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# **GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**MEDIA STUDIES  
AS/Advanced**

**SUMMER 2017**

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:  
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### **Annual Statistical Report**

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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**MEDIA STUDIES**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**Summer 2017**  
**Advanced Subsidiary**  
**MS1**  
**MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS AND RESPONSES**

The text for this examination was the music video *Welcome to the Jungle* by Novo Amor produced as part of the global marketing campaign for *Lynx Black* fragrance for men.

This proved to be a rich text that was very accessible for candidates who were clearly well prepared for this question. For many candidates this was their strongest answer. It was encouraging to see that candidates across the mark range were able to analyse the text in detail, employing various degrees of relevant media terminology. They were confident in discussing the codes and conventions of the music video and were particularly strong when discussing technical codes and the more able candidates could, as expected, discuss the impact and effect of specific camera shots, angles and editing techniques. The text allowed candidates to approach their response from a range of different starting points which proved for interesting reading and there were very few purely descriptive answers. There was some excellent, detailed analysis using a wide range of media concepts and theory. The more sophisticated responses explored a range of ideas to give a valid and at times very individual interpretation of the text, showing understanding of the role of the music video in the marketing campaign for *Lynx Black*. Even weaker responses made some attempt to analyse, although some candidates tended to list or describe technical codes and the narrative without analysing the purpose and effect. Others recognised the connotations but failed to then explore them in any detail.

Candidates must be aware that they need to cover all of the bullet points in the question; they are there to help them to structure a response. Some candidates focused on audience and representation at the expense of the focus required. Narrative was the aspect of the question that was handled least well. Although most responses made reference to binary oppositions and/or enigma codes, some centres had several candidates who ignored this bullet point completely and many (otherwise good) candidates tended towards inappropriate application of theory such as Propp. Those candidates who had a clear focus on the bullet points produced a more structured and coherent response.

It continues to be the case that the notes made by candidates in preparation for this question differ greatly in their usefulness. Candidates need to be taught how to make notes that will benefit them in approaching this question.

The range of points made included:

### Technical and audio codes

- Camera movement – audience positioning through pov shots
- Range of shots – shots of crowd, close ups of characters in varied situations, long shots of setting, tracking shots for audience involvement
- Change of POV at the end - close up on young girl. High angle to suggest vulnerability
- Reverse track shots - sense of intimidation, in the 'jungle'
- Camera angles - high to suggest vulnerability and low to suggest dominance
- Use of slow motion, creating a dream like atmosphere
- Slow editing to suggest dream like quality
- Audio track - lyrics reflect images

### Narrative

- Genre conventions
- 'Story' of journey through intimidating urban landscape to 'saviour' at the end
- 'The jungle' as a metaphor for contemporary life
- Use of slow motion to enhance narrative - manipulation of time and space
- Action codes
- Narrative structure - involvement of audience in journey
- Role of character within the narrative
- Avoids series of 'traps' - quest
- Romance at the end: 'happy ending' - resolution

### Visual codes

- Use and effect of muted colours, smoky effect
- Iconography related to dystopian urban setting e.g. graffiti
- Clothing and physical appearance suggesting roles in narrative e.g. cat walk models, 'gangsters' with dogs, young executives
- Iconography linked to urban danger e.g. police horses, police helicopter, 'bling'
- Gesture and body language associated with aggression and intimidation e.g. man beckoning into the car
- Facial expressions related to character roles e.g. aggression of boxer
- Setting and background - universal urban setting to appeal to a range of audiences

The responses to **Question 2(a)** were generally confident and many candidates gained full marks. However, some candidates did write too much for the marks awarded. Some candidates offered a range of different representations of gender rather than the two required and this was self-penalising.

Suggestions included:

- Strong, powerful women e.g. catwalk models
- Women as accessories
- Strong men e.g. gangsters with dogs, police, topless body builder
- Male paparazzi
- Man and woman at the end are innocent and ordinary compared to the other characters; typical *Lynx* representation of men
- Vulnerable female defined by a relationship
- Glamorous women

In **Question 2(b)** the best responses were those that were able to make points that were then backed up by examples from the text. It was important that candidates addressed the 'how' element of the question and explored the techniques employed to construct the representations rather than adopting a descriptive approach. Some candidates, however, explored various representations and this limited the marks they could be awarded as they didn't read the question carefully. The choice of ways selected for 2(a) affected the response for 2(b). Where the examples were clear and relevant there was adequate discussion in this question. There were, however, some simplistic responses linked to inappropriate examples. Weaker candidates adopted a very general approach and did not support their points with specific references to the text itself, others attempted to discuss too many examples - these were obviously less successful responses.

Candidates explored:

- How the lyrics contributed to the representation
- Iconography: clothing, props etc.
- Visual codes: colour, expression, gesture
- Mode of address
- How technical codes, including editing, were used to construct the representation

**Question 2(c)** was designed to allow candidates to demonstrate their understanding of how the purpose of the text affects the representations within the text. The expectation was that the response would be supported by 2/3 specific examples of media texts from different forms. There was a range of ways in which candidates approached this question and it was answered well by those who understood the specific focus of the question and had studied this across a range of examples and forms. However, some candidates failed to address this aspect of the question and offered a general discussion of the representation of gender in media texts, ignoring the required link to the purpose of the text.

The expectation was that candidates demonstrated an awareness of how representations are different according to the purpose of the text, for example, unrealistic and constructed representations in advertisements to sell products, more realistic representations in television dramas to relate to audiences and the use of stereotypes and archetypes in action films for escapism. Popular specific forms used in this response were film trailers and extracts, television advertisements, magazine front covers and music videos. Some candidates chose two examples from the same form e.g. television, which restricted their ability to offer a broader response to this question. There were some excellent explorations of texts, including Robin Thicke's *Blurred Lines* and Beyoncé's *Run the World* music videos that allowed candidates to engage in a debate regarding the representation of gender based on the text's purpose.

This question proved problematic for some candidates and it was evident that many candidates were not prepared to engage in detailed textual analysis of specific texts. It is important for a coherent response that candidates select specific scenes, pages etc. and can analyse these in specific detail. Some candidates engaged in general analysis of, for example, magazine front covers without discussing a specific edition.

It continues to be a concern that some candidates do not display effective essay writing skills; the best responses concluded and gave evidence of an overview. Many candidates moved from one example to the other without the development of a point of view or exploration of purpose.

**Question 3** proved problematic for candidates who had not been adequately prepared in all areas of the specification. The best candidates were able to demonstrate their understanding of the focus of the question: how texts are constructed to target different audiences and to show their understanding of what is meant by a target audience. Stronger candidates were able to develop their answer to discuss a range of points. The best responses used a specific example, e.g. a newspaper front page and then analysed in detail how the text targeted its audience through, for example, the choice of the central image, the use of language and mode of address etc. Weaker candidates failed to establish the focus of the question.

Some candidates saw their opportunity to write down everything they knew about audience theory regardless of whether it was appropriate to the question. There was an over-reliance on Hall's reception theory which was not relevant to the question's focus. There were many candidates who focused on how audiences responded to texts e.g. preferred, negotiated, oppositional rather than the focus of the question which was '**target**'. This was a relevant response only where candidates suggested that the construction of the text/positioning of the audience in order to target them elicited this response. It is vital for a successful answer that candidates read the question carefully and understand what is required of them.

The 'how texts are constructed' element of the question was largely ignored by many candidates. Some candidates gave very brief responses and did not develop their examples in adequate detail. There were many cases where students were too general or descriptive with the texts they referred to, limiting their ability to get into higher levels. For example many centres referred to *Spectre* or *Skyfall*. Stronger centres focused explicitly on the construction of the film's trailers or posters linking well to targeting, whereas weaker responses talked about the film overall or at a general or very descriptive level. Some centres referred to *EastEnders* but did not refer to a specific episode to heighten their focus. Others looked at magazines and newspapers but did not refer to a specific issue.

The expectation was that candidates would demonstrate their understanding through a discussion of:

- Layout and design
- Technical and audio codes
- Mode of address
- Visual codes
- Audience positioning
- Use of language
- Content

Candidates could discuss how the same text targets different audiences or how different texts target a specific audience. Both were acceptable.

There are still problems with structure for this longer essay, as noted in previous years. The best candidates introduced the concept, demonstrated their understanding of audience targeting through the analysis of specific media texts and then summed up their points in a conclusion.

**MEDIA STUDIES**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**Summer 2017**  
**Advanced Subsidiary**  
**MS2**  
**MEDIA PRODUCTION PROCESSES**

In this, the last full year of MS2, it was pleasing to have moderators report that they saw a range of excellent work again this year. The standard of the best candidates is extremely high with some work of a professional standard being produced. Indeed, right across the ability range it was good to see enthusiastic and well-engaged candidates producing work in a variety of media forms, although print productions remain the most popular medium.

Excellent task setting was widespread with only a very small number of centres not fully complying with the requirements of the specification. As the new specification is more prescriptive it is essential that centres familiarise themselves with the new requirements to avoid any mistakes in future. Candidates also need to understand the requirements of the Assessment Objectives.

### **General points**

- Moderators are reliant on the information provided on the cover sheets in order to gain an understanding of how (and where) marks have been awarded and on the conditions of production. Please ensure that these are comprehensively completed to aid the moderation process.
- Annotation of work is a JCQ requirement.
- It is extraordinary how much work is submitted without names and candidate numbers – this, again, impedes moderation. It is quite a challenge when you load up a DVD to find that every film is simply named 'my film!' Please be mindful of this in future.
- Word counts on reports are extremely useful.
- Print work should be submitted to size. It is not acceptable to submit, for example, a double page spread on a portrait A4 sheet.
- Poor printer quality should not be used as an excuse for poor work.
- Pixelated print work is not the fault of a printer but of the camera resolution setting.
- Please read the Moderator Reports. As well as offering guidance and recommendations, these also highlight areas of good practice.

### **Pre-production**

There is often a slight tendency to over reward the pre-production artefacts. These should reflect research undertaken and be technically accurate. Too often they are not. For example, too many storyboards are awarded highly yet have essential details such as editing transitions and shot durations missing or inaccurately used. Scripts must adhere to the technical codes of the format selected and print pre-productions should be to size and reflective of a finished product.

## **Production**

Print continues to be the most popular format for production, although there were some excellent moving image productions submitted. Fewer radio productions were submitted than in previous years but the number of website productions has increased. A significant minority of centres are over-generous with their assessment of production work and teachers must adhere more closely to the assessment criteria in future. Productions shot using mobile phones are on the increase and many of these are very successful – those shot in portrait or a mixture of portrait and landscape, however, tended to demonstrate a lack of awareness of codes and conventions. There was an increase too, in short films for vlogs, which was good to see – but candidates should be mindful of potential target audience and general appeal. Similarly a two minute documentary (for example) needs to be contextualised and not used as an opportunity for a personal rant!

## **Report**

The written element of MS2 carries a high proportion of the marks for this unit and is often completed extremely well by candidates. AO4 links directly to the research undertaken to inform the pre-production work and almost all candidates were able to describe and discuss research they had undertaken. A few too many cohorts, however, discussed the same research texts which detracted from the requirement that research must be undertaken independently and not as a whole class task. A high proportion of candidates are still failing to actually discuss how they used the research to actually inform their own work, which continues to be disappointing. AO2, the evaluation of the production is often less well done. Candidates too often describe the production process but do not critically evaluate their own work by discussing the strengths and weaknesses through a comparison with existing media products. Evaluation is a high order skill and one that many candidates would benefit from closer guidance on.



**MEDIA STUDIES**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**Summer 2017**  
**Advanced**  
**MS3**  
**MEDIA INVESTIGATION & PRODUCTION**

There were several recognisably effective arrangements to both the task setting and assessment of all three elements of this unit. Many centres have developed productive approaches allowing all candidates, across a range of abilities, to highlight their skills, and address the assessment criteria, in a manner designed to ensure they achieve their potential. Similarly, however, it was disappointing to note that a significant number of centres failed to address fundamental concerns previously raised through the moderation process in terms of both task setting and assessment. It is evident that problems at the task setting stage often compromise candidates' capacity to highlight their skills, develop their ideas and meet the assessment criteria. Generous assessment of any or all elements raises issues of parity between centres and, where this was the case, necessitated a suitable adjustment of marks to ensure uniformity across all centres.

Centres are reminded that the purpose of moderation reports is to offer useful, practical advice to ensure centres are aware of how their candidates can best address the assessment criteria and thereby adhere to national standards. It is an expectation that centres will both read and act upon the advice given as well as making use of the wide-ranging variety of exemplar material available on the WJEC secure site. It is gratifying to note when centres follow the advice offered and moderators are always pleased to see where positive changes have been made as a result of centres acting on the advice offered.

MS3 as a unit provides challenge for candidates as it demands high levels, and a broad range, of knowledge and understanding as well as analytical, practical and evaluative skills. Those candidates accessing the higher end of the mark range continue to show impressively sophisticated research, essay writing and production skills combined with insightful evaluative skills.

### **Research Investigation**

The most effective research investigations demonstrate the following features:

- Titles clearly focused on a key concept (narrative; genre or representation) which incorporate between 1 and 3 specific media texts for investigation.
- Primary research, in the form of close textual analysis, which makes use of the skills candidates have developed for MS1.
- Secondary research, which is focused on the key concept identified in the title, which makes use of academic, clearly referenced sources such as textbooks, journals, essays and academically credible websites.
- The **application** of secondary research findings to the primary research, highlighting the development of candidates' conceptual understanding.
- Clearly drawn, thoughtful conclusions which can be used to inform the Production element.

Common issues which limit the effectiveness of the Research Investigation and therefore create problems at the Production and Evaluation stages:

- A holistic approach where the centre prescribes titles; candidates should be offered a menu of options so that they can follow their own interests, leading to higher levels of engagement; where candidates have been prescribed titles they tend to have less successful outcomes.
- Titles that: are too broad; encourage an overview/history of a topic; attempt to explore a concept over more than one media platform; lack focus on a key concept.
- Titles which encourage a focus on audience/audience responses or a more sociological approach to topics, such as the representation of mental health issues.
- An over-reliance on user-generated sources, which lack academic credibility, such as *Wikipedia*, *Slideshare*, *Blogspot* or *Prezi*.
- Overuse of sources that, whilst academically credible, do not have a clear conceptual or media focus, for example sociology or psychology textbooks.
- A lack of referencing skills which in the worst cases may result in issues of plagiarism.
- Description rather than analysis, for example, description of the basic visual codes or a simple narration of the plot at the expense of exploration and analysis of the technical features of the texts.
- Audience research, in the form of surveys, questionnaires and focus groups, which is unnecessary and unlikely to aid conceptual understanding.

## Production

The most effective productions display the following features:

- Clearly demonstrated use of research findings and conclusions to inform the production artefact/s.
- An effective understanding of, and adherence to, the relevant codes and conventions of both the media form produced and its genre – this is usually achieved through detailed analysis and well-drawn conclusions in the investigation.
- A high level of engagement, partly due to the candidate having been allowed to choose their own area for research and develop their production from this.
- Appropriate levels of technical competence for the marks awarded, for example, effective editing and use of original images for higher levels.
- Clearly defined technical roles within group production work, such as editing or camerawork.

Common issues which limit the effectiveness of the Production:

- Limited or tenuous application of the research findings and conclusions. This is often where candidates have produced work in a different media form or genre from the one they investigated, have investigated audience rather than a key concept or have focused on a sociological issue.
- Failure to adhere to codes and conventions of the media platform, including incorrect aspect ratio, most likely due to the candidate not having analysed appropriate texts or not having paid sufficient attention to technical details in completing their investigation.
- Lower levels of technical competence than the specification requires; for example, use of found images only.
- An insufficient amount of work, for example, less than three pages of print or significantly less than four minutes of audio-visual material.
- No individually defined **technical** role within group work, for example, candidates citing pre-production/planning work as their role within a group.

## Evaluation

The most effective evaluations demonstrated the following features:

- A clear understanding of how research investigation findings and conclusions informed the production element.
- An effective ability to analyse technical features of the candidate's own work in relation to the research findings and conclusions.
- Exclusive focus on the relationship between the research investigation findings and conclusions and the production artefact.

Less effective evaluations were characterised by:

- Discussion of the pre-production processes such as storyboarding and scripting.
- Discussion of the production processes such as filming and editing.
- Discussion of the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement of the production element.
- The introduction and discussion of new research/texts which did not appear in the investigation.

## Assessment

There was a clear tendency towards generous assessment, sometimes significantly so, although the majority of centres were close to national standards.

Generosity of marking with regard to the Research Investigations often resulted from candidates either lacking credible and academic secondary sources or failing to incorporate and apply secondary sources to primary research in the form of detailed textual analysis. It is extremely challenging for candidates to achieve the high levels of conceptual understanding required for this unit if they have not made use of appropriate secondary sources. There was a tendency for a significant minority of centres to over-reward candidates who drew research purely from inappropriate, on-line sources such as *Wikipedia*, *Slideshare* and blogs; it should be noted that these sources are often simply mediated opinion on theorists and candidates are better advised to access the original theorists' work. Exclusive use of these user-generated, online sources does not provide the range expected. Other issues with secondary research included a tendency in some centres for candidates to use sociological-focused research or research based purely on the primary texts which does not allow candidates to develop their conceptual understanding. Primary research should be in the form of textual analysis not in the form of audience research.

Over-rewarded productions often lacked the close attention to detail needed for the levels awarded. In some cases, centres are best advised to explore the exemplar material available on the WJEC secure website and pay particular attention to the technical competence displayed at each level; especially the higher levels. In some instances, it was clear that the codes and conventions of the form were not securely used because of the lack of detailed analysis in the investigation. Centres need to be aware that candidates who work in one media form for their Research Investigation and a different form for Production are often making their task more difficult; this is particularly evident where candidates investigate audio-visual texts then produce print-based material, most notably in the form of magazine covers and double page spreads. All candidates should be familiar with the technical details of their media form before beginning the production; where candidates change media forms additional analytical work may be necessary.

Candidates who work in groups must be individually assessed on their technical competence and how far their Research Investigation findings have informed the production on an individual basis. Candidates therefore need to have clearly defined and appropriate technical roles. Groups should be managed so that each group member can reflect their individual Research Investigation findings distinctly in their Production. Since each candidate's contribution is based on how effectively their Research Investigation findings inform the Production, as well as their individual technical contribution, it is extremely unlikely that group members will be awarded the same marks.

### **Administration**

There was much indication of good practice, for example clear evidence of internal moderation, commentary which clearly detailed the reasoning behind marks awarded and work which was well presented. Increasing numbers of centres encouraged their candidates to include a word count which is good practice and helps ensure parity. However, there were a number of centres who failed to annotate candidates' work, making it difficult for the moderator to see how and why the assessment criteria had been applied or how marks were arrived at; this should be addressed next year.

The MS3/1 form must be completed in some detail by both assessors and candidates; not all centres did this. The form should be used to explain the work presented for moderation with all information pertinent to its completion and assessment clearly stated; for example, group roles should be specified by both candidate and assessor. Footage, imagery or music sourced from existing products should be identified along with details of how this may have affected the marks awarded.

Centres which submit work late, without an agreed extension, or present candidates' work without appropriate attention to detail as outlined above, make the moderation process difficult and raise issues with regards to parity across centres and they are requested to address these issues next year.

**MEDIA STUDIES**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**Summer 2017**  
**Advanced**  
**MS4**  
**MEDIA – TEXT, INDUSTRY AND AUDIENCE**

**General Observations**

Despite approaching the end of the specification, it was pleasing to note that many centres continue to update their text choices and maintain a contemporary focus, although there were some perennial favourites (*Doctor Who*, *Strictly Come Dancing*, *The X Factor*, *Sherlock*, *TOWIE* for television; *Skyfall*, *The Dark Knight*, *This is England* for cinema; *The Big Issue* and *Heat* for magazines; *The Daily Mail* and *The i* for newspapers; *Tomb Raider* and *GTA* for computer games; Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and Ed Sheeran for music). Successful newer texts included *Pride*, *Deadpool*, *The Night Manager*, Ariana Grande, *Mad Max* and *Assassins' Creed*. Radio continues to be less popular but is often very successful.

At best, there were some excellent, knowledgeable and articulate responses from candidates who had developed strong transferable skills and could apply these to the question asked rather than to the one they had previously prepared. Candidates do need to be taught to read questions thoroughly and to focus on what is actually being asked - a surprising number did struggle with this. Written communication continues to be a cause for concern with paragraphing, capital letters and apostrophes often overlooked. It was also disappointing to note the number of centres whose candidates had not completed the grid on the front of the answer booklet. This is essential, particularly where there are discrepancies in question labelling or rubric infringements.

There were still a minority of rubric infringements. Candidates need to be aware that they should answer one question on each of the three industries they have studied and may not combine these or use the same industry more than once. Centres should also encourage their candidates to focus on time-management so that they are able to include all three of their chosen texts in each question. Too often, candidates were disadvantaged by writing about only one or two texts.

Some centres are disadvantaging their candidates by not teaching specific issues of magazines/newspapers (or no more than the front covers) or specific episodes of television programmes or radio shows. This leads to very generalised responses which tend to be self-penalising. Candidates discussed, for example, *Al Jazeera* and *BBC News* but, without a specific broadcast, struggled to illustrate their points with the required textual detail. Similarly, in studying the music industry, the 'text' should be the artist, not a single music video or album. Centres teaching advertising should study campaigns rather than single advertisements. This is in the interests of parity, and responses which do not offer adequate breadth will necessarily be self-limiting.

It is also worth noting that there is no requirement to include text, industry and audience in every response, and whilst this holistic approach is entirely valid, it often distracts candidates from focusing on the question set.

## Section A: Text

### **A1: How far do your three main texts reinforce or challenge stereotypical representations?**

This question was very popular and was answered reasonably well, particularly in terms of the film, television and advertising industries. Good candidates were able to apply theory (e.g. Mulvey, Propp, Alvarado) relevantly and with a clear focus on the question. However, a surprising number of candidates were unable to offer a clear viewpoint on what “stereotypical” implies, and only had a simple, one-dimensional understanding of the concept. Too many candidates were unable to offer detailed examples from their texts, particularly in terms of how the representations were constructed to reinforce or challenge stereotypes. This was particularly true of music and print-based texts. Many candidates struggled with the concept of male/female gaze, interpreting this (for film and television particularly) as an intra-diegetic feature of their texts. Several candidates were determined to answer the absent question on narrative, and whilst some discussion of narrative roles/functions was appropriate, this needed to be linked to the “stereotypical” element of the question. Other candidates discussed “stereotypical representations of genre”, confusing stereotypes with codes and conventions, which was rarely successful.

### **A2: “Genre is based on similarity and difference”. Discuss this statement with reference to your three main texts.**

Candidates were reasonably confident with this question and there were some very good responses, combining theory (Neale, Chandler, Buckingham and Metz) with detailed analysis of their texts. Some candidates used this question to download a clearly prepared response to a narrative question, and whilst points were often valid, there needed to be much more explicit links to the question. Weaker responses were often descriptive and rather “list-like”. Candidates who chose the music industry sometimes had a surprisingly limited understanding of music genres. Similarly, there was often little evidence that magazines and newspapers had been studied from a genre perspective. Better responses were often focused on television, film and computer games.

## Section B: Industry and Audience

### **B1: “The aim of a media text is to appeal to a variety of audiences”. How true is this of your three main texts?**

This was a popular question and seemed attractive to candidates. The best responses were articulate and considered, particularly from those candidates who challenged the statement. However, the question had several elements and candidates sometimes struggled to move beyond one of these or lost focus. Most candidates could offer reasons why texts appealed to audiences. However, many candidates overlooked the “variety” part of the question, resulting in a more limited response. Better candidates were able to discuss a range of demographics and engage with the “aim” element of the question. There was also a tendency for candidates to lose focus and drift into audience response, with often inappropriately applied theories - hypodermic model, two-step flow, pick and mix, cultivation - being downloaded at the expense of close analysis of the ways texts “appeal”.

**B2: How important is digital technology in the marketing and promotion of your three main texts?**

At best, this question generated some detailed and well-argued responses. However, for a relatively straightforward question, this was surprisingly poorly answered by a number of candidates. Many responses lacked detailed examples of how digital technology was used, with generalised references to *Twitter* or *Facebook*, but little specific evidence to back up points. Far too many candidates discussed how digital technology was used in production, and without linking this to marketing and promotion, it became irrelevant. Using *Photoshop* to produce posters is a common-sense response. Whilst it was fine to look at other marketing strategies (the “how important” part of the question) and better candidates argued that digital technology was unimportant given the industrial context, audience or purpose of the text, unfortunately some candidates barely mentioned digital technology at all - or included it as an afterthought - when discussing their texts.

**B3: “There is a range of possible responses to any media text”. Discuss this statement with reference to your three main texts.**

This was also a popular question and there were some very sound responses, with most candidates taking a reception theory approach and offering a discussion of preferred, negotiated and oppositional readings. However, many candidates fell down here because of a lack of detailed reference to specific textual examples, with generic and hypothetical points leading to an unsubstantiated argument. This was particularly true of newspapers and magazines where specific issues were not referenced and television and radio without specific programmes. Better candidates (and centres) had learned lessons from last year’s paper and were able to support theory with actual responses which were very detailed and specific in some cases. Where theoretical responses were offered, these needed at least some textual reference to validate candidates’ viewpoints - asserting that, for example, a radical feminist would take a preferred reading of Lady Gaga is not enough.

**B4: To what extent, and in what ways, are your three main texts successful?**

This question was less popular, and whilst there were some excellent responses, often linking “success” to mainstream or independent contexts, many candidates failed to address the question fully and offered common-sense points. Whilst most candidates could enumerate reasons for the success of their texts (valid and rewardable), few addressed the “to what extent” and fewer the “in what ways” parts of the question. Too many candidates answered the question they wanted to see rather than the question that was actually asked. Whilst better responses gave detailed, specific evidence of “success” - e.g. details of sales, box office, increased circulation or donations, development of franchise, awards, critical or public acclaim, others failed to do this, leading to very generalised, often superficial points. A few sophisticated responses argued that “success” for their texts was difficult to define or quantify and offered convincing reasons for this.



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