

# AQA A Level Media Teacher Guide

Whilst general guidance can be given on each product, this has already been fully covered in the 200+ lessons EDUSITES has provided for each subscriber – the 125+ covering the core framework and the 75+ where the framework knowledge and learning was applied in detail to each of the set products.

The purpose of the revision unit is to signpost **approaches and strategies** to the effective application of their knowledge and understanding to the set products and the most effective ways of responding to the tasks set. **To prepare for the examination requires teachers to direct each student's attention to those specific areas where detailed revision and study of the products would be most effective** - something that goes beyond the capacity available in just lesson time or this unit.

In this unit, we provide **exemplars of strategies** that **can be applied to meet all of the demands of the exam**. We supply examples, but the main idea is to indicate strategies that enable you to develop ideas of your own as to how each student might apply these to each product.

**The expectation is that you have covered the ideas dealt with in the EDUSITES lesson units targeted at this examination:**

1. **Considering how media production shapes audience attitudes and behaviour - to have developed the knowledge and learning as to how to compare products from different times with an understanding of what those times were like.**
2. **An awareness that there are values contained in products to do with attitudes towards different groups of people, and these can be seen in how different groups are represented or under-represented.**
3. **To have studied similar types of products (as indicated as best practice/essential in the exam board guidance) in order to consider how the set exam products reflect generic ideas, the conventions of such products and the audiences that consume them.**
4. **An understanding of the media industry and institutions – the intentions of these producers of mass media products and the attempts to control and regulate these.**

## Lesson 1 – First principles

The slides review the core theoretical models of the examination.

**We are required to study all elements – industry, audience, media language, representations, social/historical context and era.**

**Reinforce the idea that all these ideas are interlinked** - we need understanding of both the media language and representations involved in the marketing of products as this relates directly to a sense of **the intended audience** and how the product was constructed to appeal to that audience. The cycle of production and audience are inextricably linked - we cannot consider the structure of the narrative or marketing practices without a sense of who these were targeted at.

The examination is **synoptic** – they are required to draw on all of their learning in the tasks even if it is not directly referenced as such. To coin the old proverb: it doesn't matter where we start to eat the elephant, it is always a matter of one bite at a time.

**Tasks 1C – 1D** are about making connections. If they can make connections between the set products they will start to see that all products are linked by the core framework elements. **This is very useful for the unseen tasks in the exam.**

*Use slides 32-34 as research/review areas. Can they apply this knowledge to each of their products? If not, then these are key learning/revision elements for their revision planning.*

**Lesson 1: First Principles: Slides 10-35**

**Objectives:**

**Knowledge : to develop ideas about strategies for discussing media products**

**Learning : to build ideas of how to apply the skills acquired to products**

**Understanding : to evolve understanding by applying learning to the set products**

**Starter/Loop Activity (5 minutes)**

[Resource Pack Slide 11: Task 1A] Pupils asked to consider the question from the **Lesson**

**Resource: *Social Network DVD cover image***

**Prepare the Learning (5 minutes)**

Share the objectives. Remind students of the objectives we are working towards meeting, and that this unit is designed to help them prepare for the two papers of the examination. All of the strategies are transferable. Focus on the ideas of the starter – the way we think about media and media language.

**Construct the Learning [25 minutes]**

**Slide 12 sets out the structure of the EDUSITES strategy and where the unit sits in this.**

**Slide 13:** review their knowledge of the assessment objectives. These are key to success. Understanding what the examiner is looking for ensures you provide the relevant ideas, theoretical models and examples.

Slides 14-15: Stress that **the purpose in these lessons is guidance as to proven exam and learning strategies that enable them to apply their acquired learning and understanding from the rest of the Media course.**

Slides 17-21 detail the theoretical models covered in previous EDUSITES core media framework units that are required in responses to the set products. Be certain that students are aware that they must review their knowledge and understanding of these and apply them as necessary. This is all about demonstrating understanding. **Try the slide 16 pop quiz for matching theorists to theories and relevant framework elements before showing the slides.**

**Slide 22:** they see their learning as transferable

Slides 23-24: the interlinking of all of the core framework elements

**Slide 25 Task 1C:** respond to the general question regarding the products on the slide. We need to establish a baseline for their current understanding.

**Slide 26 Task 1C:** initiate thinking around connections and comparisons of products and link this to the thoughts on slides 27-28.

**Application of Learning [20 minutes: class discussion and individual work]**

**Slide 29 Task 1D:** Use the scaffold of prompts to start the study of media language and representational elements of the set products and that these are most evident in their DVD covers.

Slide 30 offers an exemplar based on a product that is not part of their set study.

**Slides 31-34** offer ideas for home learning/revision.

**Plenary/Closing the Loop [5 minutes feedback to class by individuals]** Slide 35: Traffic light the learning.

## Lesson 2 – Breaking the codes

**Media Language** is the essential toolkit. The slides review the core theoretical models of the examination.

**In researching each product, we have explored specific ideas. These have focused on:**

- **How media language is used to construct narrative and representation**
- **Identifying target audience**
- **The needs of this audience**
- **The drives of the production** (*the institution that makes/broadcasts the product*)
- **The impact of these on society** (*what is communicated to whom, with what intention, what outcome*)

**If they cannot supply responses or ideas for each of the above for each of the set products, then you have just identified another key element for their revision planning.**

**Task 2B reviews** knowledge and understanding – an underpinning exam criterion. Apply to the magazine product and then to their own set print products.

**Task 2C** evolves knowledge and understanding. The idea is to focus on how media language constructs audience and in turn links this element to context. In doing so, we are encouraging a wider understanding of the complexities and inter-relatedness of their learning. **We are breaking understanding out from knowledge – a key criterion in all marking schemes and in examiner training for recognising the top grades.** Apply to the product and then to their own set products.

We address post-modernism with slide 44 – a key media issue for the examination board and for accessing the higher grades.

Use the learning scaffold to reinforce their prior learning and then use **Task 2D** to test that understanding. **If there are gaps/issues, then we have identified a further element for detailed revision planning.**

## Lesson 3 – Representing audience

We always tell students that representation is the element of study that defines Media Studies as a subject. Whilst language borrows from English and Art, audiences from Sociology and Psychology, institutions from Economics and Business, representation is an idea that no other academic discipline explores.

For the examination **students must be clear as to what representation involves.**

**The way that ideas and people are presented to us is important in shaping how we respond to these products** – how we see and think about the world and the people in it. **If groups are repeatedly presented to us in a negative manner this will influence how we think about that group.**

- Media products' representations are based on **the simple premise of wanting to be successful products commercially and artistically** – though this too often involves a choice between the two.
- To be successful **media products have to resonate with their audience** – be felt to **share common ideas and values about the context they exist in.**
- This means that **products often recycle formats and ideas** that have already proven to be successful with audiences.

**They must be clear for the examination responses that: the way that the manipulation of such elements aligns the audience** – shaping not only the anticipated response to the content, but **spilling out into the real world treatment and attitudes towards others - in particular around gender, ethnicity and social status - based on ideas established by patterns of media exposure and consumption as being 'true' or 'real'.**

**Task 3B** – knowledge and understanding – an underpinning exam criterion. Apply to the magazine product and then to their own set print products.

The slide 52 on tropes and stereotypes is designed to prompt their thinking about the way these are applied in the set products. In particular they need to be able to ask/respond of each product:

*What elements are seen to define ideas of social status?*

*Which of these are approved/disapproved?*

*How/why has this evolved across the eras you have studied in researching the set products?*

**The clip slide 51 Task 3C** is effective in supporting students in considering the wider issues of representation in TV and moving image products. **Slide 52** asks that they apply this to the set products with an emphasis on the wider ideas of post-modernism and the models of Baudrillard etc.

**Again, if they struggle to apply these to the set TV product options this has identified an area for revision.**

## Lesson 4 – Identities

Where would any Media lesson be without The Daily Mail? Newspapers are a very good source for consideration of identity as they directly address the values and world view of large mainstream groups.

Stress in their revision planning that they need to be clear that they can demonstrate in discussion of each product **they have learned that all products are made with a very specific audience in mind. This means that each product contains narratives, events, characters and values that are meant to construct a particular demographic.**

- In doing so products tend towards **confirmation bias** – repeating ideas and values that they know their audience deem acceptable.
- Such a re-running of the same ideas creates a certain **repetition in media products**; they all tend towards **homogeneity** - being *'the same'*. This is particularly true of products aimed at a mainstream audience, such as terrestrial TV stations like BBC1 and ITV, newspapers, lifestyle magazines, vlogs etc.
- We are also aware that in consuming media products **an audience is seeking fulfilment of needs**. Media products construct themselves so that they generate **expectations in the audience** as to how such needs will be satisfied.

These ideas are essential in their revision planning. **If they are uncertain, these must be a focus for their revision. Task 4B** offers an opportunity to test this.

**Task 4C** is a brilliant product for challenging sense of identity in others. The direct mode of address reveals that **the character understands the audience stereotyping of a middle-aged woman and of their expectations of the crime genre protagonist and that her role challenges these.**

**Slide 59** offers ideas for expanding their revision to be certain that they understand these ideas/issues in the set products. **Again, if they are struggling with this, we have identified another element for the revision plan.**

## Lesson 5 – Contexts

Each product is clear in demanding students understand the impact of the era in which a product is made on that set product. Much of the work here is around the **influence of each era's cultural values and attitudes** on the **content, narrative, representations & values of mass media products.**

They must demonstrate in exam responses **the fact that all products are of their times.** This means that each product contains narratives, events, characters and values that are meant to **construct a meaningful experience** for audiences of **that era.**

**Products are made by institutions who require commercial success** with the audience of that era. Even if they may reject this, **those that make the product are themselves a product of their times,** carrying with them values, attitudes and priorities that leave a clear trace in the work they produce.

The meaning/response equation identified by Hall and others tells us that an audience may accept/negotiate/reject the values and messages of a product but that this response is always based on **the elements of their era** – what we have learned to call **the zeitgeist; the priorities and values deemed to be of greatest importance to the lives of those people of that era and that this is most often shaped by its media products.**

**Task 5B** offers a Rolling Stone cover that very effectively can be said to be responding to changes in the zeitgeist. Consider how this cover would have been 10, 20 or 30 years ago by looking at the covers and task on slide **Task 5C.**

**Task 5D and 5E** both use the *Apeshit* video with parental advisory lyrical content. There are plenty of examples around that could be substituted (the *This is America* by Childish Gambino, *Formation* by Beyoncé, *Letter to the Free* by Common, *Borders* by MIA, *Melanie Fiona I Tried* etc.)

but we use this as it stimulates debate on the key issues of celebrity, art, music and identity being defined by the contexts of the product.

- **Compare representations in your set products with the ideas of the contemporary zeitgeist stated here – EG: *look for similarities with the post 2010 era products and the differences/evolution from the pre 2010 products.***
- **In what ways do your set music video products sustain the ideas of the zeitgeist of their era?**

This video at A Level offers so many opportunities for wide ranging discussion that tests so much of what they have learned and the extent to which they can apply knowledge/learning as true understanding. **If they can do this well, then they are ready!**