

National 5 Media



Course Notes

Course Structure

External Assessment

Each pupil's final mark is made up of the Production Assignment as well as the final exam. The weighting for the final grade is as follows:

Production Assignment – 60 marks – 50%
Question Paper – 60 marks – 50%

The question paper is made up of two sections: 50 marks of questions on texts covered in class and 10 marks for analysing an Unseen text.

Internal Assessments

N5 Media no longer involves any internally assessed units. However, the work in class and assessment practice allows the pupil to cover the material in the old internally assessed units. Therefore if a candidate opts not to sit the exam, there is still the opportunity to achieve Unit passes.

Course Outline

Students will study a range of media throughout the year, such as film, television, advertising, newspapers and radio. All pupils will also have the ability to develop their knowledge and skills in production, researching, planning, making and evaluating their own media texts.

Pupils will be expected to contribute to group and class discussion regularly which will help to build their confidence in articulating themselves in spoken language. Media also helps develop other literacy skills as well as building towards an interest or career in the Creative Industries.

Studying at Home

In addition to revising texts, notes and completing set homework, you should be working to improve regularly at home by reading, watching and listening to a wide range of media texts. Having a broad understanding of different types of texts will enable you to draw links, see patterns and be able to have a fuller understanding of Media.

Useful Websites

www.sqa.org.uk (past paper tab)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects>

Key Aspects

The course is defined by the main aspects of Media:

- Categories
- Language
- Representation
- Narrative
- Audience
- Institution
- Society

Categories

Categories are used to describe Media texts. They include:

- medium
- purpose
- form
- genre
- tone
- style
- other miscellaneous categories such as 'star system' and 'Oscars'.

Language

Language looks at different ways the producer of the Media text create meaning. These are divided into Cultural and Technical codes.

Cultural codes

The cultural code draws on previous common knowledge and actively reproduces it.

- characters
- settings
- props
- slogans
- costume
- symbol
- colour
- dialogue
- sounds

Technical codes

These are codes where technical decisions create the meaning

- Camera
- Sound
- Editing
- Framing/composition
- Lighting
- Font

Narrative

This looks at the way stories and messages in media are shaped or structured. We use narrative structures, codes and conventions to analyse how Media texts create meaning.

Representation

This relates to how people, places, ideas and themes are represented in texts. These have been deliberately ‘constructed’ – they do not happen by accident. Often institutions create pictures of people, places and ideas to put across a particular message.

Stereotyping is also a major part of Representation. A stereotype is a generalised picture we have of a certain type of person, based on common prejudices held within society. Stereotyping is the process whereby a certain feature or characteristic of one social group is represented as being the *central* or *defining* feature of that group.

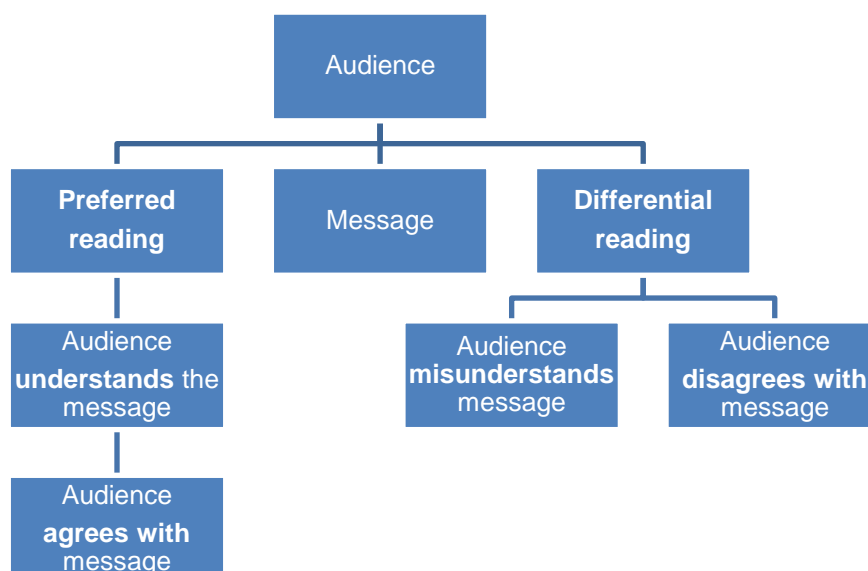
Audience

Without an audience, media itself would cease to exist. Every message, through every medium, is designed with an audience in mind. Very few texts are designed with an extremely broad fan base in mind. Makers of texts tend to focus on a target group first.

We can define target audience by the following demographics:

- age (pre-5s, pre-teens, teens, 18–24, 25–35, 35–55, 55+)
- gender
- nationality
- class (see the JICNARS scale for class distinctions)
- wealth (different from class – how?)
- lifestyle features such as sexual identity, hobbies, pastimes etc.

Audiences also “read” texts in different ways.



Institution

This key aspect refers to the creators and conditions of production from which the text has emerged.

- Who created the text?
- Are they part of a professional production/media company, or independent? How has this affected the outcome of the text?
- Does this creator/company have an identity that the public would relate to and understand? How does this affect the outcome of the text?
- What are the values of this creator/company? Do they have an agenda to persuade/influence their target group, or are they merely intending to entertain? How has this affected the outcome of the text?
- Is this a profit-making creator/company? How has this affected the outcome of the text?

The constraints the creators/producers faced during the planning, making and marketing of the text are also necessary to understand. These can be divided into external and internal constraints.

External Constraints

Imposed on the creator/producer from outside

- health and safety regulations
- copyright issues
- legal constraints concerning public decency
- employment legislation
- restricted access to locations
- costs associated with advertising.

Internal Constraints

Emerge from within the production

- budget constraints
- problems with personnel (availability, wages, demands)
- problems associated with technology.

Society

This key aspect looks at the time and place of the Media text's production and looks at how this has affected its content. This is often integrated with Language, Audience, Institution and also with the Role of the Media.

Role of the Media

At National 5, as well as looking at the key aspects, there is a further requirement to identify and explain the role of media in society.

We do not simply observe and analyse texts in isolation – we look at the contexts which produced the text (institutions) and the context for which texts are produced (audiences). As a result of this, we will be constantly developing an awareness of the role of media in shaping and influencing our culture.

The three key roles we will examine are:

- To achieve a specific purpose
- To meet needs
- To influence behaviour and attitudes

Unseen Analysis

This section of the exam is worth 10 marks. Candidates choose one of three media texts provided in the question paper. These are a film poster, an advertisement and a magazine front cover. The same question is applied to each of the three texts and will ask you to explain in detail how relevant aspects of media literacy have been used with particular purpose(s) and audience(s).

In your answer you must refer two of the following key aspects:

- Language
- Representation
- Categories
- Narrative
- Audience
- Institutions
- Society

A useful strategy is to write about categories, audience and language first. Then move on to other appropriate key aspects depending on the text you have picked.

Use TEA x5

Identify the TECHNIQUE
Back it up with EVIDENCE
ANALYSE what impact

Examples of Unseen Texts



Production Assignment

The Production Assignment is worth 50% of the course. It is sent to the SQA for marking. Therefore, your **deadline** will be at the **end of February or beginning of March**.

To create your Media text, there are four important stages: researching, planning, making and evaluating.

Researching

You will need to find out about:

- Target audience – who is your text aimed at? What are their wants and needs?
- Similar content – what do other texts do?
- Institutional constraints – what external and internal problems might you face?

You will then link this research to your plans in the next stage.

Planning

You have to decide on the content and style of your text, using the key aspects.

- Always use audience and institutions as a starting point.
- What would your audience expect from the text? What preferred readings do you want to produce?
- As an institution, what are you capable of achieving? What constraints will you face and how will you overcome them?
- Categories – what type of text do you want to produce? In particular, what style and tone do you want to achieve?
- Language – what meanings do you wish to create? What is the main message/theme of your text?
- Narrative – what storyline will you produce? How will it be structured?
- Representations – how will you represent characters, settings, ideas and themes in your text?

Making media content

You will by now have clearly defined roles and will have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and the resources (time, money, technology, space) available to you. Now you must produce your content in time and paying attention to health and safety.

Evaluating media content

Once you have created your text, you need to think about it critically. Often thinking about what went well and what you would change for next time is a good way of evaluating your product.

Glossary

Anchorage	How meaning is fixed, as in how a caption fixes the meaning of a picture
Audience	Viewers, listeners and readers of a media text. A lot of media studies is concerned with how audience use texts and the effects a text may have on them. Also identified in demographic socio-economic categories.
Binary Opposites	The way opposites are used to create interest in media texts, such as good/bad, coward/hero, youth/age, black/white. By Barthes and Levi-Strauss who also noticed another important feature of these 'binary opposites': that one side of the binary pair is always seen by a particular society or culture as more valued over the other.
Blog	Short for 'web-log', literally an on-line diary which is generally focused on some subject of interest to the blogger and which allows for readers to post responses, useful links, etc. An aspect of social networking, with many sites such as Facebook featuring blogs; increasingly considered as a viable aspect of journalism.
Brief	Information provided by a client about the content and purpose of a media product. Often contains details of target audience, intended outcome and desired features. Sometimes gives specifics about form/platform.
Catharsis	the idea that a satisfying ending in media texts serves the function of releasing 'pent up' emotion in audiences.
CGI	Computer Generated Imagery, Refers to the (usually) 3-D effects that enhance all kinds of still and moving images, from text effects, to digital snow or fire, to the generation of entire landscapes
Client	Individual or organisation for whom a media product is created; sometimes (although not always) the target audience. Usually originates the Brief.
Commercial Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station or website which relies on advertising and/or sponsorship (for example: ITV, Five, Galaxy, Century FM).
Community Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station which is based in and run by community groups. This may be on based on a restricted service licence, which allows community groups to broadcast for up to a month, or more permanent licenses.
Cut	The normal, sudden transition from one shot or audio sequence to the next. Also the name given to the action of separating scenes or sequences and joining them up in the required order and duration
Demographics	Factual characteristics of a population sample, e.g. age, gender, race, nationality, income, disability, education
Diegetic Sound	Sound whose source is visible on the screen. Non Diegetic sound – Sound effects, music or narration which is added afterwards
Distribution	The process of making sure a feature or short is available to screen in a cinema or at a film festival. Also the process by which films are made available on DVD. Preceded by production and followed by exhibition.
Edit	When used in relation to photography, the process by which an image is treated to optimise it (editing might include cropping, changing the brightness or contrast or using software to add special effects). When used in relation to moving image or audio, the process by which material a director does not wish to use is removed. Used as a noun, an "edit" describes the changes/alterations made during the process of 'editing'.
Feature (Film)	A long-form film, usually produced to be shown commercially at the cinema and often between 80-180 minutes in length (although both shorter and longer feature films exist).
Font	Usually now used to describe 'type families' – different styles of lettering available (mainly) on a computer.
Framing	The process by which a photographer, director or camera operator chooses what to include within a photograph or shot. Can also refer to the process of designing a web page or magazine cover. Linked to mise-en-scène.
Franchise	A series of films, TV programmes, games or other media products based on the same background characters or situations. Often crosses a range of media forms and platforms (for example, Star Wars films, TV series, website, games, toys, etc) Any product which has a sequel or spin-off can be considered the start of a franchise

Gaze	The idea that the way we look at something, and the way somebody looks at you, is structured by the way we view the world. Feminist Laura Mulvey suggests that looking involves power, specifically the look of men at women, implying that men have power over women.
Genre	Style or type of a media product (eg lifestyle magazine, sci-fi film, situation comedy, social-networking website, 'shoot-'emup' game)
Ideology	A set of ideas or beliefs which are held to be acceptable by the creators of the media text, maybe in line with those of the dominant ruling social groups in society, or alternative ideologies such as feminist ideology.
Logo	Usually a simple image, sometimes including the name of a product or company, used to identify that product or company
Mise-en-scène	Linked to framing, the technical name for the choice a director, photographer or camera operator chooses with regard to what is included within a particular shot. Mise-en-scène is linked to mood and genre and can give an audience visual clues about the image or film. For example, including a Christmas tree in a shot would tell an audience roughly when in the year a scene was taking place; including a space-ship would tell an audience they were probably watching a science fiction film or programme.
Mode of Address	The way a media product 'speaks' to its audience. In order to communicate, a producer of any text must make some assumptions about an intended audience; reflections of such assumptions may be discerned in the text (advertisements offer particularly clear examples of this).
Montage	Putting together of visual images to form a sequence. Made famous by Russian film maker Eisenstein in his famous film Battleship Potemkin.
Niche audience/market	'Niche' is a fraction of a total audience or market. A relatively small segment of the audience or market with specific interests and tastes.
Preferred Reading	The interpretation of a media product that was intended by the maker or which is dictated by the ideology of the society in which it is viewed. Oppositional Reading – an interpretation of a text by a reader whose social position puts them into direct conflict with its preferred reading. Negotiated Reading – the 'compromise' that is reached between the preferred reading offered by a text and the reader's own assumptions and interpretations
Pre-Production	Period during which a media product is planned (including, for example, creation of storyboards, flatplans, scripts, mock-ups, etc) Also includes primary and secondary research, focus groups, etc).
Public Service Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station which relies on public funding (ie the licence fee) (for example, BBC1, Radio 1, Five Live).
Regulation	In addition to general UK laws, the media is regulated, or in some cases self-regulated, by a number of regulatory bodies. Broadcast media are regulated by Ofcom, advertising by The Advertising Standards Authority, the newspaper industry by the Press Complaints Commission and film by the British Board of Film Classification.
Shot	A single photograph (when used in relation to still images) or a single take (when used in relation to moving images). Shots can be static or mobile, depending upon the choice of the director and the needs of the scene
Slogan	A catchy, memorable phrase, often used as part of a jingle and forming an element of a house style. Usually fairly simple and repetitive, eg 'A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play'.
Storyboard	A visual breakdown of a script often produced by a director in order to demonstrate to a camera operator or production team how a scene is designed to be shot. Often includes elements of mise-en-scène as well as camera movements, types of shot, accompanying sound and other technical information which a camera operator might need. Might also be used during the editing process. Can be very simple or quite complicated, depending on the needs of the production or the team. Usually produced as part of the preproduction process after a script has been produced.