



# Examiners' Report Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2021

Pearson BTEC Firsts  
In Creative Digital Media Production (21526e)  
Unit 1: Digital Media Sectors and Audiences.

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## Introduction

This paper was the thirteenth version sat by candidates and this year there were some questions and topics that some candidates found particularly challenging. It is important that centres prepare their learners across the entire unit specification. There were examples in this paper where too many learners appeared to be unfamiliar with concepts such as how regulators oversee media production as well as how products are made within certain sectors (such as audio, for example).

Learners need to be prepared for being able to discern what is being asked by each question and what form the answer should be in. In particular, the command verb (Identify, Explain, Discuss etc.) used indicates the level of complexity of the response required.

The best performance came from learners who had both breadth and depth of their understanding of the subject within the unit.

In the long answer questions learners who were able to give multiple arguments about the subject (or give a creative, structured response in the final question) performed well.

## Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

There were a number of questions that discriminated particularly well with the cohort distributed across all mark traits.

For 'explain' questions there are many learners who fail to link their answers to an explanation, and these lose out on many of the available marks.

In this paper some of the multiple-choice questions proved to be particularly hard especially where they focussed on elements of the specification that perhaps some students had not covered. Learners should be encouraged to revise the full specification with glossaries before taking this examination to give themselves the best chance of accumulating marks.

## Individual Questions

The following section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of popular learner responses and a brief commentary of why the responses gained the marks they did. This section should be considered with the live external assessment and corresponding mark scheme.

### Question 01a

In this question, students had to give two audio products. The majority of students were able to give at least one and this question performed as expected. Many students clearly struggled with the fact that this was asking them about the audio sector. All sectors are covered in this exam and it is important that centres prepare students to answer questions across the range covered in the specification.

This response received 2 marks.

1 A media company produces short films and wants to introduce a range of new audio products to its audience.

(a) Identify **two audio** products that the company could produce. (2)

1 Music

2 Podcasts

Podcasts is certainly an acceptable product and worthy of a mark. Music is more contentious although could relate to a range of audio products, so this is acceptable.

This response received 0 marks.

1 A media company produces short films and wants to introduce a range of new audio products to its audience.

(a) Identify **two audio** products that the company could produce. (2)

1 Camera

2 Actor

Camera is not valid within the audio sector and is a device rather than a product. Actors are relevant to the sector but also not products, so this also receives no marks.

**Question 01b**

For this question, students had to differentiate between pre-production activities and other stages of production within the audio sector. Again, the fact that this was a question about audio may have caused some students to struggle here with many giving post-production or production activities in their answer. Overall, this question performed as expected.

This response received 2 marks.

(b) Give **two** pre-production activities that would be involved in producing **audio** products. (2)

1 ~~Recording~~ Song writing

2 Scripts/ideas/planning for podcasts

Both song-writing and scripting are valid answers for this question so two marks are awarded.

This response received 0 marks.

(b) Give **two** pre-production activities that would be involved in producing **audio** products. (2)

1 editing

2 sound design

Both editing and sound design (the layering, mixing and addition of sound effects to create a soundtrack) are post-production activities so neither receives a mark.

### Question 01c

In this the first multiple choice question on the paper it was evident that many candidates (around two thirds) had not been able to identify the hypodermic needle theory as an example of a passive audience. This question was unusually difficult for an early multiple-choice item in this paper.

Audiences consuming media products is sometimes said to be like injecting people with a hypodermic needle.

(c) Identify the audience theory that this refers to.

(1)

- A Uses and gratifications
- B Active audience
- C Passive audience
- D Primary audience

### Question 01d

Students appeared to struggle with this question as many of them were unable to find a valid benefit of collective enjoyment for the audience themselves. Many gave the more obvious benefit for the producer (which relates to the next question). It is important when taking the exam and answering questions like this that students fully understand the question and assign the benefit to the party as specified in the question.

This response received 2 marks.

(d) The media production company encourages collective enjoyment of its products.

Explain **one** benefit to the **audience** of consuming a media product collectively.

(2)

Collective enjoyment benefits the audience by giving them a subject to discuss/~~the~~ debate. It allows audiences to take in a form their opinions on the ~~product~~ <sup>product</sup> at the same time.

This answer has been given two marks. A question with 'Explain' as the command verb requires two parts. Here the student has given that the collective enjoyment encourages debate (1 mark for identifying the benefit) then the answer goes on to say that this helps the audience member form their opinions (1 further mark for the reason that the initially identified benefit is beneficial to the audience member).

This response received 1 mark.

(d) The media production company encourages collective enjoyment of its products.  
Explain **one** benefit to the **audience** of consuming a media product collectively. (2)

*They all have different feedback and different views viewing points*

This answer gets the mark for identifying the benefit of understanding different viewpoints about the product. No illustration of how or why this is a benefit is in the answer. If the answer said that the user could go on fan sites to discuss (giving the method of the collective enjoyment) they could have received the second mark. If the answer said that the understanding of the different viewpoints enhanced the understanding of the content, they would have been given the second mark as well.

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### Question 01e

This question is the reverse of the previous item and asks students to explain the benefit to the producer. Students were able to perform better in this question as one of the benefits (increased revenue for the producer) was quite obvious. In 'explain' questions like this, in order to receive both marks, students need to link their example to why it is a benefit or how the benefit manifests itself. Many marks are lost in this paper through students not taking care to fully explain their answers in questions with this as a command verb,

This response received 2 marks.

(e) Explain **one** benefit to the **company** of collective consumption of its products.

a larger audience will view it <sup>meaning</sup> ~~meaning~~<sup>(2)</sup>  
it will accumulate more views the people  
that view it could also encourage other ~~the~~  
friends and groups to view it

(Total for Question 1 = 9 marks)

This answer receives two marks for linking the larger audience (one mark for identifying this benefit to the company) with the fact that audience members will encourage each other to consume the product (a further mark for illustrating how the benefit of the larger audience will happen).

This response received 1 mark.

(e) Explain **one** benefit to the **company** of collective consumption of its products.

a benefit to a company if someone collectively consumes  
their product is that they have a higher chance of  
gaining more popularity. <sup>(2)</sup>

(Total for Question 1 = 9 marks)

This response receives one mark. The answer gains the mark for identifying that collective consumption could lead to higher popularity of the product. There is no explanation linking this fact to why it is a benefit (it will lead to more revenue / investment in future production) or how it is a benefit (the collective enjoyment can lead to fan forums and related content).

### Question 02a

This question differentiated well with only the strongest learners able to identify two separate examples of sectors regulated by Ofcom. Many students felt that games and the publishing industry were regulated by this body which was incorrect.

This response received 2 marks.



2 Ofcom regulates parts of the media industry.  
(a) Give **two** examples of media sectors that Ofcom would regulate. (2)

1 television

2 Online articles

Both TV and the online sector are valid answers. Online articles relate to a product but as the name of the sector is present (online) we can award a mark here.

This response received 1 mark.

2 Ofcom regulates parts of the media industry.  
(a) Give **two** examples of media sectors that Ofcom would regulate. (2)

1 Newspaper

2 A radio show

The mark can be given for the answer 'radio show.' Strictly speaking this is not a media sector but as a sector radio would be valid so we can award a mark. Ofcom do not regulate the newspaper sector, so this answer is incorrect.

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### Question 02b

Only a small number of students were able to point to anything other than ensuring children are kept safe from harmful content in this question. Regulation is a feature of both this, and Unit 8 and students should have a clear grasp on the concerns that Ofcom have over media content (privacy, fairness, depiction of criminal activity, bias, technical standards etc.).

This response received 2 marks.

(b) Explain **two** ways that Ofcom regulates media products. (4)

1 provides advice to parents and young teens to prevent them being on harmful sites

2 it stops information being shown being biased. And stops harmful links to be accessed

(Total for Question 2 = 6 marks)

This answer makes a range of points but does not expand any of them fully so can only achieve a maximum of two marks. The learner gives the examples of stopping information being biased, protecting against harmful content and ensuring that content is age appropriate.

This response received 1 mark

(b) Explain **two** ways that Ofcom regulates media products. (4)

1 Ofcom checks over the different media produced then check the age rating to see its in the right age rating.

2 Ofcom also checks the ~~fat~~ views and ratings of each ~~media~~ <sup>movie/series/film</sup> and see if there dropping below what it is ~~to~~ usual and finds solutions to fix the problems

(Total for Question 2 = 6 marks)

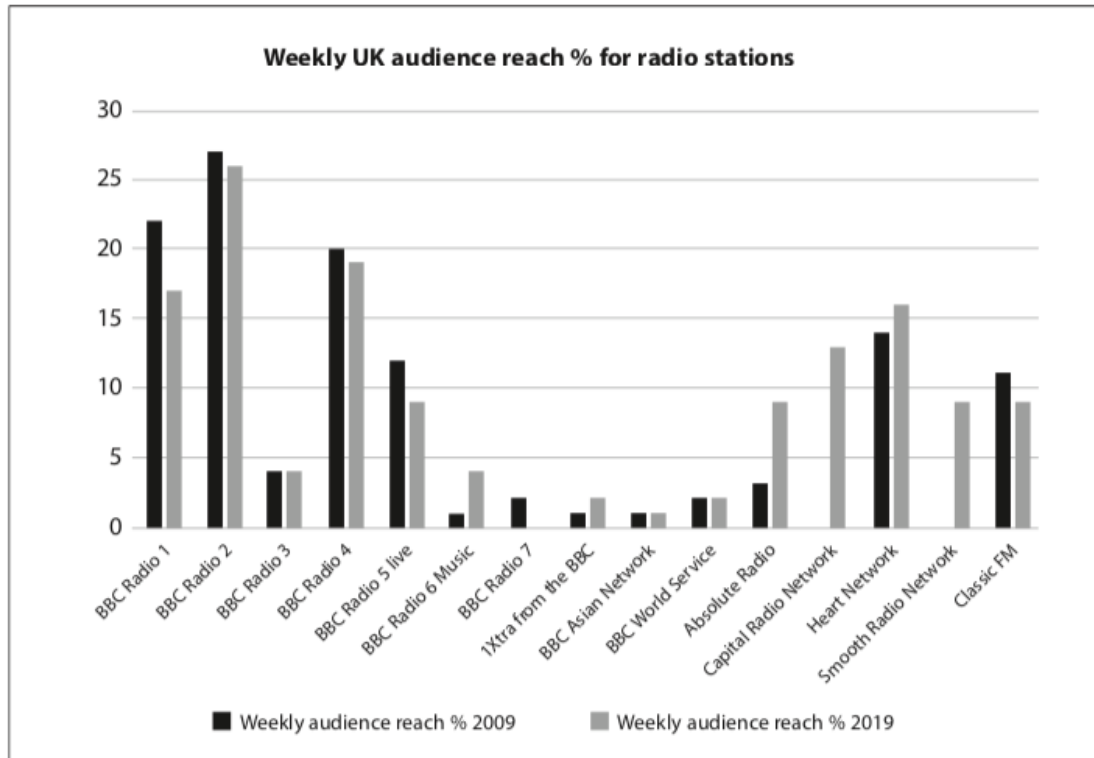
Here, a mark has been awarded for the answer that points to Ofcom checking to make sure content is age appropriate. Ofcom do not give age ratings to media products or services, but they do ensure that children are not harmed by media

products and services. The student receives no marks for their answer about ratings (referring to the popularity of a product).

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**Question 03a**

**3** The following chart shows the trend in percentage of audience reach for radio stations in the UK over 10 years.



Source: RAJAR

(a) Which **one** of the following statements is true?

(1)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b> BBC radio audience reach has decreased for some of its stations
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>B</b> 1Xtra is the only BBC station that has increased its reach
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b> The BBC has fewer competitors in 2019 than in 2009
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>D</b> The BBC has more stations in 2019 than in 2009

In each paper there are generally questions like this one that require students to identify data trends from charts or tables. In this example, the majority of the students were able to identify option A as the correct response.

**Question 03b**

This question differentiated very well across the mark range. Only the strongest students were able to give three distinct considerations related to the website design with many incorrectly discussing the content (rather than the layout and design). Overall, this question performed as expected.

This response received 3 marks.

(b) Radio stations use websites as a way of presenting their live broadcasts.

Identify **three** considerations when designing the **layout and design** of the **website**.

(3)

- 1 The use image
- 2 the use colour
- 3 The use font

Each of these are valid considerations for the layout of the website. These could have been expressed more deftly although the three examples are each separate and valid.

This response received 2 marks.

(b) Radio stations use websites as a way of presenting their live broadcasts.

Identify **three** considerations when designing the **layout and design** of the **website**.

(3)

- 1 What size and font the text will be
- 2 Will images be included
- 3 Will there be a company logo on the website

This response receives two marks. The first is given for the point about font size. The second two points relate to the use of images and so can only be awarded one mark in total.

**Question 03c**

This, the first of the two eight-mark questions performed well with a normal distribution across the mark range. The stronger responses made a range of points (giving a balanced answer in terms of the advantages and disadvantages) and were also well-articulated and argued. Weaker answers tended to give fewer points, with less balance and were less skilfully expressed.

This response received 6 marks

(c) More people listening online has led to more stations being available but each with a smaller audience.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of online media giving more choice while splitting the audience into smaller groups for any media sector.

(8)

The many advantages that come towards the online media giving more choice whilst splitting the audience into smaller groups would be that because most audience have digital gadgets which help access the internet which would mean more people would use it. Another word means that the audiences have more opportunities to be able to listen whenever they can on their earphones whether ~~at work~~ ~~at home~~ they are busy or relaxing at home. ~~also it means that because people are able to access online radio from anywhere it is also more enjoyable for them as they have been given many choices / options to pick from which radio~~

Station they would like to listen to whether it is  
 News  
 BBC radio, Capital Xtra, LBC and etc they have  
 many varieties to choose from. This is also an  
 advantage because if people only had one choice of  
 one radio station then many of the audience  
 wouldn't feel the benefit of watching it because  
 it wouldn't or may possibly not be anything  
 specific from which they can enjoy from.

~~The disadvantages~~

Another advantage ~~could be one~~ for splitting the  
 audience into smaller groups would be that it may  
 help technically because if there is a certain amount  
 of people listening to one radio station but  
 the audiences begin to exceed ~~then~~ it may make  
 the radio slower ~~and more~~ which makes it more  
 difficult for audiences to listen to and they  
 may stop listening to one radio.

The disadvantages that comes towards this would  
 be that many radio companies may have ~~to~~  
 great big losses due to one lack of audience that  
 listen to their radios. This is a disadvantage to  
 them because of the many different radio stations  
 that the media has provided. Some audiences  
 may prefer listening to one radio station



then one other and this could create a huge impact towards the radio stations ~~ones~~ that are not favored by many of the audience

another disadvantage could be that because of the many radio stations given some of the audience may not enjoy them due to cultural related situation meaning if ~~an~~ audience is from a different ethnic <sup>for</sup> ~~example~~ africans they may want to listen to their ~~and~~ cultural music on the online radio but have not been given the opportunity to because the radio station has only provided a specific set of ~~a~~ music genres and topics which make them not want to listen to it and this could create loss.

This answer is quite well argued and wide ranging giving several advantages and disadvantages. The point about the bandwidth for the radio station is perhaps somewhat spurious, although this is generally a well-argued response albeit somewhat rambling. This stays in the middle mark band.



This response received 4 marks.

(c) More people listening online has led to more stations being available but each with a smaller audience.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of online media giving more choice while splitting the audience into smaller groups for any media sector.

(8)

one Advantage of online media giving more choice while splitting the audience into smaller groups, is that the audience is able to listen directly to what they want to listen to rather than waiting. Another advantage is that the media is able to view the choice that a most audience is using and improve the ones that are not being used.

one disadvantage is that, if one choice is being used and the others aint being used as often, they are losing money and also the time the put to create that choice.

hastly, Another disadvantage is that if they have many choices, that also means that they have many groups. this can be hard for them because, they will have to focus on giving the audience / groups what they want.

This response gives a small number of points that are not made in a particularly articulate way. The answer is balanced, giving both advantages and disadvantages but the points are not very well-developed restricting this to the bottom of the middle mark band.

**Question 04a**

This question was mostly answered well by students. There were a surprising number of students who gave 'close up' as the answer even though this had been given in the question stem. Where the word 'other' is emboldened in the question it is important that students know that they have to avoid the example given in the question (as close up was here).

This response received 3 marks.

4 A music video producer is creating a music video with lots of close ups.  
(a) Name **three other** types of framing or angle that could be used in the video. (3)

1 Crane Shot.

2 Wide angle

3 low angle.

This receives all three marks. Low angle and wide angle are valid. Crane shot usually refers to motion, but this is a valid type of shot, also.

This response received 1 mark.

4 A music video producer is creating a music video with lots of close ups.  
(a) Name **three other** types of framing or angle that could be used in the video. (3)

1 birds ~~eye~~ eye views

2 body shot

3 full shot

Only bird's eye view is worthy of a mark (meaning an aerial shot). Body shot and full shot are not recognised shot types.

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### Question 04b

(b) The music video contains a shot where the camera moves left to right between two members of the band.

This is an example of:

(1)

- A tilting
- B zooming
- C panning
- D craning

This was the multiple-choice question in the paper that the candidates found the easiest of the four with around three quarters of the cohort being able to identify panning from the description in the question.

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### Question 04c

Many students found this question difficult with relatively few being able to give two separate ways that the media product could be made to be interactive. Many students gave general stylistic considerations for the producer that were not valid in this context.

This response received 2 marks.

(c) The music video producer wants to make viewing the product an interactive experience for the audience.

Give **two** examples of how a music video could be made interactive.

(2)

- 1 Having audience vote on a certain event in the music video to happen.
- 2 Having different points-of-view to concentrate to whichever bandmate the audience member likes more.

Both of these ideas would be valid interactive features of a music video.

This response received 0 marks.

(c) The music video producer wants to make viewing the product an interactive experience for the audience.

Give **two** examples of how a music video could be made interactive.

(2)

- 1 Have close up shots of the singer/director so it seems as if they are talking to the viewer
- 2 Have them sing into the camera so its more gripping

Both of the suggestions given in this answer are stylistic choices for the director, but neither would be an interactive element.

#### Question 04d

In this question, students were asked to give three primary research methods (other than questionnaires and surveys). Many struggled to name three different methods with the most obvious one already taken in the question stem. The majority of students were able to give one or two separate methods.

This response received 2 marks.

(d) The music video producer has conducted primary research of the fans of the band through questionnaires and online surveys.

Give **three other** primary research methods that the music video producer could have used. (3)

- 1 They could have done a poll to get the opinion on what to do
- 2 They could look at blogs and reviews and see what the audience thinks
- 3 They could ask the audience personally

**(Total for Question 4 = 9 marks)**

The answer receives one mark for a poll. Online poll is in the mark scheme and seen as a distinct primary research method from questionnaire (pointing to longer questions than a poll). The learner gains the second mark through the point about asking the audience. This alludes to interviews which is also a valid primary research method that is distinct to questionnaires and surveys. The learner does not get a mark for looking at blogs and reviews as these are secondary research methods.

This response received 1 mark.

(d) The music video producer has conducted primary research of the fans of the band through questionnaires and online surveys.

Give **three other** primary research methods that the music video producer could have used. (3)

1 Quiz

2 Interview

3 Bar charts / graphics

**(Total for Question 4 = 9 marks)**

This response only gets one mark for the answer 'Interviews.' The other two ideas are invalid. 'Quiz' refers to the surveys and questionnaires given in the question so cannot be awarded a mark. 'Bar charts and graphics are what might be produced following research to present the results but do not count as a primary research method.

**Question 05a**

(a) Desaturated means that the photograph has: (1)

- A** been cropped
- B** been airbrushed
- C** had the contrast adjusted
- D** been made black and white

In this, the final multiple-choice question on the paper, the candidates were required to demonstrate their understanding of the term desaturated. Around two thirds of the cohort chose D correctly.

### Question 05b

There is often a question like this in this paper in which students are required to respond to a poster (or other print stimulus) and explain stylistic codes. In this example the most obvious code (the fact that the poster is black and white or desaturated) had been given so was not allowed for the answer.

Most students can answer this well, although there were still a large group of students who seemed unable to fully explain how the identified stylistic code made meaning for the audience.

This response received 4 marks.

(b) Explain **two other** stylistic codes that are used to create meaning for the audience. (4)

1 The use of lowkey lighting in the image shows audiences the tone the game will take- dark and suspenseful.

2 The angle the photo is taken at shows audiences that your character is small compared to the danger the character will face- it adds a sense of dread and fear for the audience.

This is an excellent response. First the student identifies the low-key lighting for the photograph (a present stylistic code – for one mark), then relates this to the mood of the game (for the second mark). Next the student identifies the angle of the photograph (low angle – another valid stylistic code for a third mark) and relates this to the theme of the game (the playable character perhaps being small compared to other creatures for the fourth mark).



This response received 1 mark.

(b) Explain **two other** stylistic codes that are used to create meaning for the audience. (4)

1 font of the artwork

2 theme of the game must be portrayed on the cover correctly

This response is awarded one mark for identifying the font as a stylistic code in the poster. The rest of the response (while true) does not identify a code and therefore cannot receive a further mark.

**Question 05c**

In this question students were asked about the work of the games regulator PEGI and were asked to provide another function (other than offering advice labelling and age ratings). This proved very difficult for almost all students in the cohort (who would have probably been able to give the labelling and age ratings advice as a function of PEGI).

This response received 1 mark.

(c) Computer games are regulated by Pan European Game Information (PEGI) and in this example the game cover contains a rating and advice labels.

Give **one other** way in which PEGI can ensure that appropriate content is accessed by children. (1)

The pegi PEGI website lets you view games and why they are rated that that

This answer gives the advice that is on the PEGI website about games, this is separate to content advice on games packaging so is valid for one mark.

This response received 0 marks.

(c) Computer games are regulated by Pan European Game Information (PEGI) and in this example the game cover contains a rating and advice labels.

Give **one other** way in which PEGI can ensure that appropriate content is accessed by children.

(1)

That no sexual or explicit content is in the game that is not rated 18.

There are no marks awarded for this answer. The answer refers to the age ratings given to games that is in the question stem.

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### Question 05d

This was the final question and the second eight-mark item on the paper. A large number of students struggled with the concept of representation and perhaps as the context here was games became fixated on the ability of players to customise avatars with costumes, skills and abilities. A significant number of students did not attempt this question at all. It is beneficial for students to attempt all answers as even a basic response here can gain 2, 3 or 4 marks without the student having to complete pages of writing.

This response received 7 marks.

(d) The game producers have had to carefully consider the representation of different characters and groups in this game.

Discuss what issues of representation might be important in the development of a game.

(8)

Representation is incredibly important to add into video games, however it's also important for characters and groups to be represented well and in a respectable way. Research into different cultures that a character represents is a good way to ensure that the character isn't representing a stereotype. It's also incredibly important to show different types of sexualities and identities in games as well. However, game producers need to be careful not to "queerbait" their audience. "Queerbaiting" is when media producers create a character that is LGBT, but will not show/say it outright. This is a way that media producers can show "representation" of LGBT characters and get praise for it. However, this is not good representation, as it's only purpose is to earn praise from audiences and not actually educate or show audiences about the LGBT community. So, when making characters of different races, sexualities and genders, it's important ~~is~~ for game developers to do their ~~research~~ research and represent different groups of people as respectfully as possible.

This response has taken a small number of points but argued them rather well (if a little repetitively). The point about the representation of LGBT characters is quite well made. This argument is strong enough to be moved into the top mark band.

This response received 4 marks.

(d) The game producers have had to carefully consider the representation of different characters and groups in this game.

Discuss what issues of representation might be important in the development of a game.

(8)

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Some characters could be offensive to a certain religion and this could affect the game from what country's you can play it in and to where you can buy it. It's also important because this can affect how the game is seen globally and also affects the buyers view ~~view~~ on it.

Representation is important to stop the game from having sexist or racist ideologies that some people could use or create.

This answer makes the point about the representation of religion and the potential impact on the worldwide reputation of the game. There are few points made here but this is well argued. The answer gets into the bottom of the middle mark band.

## Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, learners should:

- Revise using the terminology in the unit specification and create a glossary so that they understand each element. All parts of the specification are in scope for this examination
- Differentiate between style and content of media products
- Tailor their response based on the command word in the question, e.g. explain will require an expansion of a point, discuss requires looking at both possible points/arguments, evaluation will require some form of conclusion.
- Cover the entire specification in revision and study examples from every media sector.
- Use the number of marks awarded as a guide to the depth of response required.
- Know the different theories and be able to apply them in different contexts
- Have a clear understanding of the different stages of product development as set out in the unit specification
- Have a clear understanding about the difference between media products, devices, formats and platforms as set out in the unit specification

