited was acquired by ITV for £120 million. Meanwhile other corporations and their lawyers circle around, ready to pounce on infringements of their copyright.

Also, there are few if any filters to help us to interpret user-generated material. Is it real or fake? Is it a genuinely amateur product or cunningly disguised advertising? Is it original or ripped off? It is often impossible to tell. We are adrift in an ocean of information without a compass. The shared experiences on which cultural identity is built are being undermined by the mouse-clicking individual grazing on low quality snippets of user-generated entertainment.”

**Please turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

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**Section B**

Answer **one** question from this section.

The **Cultural Sites** referred to in this section are: Spaces and Places, Fictions and Objects of Desire

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**EITHER****Question 2**

- 0 2** Choose **two** of the three cultural sites. Identify some examples of cultural products and/or cultural practices at the intersection between your two chosen sites. Show how critical theoretical approaches have helped you to understand these examples. *(40 marks)*

**OR****Question 3**

- 0 3** Choose **one** of the three cultural sites. Explain why mode of address is a significant concept in the understanding of this site. *(40 marks)*

**OR****Question 4**

- 0 4** It has been argued that **places and spaces** 'speak' to us in ways which reinforce our cultural identity. Drawing on contrasting examples, critically evaluate this view of places and spaces. *(40 marks)*

**OR****Question 5**

- 0 5** 'The **fictions** and stories of contemporary culture are the most powerful forces in Shaping our identities as cultural beings.'
- Discuss this view of fictions in contemporary culture. *(40 marks)*

**OR****Question 6**

- 0 6** 'The design and marketing of consumer products tells us all we need to know about power relations in contemporary society.'
- Assess this statement using your knowledge of **objects of desire**. *(40 marks)*

**END OF QUESTIONS**