

Exam practice sample answers

Paper 1

Question 1

Analyse the representations in Sources A and B. Use Van Zoonen's concept of patriarchy in your answer.

[10]

Sources A and B can be found in the sample assessment material on the OCR website at: www.ocr.org.uk/Images/316674-unit-h409-01-media-messages-sample-assessment-material.pdf.

Sample answer

Both images have been selected to emphasise the Prime Minister's vulnerability and, in the *Sun*, tearfulness. Both newspapers have selected a photograph of Cameron looking close to tears and the *Sun's* use of a close-up emphasises the expression on his face. This meaning is anchored in the *Sun* by the standfirst stating 'Teary PM didn't want Brexit grief' and the use of the headline 'Why should I do the hard s**t?' that suggests an almost child-like sense of being picked on, plus the use of a swearword suggests a man losing control. The image in *The Times* suggests Cameron's vulnerability by his downward gaze and the way he is holding on to his wife's hand as if for emotional support. The long shot allows the audience to see the location – outside number 10 Downing Street – which further emphasises how unusual his stance and facial expression are, as this is an iconic site of power and authority, within which the Prime Minister usually demonstrates his or her dominance and control.

This can be read, from Van Zoonen's point of view, as confirming the patriarchal ideology of male power in that the story has extra news value precisely because it contradicts the dominant stereotypes of masculinity and leadership – big boys don't cry and political leaders demonstrate their power and control. On the day after a momentous political decision both newspapers have chosen to concentrate on the personal effect on the Prime Minister, though *The Times* balances this with more objective headlines. Moreover, a woman is present in these images only as the man's partner, confirming Van Zoonen's analysis of patriarchal assumptions about female roles – she is there to be looked at as a 'dutiful wife'. In this case the patriarchal stereotype in the image in *The Times*

is reflecting the real role that the Prime Minister's wife played.

The fact that Cameron's resignation dominates the front pages reinforces the message that Westminster politics takes precedence over other events, reinforcing the patriarchal assumption that the public realm of stereotypically masculine activity and leadership is more important than the private realm of stereotypically feminine nurturing. This is particularly true of the image in the *Sun*, which excludes the wifely support shown in the image in *The Times*. In the latter, her support is shown, but ignored in the headlines.

The way in which the representations depict Cameron's struggle to fit his masculine role does demonstrate Van Zoonen's argument, following Butler, of the performativity of gender. The fact that a powerful man struggles to maintain his masculine performance is unusual enough to warrant front-page photographs. This suggests both that gender is performed, at least in part, and that deviations from the expected performance will be commented upon.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of representations to analyse Sources A and B.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate analysis of representations in Sources A and B, which consistently provides logical connections and a good line of reasoning.
- Precise and relevant reference to Van Zoonen's concept of patriarchy to support analysis of Sources A and B.
- Reference to Sources A and B is detailed and accurate.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 2

How far has genre influenced the media language in Sources A and B?

In your answer you must:

- outline genre conventions in British newspapers
- analyse the contrasting use of media language in the sources

- make judgements and reach conclusions about how far genre has influenced the media language used. [15]

Sources A and B can be found in the sample assessment material on the OCR website at: www.ocr.org.uk/Images/316674-unit-h409-01-media-messages-sample-assessment-material.pdf.

Sample answer

Genre conventions, particularly those distinguishing ‘quality’ and ‘red top tabloid’ newspapers, are still distinct in British newspapers but they are becoming more blurred over time. The quality press originally retained the broadsheet newspaper size as the popular press went tabloid, and this meant that the two types of newspaper looked very different. Broadsheet newspapers had traditional mastheads, used serif fonts for headlines in sentence case, used a more formal language register, had several news stories on the front page, relied more on hard news and less on images. Popular newspapers, on the other hand, had white-on-red sans-serif mastheads, used capitalised sans-serif fonts for often banner headlines, used a more informal language register, had fewer stories on the front page, relied more on soft news about celebrities and allowed photographs to dominate the page layout. These conventions have been complicated by the existence of the middle-market tabloids, such as the *Daily Mail*, which are generic hybrids, and the change from broadsheet to tabloid format for most quality newspapers except the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times*. The growth of celebrity culture means that celebrities are more likely than previously to feature in the quality press.

The two extracts use different media language and this often reflects generic conventions. The typography fits the generic conventions, with the use of a bold sans-serif font for the *Sun*’s masthead that connotes modernity and a serif font for *The Times* that connotes tradition. The layout also fits the conventions, with a high ratio of image and headline to copy in the *Sun* compared to the greater proportion of copy in *The Times* with its more formal column design. The language also fits the conventions, with the use of more colloquial language in the *Sun*, such as ‘Cam quit’ compared to the more formal register in *The Times*, such as ‘Prime Minister announces resignation’. Images also fit the conventions, with the use of a close-up in the *Sun* which emphasises the more personal angle taken by the newspaper; the two shot in *The Times* fits the harder news angle taken of the ramifications of the Brexit vote. The use of colour is also generic: the *Sun* uses the saturated red of the popular press that connotes excitement while *The*

Times uses less colour, such as the blue–grey used for ‘SATURDAY’ that connotes sophistication.

However, there are other elements that might affect the media language, such as the different target audiences of the two newspapers, the values and political leaning of the newspapers, and the demands of this type of news story. The fact that both newspapers have featured Cameron’s resignation on the front page reflects the enormous significance of this story, which is why the *Sun* has partly broken with tabloid conventions by featuring a hard news story on the front page. The *Sun* was a Brexit-supporting newspaper and the coverage on the front page incorporates this viewpoint with the photo and language connoting Cameron’s petulance at losing. *The Times* was a Remainer newspaper and the language connotes the danger of the set of events that have been set in train. While the *Sun*’s coverage aims to give a personal angle for its more downmarket audience, *The Times* offers a more objective angle for its upmarket audience. Both newspapers use images of the effect on Cameron to illustrate the momentous events that this story depicts.

In conclusion, genre has influenced the media language used in these two extracts. However, other factors are related to genre and have also influenced the media language. *The Times* has a more subtle use of media language as befits its genre, target audience and less dogmatic political viewpoint, the *Sun* has a more sensational approach as befits its genre and target audience. The fact that a very large photo dominates the front page of *The Times* reflects both the importance of the story and the way in which tabloid and broadsheet distinctions have become increasingly blurred in recent times.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of newspaper genre.
- Relevant and accurate use of terminology.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate analysis of media language in Sources A and B, which consistently provides logical connections and a good line of reasoning.
- Highly developed and accomplished judgements and conclusions regarding how far genre has influenced the media language used in the sources.
- The response demonstrates a highly developed and detailed line of reasoning which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.

It would earn 11–15 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 3

Explain how the political context in which newspapers are produced influences their ownership and regulation. Refer to the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* newspapers you have studied to support your answer. [10]

Sample answer

The concept of ‘press freedom’ is politically significant – it is seen as a cornerstone of modern democracy as representative democracy relies on an informed populace to vote rationally and choose the best government for the country. It is in this political context that newspapers have been allowed to be more opinionated than other media, such as radio and television, which are required to be impartial in their news coverage. One famous *Daily Mail* headline, for example, ‘Fury over plot to let 1.5m Turks into Britain’ would not have been allowed on television. The *Guardian*’s investigation of the Leave campaign’s misuse of funds has been accused of being a blatantly anti-Brexit viewpoint that would have to be balanced by the opposite view on television.

Newspapers are seen as important agents in political debate as they are allowed to comment upon and criticise policies from their own standpoint. The Labour Party, for example, would expect support for its ideas from the *Daily Mirror* and, to a lesser extent, the *Guardian*, and might think twice if these were opposed to an idea. The Tory Party would likewise expect support from the *Telegraph* and the *Mail*.

In order for the press to act as the watchdogs of democracy, anyone must be free to set up a newspaper if they wish and there should be no censorship or any other form of government interference. This means that newspapers have operated within a free market and have undergone concentration of ownership without government interference. Traditionally, ‘press barons’ used ownership of newspapers in order to gain political influence. Lord Rothermere, the *Mail*’s owner, used its pages to campaign for fascism in the early 1930s, for example. However, the current owner is reported not to interfere in the running of the newspaper and personally opposes its strongly pro-Brexit stance. Ownership of the press does give some power to shape political discourse, as Leveson concluded in his report. One major influence of proprietors on politicians has been to support policies allowing cross-media ownership or holding back from regulation. The *Guardian* is owned by the Scott Trust, which was set up to ensure the editorial independence of the newspaper and its tradition of liberal journalism, so it is not used by an owner for propaganda purposes.

Regulation of the press has been the subject of much political debate – many times the press has been warned by politicians that it cannot continue practices such as invasion of privacy and chequebook journalism. When this came to a head over the Millie Dowler phone-hacking affair, the Leveson Inquiry recommended self-regulation but by an agency that was recognised by a panel appointed by the government as meeting Leveson’s standards. This was seen by the press as an attack on press freedom and is being vigorously fought. The *Daily Mail* has joined IPSO, the non-Leveson compliant regulator. The *Guardian* has not joined either regulator.

Assessment comment

This answer fits both the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political contexts and their influence on newspaper ownership and regulation.
- Answer is well supported by detailed and accurate reference to the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits both the criteria.

Question 4

Evaluate the usefulness of one of the following in understanding audiences for online newspapers such as the *Guardian* and the *Mail Online*:

EITHER

Gerbner’s cultivation theory

OR

Shirky’s ‘end of audience’ theory. [10]

Sample answer

Shirky’s ‘end of audience’ theory was designed to explain the changes in media audiences brought about by the online media, so is a useful theory for thinking about the audiences for online newspapers. Shirky argues that the online and participatory media bring about a change in the audience from atomised consumers addressed by centralised media to consumers as producers, due to the user-generated content allowed by online media. Online newspapers are more likely to use ‘citizen journalism’ with material taken from social media, and to encourage comments and participation from the audience, and so Shirky’s emphasis on the online role of the amateur does apply here.

The *Guardian* website carries an invitation to send in information about a story, thus encouraging

citizen journalism. The site attracts large numbers of comments on its opinion pieces, which may argue with the original journalism or may start a debate within the comments section. Shirky argues that amateur producers value autonomy, competence, membership and generosity, and these values may be evidenced in some comments on *Guardian* opinion pieces, where people have dedicated a large amount of time to create a detailed argument for the benefit of the other readers. The *Guardian* has tried to harness this ideal with its membership scheme.

The *Mail Online* elicits comments on its news stories, which are often selected to resemble social media postings and to encourage user comments rather than the harder news stories on the *Guardian* website.

Shirky argues that the participatory media have moved from the traditional ‘filter then publish’ model of professional media producers to the ‘publish then filter’ model of participatory media. Online newspapers retain features of the old model in that they rely on professional journalism for their brand value and apply codes of professional ethics – audiences will expect prior filtering of ‘real’ news. Audience comments are a different matter. Those on the *Guardian* website are moderated, so there is a filtering process applied retrospectively, as in Shirky’s model. The comments on the *Mail Online* are unmoderated.

Shirky argues that the online media means that the audience has changed from predictable mass to unpredictable participation creating value for each other. This is likely to be more true of participatory media providing fully user-generated content, such as Wikipedia or YouTube, rather than the online version of traditional media such as newspapers, where much of the traditional model remains, especially the positioning of audiences as *Guardian* readers or *Mail* readers by the newspaper adopting a consistent world-view. However, the theory does point us towards important aspects and implications of online versions of newspapers.

Assessment comment

This answer fits both the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media audiences to evaluate either Gerbner’s cultivation theory or Shirky’s ‘end of audience’ theory.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate evaluation of the usefulness of either Gerbner’s cultivation theory or Shirky’s ‘end of audience’ theory in understanding audiences for online newspapers.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits both the criteria.

Question 5

Explain how representations in music videos are chosen to promote the artist(s). Refer to **one** of the music videos you have studied to support your answer. [10]

Sample answer

Music videos use representations both to fit the meaning of the song and to promote the artist, so engaging with their target audiences. Music videos will attempt to represent the artist in a way that emphasises key aspects of their brand image, such as their performance prowess, sexual allure, authenticity, roots within a community or their artistry. The videos might construct an image of the target audience, or one that the audience can identify with. The representations might construct a world of glamour and sophistication or another positive value that might transfer to the artist and to their fans.

The Fatboy Slim video, for example, constructs a surreal and exotic social world whose wit and high production values are designed to transfer to the artist, whose videos are often sophisticated and media literate. The video is unusual in that it does not represent the artist, except in this indirect manner. Instead it creates a parallel diegesis using a linear narrative to create a fictional world, a sun-kissed, happy-go-lucky paradise that fits the positive stereotype of the Caribbean established in tourist representations and films such as the Bond franchise. The narrative focuses on the anarchic power of music to disrupt everyday life and established authority; the tape that arrives mysteriously in the post contains the music track ‘Ya Mama’ with a driving beat that causes a range of characters to lose control of their body movement, ending with the police chief, to the delight of his subordinates. In this way the representations are illustrating the power of dance music and reflecting the anarchic and anti-authoritarian culture of dance music. The Caribbean setting may be a tribute to the role of Afro-Caribbean culture in dance music, though this is not a self-representation as the artist is White and British and the production company is Swedish. However, by associating himself with Caribbean culture, the artist is perhaps trying to gain authenticity, especially as the video deliberately avoids any suggestion of glamour – the protagonists are down-at-heel and slightly ludicrous in representation, and the dusty mise-en-scène is anything but glamorous.

The video does not portray the audience in any way, but suggests, firstly, that they might identify with the representation of music taking over the body and

serving to transcend everyday life, and secondly, that the audience will be amused onlookers in the video – identifying with the camera and the production rather than the characters. The representations position the audience as more sophisticated than the characters, internationalist in outlook, comfortable with an ethnically mixed world, and sufficiently media literate to follow the use of intertextuality and the cyclical narrative structure.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of representations in music videos.
- Clear, precise and balanced explanation of how representations are chosen to promote the artist(s) in music videos.
- Answer is supported by detailed and accurate reference to one set music video.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 5

Explain how the media language in advertising incorporates the brand image the advertisers wish to convey. Refer to the advertisements for *Old Spice* and *Lucozade* you have studied [on pages 81–82] to support your answer. [10]

Sample answer

Advertising aims to build brand awareness and brand image. Consumers need to be able to recognise a brand if it is to be at all successful, then they need to associate the right connotations with the brand to feel it is the brand for them. This brand image is built up by the product itself, how it is packaged, its price, where it is sold, and how it is advertised. All these should be linked in one brand identity. In the case of Lucozade, for example, the packaging uses yellow and blue as the dominant colours, so the advert reflects this with its blue background and black on yellow ‘In a Different League’ slogan and the use of the Lucozade logo. The Old Spice advert is somewhat more subtle – the advert does not reflect the red and white packaging design, but does include the palm trees featured in that design and the Old Spice logo.

The Lucozade brand aims to be associated with competitiveness; hence the use of language such as ‘In a Different League’ and the use of a successful footballer, Gareth Bale. It aims to be associated with the power of science; hence the use of language such as ‘Scientifically Proven’ and the cool branding

colours such as blue to connote objectivity and the use of a very cold light on Gareth Bale to create a technophile appeal. It aims to be associated with positivity; hence the use of language such as ‘Lucozade Yes’. The advert is simply laid out to suggest connotations of boldness, reinforced by the use of capitalised sans-serif fonts.

The Old Spice brand aims to be associated with masculinity; hence the use of a conventionally attractive male model and images suggesting stereotypically masculine pleasures – such as looking at women and fishing – or stereotypically masculine mishaps – such as being shipwrecked and stranded on a desert island. To undercut this rather traditional approach the advert adopts a self-mocking tone, with a ludicrous claim about the anti-perspirant in the copy and the surreal visual image of the volcano head and the beach as ‘clothing’. This mocking tone and the very hand-drawn quality of part of the advert, which further draws attention to its artificiality, all connote a sophisticated postmodern quality, a quality that the advertisers hope will transfer to the brand and attract their target audience. The media language still manages to suggest that the brand is magically transporting the audience to an exotic and exciting world, even while it appears to parody this very old advertising technique.

The Old Spice advert is part of a campaign to reposition the brand – to change the brand image from a rather tired and traditional one to a more ironic and magical one that attracts a younger, more sophisticated audience. Hence the use of striking media language to emphasise this change. The Lucozade advert, by contrast, is continuing a long-established brand strategy of creating a sporting, competitive, scientific and positive brand image. In this case, the media language needs to do less work as it is reinforcing rather than changing the brand image.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of media language in advertisements.
- Clear, precise and balanced explanation of how media language is chosen to incorporate the brand image in advertisements.
- Answer is supported by detailed and accurate reference to both set advertisements.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 5

Explain how the representations in magazines reflect their contexts. Refer to *The Big Issue* covers you have studied [on page 92] to support your answer. [10]

Sample answer

The front covers of magazines are like adverts for the magazine, so in the same way as with advertising they tend to reflect the influence of consumerism. This is particularly true of lifestyle magazines, where images and descriptions of lifestyles reflect our consumer society's ideals of a 'good life'. Magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, for example will often offer advice on how to look better, improve your life or be a better person. *The Big Issue* magazine is designed to help homeless people and so tends to have a more political, more altruistic and less consumerist focus. For example, one magazine front cover studied featured Martin Luther King with a headline about 'What Happened to the Dream?' This suggests a concern with the plight of minorities in America rather than self-improvement or retail therapy. The second cover featured David Tennant talking about leaving *Doctor Who*. Although this reflects consumerism by being about television and celebrities, the focus was more on how the role had affected him as a person and this was stressed by the rather harshly lit photo of him looking anxious, as if caught in the spotlight.

The Big Issue magazine reflects its production context in supporting the homeless by representing homeless people and their concerns prominently in the magazine. In this way, it is correcting a systematic under-representation of homeless people in the media, an under-representation that might be related to the fact that homeless people are a 'problem' for consumerist culture.

Celebrity culture is a major influence on magazines as lifestyle magazines, in particular, often feature celebrities on the front cover as the face of the magazine. Even in *The Big Issue* this is a factor as the two covers sampled represent David Tennant and Martin Luther King and expect the audience to recognise and understand the cultural role of these two figures without explanation. Martin Luther King is considered so iconic that the cover copy doesn't even name him.

Multiculturalism has influenced representation in magazines as it is now not considered unusual for cover models to come from a range of races and ethnicities. This should be especially true of a political lifestyle magazine such as *The Big Issue*, though its cover representations are often of White

people. The Martin Luther King cover uses the positive stereotypes of Martin Luther King and the 1960s civil rights movement to signify the 'dream' of racial and ethnic equality and the image of the leader in a far-seeing pose suggests positive stereotypes of political leadership. The cover expects audiences to be able to adopt the perspective of people of colour without difficulty, whereas liberal news sources in the 1960s would have covered the events sympathetically, but from a more 'outsider', White perspective.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of representations in magazines.
- Clear, precise and balanced explanation of how representations reflect their contexts in magazines.
- Answer is supported by detailed and accurate reference to two magazine front covers.

It would earn 7–10 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 6

Analyse why *The Big Issue* magazine has used an intertextual approach to Brexit on its front cover.

In your answer you must:

- analyse the use of intertextuality to create meaning in the source
- make judgements and reach a conclusion about the advantages of this use of intertextuality on *The Big Issue* magazine cover. [15]

The source – Source C – for this question can be found in the sample assessment material on the OCR website at: www.ocr.org.uk/Images/316674-unit-h409-01-media-messages-sample-assessment-material.pdf.

Sample answer

The pastiche of Abba lyrics suggests an affectionate attitude towards the group and/or confidence that the lyrics are so culturally embedded that they will be instantly recognisable. Either way, the audience are positioned as knowing about Abba. The use of these lyrics connotes an irreverent attitude towards politicians, which is emphasised by the satirical effect of placing politician's heads on ill-fitting bodies. Further, using a mainstream pop group as the basis of the intertextual references and images of the politicians at their most performative – e.g. Cameron's pout and Johnson's wide-mouthed sideways stare – suggests a preferred meaning that

the politicians are courting popularity, striking an attitude, and strutting on a stage.

Reference to a group from the 1970s may refer to the referendum being a re-run of that in the 1970s. This is also suggested by the 1970s costumes and what look like 1970s style cork tiles. The anchoring text 'The winner takes it all' connotes both the significance of the event and that the magazine is not taking a clearly partisan position in relation to the referendum, and continues the intertextual conceit. The 'singers' all suggest their position on the referendum with the Leavers suggesting 'We're through' and 'Take a chance'. Instead of a disco glitterball there is a globe perhaps connoting the far-flung consequences of the vote, or that the world is watching.

This use of political images combined with those from popular culture refers to a long-standing history of political cartoons in which politicians and policies are satirised.

What are the advantages of this approach to the magazine? This use of intertextuality is intended to help the magazine look informal and witty, and suggests that it addresses a sophisticated audience. It may have chosen Abba lyrics in order to pay homage to a much-loved pop music group, while the way the lyrics are used incorporates the rather 'cheesy' mainstream nature of the group and their slightly camp manner.

It suggests that the magazine is outside the political mainstream, looking critically at events, which fits its status as a charity supporting the homeless. This approach enables the magazine to take a neutral viewpoint on the referendum, a divisive event, in order not to alienate any potential buyers and thus disadvantage the street vendors. This cover concept allows the magazine to visualise the referendum – an abstract event – strikingly in the immediate lead-up to the vote. Superimposing politicians' heads on the group's bodies enables the front cover to create a montage of these actors in a way that creates an extra meaning – that the referendum campaign is a big performance.

In conclusion, the magazine adopts an intertextual approach to appear both satirical and politically non-aligned on an issue that might divide its readers.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework to analyse Source C.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate analysis of why *The Big Issue* magazine has used an intertextual approach to the referendum which consistently provides logical connections and a good line of reasoning.
- Highly developed and accomplished judgements and conclusions regarding why *The Big Issue* magazine has used an intertextual approach to the referendum.

This would earn 11–15 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Paper 2

Question 1

Explain why popular music radio programmes struggle to gain recognition as Public Service Broadcasting. Refer to *The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show* to support your answer.

In your answer you must:

- explain how political, cultural and economic contexts influence the status of popular radio music programming. [15]

Sample answer

The BBC is a good example of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in that it is expected to uphold higher standards than the commercial sector because of the way it is funded, as well as any regulation by Ofcom. The BBC's first Director General, Lord Reith introduced many of the concepts that would later define PSB in the UK when he adopted the mission to 'inform, educate and entertain'. The BBC has been judged on delivering 'Reithian values', such as raising the cultural standards of the nation by educating and informing, and these values are particularly expressed in radio channels such as Radio 3, with its commitment to the 'high arts' and Radio 4, with its commitment to information and education.

This also means that popular music channels like Radio 1 cannot just play commercial popular music, due to the cultural context that labels popular music as low status. While the Radio 3 remit refers to ‘great composers’, there is no reference to ‘great popular musicians’ in the Radio 1 remit. The view of popular music, especially recorded music, as low status, explains the other requirements placed on Radio 1: Radio 1 must be high quality, original, and innovative, nurture UK talent, and reflect a diverse range of new and UK music. Radio 1’s daytime programmes should offer a mix of music, information and entertainment. A wide range of live events should be covered from around the UK and beyond and live music should be featured throughout the schedule, with sessions and concerts from both established acts and experimental new bands. Radio 1 should encourage its listeners to take part in music events and activities. Further, the schedule must include commissioned speech output including documentaries and social action campaigns, and accurate, impartial and independent news. This remit assumes that it is everything the channel does other than playing popular recorded music that meets its PSB role.

The economic context in which live music is much more expensive than playing recorded music influences its status as a PSB element. The licence fee provides the BBC with sufficient income to be able to afford live music, where most commercial stations cannot.

The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show is amongst the least PSB programming on BBC radio. It largely consists of recorded music, much like any commercial popular music radio station. There are, however, some elements that reflect the Radio 1 PSB remit: the high proportion of UK music played, the high-quality presentation – the show is ‘good of its kind’, the traditional BBC standard for entertainment content – the regular news bulletins every half hour, and the address to a specifically young audience that helps the BBC fulfil its PSB requirement to reflect and represent the whole UK population.

As the showcase programme in a popular music radio channel, *The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show* is best judged within the context of the range of BBC programming and channels. Rather than expecting it to exhibit Reithian values, its role is to attract young audiences to BBC content who might later graduate to more ‘high art’ programming.

The political context in which Radio 1 operates is that politicians have in the past called for the privatisation of the channel as it could easily survive in the commercial world. Part of Grimshaw’s remit, on taking over *The Breakfast Show* was to lose the older demographic. The BBC was deliberately trying to narrow the audience for Radio 1 to 16–29 year olds, in order to make it less likely to attract mass audiences, which would also make the channel less commercially viable. In itself, this illustrates how difficult it is for popular music programmes to gain recognition as PSB.

Assessment comment

This answer fits all the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of the role of the BBC as a public service radio provider.
- Answer is supported by detailed and accurate reference to the set radio programme.
- Accurate knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts and their influence on the status of popular music programming.

It would earn 11–15 marks, perhaps towards the top end of the band because it fits all the criteria.

Question 1

Explain how the production and distribution of major Hollywood films has changed since the 1960s. Refer to the two versions of *The Jungle Book* to support your answer.

In your answer you must:

- explain how historical and economic contexts influence the production and distribution of major Hollywood films.

[15]

Sample answer

Hollywood films in the 1960s were produced by the big Hollywood studios, such as Disney for *The Jungle Book* (1967). Disney was a big corporation that owned theme parks and made television as well as films. It had a long history of making children’s animated films, but had not been very successful in the years before *The Jungle Book*. The 1967 film came out at a time when most cinemas only showed one film and films took their time to travel around a country and around the world, being released in big cities first, then to towns, then to smaller venues. This was because the multiplex hadn’t been invented and meant that films couldn’t dominate the cinemas in the way that blockbusters do now.

Hollywood films in the 2010s are still produced by the big Hollywood studios, though some smaller companies such as Lionsgate are now offering competition. Disney is an even larger corporation than in 1967, so big that it might be buying 21st Century Fox. By the 2010s Hollywood blockbusters dominated cinema. A film would be distributed to a large number of cinemas around the world at the same time in order to create a huge blitz of publicity. Lots of money would be spent on advertising and promotion. Big stars would be used. The film would be designed to attract a mass audience. It might have fantastic visual effects or an exotic location. All this would help produce an exciting trailer that can market the film to audiences. Children's films, in particular, will generate lots of merchandising. To fit a world wide audience the film will be dubbed or subtitled into lots of different languages. Smaller films are unlikely to be able to compete with these big-budget monsters, so are only likely to be shown in art house cinemas, if at all.

Assessment comment

This answer mostly fits the level 2 criteria:

- Adequate and generally accurate knowledge and understanding of the production and distribution of major Hollywood films.
- Answer is supported by generally accurate reference to the set films.
Although accurate, there isn't much reference to the set films and little use of terminology such as 'saturated distribution' or 'globalisation'.
- Mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of one or more contexts and their influence on the production and distribution of major Hollywood films
The answer only covers one context – historical – instead of the two requested and only does this implicitly, though it is accurate.

It would earn 6–10 marks of the available 15 marks.

Question 1

Explain how producers target, reach and engage audiences for video games through content and marketing. Refer to *Minecraft* to support your answer.

In your answer you must:

- explain how social and economic contexts influence how producers target, reach and engage audiences for video games. [15]

Sample answer

Video games are fun to play for audiences, who may spend very long periods of time immersed in

the world of the game. Many people worry that video games are bad for the audiences' health and mean that they don't develop any social skills. Lots of games are aimed at teenage boys by showing sexy women and letting them be violent within the world of the game. This is because we live in a sexist society where it is considered OK to show women as sex objects. Games such as *Minecraft* will attract players because they offer a competition that the players can win. This makes them feel better about themselves. They can also play with people all around the world.

Not all video games are the same. Some attract female players as well as male players. Some games are aimed at children. Some are even aimed at old people. There are different consoles that people play on. Games like *Minecraft* can be played on different consoles, which helps sell the game.

Video games can make lots of money as they are cheap to make once the game has been developed. They are made in lots of different countries around the world.

Assessment comment

This answer mostly fits the level 1 criteria:

- Knowledge of how producers target, reach and engage audiences for video games is minimal, demonstrating little understanding.
- Reference to the set video game to support the answer is minimal and may be inaccurate. Most of the answer does not demonstrate that the student has studied video games and there is only one accurate reference to *Minecraft* in the second paragraph as the point about competition in the first paragraph is incorrect.
- Knowledge of social and economic contexts and their influence on how producers target, reach and engage audiences for video games is minimal, showing little understanding. The answer touches on the cultural context of sexism at one point and implies globalisation at another but otherwise does not consider contexts.

This means that it earns 1–5 marks.

Question 2

Explain the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on video games production, distribution and consumption. Refer to *Minecraft* to support your answer. [15]

Sample answer

Digitally convergent media platforms can impact on video game production, for example, by allowing

synergies in production that produce cost savings for video games companies, e.g. fewer master copies of the video game are actually required and these can then be ported across a number of convergent platforms, e.g. Windows, (Windows PC, Windows smart phones and Xbox) or Android and the multitude of devices that support Android. *Minecraft* can be downloaded from the *Minecraft* website. The company encourages audiences to download the game through cloud servers rather than hard copies, saving distribution costs, by offering downloadable versions some months before hard copies are available.

Convergence between social media platforms, e.g. YouTube, Facebook and online fan communities, has enabled *Minecraft*'s audience to have an active voice in its on-going production through detailed feedback and commentary on modifications and beta tests. *Minecraft* encourages modifications to the game by using open source software and cataloguing available mods in The Marketplace. MineCon (the *Minecraft* convention) has switched to live streaming rather than a physical meeting to reach a more global audience (the 2018 event is entitled MineCon Earth).

In some cases the impact of digitally convergent media platforms has also increased the risk of video game production for video games companies, e.g. via leaked content that is playable across a number of convergent platforms and online piracy. Mojang has set up servers, called *Minecraft* Realms, run for paying users and their chosen friends to play in a more convenient way that is controlled by Mojang – this is partly a response to piracy.

Digitally convergent media platforms can aid monetisation features used by video games companies to gain additional revenue (from microtransactions or using a game to link to a different site, for example). They can also capture further audience information to refine future products. Microsoft uses the *Minecraft* Marketplace for this purpose and one of the reasons why Microsoft bought the game was to access the vast database of fans collected by Mojang.

Digitally convergent platforms are impacting upon video game consumption, for example, the development of the *Minecraft* 'cross-play', which enables gamers to experience online play with other *Minecraft* players at the same time, irrespective of which platform they own to play games, further bringing audiences together. 'Cross-play' is available across all devices that can support Windows 10, iOS, Android, XBox One and Nintendo's Switch. Mobile game playing is now the largest and fastest-growing

sector of video gaming. *Minecraft* introduced mobile versions of the game early in its development.

Assessment comment

This answer fits the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of industries for video games.
- Clear, precise and balanced explanation of the impact of digitally convergent media platforms on video games production, distribution and consumption.
- Answer is supported by detailed and accurate reference to the set video game.

This means that it earns 11–15 marks.

Question 2

Explain how different audiences use radio differently. Refer to *The BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show* to support your answer. [15]

Sample answer

Audiences listen to radio in lots of different situations – at home, in the car and at work being the most common. What all these have in common is that the audience might be doing something else while the radio is on. Car drivers may use radio to help their concentration and to pick up information about traffic jams. Listeners in the home may use the radio for companionship, especially if they are alone. Listeners at work may use the radio for unobtrusive background noise.

Local radio listeners may use the radio to keep up with local events, issues and gossip. The radio might help them feel connected to their community. National radio stations may be chosen on the basis of the sort of music and speech they offer. Sports fans will use Radio 5 Live or Talk Sport to find out about sport. Classical music fans will listen to Classic FM or Radio 3 for the sort of music they like.

The audience for the *Radio 1 Breakfast Show* is supposed to be 16–29 year olds. They may use the show to wake themselves up in the morning with some lively music, to feel connected with other fans of pop music with their tales of being stuck in traffic on the way to work, to find out about celebrities in the guest interview. It may be that older listeners still listen to Radio 1 to remind themselves of their youth or keep in touch with their children's musical tastes. The show is designed to fit around the busy lives of its audience in the morning by only consisting of short pieces that don't require long periods of concentration, this makes it very suitable as background listening in the home, on the way to school or in the car.

Assessment comment

This answer mostly fits the level 2 criteria:

- Adequate and generally accurate knowledge and understanding of audiences for radio.
- Generally accurate explanation of how different audiences use radio differently.
- Answer is supported by generally accurate reference to the set radio programme.

This means that it earns 6–10 marks.

Question 2

Explain the effect of individual producers on films. Refer to the two versions of *The Jungle Book* to support your answer. [15]

Sample answer

Walt Disney was the founder of Disney and he created the style of animation that we expect from Disney films. Disney films are usually cartoons and aimed at children. They often have evil characters who get in the way of our hero. *The Jungle Book* has a hero called Mowgli and an evil tiger called Sheer Khan. The story is based on a book by an English writer from a long time ago. It is set in India. Mowgli is brought up by wolves and looked after by Bagheera, who wants to take him back to the man village. Baloo the bear befriends Mowgli and wants him to stay in the jungle with him, but Sheer Khan wants to eat him.

Walt Disney was dead by the time the second *Jungle Book* film was made, so he did not influence this film. The director of the second film wanted it to be darker in tone than the first one, which was a sort of musical comedy. The second film used CGI to create realistic looking animals that could act and speak. This means that the film could be more of an action-adventure. The film follows a similar storyline to the first one, with characters such as Mowgli, Baloo, Bagheera, Kaa, Sheer Khan and Louis all reappearing.

Assessment comment

This answer mostly fits the level 1 criteria:

- Knowledge of industries for film is minimal, demonstrating little understanding.
- Explanation of the role of the effect of individual producers on films is minimal.
- Reference to the set film to support the answer is minimal and may be inaccurate.

This answer says little about the producers and mostly focuses on the plot and characters of the two films (which is unnecessary in an industries question). This means that it earns 1–5 of the available 15 marks.

Question 3

In this question you will be rewarded for drawing together elements from your full course of study, including different areas of the theoretical frameworks and media contexts.

Why do long form dramas from different countries offer different representations?

In your answer you must:

- consider the contexts in which long form dramas are produced and consumed
- explain how media contexts may have influenced the representations in the set episodes of the two LFTVDs you have studied
- make judgements and reach conclusions about the reasons for the differences in representation between the two episodes. [30]

Sample answer

Long form television dramas (LFTVDs) are influenced by social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts.

Social contexts include such factors as changes in gender roles, inequalities based on gender, race and ethnicity, and social attitudes to sexualities. They include the social anxieties and/or contested social values of the time and place that television programmes are made. These will influence representations.

Cultural contexts include the influence of national cultures on television programmes, for example the cultural importance of television dramas in reflecting, re-interpreting and re-enforcing national cultural identities and representations of social groups, events and the individuals within those (and on occasion, challenging and subverting those representations to try and instigate cultural change and domestic conversations on representations and identity). National contexts may also include the requirements for public service broadcasting in European countries. National cultural contexts may be balanced by the influence of cultural globalisation and hybridisation on television programmes. Representations may be influenced by a mix between local national concerns and globalised influences such as genre characterisation and narratives.

Historical contexts include the influence of key historical events on television programmes. Dramas such as *Homeland* or *Deutschland 83* reflect specifically historical contexts by showing how 9/11 and the 'war on terror' affected the American psyche or how the reunification of Germany influenced the region.

Political contexts include the influence of political debate on regulation of television; how television programmes can reflect and comment upon national political institutions given the freedom of Western programme makers to criticise and satirise their own political systems; and how in political dramas such as *Borgen* or *House of Cards* the audience may need to have political knowledge to understand some representations.

Economic contexts include the competitive nature of the television industries and influence of high budgets on flagship television programmes, e.g. the opportunities for character development in 'authored' high-budget programmes allow for more complex, individualised three-dimensional characterisation rather than stereotyping. They may also include the disparity between production budgets for US television dramas and European television dramas and their sources of funding and how budget can influence representations through allowing more or less choice to programme makers when constructing representations, for example, with regard to locations, settings, costumes, filming, lighting, sound and editing technology.

I am going to consider the effects of contexts on the American LFTVD *Homeland* and the European LFTVD *Borgen*.

In *Homeland*, we see the influence of social contexts. The episode reflects socially contested gender and racial/ethnic relations in that it represents a world in which apparent conformity to social norms masks underlying tensions and conflicts; in particular, we see Jessica rehearsing being 'the good wife' and the CIA desperately trying to persuade Brody to perform as the masculine 'hero', both illustrating Butler's idea of the performativity of gender. The CIA management are male, reinforcing patriarchal power, but the narrative follows the agency of a female protagonist playing the central role of the 'the maverick' who is proved right. Racial and ethnic representations are ambiguous: a Black man is poised to become Director of the CIA, the ultimate 'insider', but the 'enemy without' is an Arab. However, the Black man is not represented as having Gilroy's concept of a common Black Atlantic. The episode shows the influence of social anxieties about the contemporary terrorist threat and about the state's response to that threat.

In *Homeland*, we see the influence of cultural contexts: the episode shows the influence of American culture's reaction to terrorism and international conflict – overt patriotism, militarism and the search for heroes. However, the series

is based on an Israeli series, so may reflect more universal cultural responses about the best way to respond to threats that are applicable in a global cultural context. The episode critiques the influence of celebrity culture in the way Brody becomes an instant hero and the way the audience is shown the pretence behind this mask from both Brody and the powers that be. The representational complexity of the programme, particularly its morally ambiguous heroine, reflects the context of the high expectations of narrative complexity in LFTVDs.

In *Homeland*, we see the influence of political contexts: the programme reflects cynicism towards federal politics in the USA by representing the White House as desperate for a 'win' in a foreign war. The series requires some understanding of the CIA and Washington politics (but international audiences are used to being positioned as requiring knowledge of American society).

In *Homeland*, we see the influence of historical contexts: the episode explores the historical trauma of 9/11 in the USA: the protagonist is haunted by her failure to prevent the terrorist attack, the returning 'hero' perhaps represents an American culture struggling to come to terms with faith-based terrorism. The shadow of previous difficult wars – in Vietnam and Iraq – is evident in the politicians' need to win the PR war as well as the actual war.

In *Homeland*, we see the influence of economic contexts: the episode reflects the highly competitive market in which US cable and satellite networks, such as Showtime, operate and that one strategy available to such a network is to differentiate the brand with high-quality adult drama, which portray complex and individualised representations of people and places.

In *Borgen*, the representations reflect social contexts: the episode reflects contested gender relations showing the impact of feminism on patriarchal society; politics and the media are mostly male-dominated, but women are represented as skilled professionals and potential Prime Ministers and Birgitte, in particular, is represented as decisive. Two lesbians feature without comment. Many of the representations foreground the work of constructing femininity (as in Butler's theory), especially for Birgitte and Katrine. However, Hesselboe's wife fits the traditional patriarchal stereotype of the 'hysterical' woman. Masculinity is represented both positively from a feminist perspective, e.g. the ultra-supportive Phillip who puts his career on hold for Birgitte, and negatively, e.g. the sexually harassing, preening Laugesen, and sometimes both positively

and negatively simultaneously, e.g. Kasper is caring and supportive but competitive and obsessed with winning power. Denmark is represented as an avowedly multicultural society; Laugesen's attack on asylum-seekers is represented as a deal-breaker by our heroine.

In *Borgen*, the representations reflect cultural contexts: the episode reflects Danish culture in its depiction of consensual decision-making and coalition politics and its celebration of tolerance and inclusivity towards minority groups. However, much of the politics is not only a representation of a national culture but of a globalised ideology of western liberalism. The representational complexity and sophistication of the programme reflects the context of the high expectations of LFTVD. The episode shows the influence of celebrity culture in the way Birgitte becomes an instant celebrity by making one impactful speech.

In *Borgen*, the representations reflect political contexts: the episode reflects a cynical view of spin-driven politics yet provides an optimistic vision of democratic politics; the political world is cynical, Machiavellian, and driven by spin, but the voters respond to the honesty of a conviction politician. The episode reflects the context of immigration becoming an issue in Danish politics. The series requires some understanding of Danish national politics but does not assume this knowledge on the part of audiences, providing enough exposition to enable politically literate audiences to understand the narrative.

The representations in *Borgen* reflect the historical context of the rising power of women, in that Birgitte becomes Denmark's first female Prime Minister. (Shortly afterwards a woman did become Danish Prime Minister.)

In *Borgen*, the representations reflect economic contexts of a small publicly owned national broadcaster with limited finances but with a successful track record in selling series internationally, thus encouraging cooperation with other European television producers, creating a very national product yet with international appeal.

In conclusion, the representations in these two LFTVDs do reflect their national social, cultural and political contexts, with *Homeland* explicitly interrogating what it means to be American and *Borgen* exploring the opportunities for a news politics within a very European consensual social democratic political system. However, both dramas include elements that are due to genre: *Homeland* could be remade as a Danish spy

thriller, for example, with similar representations; equally, *Borgen* could be remade as a Washington-based political drama with an idealistic new president. Audience may also be a factor here. The sophisticated international audiences for LFTVDs may demand both local colour, so specifically national or even local representations, but also archetypal themes that can be enjoyed globally, such as protecting the homeland or creating a new politics. The free-market American television market as compared to the highly regulated and small Danish television market may also account for some of the representational differences. The Danish programme has to have cultural significance as DR's one big drama for the season, whereas *Homeland* has rapidly to establish its identity as a brand within a highly competitive American television market, hence its more mainstream use of genre. It is likely that genre, audience, industries and contexts all intertwine in their influence on representations in LFTVDs.

Assessment comment

This answer fits the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive and accurate knowledge and understanding of the influence of media contexts on representations.
- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of the media theoretical framework, media contexts, and media theory to analyse two set products from long form television drama.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate analysis of representations in the set episodes for two long form television dramas, which consistently provides logical connections and a good line of reasoning.
- Highly developed and accomplished judgements and conclusions in relation to the question.
- The response demonstrates a highly developed and detailed line of reasoning, which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.
- The response draws together knowledge and understanding from the full course of study including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts.

It would earn 20–30 marks, probably towards the top of that mark band as it meets all the criteria.

Question 4

Evaluate the relevance of Todorov's theory of narratology to long form television drama. [10]

Sample answer

Todorov's narratology can be used to analyse the narratives of the long form television dramas, but also has limitations.

The dramas can be analysed in terms of how they suggest or depict an initial equilibrium – a settled state that doesn't need to change – and how they disrupt this equilibrium with an event that creates a drive towards a narrative resolution.

In *Homeland*, the narrative disruption is Abu Nazir's plot against America with Brody's release. The narrative drive will be for Carrie to thwart this plot. The initial equilibrium is implied rather than shown: his family life before his capture and American apparent safety before 9/11. In *Borgen*, the narrative disruptions are Birgitte's conviction politics, which breaks the coalition that constrains Birgitte, and Hesselboe's blunder, which undermines his Prime Ministership. The narrative drive suggested is Birgitte's rise to power and discovering if she'll manage to introduce a new form of politics. The initial equilibrium is implied in the first episode: the cynical but stable state of Danish politics.

Todorov's theory is designed to explain linear narratives with a distinct ending, a narrative resolution, but LFTVDs are serial narratives. This means that they do drive gradually towards a resolution, unlike continuous serial narratives such as soap operas, where the narrative consists of constant disruptions and only brief moments of resolution. A LFTVD must offer a resolution for audience satisfaction, but the prime pleasure is in the delay of that resolution, a delay that creates anticipation by combining movement towards a resolution with other secondary narrative strands. These might establish tone, develop characters, establish intertwining storylines, or spiral out from the main storyline in unpredictable directions. Examples of these, in *Homeland*, are Jessica's relationship with Mike establishing her as a liar as well as a 'doting wife'; the sequence with Dana and her friend taking

drugs establishing her as a rebellious teen; the red herring of Brody secretly meeting Walker's wife, which delays Carrie's discovery of the truth.

Examples in *Borgen* include: the sequences showing Birgitte's relationship with her husband and children, establishing her partner's honest but loving support and the children's pride in her work. In addition, the storyline about Hanne's sacking for alcoholism creates more emotional pressure on Katrine and adds to her secret grief storyline. Kasper's relationship with Katrine allows his character to demonstrate a more caring and thoughtful side.

The serial narrative of LFTVDs means that narrative closure is not required at the end of episodes. Most, by contrast, end with at least one enigma: in the *Homeland* episode – 'What is Brody's plan?' and in the *Borgen* episode – 'Will Birgitte become Prime Minister?'

This shows that although Todorov's theory is very useful in analysing narratives, it doesn't include all the key elements of LFTVD narratives. Some parts of his theory, like teasing out the messages and values underlying a narrative in the transformation between the initial equilibrium (displayed or implied) and the new equilibrium, can only be applied to a whole LFTVD series rather than an individual episode.

Assessment comment

This answer fits the level 3 criteria:

- Comprehensive, detailed and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of media language to evaluate Todorov's narratology.
- Convincing, perceptive and accurate evaluation of the usefulness of Todorov's narratology in analysing the media language of long form television drama.

It would earn 7–10 marks, probably towards the top of that mark band as it meets all the criteria.