GCSE

Media Studies

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE J526**

Reports on the Units

January 2010

J526/MS/R/10J

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General Certificate of Secondary Education
GCSE Media Studies - J526

REPORTS ON THE UNITS

B322 Textual analysis and media studies topic (moving image)

A very small number of candidates entered this exam.

They were generally well-prepared for the exam and attempted all four questions:
- most could identify narrative generic conventions for question 1
- all could analyse most aspects of media language for question 2 (with the exception of editing, for which answers were very variable)
- very few could identify issues of representation
- most could accurately describe the scheduling for two comedies for question 4(a), and some could explain this scheduling
- all could describe one or more audience pleasures for question 4(b), but few could give textual examples to back up these points.

It was pleasing to note that all candidates left themselves enough time to answer all four questions, but there was evidence of poor distribution of time between questions: candidates wrote much more for question 2 than for question 3, which is worth the same number of marks.

A very small number of candidates did not notice that they had to answer both parts of question 4.

Question 1

This was generally well-answered. Many candidates cited the chase, the violence, the clear separation of heroes and villains, or the good versus evil opposition as generic conventions based on character and/or events.

A few candidates picked up on the suggestions of romance within the extract, but not all linked this to the action adventure genre (by discussing its inherent hybridity, for example).

A sizeable number of better responses from candidates used terminology such as 'protagonist', 'antagonist' and 'generic convention'.

Question 2

Candidates needed to cover all four bullet points (though not necessarily equally) to access the top two mark bands, so the many candidates who were unclear on editing failed to achieve these levels. Credit was given for the use of CGI as a post-production technique, but some candidates chose to concentrate on irrelevant aspects such as lighting.

The candidates appeared to be very confident in answering this question so answers were often over-long compared to those for the other questions.

Very occasionally candidates would discuss the use of media language very generally within action adventure films, without reference to the extract.

In subsequent years the wording of questions 1 to 3 will be slightly changed so each question reiterates the need to give examples from the extract, instead of the instruction being given just once.

Question 3

Candidates needed to go beyond a description of characterisation to access the top two mark bands, so this penalised the many candidates who simply described how tough and sweaty the characters were or how the extract makes clear that Mal is the leader. A few candidates discussed the representation of Zoe as a strong woman and the celebration of teamwork within the extract, but there was little evidence that they understood representation issues or could deploy the concept of stereotyping.

In subsequent years the wording of question 3 will be slightly changed so the question prompts candidates to address issues of stereotyping.

Question 4

A small number of candidates failed to notice that 4(a) asked for comparison of two comedies, whereas 4(b) asked for a detailed examination of one comedy.

Advice to teachers:
Prepare candidates to read the question carefully and check whether it is asking for one or two texts to be covered.

One part of the question could ask for one text and the other for two texts, or both 4(a) and 4(b) might ask for two texts. It is also theoretically possible, but unlikely, that both 4(a) and 4(b) might ask for one text.

Question 4(a)

Candidates needed to describe the channels, the day(s) and the time slots accurately to be credited for accurate description of the scheduling of two comedies and thus to access level 2 or above. Most candidates achieved this, but some omitted key data such as the channel or the time or the day of transmission for one or both texts.

Advice to teachers:
Prepare candidates to state the basic facts of scheduling early in their answers and to check that they have done this for both texts.

Some candidates were disadvantaged by discussing a programme's scheduling across a wide range of channels, which limited their ability to explain in detail how the programme fitted those institutions.

Advice to teachers:
Recommend to candidates that they focus on one channel, day or days, and time slot per programme for the majority of their answer and only investigate scheduling on other channels once this has been accomplished in detail.

Better candidates explained scheduling in terms of target audience, synergy in brand image, and PSB requirements such as the watershed and requirements for original programming.

Some candidates tried to describe target audience in terms of socio-economic categories (eg social class A to E). These were universally used inaccurately as a fig leaf for unsubstantiated assertion.

Question 4(b)

Most candidates used a situation comedy, such as Friends, to answer this question. Most could list, and many could explain, a number of pleasures. Few candidates, however, gave textual detail to exemplify their points. Many, for example, would describe the equilibrium, disturbance, new equilibrium structure of sitcom narrative and the pleasures (eg of narrative resolution) that this offered. None, however, gave a concrete example of one episode that fitted this structure. Some candidates would have scored higher marks with a shorter list of pleasures that were better exemplified.

Advice to teachers:
Prepare candidates to discuss examples from at least two episodes of each chosen comedy programme.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Media Studies (J526)
January 2010 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
B322	Raw	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	0
	UMS	160	144	128	112	96	80	64	48	32	0

The total entry for the examination was 36

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
Percentage in Grade	0	0	5.6	30.5	11.1	25	11.1	16.7	0
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	0	0	5.6	36.1	47.2	72.2	83.3	100	100

This was the series for this examination. There were no entries for Unit B323 in January 2010. Controlled Assessment units B321 and B324 are only available for entry in the June series.

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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