



Questions matter



A-level

Media Studies

7572/C Coursework

Report on the Examination

7572

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Introduction and Admin

Submission of Work

This year saw a major development with the introduction to online submissions for the NEA. Given the fact this was introduced in Spring, centres adapted to the new processes really well and there were very few issues. Moderators were able to work with centres and AQA where necessary to sort out any initial problems and thanks to all schools and colleges for dealing with the new system so well.

If you did experience any technical problems, hopefully this year's experience will mean things will run even more smoothly in 2025. I am sure, those who have submitted NEAs before will see the process as being much more efficient now that we no longer have to deal with encrypting pen-drives and putting parcels in the post.

Do please refer to the AQA **Digital Media Submissions Portal Guide** to help you submit the work with appropriate file names and using correct file formats. No doubt updated guidance will be published before submission next year so check the website beforehand.

An NEA submission guide will be published on the AQA website next term which will offer practical advice on preparing student work for submission. It will be available along with other guidance documents for both the NEA and the examinations.

Deadlines

The deadline for the submission of marks each year is May 15th. The system will then identify the students whose work needs to be uploaded. If you are entering a small number of students, you may need to upload all of your cohort's work. Larger centres will be asked to submit specific students' work up to a maximum of 15. This work should be uploaded within 5 working days of the mark submission deadline.

Any technical issues should be brought to AQA's attention immediately. There is a helpline to assist with uploading student work. Details are given in the Digital Media Submissions Portal Guide.

Admin

The paperwork for NEA submission has not changed. Each centre needs to complete and submit a **Centre Declaration Sheet** and upload it to the 'Centre Documentation' area when work is being uploaded. The form can be printed, signed and scanned, or completed electronically.

Each student's portfolio of work needs to be accompanied by a completed and signed **Candidate Record Form**. There is space to add information about sources of information, software used, unassessed participants etc. on the front and details about the brief completed, the marks and teacher's comments on the back. It is important to complete the form fully. Again, the form can be printed, completed and scanned, or it can be completed electronically.

Some centres submitted signed forms but did not include information on the back page that explains how the mark scheme had been applied. Please ensure notes are added (an additional page can be provided if necessary). Some centres add information but just replicate the wording of the mark scheme. It is useful to make direct reference to how you have judged that the work meets the descriptors on the mark scheme.

Please see note below about the information needed for moderation if AI has been used in the construction of images.

Specification Requirements

The specification offers some specific guidance regarding the use of non-original imagery. Simply put, other than the use of existing media companies' logos, no non-original imagery should be used in either production task. This refers to both still and moving images. Where non-original imagery is used in the production, the specification identifies a limitation to the marks available in the 'Audience and Industry' section of the mark scheme. If non-original imagery is used by any of your students, please make sure you follow the specification's instructions when marking the work.

Use of Templates (eg in Canva, wix.com etc.)

There was some evidence this year of the use of templates in the construction of websites and magazine pages. The use of templates reduces the ability to reward students for the control of media language and their knowledge and understanding of codes and conventions of forms and design. Subsequently, work that relied on templates was sometimes over-rewarded. Students can only be rewarded for the choices they have made themselves. They should not be using templates but, if they do, this should be reflected in the marks awarded.

AI

It is not appropriate to use AI for any written part of the NEA (Statements of Intent or text within productions).

Students could use AI to generate images for their work but must give you the prompts they used so that their input into the creation of the image can be marked appropriately. The prompts should also be included in or with the Candidate Record Form to allow the moderator access to this information.

When marking work generated by AI you should consider how far the student has controlled the Media Language choices and the meaning they have created in the image. The mark scheme assesses the students' deliberate creation of meaning, their construction of narratives and control of connotations so the prompts are necessary to be able to mark the final product and reward the students fairly for their input. Students should be advised to only use AI to create images that they cannot create in any other way and that photography is used wherever possible.

Choice of Briefs

Some centres are still exerting a lot of control over the students' choice of brief and, in a few cases, even selecting approaches to tasks for the cohort.

Please note that the NEA is meant to be an independent piece of work, and this includes giving each student freedom of choice to select their preferred brief. As students are not necessarily expected to have access to professional equipment and are able to use phones, tablets and free software and/or apps to complete their work, students should be able to work on any of the briefs set.

A word about print productions

An important part of a successful production is the ability to emulate the codes and conventions of the form being created. Now that print work is being submitted as digital files rather than printouts, care should be taken when thinking about the page size and shape and the use of design conventions of the form. For example in magazines, the appropriate use of columns, font sizes, page and image sizes and proportions still need to be considered even though the final piece will not be printed. Even colours can look significantly different on screen than on the page, so it is recommended that students are able to do at least one test print of the work before submission to ensure the work is as accurate as possible. The choices made in the context of the form being created need to be taken into consideration when applying the mark scheme.

Summer 2024

Moderators found that most of the 2024 cohort had engaged with the briefs and tasks with a real enthusiasm and showed good levels of knowledge and understanding whilst taking creative approaches to tasks and using technology appropriately.

Application of Mark Scheme

The mark scheme is in the specification. Most centres applied the mark scheme fairly and appropriately within tolerance of the national standards.

You can access marked work with moderator annotations via the Teacher Online Standardisation area of AQA's Centre Services.

If you don't have access to Centre Services, please speak to your exams officer.

Statements of Intent

There were still a small number of students who wrote the statements of intent after the production had been completed rather than before and so they described and evaluated the productions rather than discussed their intentions. Some lower-level statements included theory but defined the theory rather than how the theory influenced their production choices/intentions. Intentions are often more vague or broad and generalised at this level.

Higher level statements provided clear and precise intentions that included specific media language choices they intended to make. Work at the higher end of the mark scheme also used students' theoretical knowledge to help them make production decisions.

Students should be encouraged to use their knowledge gained in the classroom (the theoretical framework, media forms etc.) and in their own research to influence and inform their intended production choices. Stronger statements consider the target audience's influence on the decisions they have made.

Some centres have adopted a bullet-point style approach which varied in effectiveness and often ended up leading students to be quite descriptive. Students should be encouraged to offer reasons for their choices as well as the choices they are making.

Media Language

Students should be making media language choices that communicate their ideas clearly and show an engagement with the way media language creates meaning.

Students who achieve well in this section have often planned carefully, paying attention to detail. For example, where clothing has been carefully selected rather than left to chance for photoshoots or during filming and the choices have been deliberately made to control meaning and/or actively construct a narrative.

Lower-level marks often reflect a more haphazard approach to the elements within the work being produced. In written work, there is a lack of engagement with the style and tone employed and images are created with little consideration of the location or lighting used. This often leads to less control over the meaning being created and less effective construction of narrative.

Representations

Lower-level marks for representations often relate to a simple depiction of an object, person or idea without engaging with the use of Media Language to construct meaning to create audience appeal or in relation to the form or genre of the production.

Higher level work can use and/or subvert stereotypes and related to Media Language choices, representations go beyond just literal depictions and offer connotations and (where applicable) feed into the construction of brand identity, narrative roles etc. At this level, these ideas tend to relate to an understanding of the audience expectations within the form/genre being created.

Audience and Industry

This area carries the larger number of marks. Students in the upper levels have actively engaged with creating audience appeal based on their knowledge of the target audience. They will also replicate codes and conventions of the form and genre they are working in accurately whilst demonstrating an understanding of the industrial context of their work. For example, advertising products will be recognisable, will sharply target their audience and attempt to create an element of persuasiveness in their carefully chosen text and images. They will also include a call to action to help the audience act and to improve the effectiveness of the advert.

Work rewarded lower in the mark scheme sometimes used non-original imagery but is usually characterised by a personal approach which doesn't fully engage with the audience or the industrial context.

The Briefs**Brief 1- crime drama extract and TV listings magazine**

It was clear from some submissions that the study of crime drama for paper 2 was informing students in the way they approached the moving image production. Higher level work replicated recognisable genre codes, and many subverted some expectations using unconventional representations or creating hybrid approaches integrating other genre codes into their work. Higher level work took care over the use and creation of mise-en-scene from carefully dressed locations to the use of props and costume. At the lower end of the range video production lacked a clear idea of narrative and tended to use less variety in the use of camera and in the editing.

There was evidence in some magazine productions that the basic codes of the form (page design, use of fonts) were not researched and accurately applied. Front covers seemed to be the better part of these productions with inside pages often missing out on the use of columns and thoughtful placement of images, headlines and captions etc. Work at the lower end of the range often used screen grabs from video work for their illustrations whereas higher level work tended to create images especially for the magazine content.

Brief 2 - fashion/style magazine content and TikTok-style videos

This was a popular brief and again, the print option was often the weaker production. As with brief 1, students at the lower end of the range struggled to replicate page design conventions. Higher level work engaged with the design of the pages, including the double page spread, and created content and images that were engaging for the target audience.

There was evidence of real enthusiasm in many of the Tik Tok-style videos with students engaging with conventional video formats showing an awareness of the need to create videos that would encourage sharing and viewer engagement. Higher level students used editing styles commonly seen on the platform and created content that was structured for this short form format. Some students missed the fact that the videos were intended to promote the magazine from task 1. Characteristic of work at the lower end of the range were limitations in the scope of video - for example, simple 'talking head' style videos, and montages of (still and/or moving) images with no clear narrative. Higher level work created interesting scenarios (for example behind the scenes at the cover image photo-shoot, 'meet the magazine production team' etc.) to fulfil the brief's requirements.

Brief 3 - music magazine + three adverts

As the 'double print' option this proved popular with students who presented work in a range of genres from pop to R&B and folk. Again, some magazines were limited by the lack of clear engagement with codes and conventions of the form and some limitations in the range of images used. As in the previous brief, higher level work recognised the way magazines use the space on the page and provided variety in the images used showing a real engagement with selecting location, costumes and NVC to reinforce the brand, genre and create audience appeal.

Given the instructions in the brief moderators saw a lot of advertising for headphones, speakers and tours, all of which were perfectly acceptable. Higher level adverts were keenly aware of the need to appeal to the audience and to persuade them to act. This was done in the unusual use of images and/or graphics combined with persuasive text that showed an awareness of the target audience. Work at the lower level of the range tended to show and identify the product rather than sell it and some adverts at this level missed providing the means for the audience to act.

Brief 4 - YouTube lifestyle vlog + 8 insta posts

Again - another popular brief. Students created make-up tutorials and a lot of the responses presented a 'day in the life'. This was a perfectly acceptable approach but, at the lower end, some videos lacked narrative drive and consisted of a lot of tracking shots denoting a journey. These videos often lacked a purpose related to the idea of 'lifestyle' content. The 'day in the life' type of content that attracted higher marks had a clear focus (for example, a fitness journey). Higher level work showed a clear control of the construction of representations and a deliberate engagement with creating audience appeal. These videos often used established codes of YouTube videos (for example, point of view shots) but showed some creativity in the use of editing and post-production effects.

Instagram posts in the upper levels showed variety with some posts consisting of video, audio and/or multiple still images. It was clear that great care had been given to the construction of the content and creating audience appeal in light of the brief's requirements. This included the use of thoughtful captions and comments that demonstrated a clear understanding of the social nature of the form. Work in the lower ranges often produced posts with simple illustrations. Some work was not clearly linked to the content of the YouTube channel. There was less evidence of the careful construction of images at this level with some photos lacking a sense of planning, appearing more like snapshots. Of course, this style of image could be appropriate, but this would need to be clear in the statement of intent and/or the accompanying caption.

Please see the specific advice in the Submission Guide regarding the submission of Instagram posts for the NEA.

Brief 5 - film posters plus webpage and audio

As with the advertising products in brief 3, film posters that engaged with film poster design conventions and utilised imagery and text that aimed to appeal to and persuade the audience to act tended to receive higher marks. Posters in the higher levels communicated genre clearly and used imagery that was both eye-catching and created representations of ideas, character etc. Lower-level work tended to be more literal. Images depicted a character or location but lacked more connotative or symbolic meaning. Some lower-level posters missed out on opportunities to address the target audience clearly and use media language to persuade.

The second task was to create one page from a film news and review site that contained an audio feature. Most students engaged with the instructions for this brief but some created content that was not requested - such as a review of the film on the website and, in a couple of cases, the audio feature acted as an analysis and evaluation of the film posters and the surrounding website rather than the film. Successful websites were designed in a way that looked modern and used the page to promote other areas of the website (not constructed). Images were also created specifically to illustrate the article - for example, 'behind the scenes' images or more formal portraits for an interview. Whilst it was not an issue to use the posters created for task one on the webpage, the replication of one or more of the posters (or the images used for the posters) should have added to the imagery used on the page rather than be the only illustrations as the repetition often meant the minimum requirements were not met.

Some audio work also missed the minimum requirement as some were presented as simple conversations with no additional use of sound or evidence of the editing of the audio. Higher level work integrated music and/or other sounds into the production and some created 'scenes from the film' which used a number of sound elements. Many higher-level audio productions had a clear focus for the conversation which engaged with an issue/debate that allowed for the construction of a narrative. The content of the work at the lower levels tended to be descriptive or provided a personal response.

Brief 6 - awareness raising website and video

This was the least popular brief this year. There was some evidence of the use of templates for the creation of websites which limited the marks available for the productions. Stronger work designed the web pages considering codes and conventions of web pages as well as readability and audience appeal. Upper-level video work engaged with the idea of providing information and instruction as well as being persuasive. At the lower end the videos were often limited to being simply informative.

Further Support

NEA Advisor

An NEA advisor will be allocated to your centre. They are a senior moderator, and you can email them for advice and guidance on interpreting the briefs and the NEA guidance in the specification.

Guidance Documents

Some new guidance documents are available relating to the NEA – they can be downloaded from the AQA website.

Feedback Meeting

An NEA feedback meeting will be held in the Autumn which will look at student work and focus in on the lessons learned this Summer that can be taken forward when supporting NEA production for 2025 submission.

Curriculum Connect

There are (usually) termly online meetings run by the Curriculum team at AQA that focus on support for teachers. This support takes many different forms from specification support, a focus on course content, exam preparation etc. largely decided on by teachers. Each meeting has a Q&A session where you can get help or maybe just some reassurance.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.