



## Teacher Resource Bank

GCSE Media Studies (Double Award)

- Unit 1 48101 Specimen Answers



**Task 1 (A)**

**0 1 Give us three key features of mainstream television situation comedy and provide examples to support your ideas. (15 marks)**

'Benidorm'	'Peep Show'
<p>Circular narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set in Solana all-inclusive resort in Benidorm</li> <li>• most of action within resort (around pool/bar, etc)</li> <li>• status quo maintained/moneymaking schemes generally fail/all return to the resort every summer</li> </ul>	<p>Circular narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• most action in Mark and Jez's flat in South London</li> <li>• Most of action centres around continual, largely fruitless, quests for love and career progression</li> <li>• Main characters still sharing the same flat after several years – status quo maintained</li> </ul>
<p>Regular characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jacqueline &amp; Donald (middle aged swingers)</li> <li>• The Garveys (working class family from Lancashire)</li> <li>• Kate/Martin Weedon (middle class snobs)</li> <li>• Geoff &amp; his mum</li> <li>• Mel – 'Didsbury's answer to Julio Iglesias)</li> <li>• Mateo (Barman/Iothario)</li> <li>• Gavin &amp; Troy (gay couple)</li> </ul>	<p>Regular characters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark and Jeremy (also various partners) but everything centred around the two flatmates</li> </ul>
<p>Stereotypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garveys – stereotypical working class Northern family/Chav; benefit fraud storyline; teenage pregnancy; naming of baby after rapper, Coolio; unhappy wife flirts with Spanish barman</li> <li>• Mateo – stereotype of untrustworthy, slimy foreign 'ladykiller'</li> <li>• Kate/Martin – represent middle class snobbery of Benidorm</li> </ul>	<p>Stereotypes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor representation of single 20/30-something males</li> <li>• Sex/relationship obsessed</li> <li>• Continual failures</li> <li>• Socially dysfunctional</li> <li>• Flatshare through need, not choice</li> </ul>
<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensemble/prime-time mainstream show</li> <li>• Subtle social commentary on various issues: British love of the resort and of all-inclusive holidays</li> <li>• Classic sit com conventions of normal people in normal situations, but everything exaggerated and with simplified, stereotyped characters for ease and humour</li> <li>• Moved to hour long shows to develop characters more</li> </ul>	<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widely acclaimed, but more of a cult show</li> <li>• Dialogue, particularly character's internal monologues, very 'close to the bone'</li> <li>• Conforms to many sit com conventions (see above) but also moves genre forward e.g. internal monologues, unusual camera work</li> <li>• Early series used 'head cameras' so audience sees things through characters' eyes – the ultimate POV shots</li> <li>• More recently replaced with more of characters talking to camera – still unconventional for sit com</li> <li>• Deliberately unusual/ wants to be 'cult' and C4 rather than 'BBC establishment'</li> </ul>

### *Examiner's Commentary*

*Ideas are expressed clearly and effectively in chart format. The response addresses the requirements of the question in identifying clearly three key features: circular narrative; regular characters and stereotypes. Sensibly, there is also a section for concluding comments on each of the chosen shows. Appropriate media terminology. Some generally sophisticated comments, e.g. 'deliberately unusual' and 'cult'. A response that is presented highly effectively and displays a strong understanding of the genre – particularly in how 'Benidorm' and 'Peep Show' conform to and challenge the usual conventions.*

## Task 1 (B)

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**A criticism of British situation comedy is that it often provides simplified and unfair representations of groups of people in our society. How far do you agree with this statement? Provide some examples to support your views. (15 marks)**

Sit coms may provide 'simplified and unfair representations of groups of people in our society' – however, I do not believe that this should necessarily be seen as a criticism. In fact, it is part of the appeal of many sit coms. I am going to illustrate my argument by referring to the example of 'My Family' (BBC).

Situation comedy, if it is to appeal to a mass mainstream audience, must generalise, stereotype and construct generalised representations.

### Main characters in 'My Family'

- **Ben Harper:** grumpy, cynical and sarcastic dad; manipulated by his wife and fleeced for money by his kids; but loves his family despite his obvious faults.

(REPRESENTS TYPICAL BRITISH FAMILY MAN. PROFESSIONAL DADS WILL RELATE TO BEN)

- **Susan Harper:** 'Control Freak' wife, used to getting her way; worries constantly about her kids; the leader of the house.

(REPRESENTS TYPICAL BRITISH WIFE. ALL AGES WILL RELATE)

- **Janey:** stereotypical boy-obsessed, driven by money daughter; always using mobile; into shopping; always after money from parents.

(REPRESENTS TYPICAL BRITISH TEENAGE GIRL/YOUNG ADULT. PARENTS WILL RELATE RECOGNISING THEIR DAUGHTERS IN JANEY)

- **Michael:** clever, geeky adolescent, outsmarts rest of family.
- **Nick:** layabout, useless with money, 'black sheep'.

### Reasons why these simplified representations work:

- 1) People of all ages: parents and children are likely to recognise themselves or their own family in the main characters.
- 2) The sorts of things that happen to the family happen to many in the country:
  - Worries about children going to university (money issues)
  - Parents disapprove of their children's choice of boy/girlfriend (Janey's boyfriend is known as 'STUPID BRIAN')
  - Family issues – Susan's mum always complains that she is never visited.
  - Motifs – Susan cannot cook and family regularly put her cooking in the bin.

### **CONCLUSION:**

- Simplified and stereotypical representations but with enough for viewers to relate to.
- Done in a comic way so that audience can laugh at the familiar situations.

### *Examiner's Commentary*

*A generally sophisticated response. Although it gives only one sitcom as an example, all comments made are focused on the key concept of representation. The candidate offers a conceptualised response. Rather than giving many examples of unfair representations of groups of people in various sitcoms, it exemplifies one sitcom to prove an argument. Note-form aids the response.*

## Task 2 (A)

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Now provide us with your pitch for your British sitcom. You need to think about:

- setting
- characters
- an appropriate title
- what makes it funny.

(15 marks)

TITLE	'THE STAFF ROOM'
SETTING	11-18 Secondary school in leafy Cheshire suburbia
CHARACTERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Snodgrass – Headteacher of the school, very successful career but seems out of touch with his staff and his pupils (Motif: bumbles his way through staff briefings/assemblies/always gets names wrong)</li> <li>• John Bright – young English teacher, all girls fancy him, but is actually gay (Motif: always talking about his lovelife)</li> <li>• Sarah – young Drama teacher (Schoolboys have crushes on her, all male staff fancy her) (Motif: always says inappropriate things in class, without noticing)</li> <li>• Barry – cynical, middle-aged teacher, smells of coffee (Motif: cannot use ICT in the classroom)</li> <li>• Wayne and Shane (Twins in Year 11 – very bad behaviour)</li> <li>• Jason and Kylie – Married teachers working at the school</li> <li>• Sophie – Year 9 girl (Motif: always embarrassed by her dad who is the deputy head)</li> <li>• Jordan: Year 10 girl ('Vicky Pollard' type/chav)</li> <li>• Ben: Headboy</li> <li>• George: interfering Parent Governor</li> </ul>
WHAT MAKES IT FUNNY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will appeal to a wide audience: all people have gone to school so will relate in some way to the show</li> <li>• Continued motifs: e.g. the head bumbling through assemblies, getting names wrong</li> <li>• Characters and settings will lend themselves to everyday situations that viewers will relate to.</li> </ul>
HOW IT ADDRESSES THE BRIEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses simplified, stereotypical representations so that it will appeal to a wide audience</li> <li>• Fresh and current because issues such as teenage issues, pressure on teachers, OFSTED, etc can be covered easily in a comic way</li> <li>• Uses key conventions of successful past sitcoms in a way that will appeal to a contemporary audience.</li> </ul>

### Examiner's Commentary

*The use of a table and bullet points make it easier for the candidate to keep comments relevant to the focus of the question. The pitch is generally convincing and coherent. The 'How it Addresses the Brief' section justifies appeal. Understanding of key conventions i.e. motifs shown.*

**Task 2 (B)**

**EITHER**

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**We plan to use the internet to promote the successful entry. Design the homepage of a website for your programme. You should use the A3 design sheet enclosed. *(15 marks)***

**OR**

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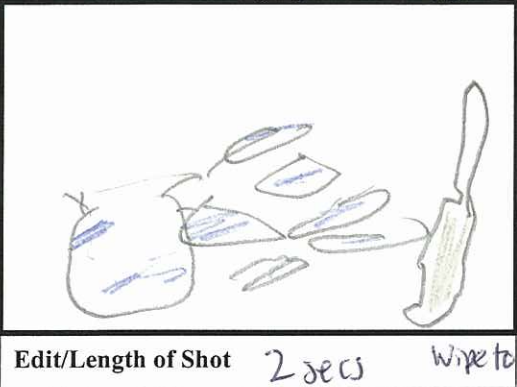

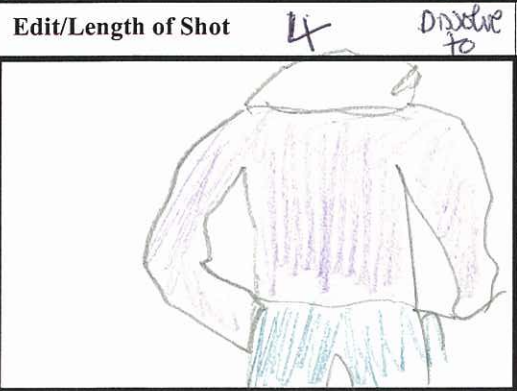
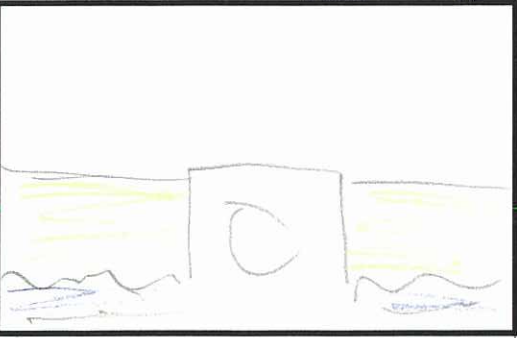
**We plan to use the internet to promote the successful entry. Sequences from the winning entry will be placed on our website. Storyboard a 30 second extract from your pilot programme which introduces two of the main characters. You should use the ten frame storyboard sheet enclosed. *(15 marks)***

## STORYBOARD SHEET

	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 1</b>            MS: JASE LOOKING AT WASHING MACHINE IN KITCHEN            NO CAMERA MOVEMENT</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            JASE: 'How hard can it be to plumb in a washing machine?'            DIEGETIC: Radio in background</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 3 secs CUT TO</p>		
	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 2</b>            POV: JASE LOOKING DOWN AT TOE - STUBBED BY WASHING MACHINE            Zoom closer to toe</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            JASE: 'Oww!! My toe!'            DIEGETIC: Radio in background            PHONE RINGS</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 3 secs CUT TO</p>		
	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 3</b>            MS - Kylie in car park</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            ... phone ringing            KYLIE: 'I'm on my way. Just got a few bits and bobs'            Diegetic sound: background car park noise</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 3 secs CUT TO</p>		
	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 4</b>            CU - Bags in boot            Zoom to ECU</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            KYLIE: '... No, I haven't spent much...'            Diegetic sound: background car park noise</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 1 secs CUT TO</p>		
	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 5</b>            SPLIT - CU SCREEN Jase and Kylie on phone            Zoom to Kylie's horrified face</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            JASE: 'I'm just sorting out the washing machine'            KYLIE: 'Don't touch it. You know how bad you are at DIY.'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 5 secs CUT TO</p>		



## STORYBOARD SHEET

	<p>Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement  <b>SHOT 6</b>            SPLIT SCREEN - MS            Jase and Kylie on phone</p>	<p>Dialogue - Sound            Jase: 'I'm not that bad!'            Kylie: 'Not that bad? Remember the toaster?'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 3 secs wipe to</p>		<p>Dialogue - Sound            voiceover            Kylie: 'You tried to change the fuse and the screwdriver fell out of your hand and smashed the vase my mother brought me.'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 2 secs wipe to</p>		<p>Dialogue - Sound            voiceover            Kylie: '... and then you threw water over it when it caught fire later.'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 4 dissolve to</p>		<p>Dialogue - Sound            internal monologue            Jase: 'I'll show her...'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 1 secs fade to</p>		<p>Dialogue - Sound            Jase: 'No! No! Nooo!!'            In background: Kylie: 'I'm home'</p>
<p>Edit/Length of Shot 5secs</p>		

### *Examiner's commentary*

*Despite the obvious weaknesses in terms of the quality of the drawings, it is important to remember that it is the quality of the ideas rather than the artwork that is to be merited. This is a realistic and workable scene. It incorporates many conventions of storyboards consistently and successfully. All aspects: shots, timing, edits, camera movement, dialogue and sound are included appropriately. The response also addresses one of the key demands of the question as the storyboard introduces the two main characters, Jase and Kylie; and important characteristics: accident prone/useless at DIY Jase and Shopaholic Kylie. Overall the storyboard is wholly appropriate.*