GCSE Media Studies Exam Information 2025

Paper 1 (40%)	Exploring the Media	1 hour 30 minutes
Paper 2 (30%)	Understanding Media Forms and Products	1 hour 30 minutes

Paper 1: Exploring the Media

Section	Areas of Theoretical Framework/Media Contexts and/or Media Forms/Products
Section A: Exploring Media Language and Representation (55 minutes)	This section will assess: **Media language:** this question will assess your understanding of media language in one of the eight set print texts (*Quality Street*, *This Girl Can*, *Spectre* film poster*, TMWTGG* film poster*, The Sun* front cover*, The Guardian* front cover*, Vogue, GQ.*) **15 marks – 15 minutes** **Media contexts:** this question will assess your understanding of how one of the eight print texts has been influenced by social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts. **5 marks – 5 minutes** **Representation:** this question will assess your understanding of how a social groups (gender, ethnicity, stereotypes) or how events/messages are represented. You will be expected to compare these representations to an unseen text. **25 marks – 10 minutes planning, 25 minutes writing).**
Section B: Exploring Media Industries and Audiences (35 minutes)	This section will assess: **Media Industries:** This question will assess your understanding of industry issues for one of the four industries we study: Film (Spectre), Radio (The Archers), Newspapers (The Sun) or Gaming (Fortnite). **Audiences:** This question will assess your understanding of audience targeting, appeal and response for one of three industries we have studied: radio, newspapers or gaming. *Total: 35 marks broken into stepped questions*

What to revise for paper 1

Section A Q1: media language

For this section you need to revise all eight print texts. One of these will be used for a 15 mark media language question. You should be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of how visual codes, technical codes, language codes and genre conventions are used to create meaning. Consider how producers create versions of reality, convey ideas or values, use genre conventions, and reflect the contexts in which the products were produced.

Example questions (these can be used with ANY set text):

Explore how the producers create meaning through:

(a) Language [5]
(b) Genre conventions [10] *These are the features of a film poster, magazine, advert or newspaper front page.*

Explore how the producers create meaning through:

(a) Images [5]
(b) Language [5]
(c) Layout and design [5]

Explore how the producers create meaning through:

   (a) Text and written language [5]
   (b) Visual codes [10]

Explore how the producers create meaning through:

   (a) Colour [5]
   (b) Genre conventions [10]

Explore how the producers create meaning through:

   (a) Characters [5]
   (b) Narrative [5]
   (c) Intertextuality [5]

Section A Q2: context and representation

In this section you will have a 5 mark question where you need to explain how the chosen print text has been influenced by social and cultural, political, economic or historical context. You need to explain what was happening at the time the text was produced and how this is reflected in the chosen visual, technical or language codes.

The second question will explore the ways in which representations are constructed in the eight set texts. You should practise comparing with as many different unseen texts as possible. You should be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of how social groups (gender and ethnicity), ideas and reality are represented. You will need to demonstrate an understanding of how these representations reflect social, cultural and historical contexts. You could bring in theoretical perspectives such as Mulvey's male gaze, Alvarado or Gilroy's post-colonial theory.

Example questions: context

2a. Explain how historical context affects advertising. Refer to the front cover of *Quality Street/This Girl Can* to support your points. [5]

2a. Explain how social and cultural context affects film posters. Refer to the film poster for *Spectre/The Man with the Golden Gun* to support your points. [5]

2a. Explain how economic context affects newspapers. Refer to the front page of *The Sun/The Guardian* to support your points. [5]

2a. Explain how political context affects magazines. Refer to the front cover of *Pride/GQ* magazine to support your points. [5]

Example questions: representation

2b. Compare how gender is represented in [set text] and [unseen text]. [25]

2b. Compare how ethnicity is represented in [set text] and [unseen text .[25]

2b. Compare the messages represented in the [set text] and [unseen text]. [25]

2b. Compare the representation of issues in the [set text] and [unseen text]. [25]

2b. Compare the representation of men in the [set text] and [unseen text]. [25]

2b. Compare the representation of women in the [set text] and [unseen text]. [25]

Section B Q3: Industry

For this section you need to revise all four industries and specific examples from each of the set texts (Spectre, The Archers, Fortnite and The Sun) that relate to all industry issues. You should be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of: production and distribution processes; ownership (conglomerates and vertical/horizontal integration integration) and funding; commercial and public service broadcasting; regulation processes; marketing strategies and synergy; and convergent media (website and social media use).

Example film question:

   a) Name the organisation that regulates films in Britain. [1]

   b) 12 and 12A are examples of age certificates used in the UK. Give two other examples of age certificates used in the UK. [2]

   c) Briefly explain the difference between the 12 and 12A age certificates. [2]

   d) Explain why a film may be given a 12A or 12 certificate. Refer to Spectre to support your points. [12]

Example gaming question:

   a) Name the company that producers *Fortnite.* [1]
   b) Explain how video games are marketed. [6]
   c) Explain how video games make money for their producers. [12]

Example newspaper question:

   a) Name the organisation that publishes *The Sun* newspaper. [1]
   b) *The Sun* is a national tabloid newspaper. Give two other examples of national tabloid newspapers in the UK. [2]
   c) Briefly explain two differences between tabloid newspapers and broadsheet newspapers. [4]
   d) Explain why newspapers have websites. Refer to *www.thesun.co.uk* to support your points. [10]

Example radio question:

   a) Name the organisation that regulates radio in the UK. [1]
   b) Briefly explain the difference between how public service radio and commercial radio are funded. [4]
   c) Explain how radio programmes use technologies to reach audiences. Refer to *The Archers* to support your points. [12]

Section B Q4: audiences

For this section you need to revise the gaming, radio and newspaper industries and have a confident understanding of their target audience. You could be asked to demonstrate an understanding of: how audiences are categorised; how audiences are targeted by producers; how the content of the product and its marketing appeals to its target audience; how audiences may interpret or respond to the product; and the ways in which audience interpretations reflect social, cultural and historical circumstances.

Example gaming question:

   (a) Name the developer of Fortnite   [1]

   (b) Identify the PEGI rating for Fortnite   [1]

   (c) Explain two ways in which Fortnite is aimed at the audience you identified in Question 4b.
                                                                                                       [4]

In question 4d, you will be rewarded for using knowledge and understanding from across the full course, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts.

   (d) Explain why audiences play Fortnite. Refer to the Uses and Gratifications theory in your answer. [12]

Example newspaper question:

   (a) What type of newspaper is *The Sun*? (1)
   (b) Identify one audience for *The Sun* website. (1)
   (c) Briefly explain how the content of *The Sun* website appeals to this audience. (4)

In question 4d, you will be rewarded for using knowledge and understanding from across the full course, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts.

(d) Explain why audiences may interpret the same media product in different ways. Refer to *The Sun.* (12)

Example radio question:

(a) Identify one audience for *The Archers*. (1)
(b) Explain two ways in which *The Archers* is aimed at the audience you have identified. (4)

In question 4c, you will be rewarded for using knowledge and understanding from across the full course, including different areas of the theoretical framework and media contexts.

(c) Explain why audiences listen to *The Archers*. Refer to the Uses and Gratifications theory in your response. (12)

Paper 2: Understanding Media Forms and Products

Section	Advance information: Areas of Theoretical Framework/Media Contexts and/or Media Forms/Products
Section A: Television – crime drama (50 minutes)	This section will assess: • **Media Language/Representation:** the exam will begin with a short extract from episode 1 of *Luther.* You will then be asked to answer two questions analysing the media language, genre conventions and/or representations from the extract. [20 marks – 20 minutes] • **Media Contexts and Audiences:** this question will assess your understanding of contextual issues or audience targeting/appeal/response for *Luther* and/or *The Sweeney.* [10 marks – 10 minutes] *Total = 30 marks*
Section B: Music (40 minutes)	This section will assess: • **Media Language/Representation:** this question will assess your understanding of media language or representation in two of the following texts: *The Man* (Taylor Swift), *Intentions* (Justin Bieber), *Waterfalls* (TLC), Taylor Swift's website, Justin Bieber's website [20 marks – 25 minutes] • **Media Industries: This question will assess your understanding of m**usic artist websites and social media – Taylor Swift or Justin Bieber. You could be asked about how they are used for marketing or audience targeting/appeal/response. [10 marks – 10 minutes] *Total = 30 marks*

What to revise for paper 2

Section A: Media Language or Representation

You should be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of how visual codes, technical codes and language codes are used to create meaning, to repeat or challenge genre conventions or construct representations. Consider how producers create versions of reality, represent gender and ethnicity, convey ideas or values, use genre conventions, and reflect the contexts in which the products were produced. Example questions:

Read the questions before watching the extract.

Extract: Luther episode 1: 04.06-07.04

- *First viewing:* just watch the extract
- Give yourself 6 minutes to make notes.
- *Second viewing:* rewatch the extract and make notes

1a) Explore the connotations of two of the settings or locations used in this extract. [8]

1b) How far are the settings or locations used in this extract typical of the genre? Explore two settings or locations. [12]

Extract: Luther episode 1: 0.00 – 03.19

- *First viewing:* just watch the extract
- Give yourself 6 minutes to make notes.
- *Second viewing:* rewatch the extract and make notes

1a) How are enigmas constructed in this extract? Explore two examples of enigmas in the extract. [8]

1b) How far are the enigmas in the extract typical of the genre? Explore two aspects of enigma. [12]

Extract: Luther episode (select one – approx. 3-4 minutes)

- *First viewing:* just watch the extract
- Give yourself 6 minutes to make notes.
- *Second viewing:* rewatch the extract and make notes

1a) How does this extract represent a <u>version of reality</u>? Explore specific aspects of media language in your response. (10)

1b) To what extent are <u>gender stereotypes</u> used in this extract? Explore one character in detail in your response. (10)

Section A: Media context and audiences

This section will require you to demonstrate an understanding of how *Luther* and *The Sweeney* fits in within the genre of crime drama and how this genre has developed over time. You need to be able to explain how crime dramas reflect the key social, cultural and historical contexts win which they are produced. You could also be asked to demonstrate an understanding of how developments in technology (the internet and cross-media convergence) has changed the ways in which audiences interact with crime dramas. You could also be asked how crime dramas target/appeal to audiences or how audiences respond to crime dramas.

Example questions:

2) How do crime dramas reflect the time in which they are made? Refer to *Luther/The Sweeney* to support your answer. [10]

2) How does *Uses and Gratifications theory* explain why audiences watch crime dramas? Refer to *Luther/The Sweeney* to support your response. [10]

2) How do production processes influence crime dramas? Refer to *Luther/The Sweeney* to support your response. [10]

2) How do social and cultural contexts influence crime dramas? Refer to *Luther/The Sweeney* to support your response. [10]

2) Why might audience responses to crime dramas change over time? [10]

2) Explain how crime dramas are aimed at a range of audiences. [10]

2) How does Uses and Gratifications theory explain why audiences watch crime dramas? [10]

Section B: Media Language and Representation

For this section you need to revise the genre conventions and representations in the music videos for Taylor Swift's *The Man,* Justin Bieber's *Intentions* and TLC's *Waterfalls* as well as the websites for Swift and Bieber. This section is worth 20 marks and will ask you to analyse how representations are constructed in two music videos or websites or how genre conventions, narrative or media language is used to create meaning. This question is not comparative so you should write about each video/website separately but reasonably evenly.

You should be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of how social groups (gender and ethnicity), ideas and reality are represented. You will need to demonstrate an understanding of how these representations reflect social, cultural and historical contexts. You could bring in theoretical perspectives such as Mulvey's male gaze, Alvarado or Gilroy's post-colonial theory.

Example questions:

3. 'Music videos/music websites reinforce stereotypes of ethnicity.' How far is this true of two of the music videos/websites you have studied? In your response you must:

- Explore representations of ethnicity in the **two** music videos you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts, such as social or cultural
- Consider whether you agree or disagree with the statement.   [20]

3. How far do the representations in music videos/websites reinforce particular messages and values? In your response you must:

- Explore examples from **two** music videos/websites you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts
- Make judgements and draw conclusions.   [20]

3. How far do music videos/websites offer a diverse range of representations? In your response you must:

- Explore the types of representations from **two** music videos/websites you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts
- Make judgements and draw conclusions.   [20]

3. To what extent do music videos/websites reinforce stereotypical representations? In your response you must:

- Explore the stereotypes constructed in **two** music videos/websites you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts
- Make judgements and draw conclusions.

3. How typical are the narratives of two music videos you have studied?

- Explore the narratives constructed in **two** music videos/websites you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts
- Make judgements and draw conclusions.   [20]

3. To what extent do these two music websites use conventions?

- Explore the genre conventions in **two** music videos/websites you have studied
- Refer to relevant media contexts
- Make judgements and draw conclusions.   [20]

Section B: Media Industries, contexts and audiences

For this section you need to revise the three music videos we have studied and Taylor Swift's and Justin Bieber's official websites and social media pages. You can comment on any or all versions of the music artists' websites that we have studied. You will be required to demonstrate how websites respond to industry needs (marketing and profit) and audience needs. You should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how Swift and Bieber's star personas are constructed through the website and social media pages. You also need to be able to analyse how the websites and music videos reflect social and cultural, economic, political (feminist) or historical contexts. Example questions:

4. Explain why websites are important to the music industry. Refer to the official *Taylor Swift/Justin Bieber* website to support your response. [10]

4. Explain how music websites reinforce the star image of music artists. Refer to the official *Taylor Swift/Justin Bieber* website to support your response. [10]

4. Explain how music websites are used by the industry to market music artists. Refer to the official *Taylor Swift/Justin Bieber* website to support your response. [10]

4. How do music websites enable the music industry to make money? [10]

4. Explain how music websites reflect the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced. [10]

4. How do music videos reflect the contexts in which they are made? Refer to *TLC/Justin Bieber/Taylor Swift.* [10]

4. Explain how contexts influence music videos. Refer to *TLC/Justin Bieber/Taylor Swift.* [10]

Useful revision resource:

Please use Mrs Fisher's revision videos on YouTube:

Paper 1 Section A

GCSE Media - Quality Street Advert -- Media Language - A Guide for Students & Teachers

GCSE Media - Quality Street Advert -- Representation - A Guide for Students & Teachers

GCSE Media - This Girl Can - Media Language - A Guide for Students & Teachers

GCSE Media - This Girl Can - Representation - A guide for students & teachers

GCSE Media - No Time To Die poster - Media Language & Representation

GCSE - The Man With The Golden Gun - Media Language & Representation

GCSE Media - GQ (august 19 issue) - Media Language & Representation

GCSE Media - Vogue Cover (July 2021) - Media Language & Representation

GCSE Media - The Sun 1.1.21 - Media Language & Representation

GCSE Media - The Guardian 18.1.22 - Media Language & Representation

Paper 1 Section B

GCSE Media - James Bond website - Industry

GCSE Media - Fortnite - Industries & Audiences

GCSE Media - Fortnite Website - Industry & Audience

[GCSE Media - The Sun - Industries](#)

[GCSE Media - The Sun - Audiences](#)

[GCSE Media - The Archers - Industries](#)

[GCSE Media - The Archers - Audience](#)

Paper 2 Section A

[GCSE Media - Luther - Industry](#)

[GCSE Media Studies - Luther - Audience](#)

[GCSE Media - The Sweeney - Industry](#)

Paper 2 Section B

[GCSE Media - The Man by Taylor Swift](#)

[GCSE Media - Intentions by Justin Bieber - Media Language, Representation & Audience](#)

[GCSE Media - TLC Waterfalls](#)

[GCSE & A Level Media - Taylor Swift Online Media - Representation](#)