

MEDIA STUDIES

<p>Paper 9607/01 Foundation Portfolio</p>

Key Messages

For success in this coursework paper, candidates need to complete one of the two set tasks (video or print), keep a detailed blog of the process of the project, and reflect upon their work in the creative critical reflection. Each of these elements needs to be done to a high standard, demonstrating knowledge and understanding, research and planning and appropriate skilled use of media tools. Expectations of evidence from each assessment objective are listed on pages 24–27 of the syllabus. An *Individual Candidate Record Card* needs to be completed for each candidate submitted, with clear comments to show how marks have been arrived at for each assessment objective.

General Comments

There was some very good work submitted for this component, demonstrating detailed research into existing magazines and film openings, which fed into the planning and construction of candidates' own media products. There was some good skill shown in the use of media tools, in both the products and in the creative critical reflections. In the best work, knowledge and understanding of conventions of all aspects of the media products was coupled with comprehensive evidence of the process.

On the whole marking by centres was accurate, with very few marks changed during the moderation process.

Comments on Specific Tasks

Blogs

Centres should set up blog hubs which allow one click access to the individual work of candidates. Typing in long URLs runs the risk of errors. Links need to be checked by centres in advance to ensure that they are working and the finished product should be placed at the top of the blog so that it is clear which is the final version. The best work was comprehensive, with blogposts that followed the whole process of the project and showed clear evidence of research into all aspects which then feed into the finished work.

Creative critical reflections

Candidates who fully addressed the four questions using varied digital formats performed best in this area. There are a number of social tools which enabled really interesting and reflective work, appropriate to the task. There were some excellent voiceover videos with extracts from the finished product and from the process and some really imaginative approaches to which adequate time had been allocated.

Products

Magazines

The syllabus requires candidates to produce the front cover, contents page and a double page spread of a new magazine, including a minimum of four images and made up of entirely original material. On the whole, candidates fulfilled the brief, with understanding of features of design, layout, font choice and size in evidence, as well as lots of well-shot photographs. Some candidates would have benefited from more support in building their skills with the software – a DTP package such as InDesign is really needed for this task – and particularly with their understanding of conventions.

Film Openings

This task involves the production of the first two minutes of an imaginary feature film, including the titles, adhering to commercial cinema conventions. This worked best when candidates had researched film openings relevant to their own genre choice and had developed a systematic understanding of the institutional conventions of opening titles.

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<p>Paper 9607/02 Key Media Concepts</p>

Key Messages

For this examination, candidates need to analyse the extract from TV drama in terms of how it constructs meaning through camerawork, editing, mise-en-scène and sound. They also need to be able to adapt their learning about the media industry they have studied to one of the two questions from Section B.

General Comments

There was a good spread of marks across both sections of the paper, with many candidates showing evidence of thorough preparation, writing at length and supporting points with appropriate examples.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

Stronger responses considered the clip in its entirety and links were formed between different sections of the extract. A lot of candidates were knowledgeable about the programme from previous viewing, but this did not always help in their analysis of the specifics of the sequence. The best responses balanced consideration of the technical codes and were able to link these to the generation of meaning in the sequence. Candidates did best when they considered the way power was established through the use of mise-en-scène and editing of the sequence, exploring the impact of contrasting wide and close-up shots and the use of sound in creating meaning within the sequence.

Section B

Question 2 and 3

The overwhelming majority of responses tackled the area of film, with one centre concentrating on video games. No other media industry was used in the responses. **Question 3** was the more popular and was answered best when candidates had an understanding of the issues and were able to support points with apposite examples. **Question 2** needed clearly contrasting examples to support an argument and in some cases these were very well chosen.

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Paper 9607/03
Advanced Portfolio

Key Messages

For success in this coursework paper, candidates need to complete one of the four optional tasks, keep a detailed blog of the process of the project, and reflect upon their work in the creative critical reflection. Each of these elements needs to be done to a high standard, demonstrating knowledge and understanding, research and planning and appropriate skilled use of media tools. Expectations of evidence from each assessment objective are listed on pages 27-30 of the syllabus. An *Individual Candidate Record Card* needs to be completed for each candidate, with clear comments showing how marks have been arrived at for each assessment objective.

General Comments

Some strong work was submitted for this component, demonstrating detailed research into existing products, which fed into the planning and construction of candidates' own media products. There were some high levels of skill shown in the use of media tools, in both the products and in the creative critical reflections. In the best work, knowledge and understanding of conventions of all aspects of the media products was coupled with comprehensive evidence of the process. In some cases, candidates did not complete all three elements of the set brief; it is important that both major and minor tasks are completed.

Comments on Specific Tasks

Blogs

Centres should set up blog hubs which allow one click access to the individual work of candidates. Typing in long URLs runs the risk of errors. Links need to be checked by centres in advance to ensure that they are working and the finished product should be placed at the top of the blog so that it is clear which is the final version. The best work was comprehensive, with blogposts that followed the whole process of the project and showed clear evidence of research into all aspects which then feed into the finished work.

Creative critical reflections

Candidates who fully addressed the four questions using varied digital formats performed best in this area. There are a number of social tools which enabled really interesting and reflective work, appropriate to the task. There were some excellent voiceover videos with extracts from the finished product and from the process and some really imaginative approaches to which adequate time had been allocated.

Set Briefs

Music Promotion Package

Candidates who demonstrated an understanding of the codes and conventions of music video through detailed research into relevant examples were able to translate this into their own work. The best music videos showed good pace and the ability to lipsynch and edit to the rhythm. Digipacks were generally formatted appropriately, with the best being evidently the result of development over a period of time, rather than an afterthought. Websites for artists often used templates such as Wix to good effect.

Film Promotion Package

The best examples of work here featured pacey trailers which showed a clear grasp of the conventions of the form. Posters and a website which captured the sense of branding were most effective. This task requires candidates to develop a real sense of what the whole film would be like in a simulation of the film industry's marketing practice, so needs to be based upon quite a lot of research into existing examples. The best work showed this and also showed strong skills with photography, editing and image manipulation programs.

Documentary Package

The best work showed a strong engagement with the subject matter coupled with excellent research into the form and the demonstration of strong skills in the making of the texts. Once again, minor tasks were best when they had been done in parallel with the major task.

Short Film Package

At their best, short films made excellent use of actors, locations and narrative. Weaker examples tended to lack structure and showed limited skills with camera and editing. The postcard task needed to draw upon research into similar examples; websites at their best were done well with a clear sense of audience.

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<p>Paper 9607/04 Critical Perspectives</p>
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Key Messages

This paper requires reflection on the coursework undertaken and the skills developed, analysis of one piece of coursework using a theoretical framework, and an extended response on one contemporary media theme.

General Comments

The entries for this component were spread right across the ability range. At the top end there was evidence of high level analytical skill and the ability to write at great length in limited time. There were, however, a number of candidates who did not appear to have been prepared for the topics, with limited material to cite as examples.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

Where candidates understood and had prepared for the question, this was invariably answered very well, covering hardware, software and online technology and reflecting upon the development of their skills with reference to examples. Some candidates did not appear to have been prepared for the possibility of this question and either tried to answer a previous question or simply described some things they had done on their course without regard for relevance.

Question 1(b)

Where candidates had been taught the concept of audience, and had some relevant theory to use, this question was well answered. Where they had not addressed the concept or prepared for the exam, they quickly ran out of material. Strong responses made detailed reference to their own production and applied theory effectively.

Section B

The most popular topics were post-modernism, which was answered very well, and media in the online age which tended to be answered poorly. There were two answers on regulation, one of which was very sound and one which appeared to be a topic selected at random, and two on global media which again seemed to be answered without preparation.

For all topics, candidates need to be prepared with case studies and reference to theoretical frameworks, so that they can apply these to examples in the service of their argument. Clearly for post-modernism, this had been done, with a range of examples from film, TV, video games and the internet which allowed candidates to make sophisticated arguments and to discuss the work of Baudrillard and others. For media in the online age, it appeared as if candidates were responding on the basis of simply being alive in the online age, with vague assertions, few concrete examples and an absence of theory.