



Examiners' Report/
Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2020

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Creative Digital Media
Production
Unit 1: Media Representations (31668H)



Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from Pearson, the world's leading learning company. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk for our BTEC qualifications.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

If you have any subject specific questions about this specification that require the help of a subject specialist, you can speak directly to the subject team at Pearson.

Their contact details can be found on this link: www.edexcel.com/teachingservices.

You can also use our online Ask the Expert service at www.edexcel.com/ask. You will need an Edexcel username and password to access this service.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your learners at: www.pearson.com/uk

January 2020

Publications Code 31668H_2001_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2020

Grade Boundaries

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Unit 8: Media Representations (31668H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	10	20	34	48

Introduction

This was the fourth series of the new specification for Creative Digital Media Production. This series a pdf answer booklet continues to be used by learners and is proving an effective means of providing responses to the questions and stimulus materials.

The focus of this paper was on a range of clips from the Moving Image sector, in the form of adverts for movies, which included posters and trailers. As stated in past LE reports the sector focus will continue to change with each examination, thus allowing coverage of all the sectors identified within the specification. It is important for centres to continue to ensure that learners are given the opportunity to engage with a wide range of stimulus materials from across all of the sectors identified within the specification, rather than focusing on one single sector, for example, Games or Moving Image. Learners should be provided with numerous opportunities to study media texts and to practice responding to sample assessment materials and past papers. Centres should note that any part of the unit content can be chosen to form part of the test and therefore it is of the upmost importance that all areas of each learning aim is covered fully.

The paper has 12 questions. Each question is based on either a clip or image which has been provided or materials that learners would have previously studied either with their tutors or independently. Learners were required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of specification topics and to apply this knowledge to the specific question. The intention is to offer as broad a coverage as possible for all areas of the unit content. Questions have varying weightings attached to them, with 2 to 4 marks for the lower demand questions and 10 to 20 marks for questions where an extended response is required, such as discussion, analysis or evaluation.

Each of the extended response questions are marked using a 'levels based' approach to assessment. The overall quality of the response is considered rather than the specific number of points gained. There is also a focus on the use of suitable technical and vocational language and terminology within each response. The remainder of the questions on the paper are assessed using a range of indicative content and on the quality and clarity of the explanation provided.

It is important to note than when assessing this paper consideration is given to the time taken to review the clips provided and the fact that learners are often typing at speed and therefore are likely to make spelling and grammar errors. Although meaning cannot be inferred, benefit is given to responses that may, seem confusing due to poor spelling and/or grammar.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

There was a slightly weaker level of performance this series as compared to the previous January series, as is common with the January series there were a number of resits amongst learners. There were certain questions that are more challenging than others, this is to ensure a consistent level of demand across all papers. There was evidence of learners having been taught across the range of unit content and learners have generally been able to attempt the majority of questions within the paper.

It is of continued importance to stress that learners must be given the opportunity to practice responding to shorter and/or lower demand questions as well as extended question writing. There are still instances where learners are writing lengthy and detailed responses to 2-mark questions which only require them to provide a brief explanation. It is important that learners are able to utilise their time efficiently, given the limited time available for this exam. Learners should be encouraged to focus their extended responses for the questions with a higher mark weighting; a well-structured sentence or two is more than sufficient for the 2-4-mark questions.

In past papers learners have responded well and provided more detailed responses when stimulus materials were offered and therefore, we continue to ensure that all of the extended response questions are either provided with stimulus materials or allow for stimulus materials to be referenced. Please keep in mind that these stimulus materials are only been seen by learners for the duration of the exam (although may be familiar to them in a wider context), learners that perform well within this paper will make use of a wider range of media texts with which they are familiar. It is important for learners to have studied a range of media texts from different genres to support them with their responses.

Learners must ensure that their textual references are specific, there must be a specific text that is being referred to, not 'music videos' or 'magazines', this seems to be happening less and less but can still be the case for some learners. Learners must also avoid referencing social media such as Facebook and Instagram as media texts, nor should they use music, football or TV and film celebrities, unless they are speaking about these within the context of a specific media text such as a music video, podcast or advert that features that celebrity or that appears on that particular site.

Learners should be encouraged to reference texts from the advertising sector; however, they must be specific and reference an actual text, its content and construction as opposed to an entire campaign, which is not a text but a range of texts. For example, it is not sufficient to say 'perfume adverts objectify women' as not all of them do and some do not include woman at all. Learners must be specific if they are to be rewarded for their exemplification.

Media theories and debates are an important part of this paper. Learners performing at the higher-grade boundaries have shown clear and up to date knowledge and understanding of current and relevant theories and debates. Learners must also be able to apply these correctly to a given context or in relation to a media text. A few well-chosen texts with well-developed explanations and exemplification can often work better than using many texts that have only been referred to very briefly.

Individual Questions

The following section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of 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.

Q1 Explain one way in which props have been used in Clip 1 to appeal to the audience.

This question proved to be accessible to learners and many learners made reference to the candy shaped objects appearing in the advert which replaced everyday objects, most learners likened this to characters seen in the game which would provide an association to the audience; creating excitement and enjoyment. Learners were required to reference a specific prop being used within the text rather than 'they use bright and colourful props'.

2 marks

In clip one, there is a man using a megaphone and wearing a sign around his neck saying "EVERYTHING IS DOOMED!", but after he has been hit by a sweet from the game, it changes to "EVERYTHING IS DIVINE!", where the typography of the word "Divine!" is the same as from the game - which appears when the player has won a level and got a high score. This will appeal to the audience because those who have played it the first Candy Crush game will recognise it from they have done good on a level and therefore identify with the the game again and want to play the new one, to get the "Divine!" rating again.

The learner has been awarded two marks for mention of the sign and the changes to this when struck by the candy crush piece.

1 mark

Props have been used to create visual amusement with the audience. This gets them to connect and engage with the advert. They use simple colours and designs to show it is for all ages and even the youngsters can play it.

Whilst this learner has identified the use of colour within the text there is no mention of a specific prop in this response, the learner has been awarded for the meaning to the audience.

Q2 Explain two ways that camerawork has been used in Clip 1 to create meaning for the audience.

Some responses made vague comments about handheld camerawork or 'there were lots of close ups/mid shots to show emotion rather than selecting specific examples from the text and discussing the meaning/effect/purpose. Some learners made quite general comments about camera work and there were some inaccurate descriptions of camerawork with some learners misunderstanding and confusing camerawork for editing.

4 marks

- 1. The camera has uses shot types to create meaning for the audience. At 00:35, there is a bird's eye view shot with a news channel logo, as if it was from a news helicopter. The use of this shot, creates meaning for the audience that what is happening is action-packed and/or really interesting because of how helicopter shots are usually used for such things as police chases or large events in real news broadcasts.***
- 2. Camera tilt has been used to create meaning for the audience, insinuating that the game is very good and powerful. This is done from 00:53 to 00:55 where there is an upshot on the giant floating jelly bear, then a down-shot on the woman who is representing the player. This makes the jelly bear look big and powerful while making the player seem smaller and need to play the game to please the bear, who speaks like the man in the game who reads out words when the player does well, such as "Divine" and Sodalicious".***

The first point is well written, the second does not use correct terminology, and there are two reasonable explanations which have been awarded.

2 marks

- 1. They use the camera shot over the shoulder to engage the audience and so we focus on the vending machine with the drinks in but also don't forget about the girl who is then in control and organises the sweets in colour order.***
- 2. Another form of camera work is always having the main focus of the shot being the candy. They place each piece of candy in the centre of the screen so the viewers eyes are drawn to it and we forget whats happening in the background.***

This learner has been awarded two marks for the first point where they have made express reference to an over the shoulder shot and the reason for its use.

Q3 Explain how two examples of visual effects have been used in Clip 2 to create meaning for the audience.

This question was generally poorly answered. Lots of responses related to the change of lighting within the clip. For example, "The light to dark visual affect could be a signifier that his life is coming crashing down on top of him and that everything he has achieved has been pointless." It may be that as the clip is all animated on a computer, some learners struggled to identify what would be classed as a visual effect in a moving image product, often interpreting a 'visual effect' as whatever they could see. Learners that selected the more obvious examples such as lightning, explosions and smoke tended to do well and get all 4 marks.

4 marks

- 1. During the scene where Spider-man falls from the skyscraper, visual effects have been used to create meaning for the audience. They use a thick, black smoke which darkens the overall area he is falling through, and they use it at multiple points both up and down the skyscraper. The meaning that this will give the audience is of impending doom because of the colour connotations of black, that being death and doom.***
- 2. When each villain has been defeated on the way up back the skyscraper, they explode into a crystal-like dust - the same kind which the negative colour toned villain at the top of the skyscraper shoots out of his hand at Spider-man. For the audience, the use of this visual effect would mean that they villains who are hitting Spider-man that appear on falling rubble are made by the negative colour toned villain and are not actually there, which would be why they would explode into that same dust when Spider-man hits them.***

There is an explanation of the use of dust, smoke and other visual effects throughout the response and the learner links this to the characters within the text using good exemplification.

2 marks

- 1. the explosion at the start of the clip creates meaning for the audience as it shows the amount of damage it did to the building and therefore spider-man, showing how strong he is in the game.***
- 2. the shift between real life and dark nightmare life tells the audience that the character that created the explosion at the start of the clip is the main antagonist in the game***

Here the learner has been awarded for the first response that talks about the damage to the buildings reflecting Spiderman's strength, the second point does not provide any specific references to visual effects.

Q4 Digital games provide the player with different perspectives.

Explain one way that the player's perspective has been used in Clip 2 to engage the audience.

Learners consistently found it difficult to really engage with the idea of perspective. There were a number of references to Spiderman's point of view, which never really happened within the clip, apart from the start. There were also references to player's perspective without anchoring them to the clip, essentially the response was merely a repetition of the question. Some of the more sophisticated answers developed the sense of being able to hear Spiderman's thoughts and being put in to his perspective and appreciating his inner struggle.

2 marks

Clip 2 positions the player to perceive the game trailer as if they were watching a Spider-Man movie at the cinema - done through the way it is shot and edited, switching between long shots, extreme long shots, mid shots, and not having the camera at all behind and watching Spider-Man, like in the actual game. This perspective engages the audience because those who are interested in Spider-Man and like the films would want to watch another Spider-Man film. And the audience who are not into Spider-Man but into films would be engaged with watching this as it is made and edited, like a Spider-Man movie or an action movie.

Here the marks have mostly been awarded for the first points made and the comments about not shooting behind the character to give a filmic perspective as in cinema trailers which gives the perspective of the observer of the action unfolding.

1 mark

In clip two the players perspective is omnipresent, giving a sense that we are there watching him what he goes through but not from his view or onlookers, more like a third person view per say. The players perspective has also been used to engage the audience as it makes us feel like we are spider-man, taking every blow as we fall down and we start to feel bad for him but as he rises up we feel happy.

Here the learner has been awarded for mark for the reference to an almost omnipresence, however, the response is not related to how it engages the audience there is only a slight reference to 'we feel happy' which does not cover the gamete of emotions the trailer would illicit.

Q5 Explain two ways setting has been used in Clip 3 to create meaning for the audience.

For this question many learners failed to mention a specific setting, instead they would merely refer to 'setting' in the broadest terms. Some responses engaged heavily in a discussion of lighting rather than specifically the setting/location in which events unfolded. Some of the more interesting responses linked the look and feel of the temple/cave to the specific genre of the game, being suggestive of adventure and exploration.

4 marks

1. one way setting has been used to create meaning for the audience is through the vine covered temple. this tells the audience that the game is set in a jungle and that temple has been untouched for many years, with who knows how many evil creatures living in there.

2. another setting is deeper in the temple where we see a wall open up to reveal orange fire like colour. this tells the audience that the game possibly goes into realms such as hell, and it prepares them for when they play the game. or maybe the creature behind the wall comes from hell

The learner has described two suitable locations in the form of the temple and the vine covered walls/jungle setting and they have explained the reasons why these settings have been used to create meaning for the audience.

2 marks

1. The opening shot is set in front of a sealed off area, focusing on a mural on the wall, before a nearby wall is smashed through by the characters, bathing the area in light. This setting creates the meaning of adventure and exploration for the audience, through the dilapidated and ancient look of the stone, as the moss growing throughout it, suggesting that no one has been there for a long time.

2. The main setting on the clip, the characters attempt to open a door using a magic tablet, also creates meaning for the audience. For the audience who have played other games in the series, the setting here is familiar to them, because of similar settings in the games, and they will identify with being in places like that, and the setting will mean to them that it is a part of the Elder Scrolls game series which they have played and enjoyed.

The learner was awarded 2 marks for the first point, the second point does not meet the requirements of the mark scheme as there is little mention of the settings and relies on prior knowledge of the game.

Q6 Explain one way lighting has been used in Clip 3 to create meaning for the audience.

There were some instances where lighting wasn't specifically anchored to examples in the text but instead learners made more general comments. There were also numerous references to 'dark lighting' which isn't actually a lighting effect. Some of the better responses talked about the juxtaposition of the light outside the cave with the dark within it and references to the orange light behind the door symbolising danger.

2 marks

Lighting has been used to show the importance of the stone and the wall falling down. It was a dark abandoned place with over grown weeds and then the use of back lighting shows the importance of the wall as the stones are being put together. It shows the power the wall has as it lights up the mans face at the end as he is astonished at what he is seeing.

This learner has provided a well-considered response which talks about back lighting and how it illuminates the action within the text to create meaning.

1 mark

The lighting in clip three has been used to create the meaning of an old and abandoned place which no one has been to in a long while. This is done through the scarce use of lightning, having the majority of the areas they are in in darkness, with the light coming through apparent cracks and holes in the ceiling or through the hole in the wall which they made.

The learner has given a good example of how meaning is created but the type of lighting has not been identified.

Q7 Analyse how sound has been used in Clip 3 to create meaning for the audience.

Some of the better responses to this question took a quite simplistic approach by identifying a sound and considering the effect, repeating this as a series of comments in a linear manner that covered the entire clip. A number of learners gave repetitive responses whereby they identified numerous sounds but referred back to the same effect/meaning such as to create tension/mystery. This repetition of meaning therefore limited the marks awarded despite learners picking out a satisfactory number of sounds.

10 marks

Sound can be used to create many effects for the audience watching. This clip is no exception and it uses lots of different sounds to create a meaning that is anchored to the text.

For example the use of the non-diegetic background score helps to heighten the actions on screen as when the door opens the music gets more and more menacing and you feel like there is something about to come out of the door. The weight of the sound is also clear as it gets more and more bass heavy which is useful in representing the power of something. This all helps to create tension and increase immersion. This is especially important for the type of genre this advert is for, which is gaming and in gaming immersion is one of the most important things for the people consuming this type of media. Tension also helps in making a game more fun for the audience as it evokes a reaction from them.

The use of diegetic Foley sound in this clip gives a heightened sense of realism and it also helps to establish this world as a world far away from our own and even something as simple as the groans of unfamiliar organisms helps to show that this world is much different from our own, as these sounds are foreign to us.

The use of environmental sounds for the cave also helps to create immersion as we hear every little environmental detail, to the running of water and how it hits the ground, from the sound of birds chirping. The sound of birds helps to represent tranquility and normality, the significance of this is that at the start the sound of the birds is quite loud, but towards the end this tranquility and normality fades and is replaced by these hostile and alien noises that show that conflict is about to arise from this ancient door opening. This makes the viewer tense as they are about to witness the conflict that will unfold.

This is an extremely well-structured response; every point has been linked to an audience response and the reasons for each of these is considered and well thought out, there is clear exemplification from the text.

2 marks

Sound has been used affectively to build up tension, the first two noises we hear are big thuds. This gives the impression of powerful people walking.

The use of mystical music helps to present the scene as unusual and intense. The sound helps the audience to set the scene and feel like they are part of it as all the sound is non diegetic. As there is no dialogue the sound helps the audience to understand and feel the tension in the scene.

This learner has identified two valid points in the form of music and the use of non-diegetic sound, however, the explanations are limited and the comments are similar throughout.

Q8 Analyse how the characters have been represented in Clip 4.

This question was generally soundly answered. Most learners picked up on the idea of the man as the leader and could link this to various shots and content within the clip. Some more sophisticated learners explored the male and female characters' representations in terms of patriarchy and stereotypical roles, either for the game genre or the time period. A significant number of learners, however, still focused on just explaining the content of the clip rather than linking it explicitly to representation

8 marks

The video gaming community is very male dominated and this is made clear with how genders are represented through the characters in this advert. The man is represented as a visionary who has his mind set on this massive empire and his visions are only limited by his mind. He is surrounded by powerful male characters when he gathers this empire. But not once do you see a woman character within the dream of his empire.

The woman is represented as very soft and gentle, she is not represented as powerful and she is only seen briefly at the start of the clip. This shows that this advert is trying to appeal to the male audience of gaming. The way she is represented physically, with her big eyes and soft skin, contrasts with the harsh look of the man that shows his power over her. The function she serves in the story is merely as his wife/partner as she helps him see his vision, there are no other women in the story and this stereotypical house wife is shown here.

The setting of this is also significant in how the characters have been represented. As this is set in Roman times, long before makeup was invented. But when you look at the woman character you can see that she has a full face of makeup on. This is not historically accurate and was merely included by the creators of this game to objectify her and create this perfect woman that the men watching would gaze upon through Laura Mulvey's Male Gaze theory.

The way the camera looks at the woman also helps to establish this as a male dominated society. This is also accurate to the context it was made in as women would have been less powerful than the men above them. The way the camera looks at this female character is significant as we are looking down on her through a high angle shot, presenting her as this weak and vulnerable character. However the way we look at the man is that we look up at him through a low angle shot. This establishes him as powerful and in control.

There are occasional lacks of focus within the response but overall, there are a number of excellent suggestions relating to the male and female characters and their relationship to each other and how this can be interpreted by the audience.

3 marks

The soft music bed playing behind the dialogue highlights that these are good characters. The women acts as a plot devise to inform the audience on the protagonists plan in the game as she is seen asking him questions on what hes making. The protagonist is presented as intelligent and noble. We see this as he is carefully planning their next move in the war. We can see his noble as towards the end of the clip he is pictured boldly riding a horse onto the battle field. she is conventionally pretty which might draw in players

This learner has identified some valid points from the text, there is little explanation or exemplification in terms of how the meanings could be interpreted by the audience.

Q9 Explain what is meant by the term 'intertextuality', using one example from any media text that you have studied.

Question 9 was asking the learners to explain the term Intertextuality. The answer to this question could only be provided if learners were familiar with and had studied this term. Those learners who could give a definition of intertextuality could almost certainly provide an example. Learners must reference a specific **media text** within their responses in order to gain the second mark.

2 marks

Intertextuality is where one piece of media is referenced in another piece of media, such as in the film "Ready Player One" where there are charters and vehicles from popular films and TV shows in the film - such as the Delorian from "Back to the Future" which the main character, Wade, drives in "Ready Player One".

This response provides a lengthy but appropriate explanation of the term and valid example from a specific, identified media text.

1 mark

Intertextuality is when a media text copies/borrows from another media texts. For example,

Whilst this learner has identified the meaning of intertextuality there is no example provided, learners **must** always provide a specific **media text** to make reference to.

Q10 Discuss why media producers make use of stereotypical characters.

Use any of the clips provided and/or any other media texts that you have studied as examples.

Many learners could discuss stereotypes, with varying degrees of success. Some basic examples were employed as illustration e.g. The Simpsons. The more successful learners considered how stereotypes can and have been subverted. Where learners were less successful was in considering the element of the question in terms of why and how these stereotypes are used, often limiting it to them being recognisable. Higher level learners really considered the changing social landscape and how the stereotypes constructed were directly affected by a wider context and purpose.

7 marks

The stereotypical male in the media is strong, handsome, intelligent, funny and usually the Proppian hero, who is idolized by a young male audience. The stereotype of a female in the media is that they are pretty, kind, naive, and need saving by the main male character. They are usually seen as Proppian Princesses, as they are usually put in danger by the villain, only for the hero to save them in the end, and the heroes prize is the princesses gratitude. The most evident use of the stereotypes of males and females in the media are in the James bond franchise. Where James Bond is the main character, who is a secret agent who fights crime, and is very charming towards the ladies.

An example of how stereotypes are typically shown in the media, is in clip 4. This clip showcases a stereotypical male and female in the media. The woman seems very intrigued in what the man has to say, as she is asking him questions, which creates the impression that she is kind, as she cares about the actions of other people. She also has a large smile on her face, to emphasize this, whereas the man is shown as courageous, and strong, and intelligent, which gives him characteristics of a Proppian hero, whereas the woman shows characteristics of a Proppian princess, as she is naive and kind.

However, as a society, in recent years, we have become more androgynous, which means that our perceptions of stereotypes, and acceptance of changing gender roles, has lead to stereotypes becoming more realistic, and has lead to male and female roles to become more similar. This means that more media productions have been made where the female character is the hero, which subverts the ordinary stereotypes, as they are usually seen as the princess. she shows courage, that is usually shown in male characters in action movies, to stand up for herself and for what she believes in, which is a stereotypical trait of a Proppian hero. An example of this is in the Hunger Games franchise. Katniss Everdeen is the main character, who is seen as a stereotypical hero, as she fights, and puts herself on the line to protect the people she cares about, and put an end to the villains. In the opening scene of the movie 'Hunger games : Catching fire' Katniss can be seen

hunting with a bow and arrow, before she has been properly introduced to the audience. This shows that she is strong, has no fear and is very athletic, which are all typical characteristics that are associated with a male hero, even though she is a woman.

The learner makes reference to suitable uses of stereotypes within their chosen text and how these have been subverted. The learner has picked a suitable theory to reference and made some comments about the expected stereotypes found in media texts.

3 marks

one reason why media producers make use of stereotypical characters is because it helps the audience relate to them quickly. since stereotypes are very simplistic descriptions many people feel like they will fit in with one group or another. such as a stereotypical nerd normally has glasses and has a condition such as a lisp, these can fit into real life situations such as in schools or workplaces. Another reason media producers use stereotypical characters is that it helps the audience see who is good and who is bad. usually if you see a man covered in scars he can be portrayed as a villain and many movies will do this to make it easy for the audience to realize this, but over time more and more producers challenge this and they set up a person to have scars and wear dark clothing, giving connotations of evil when really he is a good guy.

This learner has chosen not made reference to any specific text although there are some relevant examples provided, these are generalised and not explained in depth.

Q11 Discuss how the uses and gratifications theory relates to choices in media consumption.

Use any of the clips provided and/or any other media texts that you have studied as examples.

This proved again to be the one of the more challenging questions within the paper as this theory needs to be studied and applied in order to be effectively understood by learners. Many learners gained marks for simply being able to describe the theory in basic terms. There were responses where learners were too vague in the generalised examples, they provided such as 'the news', 'soap operas', 'magazines'. The more sophisticated responses explored how the same text could be used for different gratifications by different audiences.

7 marks

The Uses and Gratifications theory (Blumler and Katz) is about why the audience chooses to consume whichever piece of media that they are. This can be for such reasons as identification with a model/character in the media, information, the

entertainment that they will get from consuming it, the objectification of an attractive person, aspire to be like who they are looking at or for the socialisation they can get from talking to other about it. This is seen heavily is the choice of what magazine and audience will read, especially in something like a magazine like "Men's Health" magazine which includes pictures of strong men on the cover, some with little or no t-shirt. This will be chosen to be picked up by the audience for different reasons relating to the uses and gratifications. From heterosexual female gaze, they may objectify the man on the cover and read the magazine to objectify those inside as well. From a male gaze, they could either identify with the man on the cover, see themselves as strong or attractive as him and pick up the magazine for that reason, or they could aspire to become like them.

Some people may consume such media as magazines and documentaries for information purposes, particularly documentaries like "Blue Planet" where the audience will learn about the animals and the planet as a whole. Media like this could also be used for purposes of socialisation, and the audience may watch it so that they can talk about it with other people.

The uses and gratification theory can be applied to an pieces of media, whether it is a magazine, newspaper, film, game or TV show. It is based upon why the audience would want to consume the media, and the same piece media can be consumed in different ways, meaning that the creator can target multiple secondary audiences while targeting their primary.

There is a good explanation of the theory of itself, with some good contextualisation. The examples are appropriate and explained in suitable depth.

3 marks

The uses and gratification theory states that we use media as a form of escape and we connect with the characters. An example could be video games. Some people use them as a form of escape from the real world and into their own fantasy one. In GTA you can shoot who ever you want, rob whatever store or car you wants and even get sexual pleasure by going to the strip club. For some people this is all better than there real life so they use these media platforms for entertainment.

Uses and gratification also states we use media for information and knowledge. This is correct as we have the news on tv and all the online newspapers. We can easily access a wide range of information at any given moment.

This response is focussed on a limited reference to GTA, there is some explanation of the theory here with only one example being provided, overall this is a limited response.

Q12 There are many different genres and sub-genres in the different media sectors.

Evaluate genre codes and conventions and how they have developed over time.

Use any of the clips provided and/or any other media texts that you have studied.

Overall, there was a general lack of specific responses to the question, particularly with regards to how/if genres had changed over time and why/why not. Many learners simply listed the key elements of certain genres, most popularly horror. There were many more sophisticated discussions of genre in general that still failed to address this question directly, but these were still rewarded highly. Those learners that addressed the issue of change, primarily did so from a gender perspective, highlighting how the societal context had directly impacted the representations within genres. Ethnicity and race were also popular choices for the focus of change over time.

15 marks

Genre codes and conventions have been used throughout the media industry to influence the basic structure of storytelling, as well as the layout and designs of scenes and shots, in order to allow the audience to quickly and easily recognize and understand the basic story structure and theme of show, magazine, movie, game etc.

Conventions of storytelling are an extremely useful way for audiences to quickly develop an understanding of the world being constructed and understand the sense of scale having only been shown the limited window of time through the movie. An example of a basic story structure and convention is that in 80's style slasher films, such as Friday the 13th, in almost every single film that features the antagonist Jason Voorhees, there is a set group of teenagers, one will be jock archetype, the slut archetype, the athlete, the nerd and the well behaved virgin girl. All of these characters will be murdered throughout the course of the movie one by one, leaving only the virgin girl remaining. This is a typical structure of the movie and all slasher fans can tell from the beginning of the movie that the sympathetic character for them to root for will be her. However, some films such as 'Nightmare on Elm Street' which understands such a basic trope, will subvert the expectations of the viewer to heighten the effect that the film has on the audience. At the end of the movie, the virgin girl survives and gets into her car with her friend, by a red and green striped hood closes over the car and 'Freddy Krueger's' Laugh can be heard, implying that she was still dreaming and that she was also killed, which is the complete opposite of the expected ending of the film and shocked audiences.

Technical codes are influenced by the genre of a media piece and quite often changes from piece to piece, but always remains consistent throughout genres. For example, it is very common for shot types and editing / visual effects to be changed as a result of a genre choice. For example, in a science fiction film, it is quite common for the film to be dimly lit with cold, harsh light to represent the harsh, machine run environments or the isolation of space. Whereas in romantic comedy movies, the film is often softly lit with warm colours as this implies the love that the characters feel for one another and the joy of the scenes, as everything is usually going well for both the male and female protagonists. Techniques such as this are especially useful for those that like to subvert expectations as recognisable codes are used so that the audience still understands the theme of the media text.

Environment and settings often play a large role in setting the conventions of a genre. For example, if a potential audience member see a large, grand scale castle, they will likely assume that via the setting, the film will be a fantasy set in an alternate world, Whereas, if they were to see a space-ship, they would assume sci-fi. Genre codes often pay complements to the conventions, for example, whilst it would be a convention and usually enough of a signifier that a unicorn was on screen, being that it is likely a fantasy film, it could also be a science fiction film as the creature may have been genetically engineered. In order to create this distinction, the show would be extremely saturated and warmly lit, signifying it as a fantasy movie, as sci-fi films are often cold, harshly lit films that have the saturation turned down to exaggerate the misery of the landscape.

Some films also exist in hybrid genres, such as John Wick, which is both an action and a thriller. This is because whilst action films are films where the plots are about violence, thriller movies are films in which the plot is progressed by violence. In John Wick, the film is focussed around his substantial ability to murder people, and is focussed around his violence, However, as the film has a revenge based plot line, in which he attempts to hunt down the man who killed his dog, the violence also progresses the plot as he must use murder and violence to convince people to tell him where his enemy is hiding and how to get to him, as he would otherwise be unable to reach his location.

This response has been awarded in the upper mark bands, the learner has provided some suitable examples across different media texts and has cited some changes to genre, codes and conventions over time. There is limited reference to specific media theories within the response, however, the overall observations and commentaries are reasonably well considered and developed.

8 marks

Most genres have a specific set of codes and conventions, these are basically the rules of each genre, for example, a Sci-Fi Film would have a very blue-green colour scheme, this is a common convention across Sci-Fi films and some even have a

blue wash filter placed across the entirety of the film this is because the two colours are seen as futuristic and alien, blue mostly being associated with futuristic and green being with alien's and alien technology, this would be in contrast to something like a thriller where the environment would be quite dark and desaturated, comparing to each other a key part of Sci-Fi films is cleanliness, well polished floors, bright white walls and lighting, ect whereas thriller films would be expected to be quite dusty and wooden, with very dim lighting.

Colour schemes and different environments across the different genres are only a very small part of the codes and conventions of different film genres, one large part of the codes and conventions is sound, sound can be used in a number of different ways, for example in a fantasy setting producers would adopt the use of quite mystical music and would share some sound effects of mythical creatures with aliens from the Sci-Fi genre as well as the use of mystical music when on an alien planet for example.

The reason some of these genres share these similarities is because many of them have been born out of each other, going back a few years and there was not nearly as many genres as there are today, the most prominent genres were action, comedy and romance, this is because a lot of film and TV is influenced by real world events, decades ago War films were some of the most popular and that was because World War 2 had just come to an end and a new generation was learning about it through film and TV.

Film and TV is still heavily influenced by real world events and so codes and conventions are changing constantly, old war films used to be very patriotic and portrayed the enemy as evil, then in America they went to war with Vietnam and many people started to question how good America really was, following this a number of pieces of media were created showing America in a less than positive light and portraying a lot of people being killed as innocent civilians, this is now a common theme in a lot of war films where the films question whether the war was really worth it and points out that the war could have been for negative reasons.

Although codes and conventions are seen a lot of the time as rules of certain genres they are constantly changing, sometimes one film will do something radically different and it is a huge success and so other films will copy this and insert it into their own film, this is also why we see a lot of crossover from different genres where one film in one genre will do something radically different and another film in a similar genre will do the same thing and then it becomes a convention for both genres.

This is a good example of a middle mark band response, the learner has provided a lot of generic codes and conventions and these have been explained in many different examples but these examples are not explicit and certain films or texts have not been referenced, there are some nice points but there is a distinct lack of development throughout.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, learners should:

- Use appropriate technical language throughout your responses, i.e. Use the correct names such as transitions, cuts, fades, shot types and angles etc.
- Tailor your 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.
- Use the number of marks awarded as a guide to the depth of response required.
- Be clear about terminology used in the specification as these words will be repeated in the exam paper, e.g. edits, camerawork, use of sound.
- Know the different theories and theorist and be able to apply them to both seen and unseen texts

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.com/quals

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

Ofqual



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

