

Media Studies Curriculum Summary May 2024

Vision:

The media play a central role in contemporary culture, society and politics. They shape our perceptions of the world through the representations, ideas and points of view they offer. The media have real relevance and importance in our lives today, providing us with ways to communicate, with forms of cultural expression and the ability to participate in key aspects of society. The economic importance of the media is also unquestionable. The media industries employ large numbers of people worldwide and generate significant global profit. The globalised nature of the contemporary media, ongoing technological developments and more opportunities to interact with the media suggest their centrality in contemporary life can only increase.

Media Studies offers learners the opportunity to develop a thorough and in depth understanding of these key issues, using a comprehensive theoretical framework and a variety of advanced theoretical approaches and theories to support critical exploration and reflection, analysis and debate. The study of a wide range of rich and stimulating media products offers opportunities for detailed analysis of how the media communicate meanings in a variety of forms. Learners work from the product outwards to debate key critical questions related to the social, cultural, political and economic role of the media. Through studying media products holistically in relation to all areas of the theoretical framework, learners engage with the dynamic relationships between media products, media industries and audiences. Learners also consider established media forms alongside more contemporary forms, developing an awareness of emerging and evolving media.

Although the primary emphasis is on the contemporary media, learners explore how the products relate to their wider historical contexts. Learners also extend their experience of the media through the study of products with which they may be less familiar, including those produced by or for a minority group, non-mainstream and non-English language products. Media Studies aims to develop knowledge and understanding of the transnational nature of the media, considering the effect of different national contexts on representations in media products, the global reach of media industries, and the targeting of audiences on a national and global scale.

Media Studies also recognises the fundamental relationship between theoretical understanding and practical work, providing learners with exciting opportunities to develop media production skills in different forms, apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical framework to media forms and products, and become creators of meaning themselves. Learners are offered a choice of briefs and forms within which to work, enabling them to explore and pursue their own media interests.

Media Studies offers a broad, engaging and stimulating course of study which enables learners to:

- Demonstrate skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis
- Demonstrate a critical approach to media issues
- Demonstrate appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture, politics and the economy
- Develop an understanding of the dynamic and changing relationships between media forms, products, industries and audiences
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the global nature of the media

- Apply theoretical knowledge and specialist subject specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed
- Make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- Engage in critical debate about academic theories used in media studies
- Appreciate how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- Demonstrate sophisticated practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production.

Yearly Intent Statements

What are the aims of specific stages of the curriculum?

Year 12: By the end of the year...

Students will have become confident in their understanding and application of the Media Studies Framework - that is to say, the concepts of Media Language, Representation, Audience and Industry. The study of Component 1 texts covering Music Video, Advertising and Marketing, and Newspapers means that students will have detailed experience of a broad range of media forms. Students will also have the ability to analyse the construction of a range of media texts (including unseen texts), thereby reinforcing the skills required in the Component 1 exam.

Students will also have the opportunity to develop practical skills in a range of media forms, which will reinforce their subject knowledge, as well as preparing for the start of the practical coursework Component 3 in the Summer Term.

Year 13: By the end of the year...

Students will have completed all practical coursework for Component 3. They will also have covered the more demanding Component 2 units (Section A TV; Section B Magazines and Section C Online Media) with their more detailed and synoptic study of Industry and Audience. This will also allow students to apply their understanding of Media theory and theorists. Revision and exam technique sessions will fully prepare students for their A Level examinations.

Rationale behind sequencing:

Year 12

The sequence in which units are taught and materials covered has been carefully constructed. Because Media Studies is not taught at GCSE, the course begins with a module designed to introduce the Theoretical Framework which underpins the specification and give students the opportunity to begin developing the practical skills necessary for the Cross-Media Production coursework unit.

The first taught unit from the specification is the Advertising and Marketing element of Component 1 Sections A and B. This allows students to begin applying the Theoretical Framework on the most recognisable and accessible materials. The materials cover a range of print and audio-visual texts which provide an excellent introduction to textual analysis skills focusing on the Core Areas of Media Language, Representation and Institution. Knowledge and application of these Core Areas is extended and reinforced in subsequent units.

Coursework delivery straddles the Summer Term of Year 12 and the first half of the Autumn Term of Year 13. This allows learners to integrate the practical skills and

understanding of the Core Areas that has already been developed during the first two terms, as well as providing the most flexibility in terms of the production of practical work.

Year 13

More challenging material is covered in Year 13, by which time learners have a much more secure understanding of the theoretical framework and are able to approach more unfamiliar texts, such as the unit on Radio. Similarly, the Component 2 units on 'The Golden Age of Television' and 'Media in the Online Age' are covered in Year 13. Not only do these require a more developed academic ability in terms of assessment based around the comparison of texts from different historical, cultural and industry contexts; but the assessment focus on Industry and Audience is itself more challenging.