

Report on the Components

June 2008

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education GCSE Media Studies - 1918

REPORT ON THE COMPONENTS

1918/01-04	Textual Analysis	1
1918/05 & 06	Cross Media Topics	5
1918/07	Coursework Portfolio	13
	Grade Thresholds	24

1918/01-04 Textual Analysis

General Comments

The unseen extracts in both mediums seemed to engage the candidates and the vast majority of responses showed a well-informed and clear understanding of Scrubs or NME.

Candidates continue to be well prepared for this examination, ready to engage with texts, able to use media language terminology where required and can produce detailed textual analyses. It is now the norm to attempt all four questions. This remains a challenging examination and many candidates do remarkably well in the time allowed

A feature this year seemed to be a very high standard of Foundation responses. Most Foundation candidates addressed all questions and many did so with confidence and accuracy.

Problems:

- Many candidates still write too much for question 1 and not enough for question 4.
- Some candidates were entered for the wrong tier of the examination. Some Foundation candidates gained very high marks and may have gained more than a grade C if entered for the Higher Tier.
- Some candidates did not focus enough on answering the question. Some appeared to be answering last year's question 4 at Higher Tier, so focused on differences between texts and failed to establish shared conventions and pleasures. Similarly, some examiners felt that candidates were applying inappropriate set answers to questions 1 and 2.
- Some students did not number the questions (particularly question 4a and 4b). This made it difficult to allocate points as in some cases, it was not clear where 4a finished and 4b began.

Comments on Individual Questions

Moving Image: Components 1 and 2

- 1 Some candidates wrote too much, but most performed well in this question.

Candidates seemed to cope well with the change in question format at Higher Tier. Most who scored full marks on the first part could gain the additional 4 marks for the second part; the most common strategies were to explain why a particular convention was useful or to state how common a convention was. However, some candidates discussed different conventions in the two halves of the question – an unsuccessful strategy.

A few candidates selected unusual features of the extract, rather than conventional ones, and so lost marks.

- 2 Question 2 asked candidates to analyse unusual media language elements of the extract. This proved to be a relatively difficult task and fewer candidates scored highly on this question than in some previous years

Some candidates selected only one of the four areas to discuss, missing marks for the other three areas.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

Foundation candidates could score two marks by naming any media language element from camerawork, editing in the title sequence, soundtrack and special effects, but Higher Tier candidates needed to supply an unusual example to gain any marks as well as an explanation of its deviation from generic conventions for full marks.

Most were able to cite unusual camerawork such as handheld camera or extensive tracking, but there was some evidence of a lack of precision in defining shots: mid shots were identified as close ups and tracking was wrongly described as panning.

Many were able to attempt a description of the editing in the title sequence, but a surprising number of candidates clearly did not understand what was meant by editing. A large number of candidates described only the clip of the title on the x-ray board. There was a lot of misunderstanding of the 180 degree rule.

Those candidates who understood the range of elements covered by the term 'soundtrack' could easily answer the question, those who thought it only meant the theme tune struggled hopelessly and usually unsuccessfully.

Centres are advised to constantly remind candidates of the range of elements covered by the term soundtrack.
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Some candidates discussed the use of canned laughter, despite its absence from the extract.

A large number of candidates did not understand what is meant by 'special effects' and would discuss the voiceover, or editing of title sequence for example.

- 3 Question 3 proved accessible and most candidates made use of the bullet points (or listed points for Higher Tier) in their answers, but weaker candidates 'plodded through' the bullet points and made the same point repeatedly.

Centres are advised to inform candidates that the bullet points are there as a helpful starting point and that it is more important to develop an argument than to work through them slavishly
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Most candidates discussed the young and attractive cast, the 'immature' humour, the use of easily recognisable stereotypes, the focus on relationships with authority figures, the use of mobile phones, the fresh and unusual style of the programme.

- 4(a) Question 4(a) was answered well. Many candidates discussed conventions, gave textual examples, and reasons why these conventions are common, which is a lot to do in a 12 minute question. Hence, the mark scheme demanded rather less textual detail than in previous years.

Some candidates chose conventions (24-30 minutes long or 'canned laughter') that offered only limited opportunities for exemplification.

Some candidates focussed on listing more than the required three conventions and gave little textual detail from their examples.

Some relied too much on repeating the conventions listed in question 1. These were rarely the best answers.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

A few candidates did not seem to understand the term 'convention' or gave extremely vague answers, such as 'camerawork' or 'a setting'.

Some chose to analyse unusual situation comedies (often *The Office*) then struggled to discuss similarities, but many did use unusual examples including *Spaced*, *My Name is Earl*, and *Curb your Enthusiasm* and still produced effective answers.

A few candidates discussed comedy texts (*Little Britain*, *Shameless*, *Goodness Gracious Me*, *Monty Python*) that are not situation comedies and so did not lend themselves to a discussion of sitcom conventions. A very few candidates used films such as *East is East*, *Borat*, and *The Full Monty*.

- 4(b) Foundation candidates sometimes struggled to give three separate pleasures, but the better answers succeeded in this and gave some textual exemplification.

There were fewer candidates than in previous years who did not understand the concept of audience pleasures, but many still failed to give textual detail to back up their arguments. Some however placed undue emphasis on the text, often listing conventions as pleasures, and didn't adequately think about how a pleasure is something that a viewer experiences. It proved especially difficult to expand on "canned laughter" as a pleasure.

Some candidates sitting the higher tier only discussed one sitcom. A number of candidates did not allocate enough time to answer 4b.

Print: Components 3 and 4

- 1 This question was generally accurately answered, though some higher tier candidates failed to make explicit points about their chosen element was typical of music magazines. Some Higher Tier candidates discussed how elements of media language reflected the nature of indie or rave music and in doing so often failed to pick an element that fitted the conventions of the music magazine genre as a whole.

Centres are advised to ensure candidates are able to apply conventions that fit the full range of music magazines and understand the difference between musical genres and magazine genres.

A large number of candidates did not know the difference between generic conventions and the codes of the medium, seeing features such as masthead, left hand third, a big picture on the cover, or serif writing as conventions of music magazines.

- 2 Most candidates answered this question well, though some weaker answers were unclear as to the meaning of 'busy' or 'lively'. A significant proportion still confused serif with sans serif fonts. A number of candidates had problems with the meaning of layout and discussed colours for fonts, but more candidates seemed confident on layout than in previous years. However, candidates often appeared to need further help with analysing photography.

There were examples of candidates clearly repeating 'stock' answers from previous papers, such as discussing, erroneously, the minimalist layout of the magazine. A number became bogged down with explaining colour symbolism at the expense of perhaps more interesting features of the text. There were a number of candidates who made sweeping and inaccurate generalisations about the use of typeface.

Many responses concentrated on the front page.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

3 This was an accessible question in that most candidates effectively discussed audience address using some or all of the bullet points. The main differentiator in this question was the sophistication and range of the analysis.

4(a) This was an accessible question for which there were few poor answers.

A number of candidates appeared to have studied magazines, such as *Smash Hits*, that are no longer published and so cannot be read regularly. It was noticeable that responses on *Smash Hits* were more stereotyped and showed less engagement than those on some other magazines.

Disappointingly few answers discussed the whole of the magazines but instead only used examples from the covers and contents pages.

Some candidates reproduced a comparative analysis of different music sub-genres, which meant they struggled to find any similarities.

Again, some descriptions of conventions were too general: the masthead, the cover-lines, the colour scheme, for example. More successful candidates went further and gave enough explanation to make these observations valid, for example, by discussing the use of a colour scheme dominated by dark colours for *Kerrang* to reflect the genre of music that the magazine is about.

Some candidates appeared to have examined one or two texts in great detail, but hadn't built up a sense of the genre as a whole.

Centres are advised to study the genre as a whole as well as three texts in detail – this will help with answering questions 1 and 4

There was some use of inappropriate magazines like *Bliss*, *OK* and *FHM*.

4(b) This was an accessible question that was generally well-answered.

Foundation candidates sometimes struggled to give three separate pleasures, but the better answers succeeded in this and gave some textual exemplification.

There was some tendency for candidates to repeat, as pleasures, elements they had used as conventions in the previous question (such as free gifts). Higher tier candidates, in particular, should be encouraged to focus on more general audience pleasures that might be offered by a range of textual features in order to achieve the higher mark bands.

A significant number at both Foundation and Higher tier used NME and one other text for Q4.

Some candidates only answered one of the sub-sections of question 4, giving the impression that they thought it was an either/or type question.

1918/05 & 06 Cross Media Topics

General Comments

Once again the findings within this report echo key points raised in previous years. Again, by and large, this is a positive thing as it is clear that Centres are adopting good practice which in turn is reflected in the quality of the responses provided by candidates. However some of the points raised herein, a number for the fifth time in as many years, indicate that a small number of Centres still have yet to use this report in the spirit in which it is published as a means of guiding teaching and learning for these papers, which in turn only harms the achievement of the candidates.

On the whole Centres have got to grips with the peculiarities of these Units and once again a significant number of students achieved full marks this year both at Higher and Foundation level. Again the Centres who had taken a clear and defined case study approach allowed their candidates ample opportunity to succeed as opposed to those Centres where candidates were given 'carte blanche' or a choice from a selection of clearly unfocussed and under prepared stimuli. It is good to see that there were far fewer Centres leaving their students to such vagaries this year. Once again one would not, of course, want to deny students opportunity to take an autonomous approach to this unit but it is a rare candidate indeed who demonstrates an aptitude to thrive within this context without at least some very firm guidance. This is a task that some AS and A Level students would find challenging and, though one could argue that it is excellent preparation for work at this higher level in a number of disciplines, it must be done within very tight parameters. It is again slightly concerning to see a very small number of candidates offering responses based upon materials encountered in the news or on a billboard witnessed en route to the examination but these individuals grow thankfully fewer in number with each year and, as ever, there was a great deal of very good practice within the vast majority of Centres which allowed candidates to articulate quite effectively in response to the demands of the paper.

Effective differentiation between tiers seemed readily apparent within most Centres but it is still nonetheless disappointing to mark the work of a Foundation Tier candidate who clearly would have flourished in the Higher paper, and in one case a Centre where a large number of candidates could clearly have excelled beyond the mark range stipulated at this level were left with many students limited to but a 'C' grade. As a point of reference Centres are advised to look at the marks achieved by students this year and if a majority have achieved 50+ in this Foundation paper it would suggest a need to reconsider the criteria for tiers of entry.

Conversely at least one Centre had clearly entered a vast majority of candidates at Higher Tier who would have better prospered at Foundation and resultantly a majority of such candidates would not have attained a grade. Foresight and preparation are the key and mock examinations and trial papers cannot be urged enough as a means of ensuring that candidates are entered for the relevant paper and therefore grades.

As occurs every year, weaker candidates found it difficult to relate learning to the questions and as a result offered responses reliant on general knowledge and conjecture which failed to demonstrate any degree of specialist understanding. It is essential that as many candidates as possible are appropriately prepared and briefed for the exam with case studies and not generalisations and it is again firmly suggested that in order to familiarise candidates with the demands of the questions prior papers are used as a basis for discussion during lessons as well as in mocks. A characteristic of this paper is that there is little change to the 'flavour' of the question despite subtleties of focus and wording and therefore Centres can better prepare their candidates to show their flair and understanding without the need for worrying too long about idiosyncratic elements of the question paper. The spirit of this paper will continue in this vein until the current specification has run its course. With this said it was pleasing to see that many

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

Centres had embraced this approach without having to resort to pre-prepared answers. Many students thrived with the framework of preparation provided (q.v.) and were allowed to interpret and provide a sense of the personal engagement, a characteristic of the Proficient and Excellent response.

Once again evidence suggests that responses using two examples in answer to a question tended to be better focussed than when three were used and four seemed to lead to superficiality or predominance on description over analysis or comparisons. Such responses tended to lack supporting exemplar material which ultimately limited the marks available. This was particularly notable at Foundation level but there were instances of this within the Higher Tier. That is not to say that exceptions were not apparent within this year's responses and there were indeed a small but significant number of candidates who had clearly been well briefed on a number of case studies and who used the time effectively to offer detailed in depth responses to the questions posed producing fluent and lengthy answers which far exceeded expectations of a 15-16 year old writing over an hour and a half. Centres are recommended to consult the Mark Scheme in order to identify the criteria which examiners are looking for to further inform their teaching of this paper.

As ever there was some disappointment at the lack of use of media terminology within both Tiers although when it was used it was used very well, particularly with reference to News. It was pleasing to see some of the most able candidates offering interesting ideas and insights into complex media theories such as Uses and Gratifications, Maslow, and even some brave and effective attempts to explore news in terms of Todorov and Propp. However, there were equally a significant number 'bolting' on theories or 'carpet bombing' hoping that by simply adding a few practitioners names into the body of their work it would add credibility to a response. Theory is much welcomed at GCSE Level but only if it is employed to further illuminate the response and, it must be said, there are a great number of candidates who achieve the very highest of marks without referring to a single theorist. It is again important to note that a number of candidates were disadvantaged by poor literacy skills and in some instances the actual presentation of their work, which on some occasions was near illegible, made it very difficult for an examiner to offer an intelligent assessment.

There were very few candidates who failed to make good use of their time this year giving equal time and consideration to both questions, although again there were a few who spent too much time writing out unnecessary descriptions of texts without including much in the way of consideration of presentational devices. Only on rare occasions did candidates lose momentum after completing Section A. Those that failed to use time effectively were generally those who were ill-equipped or unable to tackle the paper and such work tended to demonstrate time dedicated to graffiti and doodling as opposed to experiencing issues regarding strictures of time within the exam room. It was however, encouraging to see the number of blank or defaced answer booklets were very much in the minority

A mere handful of candidates were confused by the rubric of the paper and chose to complete questions 1 and 4 or 2 and 3 or attempted all four questions. Although not penalised by the examiner the candidates in fact penalised themselves as their answers were not always completed in the depth required to offer sufficiently reflective responses.

Foundation Tier

Section A

Question 1

Once again this question was answered by a relatively few candidates although there were some examples of good practice amongst those that did. The majority of students were able to use two or more media.

There was, as ever, some tendency at this level for a small number of candidates to rely on the general knowledge of recent news events as opposed to specific case studies although there is clear evidence that most Centres are now teaching to such examples. Many candidates wrote about media and institutions without reference to specific news stories and again it is important to note that this is a perfectly legitimate and acceptable way of tackling the question with many candidates achieving pleasingly high marks from this approach. That said however there is still a general feeling from examiners that responses underpinned with direct textual evidence tended to achieve a higher level of competence. Consideration of target audience was again informed with a number of candidates having a clear idea of demographics as opposed to vague and abstract concepts although there were still a significant number who took target audience in generic terms or by referring to social classifications without the facility or understanding to effectively explore such significance.

It was noted that a number of candidates at this level who undertook this question ended up offering simple narratives of events or indeed even offering their personal opinion as to how news institutions treat people and events. Although points may be made with passion few such points were anchored within a media context and as such limited the candidate's marks.

At the very highest end of this level there were nonetheless some skilled commentaries and it is pleasing to see that even at Foundation level there were worthy responses demonstrating understanding key media concepts of gatekeeping, news values and agenda setting. Some high achieving candidates took the internet and 'rolling news' channels as one of their examples, so their answers had currency and relevance. Others looked at radio news output and made some perceptive points about target audiences. As ever most candidates focussed on tabloid and broadsheet newspapers in comparison to a variety of regional and national television and radio offerings. It is worth noting again that documentaries are not strictly classified as news although they do refer to newsworthy events and candidates who refer to them will find their marks impeded. Nonetheless there was but one isolate example of such a text being used this year.

Question 2

Once again candidates at Foundation level seemed better equipped to answer this question than Question 1, with clear evidence of effective use of case studies which showed preparation and planning. A pleasing number of candidates offered a degree of informed analysis which made appropriate reference to specific examples. Most candidates had a sound understanding of 'appeal' and of the composition of different target audiences - indeed most were able to describe and analyse target audiences in some detail, offering opinion on how background, social class etc., influenced their 'reading' of a given text and ways in which producers intended to appeal to them. It was also pleasing to see that some Centres referring to advertising agencies or personnel as a way of contextualising certain adverts and this is only to be encouraged, although candidates should be guided away from simply offering a history of an agency or a product without considering it in the context of 'presentation'.

Comparisons of a particular institution's campaigns across different media, for example the promotional campaign of certain films, once again proved effective. Indeed with the increased

access to such materials on DVD and the internet this can prove an appropriate way of engaging with texts for those Centres experiencing difficulties acquiring material with many successful analyses being offered on texts as diverse as *The Blair Witch Project*, *The Other Boleyn Girl*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Gladiator*. Similarly competent responses were also offered with reference to the ubiquitous Coca Cola's print and internet campaign and Levis television and magazine adverts as well as BT's current print, internet and television campaign. A number of candidates also offered perceptive and cogent responses comparing different brands' use of media, e.g. Lynx and Lambrini, Folgers Coffee, Cadbury's Dairy Milk and Magnum Ice Cream, Sensodyne and Gillette and of course Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola and Levis and Benneton. Some Centres chose charity campaigns which generally proved successful, providing candidates with opportunity to analyse although occasionally one found weaker candidates offering rather lurid descriptions of the more shocking adverts without considering their significance

On the whole candidates found it difficult to incorporate specific media terminology within their responses at this level.

Section B

Question 3

Again there were very few responses to this question and such responses tended to be answered less effectively than Question 1. This was occasionally down to poor choice of examples to show understanding of changes in representation over time; references to the current issues with the Labour government and the sinking of the Titanic again may form an intriguing political analogy for a sophisticated cultural commentator over a glass of wine, but does not really help the 15-16 year old Media student. Centres are again urged to go for the simplest approach possible. This question is challenging enough for many at this level and so clear and obviously comparable texts are essential in order to give us much opportunity as possible.

Significantly fewer candidates fell into the pothole of simply describing how reporting the news had changed and/or stayed the same over time- for example how the layout of a newspaper front page had changed or how a news anchor looked- and though this has its positive features which were duly rewarded a lack of consideration of the inherent concept of messages and values associated with such changes leads to a basic or limited response. Some candidates also spent too much time describing the events as they occurred rather than their representation in the media - sometimes the media was not even mentioned

Similarly once again candidates could get quite incendiary regarding the socio-political issues underlying news stories rather than actually focussing on how events are represented. As a result there were a significant number of responses responding to issues of immigration and the disappearance of Madelaine McCann which tended to descend into rants as opposed to balanced analysis. This should be discouraged whatever the political leanings or personal viewpoints of a teacher or candidate, the examination is not the forum for such spleen venting.

Although significantly fewer than in previous years some candidates unfortunately compared news stories that were within a short period of one another, which served only to limit the marks available. Centres are advised to choose news events which will allow candidates to fully explore the similarities and differences in representations over time.

As ever candidates performed best when they chose similar subject matter, most notably the Royal Family, disasters or military events. The hardy perennials of George VI's funeral in comparison to Diana's, the Falklands war in comparison to recent events in Iraq, and Pathe newsreel of German prisoners of war during World War II in comparison to prisoners from the

current Iraq conflict proved again effective. Again potted histories of events and/or celebrities tend to lead to the most basic of responses. Centres are reminded of the importance of focussing on how the media have influenced such perception of such celebrities and/or events.

Question 4

Again this was the more popular of the two questions in this section and was reasonably well answered demonstrating effective preparation by Centres. Many candidates used the same case studies as those which had been used in Section A, more so than in Question 3, which resulted in a degree more replication of subject matter with some candidates viewing it as another opportunity to answer Question 2. Again a large number of candidates at Foundation Level did not fully grasp the concept of representation and so reverted to discussing the roles of producers and audience or offering simplistic observations of messages and values, e.g. to buy the product or 'wear this and you will look like me' or 'you shouldn't smoke as it is bad for your health'. This served to limit certain candidates at this level.

The concept of ideology and messages and values can be a complex one and so students at this level should be encouraged to relate representation to social context in order to facilitate appropriate answers. There was also a tendency to discuss historical developments of products rather than representational aspects. This led to repetitive and descriptive work that did little to engage the concepts behind the question.

A small number of candidates compared adverts that were within months of one another. Once again Centres are advised to choose adverts from significantly different time periods which will allow candidates to fully engage with the spirit of the question, a consideration of how messages and values have changed as well as of course if they have stayed the same.

Candidates performed best when they chose subject matter where there were clear enough similarities and differences, those who chose totally different subjects tended to produce weaker responses as this impeded their ability to develop an argument. Popular and successful choices at this level involved Tango, Oxo, Persil in comparison to Daz, and interesting considerations of ethnicity in the Pears Soap and Halifax adverts. Lucozade and Guinness were again favourites as well as the ubiquitous Levis and Coke where there is lots to say, a fact that characterises the reasons why these products have been so consistent within the pages of these reports over the years.

Higher Tier

Section A

Question 1

This question was answered well by a number of candidates although, as noted above, significantly less than those who answered Question 2. Once again it is pleasing to see the sophistication and maturity exhibited by a number of students in their discussions of how news is produced and the effect on audiences. As I have stated before Centres are clearly priming their students effectively for this, the breadth of knowledge and facility to respond to the challenges of the question at the top end continues to increase with each year. There were some highly effective comparisons of different media and again it was pleasing to see another year in which radio and the internet were being heartily embraced by Centres. Some of the more able candidates provided extremely broad but also in depth analysis.

Good practice was shown this year with some detailed textual analysis, clear focus on audience, using highly precise and complex media terms, leading to very high marks. This question often

shows tangibly as to how engaging subject matter can inspire the more able candidates allowing them to shine as well as offering accessibility for the weaker candidates.

Case studies on videogame controversy related to *Grand Theft Auto IV*, the Gillian Gibbons 'teddy bear teacher' story and the tenth anniversary of Princess Diana's death proved engaging as did an interesting comparison between *The Mail* and GMTV.

A few candidates failed to offer comparison, merely offering two stand alone descriptions of different media which again limited the potential of responses. Conversely there were candidates who offered a consideration of four different media or case studies which tended to limit the level of focus and clarity of the response, although it must be noted there were some who proved perfectly capable of dealing with such a broad study and offered insightful and lucid responses.

Many candidates had a very strong grasp of news values, gatekeeping and agenda setting although more detailed media terminology was not widely employed by a significant majority

Question 2

Once again there was a lot of evidence of confident and sophisticated use of case studies which showed obvious preparation allowing candidates to fully access the question and offer thorough and detailed responses with clear comparisons and detailed references to specific examples. It was noted once again that very few candidates failed to compare media in this question.

As with Foundation Tier, candidates approached this question from a variety of angles, all perfectly valid, be it a consideration of one company's campaigns across a variety of media or comparable companies' different employment of different media. Most candidates effectively used specific examples although, very occasionally, historical accounts about an individual or a company were offered as opposed to a consideration of how a product was made appealing. The better responses tended to focus on the advertising of one product or very similar products across two media. This gave an ideal opportunity to compare the way adverts had been constructed to appeal to an audience. The common product tended to strengthen rather than impede the development of an argument for the stronger candidate.

Particularly successful responses included the Peter Kay John Smith's, adverts, as well a whole variety of film campaigns, The Tree of Knowledge book, Lynx and Dove adverts and some interesting cross media consideration of the promotion of *Grand Theft Auto IV*. These proved accessible, relevant and engaging to candidates and lent themselves to detailed textual analysis with clear understanding of celebrity endorsement, humour and methods for capturing attention with a target audience. It also goes without saying Levis and Coca-Cola offered opportunities for detailed response.

It is a point worth mentioning that the examples cited here are not unique to Higher Tier study and of course are generally taught to both levels of entry in the mixed ability classroom. This is, naturally, encouraged.

On the whole a number of candidates used media terminology to significant effect and many achieved very high marks in this question.

Section B

Question 3

Many varied responses were offered to this question at this level. Once again it was the less popular of the two options amongst Centres. It seemed candidates were well prepared for this question with many having varied subject matter to that of Question 1.

There was a little confusion over what constituted a past and recent example with some candidates using a past example from only six months ago but as has been previously been stated this is becoming a rarity. Again to avoid any compromising of candidates' grades Centres are advised to choose new stories from at least two distinct eras in order to avoid confusion. Most candidates, however, explored effectively comparable news stories to fully develop responses to this question and some particularly lucid, mature and sensitive discussions were offered.

Although nowhere near as significant at Foundation level there was still a notable number of candidates who did not fully grasp the concept of representation and so reverted to producing an answer more appropriate to Section A. On occasion, although media representation was addressed, candidates failed to focus on particular examples and ended up describing meaning of representation. As stated above the importance of rigorously preparing candidates for this key concept cannot be overemphasised.

Again candidates performed best when they chose similar subject matter, most notably the Royal Family, disasters or military events. Candidates who chose totally different subjects tended to produce weaker responses as this impeded their ability to develop an argument. The death of Princess Diana in comparison to royal figures or statesmen/women from previous eras featured in many answers, and the event has clearly impacted on a number of candidates. Candidates from one centre produced some excellent answers using the allegations of sexual abuse made against TV personality Matthew Kelly as a case study, with some very perceptive comments on messages and values.

Question 4

Again this was a generally well answered question with appropriate examples used demonstrating effective preparation by Centres. There were very few issues regarding the concepts of different time periods, but it seems apt to advise Centres to choose adverts from significantly different time periods which will allow candidates to fully explore the concepts of how things change and/or stay the same without any danger of marks being jeopardised.

Centres are reminded that only one medium needs to be used in this question (although of course more than one could be referred to should the Candidate and Centre so choose and there were many proficient and excellent examples of responses which demonstrated this). Many answers showed an understanding of representation with some particularly lucid and effective pieces. Candidates were able to analyse changing values within society through their examples. They were able to justify changing representations through an analysis of the social context in which they appeared.

Some excellent answers on gender, social class, ethnicity and lifestyles were offered on Lucozade, Levis, Dove soap, the Oxo family, and a variety of washing powders. Some inspired work was also offered exploring gender representation in the 1950's Persil adverts and a contemporary advert for Lux alongside some very interesting work comparing an advert for Chase and Sandborn coffee to the film *Mr & Mrs Smith*. An analysis of Women in TA adverts again produced interesting, detailed textual analysis and insightful remarks about changing gender roles.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

Candidates who chose totally different subjects tended to produce weaker responses as this impeded their ability to develop an argument. The changes in representation of women were often very successful and appropriate texts were chosen to support very sound arguments. These discussions often made reference to social and cultural changes which further strengthened the response.

1918/07 Coursework Portfolio

General Comments

This year the majority of Centres demonstrated good practice, designing a varied range of interesting and engaging coursework assignments that effectively tested their candidates' knowledge and understanding of the key concepts and their analytical skills. Moderators reported a high standard of work this year.

There were many examples of well written, analytical assignments for Assignments 1 and 2, while an increased number of short accompanying practical production exercises supported candidates' understanding of theoretical concepts. This is strongly encouraged, as it also enables candidates to explore practical techniques which assist with the major practical production in Assignment 3. In addition, supporting practical work will facilitate a smooth transition to the new GCSE Media Studies specification (first teaching in 2009), as it is a feature of the new course.

The most impressive Centres were the ones that presented the candidates' work in a well organised manner, often with supporting media production work to accompany the written assignments. These Centres had really stretched their students and given them a wide range of experience in a number of media forms and texts. Most Centres are to be congratulated on their attention to detail, which was almost always positively reflected in their candidates' work. This precision not only made the moderators' work easier, but also helped them to agree with the Centre's marks.

There was generally very good evidence of teaching input, with plenty of preparation and an increasingly sophisticated grasp of media concepts and language. Knowledge and understanding of media concepts was evident. There were fewer examples of unfinished work. The standard of production skills, especially print work, was very high. Particularly noticeable this year was an improvement in moving image work: even where these productions were based on rather sketchy narratives, it was pleasing to see greatly improved technical skills in editing.

On the whole a good range of media forms and texts was covered, but there were a few Centres where candidates were not able to experience studying this range, as Assignments 1 and 2 were set on the same medium. Centres are advised that this is to be avoided and goes against the spirit of the specification: 'For all areas of the specification, Centres are encouraged to facilitate the study of as wide and diverse a range of texts as possible...' (p.28 of the specification).

This year there were very few Centres where the assessment criteria had not been satisfactorily applied and adjustments were rarely necessary. Generally, it was easy to see how marks had been awarded, and the majority of Centres deserve praise for their application of the assessment criteria. However, there are still a few Centres that present assignments with no annotations at all. This does not help the moderator to agree with the Centre's marks. A brief Summative Comment on the Individual Assessment Task Form is also essential so that the moderator can see how the mark has been arrived at.

Administration

There was a disappointing increase this year in the number of Centres that were slow at sending the MS1 forms, necessitating additional work for the moderator. This was of particular concern this year because of the timing of the Whitsun holiday; the late arrival of the MS1 forms meant the even later arrival of the samples. Centres are reminded that deadlines should be observed, even if they have two week holidays in the middle of the moderation period.

Centres are to be thanked for making the MS1 forms clearly legible; this is very much appreciated as it is acknowledged that it can be a time consuming task. Centres are reminded that where the number of candidates is ten or fewer than ten, all the coursework portfolios should be sent directly to the moderator. Where the entry is greater than ten, the Centre should wait for the moderator's request for the coursework sample.

Authentication Form

The majority of Centres are thanked for sending the Authentication Form with the sample. However, there were still a number of Centres that failed to do this, involving the moderator in a great deal of unnecessary extra work and delaying the moderation process. Centres are reminded that if the Authentication Form is not sent, the candidates cannot receive their award.

Teacher Comments and Annotations

The majority of Centres used the assessment criteria from the specification to help annotate candidates' work and to write clear and informative summative comments. Those Centres that did not annotate the work carefully tended to be those that had other problems, either of organisation or of narrowness of approach. In addition, Centres which failed to annotate candidates' work or to fill in the Teacher summative comment risked disadvantaging their candidates, as the absence of annotation or comment made it more difficult for the moderators to agree with the assessment.

Where the work was carefully annotated, it was extremely useful in seeing how the criteria had been applied and also clearly demonstrated the high quality of the teaching.

Centres are reminded that it is particularly important that comments are made to indicate how marks have been awarded to individuals working in a group on Assignment 3.

Individual Task Assessment Forms

Centres are reminded that candidates must give the **title** of the production and the **names of members of a group** on the Individual Task Assessment Form for Assignment 3. It is disappointing that a number of Centres neglected to do this, often resulting in confusion and slowing down the moderation process. It is recognised that this is a time consuming process; candidates can be asked to do some of the form filling themselves, as long as it is checked by the Centre.

Almost all Centres organised their candidates' work effectively, using the Individual Task Assessment Forms to identify the precise task and to indicate the reason for the Centre's marks. There were just a few Centres that placed work in the wrong order or where the production work could not easily be matched to the candidate, but the majority of Centres are to be congratulated on the care taken over the presentation of the coursework.

Assessment

The majority of Centres applied the mark scheme carefully, using comments from the assessment criteria in the annotation of their candidates' scripts. Marking was generally consistent, and there was plenty of evidence of candidates' interest and engagement.

Where adjustments were made, these tended to be in connection with the over-marking of Assignment 3, particularly with regard to the assessment of the planning and of the Evaluative Commentary. This continues to be the area of the greatest disparity. There are clear guidelines in the specification (pages 40–45) and in the Teachers' Guide on what should be included in the Evaluative Commentary and appendix.

General Organisation and Packaging

The majority of Centres are to be congratulated for their care over the presentation of work, with clear and precise labelling of DVDs, magazine and advertising productions and websites with each candidate's name and number. Centres are to be thanked for the thoughtful inclusion of copies of posters, magazine advertisements and newspaper articles that had been studied by the candidates.

Yet again, some Centres persisted in using three-sided plastic wallets; this is expressly forbidden (p.47 of the specification) and causes considerable delay to the moderation process.

For further clarification, please see the summary below on how to present coursework.

Internal Moderation

Centres are reminded of the importance of internal moderation and of demonstrating to the moderator that this has taken place. In Centres where there is more than one teaching group, moderators are instructed to check that work has been fairly assessed and moderated across the groups. Where a mark has been altered through internal moderation, the original mark should be crossed out (rather than erased) and the new mark initialled by the Head of Department, so that it is not interpreted as a clerical error.

Teachers' Tips

How to Present Coursework

- Record the teaching groups on the MS1 forms and ensure the forms are legible
- Write a summative comment on the Assessment Form and attach it to the front of the portfolio or use it as a folder to encase the work
- **Ensure that all staff have signed one Authentication Form for each Centre and include it with the sample**
- Ensure that evidence of internal moderation is clear
- **Check that all assignments are annotated by the teacher**
- Make the details of each assignment clear and give a brief explanation of how the marks were awarded on the Individual Task Assessment Form
- **Ask your candidates to write the title of each production for Assignment 3 and the names of all members of their group on the Individual Task Assessment Form**
- Comment briefly on the individual candidate's contribution to Assignment 3 if s/he worked in a group
- Label all videos, DVDs, audio tapes/CDs and websites with the title of the production, your Centre's name and number and your candidate/s name/s and number/s
- Place coursework assignments in the correct order using card folders or treasury tags, **NOT three-sided plastic wallets**
- Include the required research and planning material for Assignment 3 in an appendix (see pp.42-44 of the specification)

Assignments 1 and 2 – Task setting

It was very pleasing to see that the majority of Centres are confidently setting a range of appropriate and challenging assignments that suit their own interests and enthuse their candidates. The work for these assignments was well taught, with plenty of preparation and an increasingly sophisticated grasp of media concepts and language. Some of the work was outstanding, showing a strong engagement with some quite challenging topics.

The main weaknesses occurred where Centres had misinterpreted the specification and allowed candidates to look at only one text for Assignments 1 or 2. Page 35 of the specification makes it clear that both these assignments must focus on **two or more media texts**. This disadvantaged candidates and prevented them from achieving Level 4, where comparison is a requirement.

A small number of Centres set inappropriate or unfocused essay titles for Assignment 2, disadvantaging their candidates. Whilst Centres are free to set their own tasks for Assignments 1 and 2, if they are unsure about setting appropriate tasks, they should follow the examples of successful assignments in this report below, in the specification (pp.36-38) or in the Teachers' Guide (available on CDROM from OCR).

Centres are reminded that duplication of the exact area of study chosen for the Textual Analysis Paper and the Cross-Media Paper is not permitted for Coursework Assignments One and Two (pages 29, 31 and 33 of the specification). However, it is acceptable for candidates to use the same area of study selected for the Examination Papers for Coursework Assignment 3. For example, candidates could study sitcoms for the Textual Analysis Paper and also produce a sequence from a sitcom for Set Brief 1 as Assignment 3.

Moderators expressed concerns again about the narrowness of the course where both Assignments 1 and 2 were film based essays. In order to ensure the study of a range of media texts, Assignments 1 and 2 should focus on different media.

Supporting practical work

An increasing number of Centres incorporated practical exercises into Assignments 1 and 2, enabling candidates to learn through practical work. These complementary practical exercises were generally done to a highly commendable standard, and demonstrated the candidates' engagement with the texts and media concepts. Candidates in the lower levels were able to demonstrate a greater understanding through the practical tasks, together with written work split into separate sections.

Assignment 1: Media Languages and Categories

This assignment tests the candidates' understanding of the codes and conventions of media texts. **A minimum of two texts must be studied and a comparison between the two is required** in order for candidates to achieve the higher levels. A small number of Centres asked candidates to produce two separate analyses of the opening sequences of two films. This meant that candidates could not access the higher mark bands.

The more focused a task is the better; candidates do not write well when comparing whole films for Assignment 1. A five minute sequence or the opening sequence will test candidates' knowledge and understanding far more effectively and give them space to demonstrate close detailed textual analysis. Differentiation of tasks benefits the candidates in the lower mark bands who struggle with the more challenging titles.

The most popular task was a comparative analysis of genre and narrative in the opening sequences of two films. This ensured concise, detailed analysis and avoided broad essays that

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

tended to elicit rather descriptive responses. Use of media terminology was usually impressive. Increasingly media theory was cited by candidates, demonstrating the growth of the subject academically. Centres were quite adept at using this as a tool to stretch the more able.

This task tended to be more accessible if the genres of the films were significantly different, such as historical epics with thrillers, although there were examples this year of effective comparisons within the same genre. Where there is a potential overlap with English, such as a comparison of two film versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, it is important that the focus is on media concepts and that correct media terminology is used.

Centres are reminded of the importance of awareness over the certification of films; *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* may be appropriate for investigating censorship at A level, but is clearly less appropriate at GCSE level.

There were some excellent comparisons between music videos, documentaries, magazines, websites and television panel shows.

Teachers' Tips

Assignment 1

Examples of Successful Tasks set in 2008

- A comparison between the ways in which genre and narrative are established in the opening sequences of *Casino Royale* and *Bridget Jones* or *A Nightmare on Elm St* and *Hairspray* or *About A Boy* and *Erin Brokovitch* or *The Wizard of Oz* and *My Own Private Idaho* or *War of the Worlds* and *Lord of the Rings* or *St Trinian's* and *V for Vendetta* or *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *The Devil Wears Prada* or *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bride and Prejudice*. Design a film poster/DVD cover that shows clear genre conventions.
- A comparison between the ways in which two documentaries use codes and conventions to convey their subject matter. Successful choices of documentaries included: *Touching the Void* and *Bitches and Beauty Queens*; *Airline* (ITV1) and *In Memoriam – 9/11* (Channel 4); *How Clean is your House?* and *My Crazy Parents*.
- Compare the codes and conventions of two different magazines, such as *Now* and *XBox 360* or *Cosmogirl* and *Shoot*.
- Compare the codes and conventions in two panel game shows, such as *Countdown* and *The Weakest Link*.
- Compare the codes and conventions used to create identity and image of two artists in music videos, such as *Leftfield* and *Björk*.
- Compare the ways in which three different newspapers (*The Mirror*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*) use codes and conventions to construct brand identity
- Compare the codes and conventions of the breakfast shows on Radio 1 and on a local radio station
- Compare the ways in which codes and conventions are used to construct identity in two websites: *River Island* and *Cbeebies*

Assignment 2: Media Messages and Values

This assignment tests the candidates' ability to analyse and compare representations and values in a minimum of two media texts.

A wide range of texts was tackled this year, with Centres experimenting with new material. Challenging texts like *This is England* led to strong responses. Although there were some very good responses which looked at representations in soaps such as *EastEnders*, some of this work tended to be a little bland and descriptive. Some Centres looked at representation in print

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

texts, resulting in some excellent work on comic strips and newspapers. The majority of Centres opted for moving image texts, producing some very interesting work on crime fiction, disability in film, medical dramas, and representations of family.

A brief historical context is a successful aspect of the best assignments, encouraging candidates to reflect on changing representations over time and to become personally engaged with the issues.

Teachers' Tips

Assignment 2

Examples of Successful Tasks set in 2008

- Compare the representations of cultural difference in *East is East* and *Carry on Camping* or in *Tsotsi* and *Crash*.
- How do the TV series *Lost* and the film *Crash* represent ethnic minority groups?
- Discuss how the characters in *Boyz N The Hood* and *Bend It Like Beckham* are struggling for acceptance in their own society and in the wider community.
- Compare and contrast the different ways in which disability and disabled people are represented in *Children of A Lesser God*, *My Left Foot* and *Aaltra*.
- Compare the representations of family life in America in *The Truman Show* and *Groundhog Day* or in *Little Miss Sunshine* and *Who's Eating Gilbert Grape?*/*The Simpsons*.
- Compare the representations of Chinese culture in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Mulan*
- Looking at print articles and two pop videos, consider the messages and values in the representation of Kylie Minogue at different periods of her career.
- Compare the representations of the 'War on Terror' in three British newspapers.
- Compare the representations of police and criminals in *Dixon of Dock Green* and *Life on Mars* or *Hamish Macbeth* and *Spooks* or *Starsky and Hutch* and *Law and Order* or *Holby Blue* and *CSI*. Storyboard the opening sequence of a new police series. Or write a character pitch for the introduction of a new character to an established crime drama series.
- Compare the representations of family in early and contemporary TV advertisements.
- Compare the representations of American culture in two different websites
- Compare the representations of hospital staff and patients in medical dramas *Scrubs* and *ER*
- Consider the representation of women in two TV versions of *Robin Hood* (1955 and 2006)
- Show how different cultural and historical backgrounds influence the messages and values in comic strips: *Barefoot Gen* and *When the Wind Blows*

Teachers' Tips

Assignments 1 and 2

There are many more suggestions for Assignments 1 and 2, together with complementary practical exercises, on pages 36-38 of the specification and in the Teachers' Guide.

Assignment 3: Media Production and the Evaluative Commentary

This assignment was tackled with obvious energy and enthusiasm in the majority of cases. The set briefs were very successful in motivating candidates and giving them an opportunity to develop their skills and understanding and to demonstrate what they could do. There was an increased use of the relevant technology, which is to be commended.

The print production work was the most popular and produced some impressive work again this year, with some superb examples of magazines that would not have looked out of place amongst those on sale in a newsagent's. Some of the photographic work for the perfume advertising campaigns was outstanding, demonstrating the candidates' enthusiasm and commitment.

Original photography enlivened the print productions, with Centres and candidates increasingly confident in their use of a variety of appropriate graphics packages. Generally there was an increase in the use of original photography, although a few Centres still allowed found images to dominate. Magazines demonstrated appropriate conventions and were more successful where an existing text had been analysed (in many cases, annotated).

There was a big improvement in the technical quality of the moving image work this year, with some entertaining and original TV and film sequences submitted. The majority were carefully planned and thoughtfully evaluated. Where improvements were needed, tighter editing was the usual requirement. When productions were of a poorer standard it seemed that candidates were not always given enough time to become familiar with the equipment or that the planning needed to be more detailed. It is useful if candidates have a sense of where and when their productions might be seen in order to engage their potential audience and to help them to write their evaluative commentaries.

Formats

Moderators commented that the format for the moving image work was sometimes difficult to access. A few Centres used VHS or CDROM. These are more difficult for moderators to access - even with the help of experienced technicians some would not play. With changing technology, the preferred format is DVD, with either individual DVDs for each candidate, or when there is a compilation, clearly labelled separate sequences with a menu for ease of access. It is the Centre's responsibility to check that these will play on standard equipment.

Group work

Centres are reminded that candidates must give the title of their production and the names of the members of their group on the Individual Task Assignment Forms. Centres must also indicate an individual's contribution to practical work in the box provided in order to explain how marks have been awarded. Candidates must include a clear explanation of the allocation of roles in their Evaluative Commentaries (see p.41 of the specification). Guidelines on this point are also given in the detailed instructions to candidates for each individual brief in the Teachers' Guide.

Set Brief 1: Television sequence

It was very pleasing to see an improvement in quality compared to previous years. There were some well executed and skilfully edited sequences, observing the relevant codes and conventions; however, there were still examples where the intentions exceeded the outcome, despite the commitment of the majority of candidates.

Report on the Components taken in June 2008

There were some very entertaining television sitcoms, documentaries and soaps this year, clearly demonstrating the candidates' commitment, energy and enthusiasm. Editing was much improved, although there were some cases where it could have been tighter.

Centres are reminded of the importance of planning and that storyboards are an essential part of this process. Even if the finished product varies from the original storyboard, it is a requirement that the storyboard is submitted. Test shots, script synopses and shooting scripts may also be included as evidence of planning.

Set Brief 2: An opening sequence for a new film

Again, there was a big improvement in the technical quality of the work submitted for this brief. This option continues to be more popular than Brief 1, although it could be argued that it is more difficult to succeed in than the television brief. There were some successful productions with good choices of mise-en-scène and camerawork.

Some moderators commented that candidates were most successful where a Centre had offered focused teaching on a particular genre and then instructed all its candidates to work in that genre. Clearly this supports the candidates' understanding of codes and conventions, but there were also some successful examples where a variety of genres were offered by the same Centre. Popular and successful genres included thriller and horror.

It is good practice to put all candidates through a short induction exercise in order for them to familiarise themselves with the technology available. As in Set Brief 1, storyboards and planning material are required as evidence for the moderator.

Set Brief 3: Radio

Set Brief 3 was tackled by a small number of Centres, but there were some successful examples of magazine style programmes, with effective use of a range of different sound elements, including jingles, phone-ins, interviews and news.

Where candidates produced work for music channels, music tended to dominate and there was often a lack of variety, even though the brief demands 'an audio sequence for a new talk radio programme' (p.39 of the specification). Centres are advised to limit the length of the music tracks, so that candidates can demonstrate a variety of skills.

Set Brief 4: Magazine sample

This was a hugely popular brief, with some extremely impressive outcomes with creative design ideas and thought provoking topics. Articles were imaginatively written and presented, while original photography was used to excellent effect. A wide range of topics was covered, from music to knitting, with an equally wide range of target audiences. All moderators reported on the high quality of the magazine work.

In the small number of cases where no original photography was used, the magazines tended to be less successful and candidates' work was often spoilt by the pixellation of found images. Centres are reminded that original photography is a requirement of this brief (p.40 of the specification). Candidates who rely on found images are therefore likely to be disadvantaged.

Centres are advised to collate the pages of the magazine so that the moderator can gain a sense of its brand identity. It was disappointing when magazine pages were submitted on loose

pages, rather than compiled so that they handled like a magazine. In a small number of cases the pages were printed as landscape, which was clearly inappropriate.

Centres are to be congratulated for ensuring that where candidates worked in a group, each group member produced a double page spread article, in addition to the front cover and the contents page, which could be collaborative.

Set Brief 5: Advertising campaign for a new product

Like Brief 4, the advertising campaign produced some excellent work, showing imaginative ideas, creative flair and skilful use of ICT.

There was some original photography of a very high standard, particularly for fragrance advertising campaigns. These were creative, artistic and meticulously carried out – a pleasure to moderate. Many Centres have designed excellent detailed schemes of work for this assignment, resulting in the engagement and commitment of the candidates. Few Centres relied on found images; where they did so, candidates were seriously disadvantaged (see Set Brief 4 above).

However, some Centres failed to interpret the brief accurately – for example, the brand design was sometimes missing, and in several samples it was hard to see any significant difference between the two magazine advertisements.

Sometimes the distinction between a billboard and a magazine advertisement was ignored; Centres need to consider the different target audiences and ensure that there is a difference. Billboards have to appeal to their target audience in the space of a few seconds; their proportions are different from those of the magazine advertisements: 40x20cm is an effective format. It is expected that the magazine advertisements would be printed in portrait and the billboard advertisement in landscape.

It would also be appreciated if the advertisements were labelled to clarify their purposes.

Set Brief 6: Local newspapers

Only a small number of Centres offered this option. The newspapers were well constructed and followed the relevant codes and conventions appropriately. Candidates' use of ICT has improved so that there is less reliance on DTP software templates, which can impose awkward restrictions on candidates' layout and make it difficult for them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions of newspapers.

Set Brief 7: Entertainment website

There were some very impressive examples of entertainment websites this year, despite the fact that this was not a very popular option. Candidates managed to produce well planned websites which were effectively aimed at their target audiences.

Centres are thanked for an improvement in the accessibility of the work for moderators, despite the occasional difficulty. Very few Centres failed to send a disc that worked as well as a hard copy of the website. This enabled moderators to access the site as designed in order to investigate the interactive nature of the production and check the candidates' understanding of the conventions of web publishing.

Set Brief 8: Website promotion for a new band

This option was very well tackled by the small number of candidates who chose it. The website promotion gave candidates the opportunity for some lively original photography, which then had to be carefully manipulated in order to fit into the websites. Candidates evidently engaged well with the task, demonstrating their understanding of conventions and their creativity at the same time. Interviews, profiles and tour information were well covered, demonstrating the candidates' ICT skills effectively.

As above, Centres are thanked for the improvement in accessibility of the websites.

Planning and research material

While the majority of Centres included background planning and research material for Assignment 3 that supported the candidates' marks, this continues to be the area with the least consistency between Centres, despite the detailed guidance given on what should be included for each separate set brief on pages 42-44 of the specification and in the Teachers' Guide.

Evidence of planning and research tended to be the weakest in the case of Briefs 1 and 2. A number of the sequences offered very little planning evidence, some half finished storyboards and no script synopsis. In print work, thorough primary and secondary research was in evidence, informing the planning and the production.

Centres are reminded that the primary purpose of the inclusion of planning and research material is to offer clear evidence to the moderator. It can also help candidates to reflect on the processes of planning and production when writing the Evaluative Commentary. There is clarification in the specification on what is required and what is optional.

Teachers' Tips

Planning and research material for Assignment 3

- The details on the requirements for the planning and research material for each brief are given on pages 42-44 of the new edition of the specification.
- This material should be placed in an appendix, separately from the finished production.
- Further information on the amount of material to be included for each individual brief is given in the Teachers' Guide. These instructions have been written so that Centres can give them directly to the candidates.

Evaluative Commentaries

Some evaluations simply summarised the production process and a number of Centres had tended to reward candidates too highly for this section. However, many Centres had clearly encouraged candidates to think through the evidence submitted and to plan their evaluative commentaries carefully. This led to some honest and interesting accounts.

In the better evaluations candidates were able to consider the strengths and weaknesses of their productions and address representational and institutional issues. Less successful evaluations tended to describe the process, focusing on group dynamics and unforeseen problems. Guidelines, as given on pages 40-42 of the specification and in the Teachers' Guide, are useful to ensure that candidates look more critically at their own work in terms of codes and conventions and audience appeal, and also compare their product with actual media texts.

Teachers' Tips

The Evaluative Commentary

- Instructions on how to write the evaluative commentary in three separate sections are given on pages 40-42 of the specification.
- Detailed guidelines on how to write the evaluative commentary for each of the eight briefs are given in the Teachers' Guide. These can be issued directly to candidates.

Conclusion

On the whole, the moderation process was a rewarding and enjoyable experience for moderators this year. The improved quality of the moving image work and the greater engagement with other technologies are particularly welcome improvements this year. Centres are to be congratulated for these improvements and for their good practice, creative planning and generally excellent delivery of the course this year.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
(Specification Code 1918)
June 2008 Examination Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
01 Textual Analysis- F	60				45	37	29	22	15
02 Textual Analysis- H	60	44	35	27	17				
03 Textual Analysis- F	60				44	34	27	19	11
04 Textual Analysis- H	60		46	38	30	17			
05 Cross Media Topic- F	60				39	30	21	12	3
06 Cross Media Topic- H	60		41	30	19	11			
07 Media Portfolio	120		99	84	70	58	46	34	22

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	3.7	17.8	39.2	65.5	82.2	91.0	95.5	98.3

The total entry for the examination was 7135

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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