



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

June 2003

GCE

Media Studies

Unit MED1

Copyright © 2003 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

UNIT 1: READING THE MEDIA

This paper asks candidates to employ their knowledge and application of the Key Concepts – most particularly Media Language, Representation and Media Audiences – when analysing a media text. It also suggests that reference could be made to the remaining Key Concepts – Values and Ideology and Media Institutions – whilst also anticipating that an element of evaluation should take place, in terms of the appropriateness, success and effectiveness of the extract.

There is a great deal for candidates to do in the one and a quarter hours of the examination and it is highly unlikely for a candidate to manage every aspect of the analysis and evaluation suggested by the list of sub-topics. Examiners should be aware of this when marking papers and reward candidates for what they have achieved, **not** penalise candidates for what they may have omitted.

It is also important to allow the candidates as much critical autonomy as possible. The point of this examination is to give candidates a springboard for the analysis and evaluation of a media text. While the sub-topics below give the candidates a scaffold upon which to formulate a response, it is also to be hoped that some candidates will have the confidence, and the understanding of the media text being examined, to perhaps explore areas that are both **unpredictable and unexpected**.

It is also important to note that an holistic approach is often utilised by candidates in the higher levels and the scaffolding can on occasions be ignored entirely.

The areas below represent a general guide to the areas suggested in the list of sub-topics, and as such cannot hope to be definitive.

****Please note that the notion of a ‘balanced’ response to the text – utilising all the Key Concepts – has been replaced. Whilst some candidates will tackle all Key Concepts, the likelihood of this happening in a ‘balanced’ fashion in what amounts to 60 minutes writing is unlikely. It is far more likely that candidates will tackle aspects of the text which seem most appropriate and in some cases this may well mean that other Key Concepts seem less well handled.

Please note the instruction above – *examiners should reward candidates for what they have achieved, **not** penalise candidates for what they may have omitted.*

GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Level 6 51 – 60 marks

At Level 6 candidates will have an obvious confidence in their approach to the text. The response will be well structured and contain an organised understanding of the Key Concepts, which will be used in the analysis and evaluation of the text. They may well ignore the scaffolding in the question paper but take their own path towards revealing a clear understanding of the concerns of the question – but they may also engage in a debate, challenging commonly held viewpoints on occasion, using the text as a starting point. There will be a sense of the ambitious and engaged.

The response will be detailed yet avoid the descriptive at the top of the band. Reference to ideas or theories will be made where relevant and useful to the argument being proposed. Level 6 candidates will show clear evidence of critical autonomy.

Level 5 41- 50 marks

Level 5 candidates will show a clear ability to analyse and evaluate the text in question. They will reveal a good understanding of the media Key Concepts, which they will handle well in their reading of the text. Their response will be thorough and detailed but without the confident grasp of Level 6. Their manipulation of the Key Concepts will not be total and in places may well be a little simplistic. However, the textual analysis will be good. Ideas will be experimented with and a sense of the candidate's true voice will be evident. There will be a sense of debate and some reference to media theory where relevant.

Level 4 31 – 40 marks

Candidates at Level 4 will generally speaking show a solid/sound understanding of the media Key Concepts, although some concepts may be treated rather better than others. There will be a sense that the typical Level 4 candidate understands the Key Concepts but not in their entirety and in a rather simplistic way at times.

Analysis and evaluation will be sound but there will be some description and repetition of school based learning rather than an individual grasp of the text. Media terminology will exist but will not always be utilised properly and may sometimes be misplaced. Candidates at this level will tend to look at the text concept by concept.

Level 3 21 – 30 marks

Candidates at this level will display a competent understanding of the media Key Concepts and will probably be better at dealing with Language, Representations and Audience than the other Key Concepts available to them. They will make attempts to analyse and evaluate though this may be rather limited and answers will tend to appear rather broad and unfocused. There will be points of merit made which must be rewarded.

Candidates at this level will frequently work their way through the text from start to finish and will also use phrases taken directly from the question paper. At this level it is often the case that candidates confuse description with analysis.

Level 2 11 – 20 marks

Candidates at this level will have a rudimentary understanding of the media Key Concepts and may be limited to an answer which really only looks at one or two of them in any depth. Analysis and evaluation (if it exists) will be limited and often seem to repeat what has been learnt in the classroom without any real sense of understanding taking place. There may be a lack of relevance and answers may be generalised. There is likely to be a large amount of description with the occasional critique attached.

Level 1 0 – 10 marks

Very limited responses to the question. Candidates may really only understand one or two media Key Concepts, probably quite superficially. Answers will tend to be brief and quite generalised. Some evidence of engagement with the media or the text. There may well be points of merit which must be rewarded, although these may not be placed within a media context.

QUESTION SPECIFIC MARKING DESCRIPTORS:

What follows is some suggested areas that candidates might explore. Experience of previous examinations would suggest that generally speaking most/many will stick to predictable areas but there will also be many candidates who produce the unexpected and the unpredictable.

Thus the descriptors below are really only a guide – examiners will have to remember at all times to mark as positively as possible and bear in mind that if the unexpected is backed up with specific reference to the text then it must be treated accordingly. It is impossible to second-guess every candidate. The list below simply represents some suggested paths and is meant to be helpful when marking. The General Assessment Criteria are your final recourse – and please **do not** think in grades – candidates must be placed in the appropriate level.

MEDIA LANGUAGE**Narrative Structure:**

The sequence chosen concerns the actual lottery ball-picking process. A number of candidates will be familiar with this although one imagines that not too many teenagers actually bother to watch the programme so may well not. (In fact there is a reference by voice over to ‘you 30-somethings’ which seems quite appropriate.)

Propp and Todorov are unlikely to be appropriate here, although candidates may note that the narrative revolves around an ‘enigma’, which balls will be drawn and who will win (although we never really find that out).

We begin with the tail end of a quiz eliminator – the winner moves across the studio to press a button – the jackpot is announced and the balls are released. There is a whirring of machinery as the balls are selected, one by one, to an increasingly strident fanfare. It is all very well choreographed, the pictures in perfect synchronisation with music which is actually quite impressive since it is a live show.

Camerawork, Editing and Mise en scène

The quiz show is predominantly blue (candidates may note how each character is appropriately dressed so as not to clash with the blue hue) but when we move across to the lottery draw the set is awash with yellow. Note the steering wheel that Philip Schofield clasps as he talks to us – he is in the ‘driving seat’ at all times.

There is a great deal of camera movement – the camera is seldom still except when Schofield is addressing us in supportive tones – almost as if he wants to give the money away.

There is a brief (red) title sequence to announce the arrival of the draw. The set is garish – the lottery selectors look like some mad invention – wheels whirring like in a bingo hall. It is all very old fashioned and as far removed from the ‘techno’ age as is possible. The actual draw is made as exciting as possible. The balls are dropped and a shot from the side reveals this. We also have a direct shot of the scoops and then we literally follow a ball as it is selected and dropped into the rack, which contains the winning six balls and the bonus ball.

There are cut-aways – each draw has its own title – the lottery draw has a computer generated brief title sequence bathed in red and there are also subtitles available when our hostess announces the amounts available to win.

Music and other Sound:

There is much applause throughout the sequence although the audience is obediently quiet when Schofield or anyone else is talking. The sequence is also driven by music – the fanfare to announce

the draw and the music during the selection of balls which has ‘stingers’ every time a ball is picked and seems to build to a crescendo throughout the entire procedure.

This is a sequence which has been watched now for several years and of course is familiar and treads a well-worn path. As said before, it is all very well choreographed. (We might wonder how they pick a ball in time to the music so perfectly every time.)

Other points worth noting are:

- the black female presenter whose job is perhaps simply to announce the sums involved (and she stumbles on that)
- the adjudicator who stands to the left – clipboard in hand – does he get paid?
- a sense that the whole show is reminiscent of old quiz/entertainment shows – garish bright lights, cheerful presenters etc.

REPRESENTATION

Gender:

Our host is male, as is the adjudicator – positions of responsibility of course. We have a woman who announces the sums involved and she is black. A woman presses the button. There is a sense of the avuncular from Schofield, authority in the shadows that is the adjudicator in a dark suit and a touch of glamour from the woman presenter.

Celebrity:

Schofield is very much a ‘C class’ celebrity but interestingly one who has never courted publicity. He was a children’s television presenter to start with and has very much a ‘cheerful chappy’ persona – certainly ideal for a show where they want the audience to believe that they love giving money away. In fact the mood of the sequence suggests that they are desperate to give the money away and that Schofield is a very willing participant in this process.

GENRE

Codes and Conventions:

Most of what is written above would suggest that the programme obeys most of the codes and conventions of a quiz/entertainment programme. Live audience, bright lights, cheery host, emphasis on movement (the show really whips along). Certainly, the drawing of the balls is over very quickly although we have had to wait an age for this to happen.

Candidates (especially those who are familiar with a format not historically popular with teenagers) may discuss the set, the conviviality, the nature of the presenter and his or her relationship with the ‘general public’. Many aspects are reminiscent of earlier television quiz shows such as *Beat the Clock* on *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*.

MEDIA AUDIENCE

Target Audience:

This is the section where many candidates often come unstuck since they either start to talk about audiences in terms of their class (often showing little understanding of class) or suggest that whatever the age/sex of the main character is also the age/sex of the audience.

Since it is shown on a Saturday night and that its competitor on ITV is often either *Ant & Dec* or *Blind Date*, the audience will be more likely either the young (pre-teenager) or older adults with children. Also of course people who have bought a ticket (which statistics suggest are the people who can least afford it).

It is likely that the bulk of the audience may be C2s, Ds and Es (who are the main purchasers of lottery tickers). This is reinforced by the nature of the celebrities who have guested in the past, suggesting a middle of the road family audience.

VALUES AND IDEOLOGY

Assumptions about the audience:

It is gaudy and flashy. This programme has had difficulty finding and maintaining an audience, and there have also been questions asked about whether it belongs on BBC. There is something slightly tawdry about the programme and the format is very stale and yet it plods on. Some interesting assumptions may be offered about the people who watch it on television and more about the people who are in the studio audience.

There is a debate to be had here about the nature of greed – is the audience really interested in where the money goes or simply in winning? Also the poorest people in the country are those who buy the most tickets so there is an irony there as well.

Values implicit in the text:

Greed dressed up as charity?

Attempts to make the Lottery a ‘National Institution’?

The nature of the stars and personalities and indeed members of the public that appear on the programme tend to be very ‘B’ or ‘C’ rate.

The Lottery is failing to draw in the punters right now and it is possible that the nature of this programme may well contribute to this.

MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

Some candidates may be able to discuss the nature of PSB and the role of the BBC but this is fairly unlikely. However a discussion may take place about the relationship between the BBC and the Lottery in terms of whether it belongs on a Public Service television station.