

# *Year 12 Trial Exam Paper*

## **2017**

## **MEDIA**

### **Written examination**

### *Sample responses*

#### **This book presents:**

- high-level sample responses
- mark allocations
- tips & guidelines

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**SECTION A – Narrative****Question 1a.****Sample response**

Cause and effect can be defined as a chain of interconnected events that progresses a narrative. This chain begins with an event or a problem (cause) that impacts (has an effect) on characters and therefore on narrative progression, explaining character motivation (why characters make certain decisions) to the audience.

***Mark allocation: 1 mark***

- 1 mark for an accurate definition that demonstrates an understanding of the story element ‘cause and effect’

**Question 1b.****Sample response**

The function of cause and effect is to assist the audience's understanding of how the psychologically disturbed protagonist of *Batman Begins*, Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale), overcomes his problems and becomes the superhero Batman. Christopher Nolan uses editing to connect a flashback of a childhood trauma – falling into a well (seen in slow motion) and being attacked by bats – with the adult Wayne in a Bhutanese prison, thereby communicating to the audience that the bat attack has *caused* Wayne to be both literally and figuratively trapped. For example, a close-up of the eight-year-old Wayne's face as he screams with fear when the bats attack him is match cut with a close-up of the adult Wayne's face as he wakes up in prison; this is also a jump cut used to visually connect the two shots and therefore the two time frames. It allows the audience to see that this is the same character and to understand the *effect* that this event has had on him.

**Mark allocation: 3 marks**

- 3 marks for a comprehensive response that demonstrates a perceptive and detailed understanding of the function of cause and effect in one narrative text. One production element is referred to accurately using appropriate media terminology, and a detailed analysis of how it has been used to support the story element cause and effect is provided.
- 2 marks for a satisfactory response that provides some explanation of the function of cause and effect in one narrative text. One production element is referred to accurately, although detail is lacking. Appropriate media terminology is basic, as is the analysis of how the production element has been used to support the story element cause and effect.
- 1 mark for a limited response that provides a basic explanation of the function of cause and effect in one narrative text. One production element is referred to but may be inaccurate, and detail is lacking. Appropriate media terminology is limited or lacking.

**Tips**

- *Make sure you select examples from your chosen text that illustrate the chain of cause and effect, such as the opening sequence, the key turning points, the climax, and the resolution of the narrative in the closing sequence.*
- *Make sure you can refer to how production elements are used to support this story element by explaining how particular techniques are used to make connections between key events or causes and their effects or consequences.*

## Question 2

### Sample response

The protagonist of *Spider-Man*, Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire), is established as an awkward teenager at the bottom of his school's social hierarchy. Camera techniques are used to convey the subjective point of view of both Parker and his peers on their school bus to allow the audience to empathise with Parker and his low social status. For example, a high-angle, over-the-shoulder shot is used to show an overweight boy (usually the character bullied in teen films) laughing at Parker's hand banging on the bus window, which functions to convey the subjective point of view of the students on the bus, indicating that they are literally and symbolically above Parker. A close-up of the bus' side mirror reveals Parker running behind the bus, reflected in the mirror, establishing him as an 'outsider'. Omniscient or neutral point of view is employed to show Parker's anxious expression as he gets on the bus (a mid-shot), but this quickly cuts to point-of-view shots of the students on the bus, representing Parker's subjective point of view once more, encouraging audience empathy.

### Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 4 marks for a comprehensive response that provides a perceptive and detailed analysis of how two elements are used to establish a character. Appropriate media terminology is used consistently. Both elements are discussed using detailed examples.
- 3 marks for an informed response that provides a clear and thorough analysis of how two elements are used to establish a character. Appropriate media terminology is used most of the time. Both elements are discussed effectively, but some detail is lacking. One element may be discussed in more detail than the other.
- 2 marks for a relevant but general response that provides some analysis of how two elements are used to establish a character. Some appropriate media terminology is used. Both elements are discussed in a basic manner.
- 1 mark for a limited response that provides a basic analysis of how two elements are used to establish a character. Appropriate media terminology is limited or lacking, as is the use of examples.

**Note:** A response that refers to the same text as Question 1 will be awarded no marks.



### Tips

- *Make sure you can draw on examples for all story elements using a range of production elements and that you can explain how they combine to communicate ideas.*
- *Make sure you use accurate and appropriate media terminology in your response.*

### Question 3

#### Sample response

Sound is used in *Batman Begins* to communicate the idea that the protagonist, Bruce Wayne (Christian Bale), has overcome his fear of bats, and that his character has developed into the superhero Batman. For example, Wayne returns to the well that leads into the cave where his fear of bats began, accompanied by the music track ‘Vespertilio’, the Batman theme, to signify that he is bravely facing his fear. As he enters the cave, the Batman theme recedes and is replaced by the diegetic ambient sound of the cave and a low rumbling sound effect to suggest that his fear has returned, and that the cave has power over him. The sound effect of screeching bats then dominates, but this is soon replaced by ‘Vespertilio’, indicating that Wayne has now overcome his fear of bats.

#### Mark allocation: 3 marks

- 3 marks for a comprehensive and insightful analysis that explains in detail how one story element combines with sound to communicate ideas in one narrative text. The response includes detailed examples that support an effective contention. Appropriate media terminology is used throughout the response.
- 2 marks for a general analysis that explains with some detail how one story element combines with sound to communicate ideas in one narrative text. The examples given are relevant but lack detail. Appropriate media terminology is used in some parts of the response.
- 1 mark for a limited analysis that provides a basic or simplistic explanation of how one story element combines with sound to communicate ideas in one narrative text. The examples given are lacking in detail and/or relevance. Appropriate media terminology is limited.



#### Tips

- *Make sure you can draw on sequences from both of your narrative texts where sound is used to communicate particular ideas.*
- *Make sure you can discuss in detail a range of production elements in relation to themes, ideas and character development.*
- *Make sure you can discuss a range of story elements in relation to sound.*

## Question 4

### Sample response

The narrative texts *Spider-Man* and *Batman Begins* are both hero journeys and, as such, rely on the relationship between the protagonist and his father to develop and resolve the narrative. Both films utilise a classic father–son relationship binary in which at first the protagonist is seen to identify with a negative father-figure. However, by the narrative’s resolution, he identifies with the legitimate and positive father-figure, whose values he represents. The relationship between father and son helps the audience understand how the protagonist’s values are formed and defines the narrative’s version of ‘good’ as opposed to ‘evil’.

In *Spider-Man*, for example, Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) first identifies with Norman Osborn (Willem Dafoe), the antagonist, in a father–son relationship. A long shot on the steps of Columbia University shows Osborn and Parker facing each other on the same step in the foreground, while Osborn’s real son, Harry (James Franco), stands between them in the background. The framing is used to show how Harry is excluded. Osborn also praises Parker’s scientific achievements, telling him, ‘I’m something of a scientist myself,’ while Harry tells Parker, ‘I think he wants to adopt you.’ The camera technique and dialogue therefore show the audience that Norman Osborn can be seen as a father-figure for Peter Parker at this point in the narrative. Later, Parker decides to lie to his legitimate father-figure, Uncle Ben (Cliff Robertson), telling him he is going to the library when in fact he enters a wrestling match. Parker angrily tells his uncle, ‘You’re not my father!’, emphasising the lack of paternal identification and linking it to bad behaviour. However, Parker realises the error of his choice when his uncle is killed, a key turning point in the development of the narrative. At this moment, Ben’s motto, ‘With great power comes great responsibility,’ hits home, motivating Parker to become a crime-fighting superhero. The point of realisation is shown as a flashback to the moment Parker allows a robber to escape when he could have stopped him. A close-up of Parker’s face cross-dissolves to black-and-white footage of the robber escaping, in slow motion, to underscore the importance of this event. A flash of hard light illuminates Parker’s face, as he ‘sees the light’, understanding now that his uncle was right. Another cross-dissolve to a close-up of Uncle Ben’s face as he is dying cuts back to Parker’s face, which is now fully illuminated, showing that he understands that what he did had tragic consequences. His final ascension to becoming Spider-Man occurs in the film’s climactic scene, as he fights the Green Goblin. Both characters wear their costumes, and both have their masks removed, showing that character and alter ego have merged. In the case of Osborn, this means that he has become totally evil. However, he tries to trick Parker into feeling sympathy for him and tells him, ‘I’ve been like a father to you.’ Parker emphatically replies as the music rises to a crescendo, ‘I have a father. His name was Ben Parker,’ signifying that he has now become the superhero by identifying with the legitimate father-figure, thus resolving the narrative.

*Batman Begins* offers a similar binary in which Bruce Wayne initially identifies with an illegitimate father-figure, Henri Ducard (Liam Neeson), who teaches him to overcome his fear of bats. Ducard’s role as Wayne’s mentor draws on audience expectations, as Neeson is known for his prior role as Qui-Gon Jinn, Obi-Wan Kanobi’s mentor in *Star Wars*. Neeson’s acting – his use of a calm, measured voice and disciplined body movements – recalls the *Star Wars* role. However, Wayne realises that he cannot continue identifying with Ducard when he is asked to execute a thief, a key turning point in the development of this narrative. A mid-shot shows Wayne approaching the thief with his sword, raising it to strike, while a cut to a close-up of the thief’s face shows his distress and promotes audience sympathy for the thief. A cut back to a close-up of Wayne’s face shows his sympathy and explains why Wayne does not complete the execution. At this point, his own father’s teachings on the importance of compassion over revenge supplant Ducard’s insistence that justice equals vengeance,

emphasising this narrative's version of 'good' over 'evil'. When Ducard reveals that he is the arch-villain Ra's al Ghul and declares his intention to exact vengeance on Gotham for its corruption, Wayne opposes him, representing his father's belief in kindness and forgiveness. The closing sequence confirms Wayne's acceptance of his own father's legitimate values. Wayne is seen sifting through the ashes of his mansion and finding his father's stethoscope, a symbol of 'listening to the heart'. As the audience sees a close-up of the stethoscope, backlit to create a slight aura, light rays or 'God rays' (a special effect) break through the clouds while Rachel Dawes (Katie Holmes), Wayne's love interest, states, 'Your father would be proud.' This confirms Wayne's identification with the 'good father', allowing him to become the superhero Batman, which provides narrative resolution.

***Mark allocation: 10 marks***

- 9–10 marks for a comprehensive response that demonstrates an insightful and perceptive understanding of how the relationship between characters contributes to the development and/or resolution of the narrative. A range of production and/or story elements have been referred to in significant detail to support the analysis. Highly effective and appropriate use of media terminology is evident in the response.
- 7–8 marks for a clear and effective response that demonstrates an informed understanding of how the relationship between characters contributes to the development and/or resolution of the narrative. A range of production and/or story elements have been referred to in detail to support the analysis. Clear and effective use of media terminology is evident in the response.
- 5–6 marks for a relevant response that demonstrates a clear understanding of how the relationship between characters contributes to the development and/or resolution of the narrative. A range of production and/or story elements have been referred to in an informed manner, although detail may be lacking. Some use of appropriate media terminology is evident in the response.
- 3–4 marks for a limited response that demonstrates a basic level of understanding of how the relationship between characters contributes to the development and/or resolution of the narrative. A range of production and/or story elements have been referred to in a general manner, although detail is lacking. The use of appropriate media terminology in the response is basic and limited.
- 1–2 marks for a very limited response that demonstrates a general and simplistic understanding of how the relationship between characters contributes to the development and/or resolution of the narrative. There is little reference to production and/or story elements, and examples may be limited to describing storylines. Very little use of appropriate media terminology is evident in the response.

## SECTION B – Media texts and society’s values

### Question 1

#### Sample response

A dominant value that is evident in the 1960s British spy film *Dr. No* (1962) is the belief that men are more intelligent than women, and that women are more desirable to men if they lack intelligence. This belief meant that men could objectify women, focusing their attention on the female body and ignoring the women’s minds and personalities. Men, who were regarded as society’s leaders, could hold positions of authority because they were ‘rational’, while women, seen as ‘emotional’ (and therefore not rational), were often considered men’s ‘property’ rather than as capable of participating in the structures of power and knowledge alongside men.

#### Mark allocation: 2 marks

- 2 marks for a response that clearly and accurately identifies a dominant or an emerging value. The description of the value is thorough, and makes some reference to the time period and the location of the society that produced the text.
- 1 mark for a response that identifies a dominant or an emerging value, but the description of the value is limited or lacking in detail.



#### Tips

- *Make sure you can identify the value accurately and in clear, specific terms.*
- *Make sure you can provide a thorough description of the value that goes beyond simply stating what the value is, and that you can make a connection between the text and the society that produced the text.*
- *In your exam preparation, make sure you revise definitions of all the key values in your texts.*

## Question 2

### Sample response

The dominant value that men are more intelligent than women, and women who lack intelligence are more desirable to men, is reflected in the James Bond text *Dr. No* (1962). In the film, the character Honey Rider is a representation that has been constructed as a ‘dumb, sexy blonde’ by casting the 1960s sex symbol and soon-to-be *Playboy* model Ursula Andress in this role. Rider is established as a ‘Bond girl’, emerging from the ocean in a white bikini, framed by the ‘male gaze’ of the camera like a *Playboy* model. A cut to a long shot of Bond shows him looking appreciatively at her body. However, while Rider is represented as a sexually desirable adult woman (with a sexually suggestive name), the dialogue and the plot suggest that she has the mind of a child. Rider is singing a childish song in a baby voice and collecting shells as would a child. Furthermore, she believes that Bond’s interest in her is to steal her shells, missing the sexual innuendo of his dialogue. (Rider: ‘What are you looking at?’ Bond: ‘I’m just looking ...’) The relationship between these two characters thus reflects the dominant value that it is women’s bodies that are desirable to men rather than their intellect.

### Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 4 marks for a comprehensive and perceptive explanation of how the same value that was described in Question 1 is reflected in the construction of a representation in one media text. The response is well substantiated by effective examples from the text.
- 3 marks for a clear and relevant explanation of how the same value that was described in Question 1 is reflected in the construction of a representation in one media text. The response is substantiated by examples from the text.
- 2 marks for a basic explanation of how the same value that was described in Question 1 is reflected in the construction of a representation in one media text. The response lacks adequate substantiation through the use of examples from the text.
- 1 mark for a limited explanation of how the same value that was described in Question 1 is reflected in the construction of a representation in one media text. Substantiation through the use of examples is limited.

**Note:** A response that refers to a different value from the one described in Question 1 will be awarded no marks.



### Tips

- *Make sure you are able to discuss the construction of representations in detail in order to offer a thorough analysis.*
- *Make sure you select the most effective examples from the text to support your explanation.*

### Question 3

#### Sample response

The discourse on gender in Britain in the 1960s was influenced by the growing popularity of second-wave feminism and its challenges to patriarchal values, as well as by the anti-authoritarian youth culture that led to the decade being labelled ‘the Swinging Sixties’. This discourse shaped the construction of media representations at that time, as studios began to realise that a significant minority of audiences responded positively to strong female characters, and were rejecting representations of women as housewives or, increasingly, as ‘sex objects’ (such as Honey Rider in *Dr. No*). An example is Dr Cathy Gale (Honor Blackman), the co-protagonist of the second season of the British television series *The Avengers* (1961–69). Gale is represented as simultaneously attractive and intelligent, in contrast to common representations at that time of attractive women as stupid. Gale is blonde and wears tight leather outfits, emphasising her shapely figure. However, she is also a spy, an anthropologist with a PhD (therefore intelligent) and an expert at shooting and judo (therefore also physically capable). In an episode titled ‘Bullseye’ (1962), Gale is seen as part of an all-male corporate board whose members declare ‘she’s the only one here who knows what she’s talking about’, suggesting that she is not just equal to men in business but actually superior. The series steadily increased in popularity, and by 1969 it was shown in 90 countries, thus also contributing positively to the discourse on gender.

#### Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 4 marks for an insightful and well-substantiated analysis of the relationship between a social issue or discourse and one media text. The response explains comprehensively how a clearly stated social issue or discourse has shaped a media text, based on specific and effective examples.
- 3 marks for a clear analysis of the relationship between a social issue or discourse and one media text. The response explains how a social issue or discourse has shaped a media text. Examples are clear but some detail is lacking.
- 2 marks for a general response that contains some analysis of the relationship between a social issue or discourse and one media text. The social issue or discourse may be mentioned but not linked effectively to the text or to the society that produced it.
- 1 mark for a limited response that demonstrates a basic understanding of the relationship between a social issue or discourse and media texts. There is limited use of examples to substantiate claims.

**Note:** A response that uses the same text as the previous question will score no marks.



#### Tips

- *Make sure you research the society and the historical period thoroughly, including researching other media texts that reflect the social issue or discourse you have studied.*
- *Make sure you understand the difference between the terms ‘discourse’, ‘social issue’ and ‘value’.*

## Question 4

### Sample response

Many of the values that were dominant in Britain in the early 1960s, such as the belief that women are less capable than men, have evolved to become oppositional in the 2000s. Conversely, values that were oppositional, such as the belief in gender equality – a value that was only emerging in the 1960s – can be seen as dominant today. However, tension exists between these different values in both time periods, as all societies contain minorities who challenge the dominant views. This tension informed the discourse on gender in the 1960s, when second-wave feminism was beginning to influence the construction of representations in media texts. For example, the main ‘Bond girl’ in *Goldfinger* (1964), Pussy Galore (Honor Blackman), is a representation that reflects the tension between dominant, oppositional and emerging values in Britain at that time. At first, Galore appears to represent the emerging value that women are just as intelligent and capable as men, a value promoted by feminists such as activist Gloria Steinem and author Betty Friedan (Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, called for women’s right to a career, opposing the belief that women should only aspire to being housewives and mothers). Galore is first seen on screen in a low-angle shot from Bond’s point of view, establishing that she has the power in this relationship. Furthermore, she is a pilot, wears trousers (as opposed to the bikinis and miniskirts worn by other ‘Bond girls’) and holds a gun (a phallic symbol of power), telling Bond she is ‘immune to his charm’, she’s ‘not interested in what he’s got’ and she’s ‘a damn good pilot’.

As Galore is also blonde and attractive, this would seem to go against the dominant value that men can treat attractive women as sex objects because women are less intelligent and capable than men. However, the tensions in society between dominant, oppositional and emerging values are evident in this representation because Galore’s seemingly feminist character traits are linked to her being an antagonist; therefore, they are undermined. Furthermore, the dialogue and her rejection of Bond’s advances can be seen to refer to her character in the bestselling novel of the same name, in which she is a lesbian – an oppositional value in 1964, which also undermines her power. Finally, Bond ends up seducing her, which ‘cures’ her of her feminist traits, at which point she becomes a minor character – until the final shot, in which Bond is literally on top of her, symbolising the superior status of men. While this character can be seen to reflect the emerging value that women are as capable as men, it can also be seen to reflect the dominant patriarchal framework of that time, which remains dominant by the plot’s resolution.

By 2012, strong female characters had become acceptable in Bond films, reflecting the changes to British legislation on gender such as the *Sex Discrimination Act* (1975), the *Human Rights Act* (1998) and the *Equality Act* (2006). The *Sex Discrimination Act*, in particular, was instrumental in Britain electing its first female Prime Minister in 1979 (Margaret Thatcher), as well as the appointment of a woman, Stella Rimington, as the head of MI5 in 1992 (who in turn inspired the casting of Judi Dench as M in the Bond films from 1995 to 2012). In *Skyfall*, for example, Eve Moneypenny (Naomie Harris), a character who was a secretary in the 1960s films, is represented as an active field agent who can drive fast cars and shoot high-powered rifles. Moneypenny is first seen in the opening sequence in a high-speed car chase, such chases being a convention of action films and normally involving men. This would seem to indicate that gender equality has now become a dominant value in media texts. However, although she is the one driving, Bond is seen grabbing the steering wheel while Moneypenny smashes both the car’s side mirrors, to which Bond quips, ‘You weren’t using them anyway.’ This suggests she is a bad driver, a traditional sexist stereotype reflecting the belief that men are more capable (in this case, as drivers) than women. Furthermore, Moneypenny is asked to take a shot at the villain as he fights with Bond on a train roof, and she unintentionally hits Bond, suggesting she is not a good shot. Towards the

end of the film, Money Penny tells Bond she is retiring from field service to return to secretarial work, to which Bond jokes, 'I feel safer already.' Thus, while the later Bond films represent women such as Money Penny as strong and active (in contrast to the Bond films of the 1960s), they also undermine these representations by including sexist remarks – ostensibly oppositional values – that maintain the tension between dominant, oppositional and emerging values in Britain and the United States in the early 2000s.

**Mark allocation: 10 marks**

- 9–10 marks for a comprehensive and well-substantiated discussion of the relationship between dominant, oppositional and/or emerging values in one or more media texts. The response discusses a range of society's values perceptively and provides effective examples of how society's values are distributed through media texts and through the construction of representations. The response refers to a relevant discourse or social issue and comprehensively explains how a discourse or social issue evolves over time.
- 7–8 marks for an informed and substantiated discussion of the relationship between dominant, oppositional and/or emerging values in one or more media texts. The response discusses a range of society's values thoroughly and provides clear examples of how society's values are distributed through media texts and through the construction of representations. The response refers to a relevant discourse or social issue and clearly explains how a discourse or social issue evolves over time.
- 5–6 marks for a relevant and appropriate discussion of the relationship between dominant, oppositional and/or emerging values in one or more media texts. The response discusses society's values with some detail and provides examples of how society's values are distributed through media texts and through the construction of representations. One value may be discussed in less detail than others.
- 3–4 marks for a general or basic discussion of the relationship between dominant, oppositional and/or emerging values in one or more media texts. The response provides some discussion of society's values and provides some basic examples of how society's values are distributed through media texts and through the construction of representations.
- 1–2 marks for a limited discussion that shows a basic level of understanding of the relationship between dominant, oppositional and/or emerging values in one or more texts. The response discusses society's values in a limited way. Examples may be lacking in detail or not relevant. The response may lack discussion of how a discourse or social issue evolves over time.



**Tips**

- *Make sure you understand why there is always tension between values in society and how this is reflected in media texts.*
- *Make sure you can relate the evolution of a discourse or social issue to how values are distributed through media texts.*

## SECTION C – Media influence

### Question 1

#### Sample response

Encoding/decoding theory is a communication theory that is underpinned by the cultural studies model, which sees audiences as actively interpreting media texts. Stuart Hall was a key figure in establishing cultural studies at the University of Birmingham in the late 1960s and the 1970s. His Encoding/decoding theory, first developed in 1973, challenges the effects tradition by arguing that audiences interpret media texts semiotically, depending on their personal, social and cultural backgrounds. Hall argued that while media producers encode media texts with particular meanings, audiences actively decode meanings according to their individual status in society. If an individual sees him- or herself as part of the dominant belief system (for example, as white, middle-class and male), they are likely to interpret a media text according to the dominant reading of that text, accepting the encoded meanings. If an individual sees him- or herself in opposition to the dominant belief system, they are likely to interpret a text from that viewpoint, rejecting the encoded meanings. Decoding can also be negotiated, meaning that audiences might support a dominant reading in some respects but oppose it in others. Encoding/decoding theory was instrumental in promoting the concept that audiences actively consume media texts, as opposed to seeing audiences as passive.

#### Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 4 marks for a comprehensive response that clearly outlines a communication theory or model underpinned by the cultural studies model. The response demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how the communication theory or model relates to a theory of audience.
- 3 marks for a clear response that appropriately outlines a communication theory or model underpinned by the cultural studies model. The response demonstrates a good understanding of how the communication theory or model relates to a theory of audience.
- 2 marks for a basic or general response that outlines a communication theory or model but demonstrates a limited understanding that it is underpinned by the cultural studies model. The response demonstrates a limited understanding of how the communication theory or model relates to a theory of audience.
- 1 mark for a very limited response that demonstrates a basic level of understanding of how a communication theory or model is underpinned by the cultural studies model. The response demonstrates little or no understanding of how the communication theory or model relates to a theory of audience.



#### Tips

- *Make sure you learn all aspects of the Media study design, not just the key knowledge and key skills. The study design refers to academic approaches that underpin theories of media influence and communication models. Ensure you have learnt communication theories and models from all three academic approaches referred to in the study design.*
- *Make sure you understand that ‘active’ and ‘passive’ audiences are not actual audiences, but concepts derived from theoretical frameworks.*

**Question 2a.****Sample response**

A communication theory or model from the effects tradition is the Cultivation theory.

**Mark allocation: 1 mark**

- 1 mark for a response that clearly and accurately identifies a communication theory or model from the effects tradition.

**Tip**

- *Make sure you know several communication theories or models from the effects tradition.*

**Question 2b.****Sample response**

Cultivation theory was developed by George Gerbner and his team in the late 1960s in relation to television. Gerbner argued that television represented American society as more violent than it actually was, as there was ten times the amount of violence on television compared to real life. Gerbner measured the number of violent acts shown on television and compared this with crime statistics, which were much lower. He then surveyed heavy consumers of television and found they believed that the amount of violence in society was the same as on television. He called this the ‘mean world syndrome’, and argued that this effect was cumulative, long-lasting and possibly even permanent, and could lead to a more frightened, aggressive society. A strength of this theory is that Gerbner generated data to measure the amount of violence on television. Gerbner’s definition of audience is also less simplistic than early effects theories, as he distinguishes between light and heavy consumers of television. A weakness is that Gerbner’s definition of violence is too broad (for example, audiences will respond differently to dramatic or comedic violence). Crime statistics also only show particular types of violence in society. The late 1960s was the time of the Vietnam War and student protests against it. For people watching these events on television, the perception then that American society was more violent than shown through crime statistics can be seen as plausible, rather than as a distorted worldview.

**Mark allocation: 4 marks**

- 4 marks for a comprehensive and well-substantiated evaluation of the arguments and/or evidence used to support the communication theory or model identified in part a. The response demonstrates a comprehensive application of appropriate media language and terminology.
- 3 marks for a clear and relevant evaluation of the arguments and/or evidence used to support the communication theory or model identified in part a. The response demonstrates a clear application of appropriate media language and terminology.
- 2 marks for a basic or general evaluation of the arguments and/or evidence used to support the communication theory or model identified in part a. The response demonstrates a basic application of appropriate media language and terminology.
- 1 mark for a very limited evaluation of the arguments and/or evidence used to support the communication theory or model identified in part a. The response demonstrates a very limited application of appropriate media language and terminology.

**Note:** If the selected communication theory or model is not from the effects tradition, the response will be awarded no marks.

**Tips**

- *Make sure you know two or three communication theories or models from each of the academic approaches listed in the Media study design.*
- *Make sure you can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments, as well as the evidence used to support them.*

### Question 3

#### Sample response

One argument that has been used to support the regulation of the media is protecting minors from media content that could harm or disturb them, as children are considered to be much more vulnerable to media influence than adults. Young children could be disturbed by exposure to violence, sex, adult themes, drug use, nudity or coarse language, as they may be too young to adequately distinguish between fantasy and reality. Children might also copy behaviour they see in the media, such as aggressive behaviour. For this reason, the media should be regulated by, for example, age-based classifications that provide parents with consumer advice so they can make informed choices, and that restrict access to content designed for mature audiences.

#### Mark allocation: 3 marks

- 3 marks for a perceptive and comprehensive response that clearly and accurately outlines one argument in favour of media regulation. The response demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of an argument surrounding the regulation of the media.
- 2 marks for an appropriate response that outlines one argument in favour of media regulation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of an argument surrounding the regulation of the media.
- 1 mark for a limited response that demonstrates a basic understanding of an argument surrounding the regulation of the media.



#### Tips

- *Make sure you understand a range of reasons and arguments for and against regulating the media in Australia.*
- *Make sure you avoid presenting the argument as your personal opinion.*
- *Make sure you are familiar with how the media is regulated in Australia, including through government, industry and self-regulation.*

## Question 4

### Sample response

One argument against media regulation is that it limits individual democratic freedoms. A fundamental principle of a democratic nation such as Australia is that, as stated in the National Classification Code, ‘adults should be able to read, hear, see and play what they want’. The censorship of the media by the government is regarded as a feature of totalitarian regimes and is seen as inappropriate in a free democracy. However, the Classification Board, part of the Department of Communications and the Arts, does impose some restrictions on access to media texts, such as films, video games and certain publications. This is primarily to protect children, but also to protect adults, from media content considered offensive. The Classification Board has the power to refuse classification, which can impact on an individual’s right to consume the media texts they want. For example, film critic Margaret Pomeranz has been very vocal in opposing government bans of media texts (such as *Ken Park* in 2002), arguing that the government does not have the right to censor art. However, in 2015 she pointed to the role of the internet in bypassing government restrictions, stating this meant the government no longer has the power to censor the media. While the internet may have had a positive impact on the democratic freedoms of adults, it also potentially provides minors with access to adult content, another issue that arises regarding attempts to control the media.

### Mark allocation: 4 marks

- 4 marks for a thorough and sophisticated discussion of an argument against media regulation with reference to issues that may arise in attempts to control the media. A form of regulation, such as government, industry or self-regulation, is addressed in an insightful and perceptive manner.
- 3 marks for a clear discussion of an argument against media regulation with reference to issues that may arise in attempts to control the media. A form of regulation, such as government, industry or self-regulation, is addressed in a clear and relevant manner.
- 2 marks for a basic discussion of an argument against media regulation with reference to issues that may arise in attempts to control the media. A form of regulation, such as government, industry or self-regulation, is addressed to some extent.
- 1 mark for a limited or very limited discussion of an argument against media regulation with reference to issues that may arise in attempts to control the media. A form of regulation, such as government, industry or self-regulation, is addressed in a cursory or very general manner.



### Tips

- *Make sure you do some research into media regulation controversies to provide you with examples you can use to substantiate your response.*
- *Make sure you understand the forms of media regulation, including government, industry and self-regulation, and the differences between them.*

## Question 5

### Sample response

Violent video games such as *Doom* or *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* (among others) have been blamed for causing young men, often teenagers, to commit violent crimes. For example, playing *Doom* excessively was claimed to be the reason why fourteen-year-old Michael Carneal shot three students at Heath High School in Kentucky in 1997. The 1999 Columbine High School shootings in Colorado were also blamed on violent media, particularly *Doom*, as the shooters allegedly were so obsessed with this game that they had created their own levels. In 2011, Anders Breivik killed 69 people at a youth convention, allegedly claiming that he had used *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* as a ‘training simulation’. That violent video games are ‘murder simulators ... that teach kids to kill’ is an argument made by ex-army trainer and anti-gaming activist Dave Grossman. Grossman argues that these games are designed to train soldiers to kill, and that if teenagers play them, they will experience the same effect. A communication model used by Grossman to support his argument is the General Aggression Model (GAM), developed by Craig A. Anderson at Iowa State University. According to Anderson, regular gaming leads to ‘scripts’, which are violent knee-jerk reactions to everyday situations; therefore, this type of media has a powerful effect on its audience. Anderson conducted lab studies testing brain impulses during gameplay, and identified that aggressive impulses were stimulated. When these gamers were asked to complete a story, they allegedly provided violent endings, in contrast to non-gamers in the control group. For Anderson, the causal link between playing violent video games and violence is as strong as that between cigarettes and lung cancer.

However, as Dr Aaron Carroll from the Indiana University School of Medicine has pointed out, brain impulses are thoughts, and ‘thoughts are not actions’. While violent games may stimulate aggressive brain impulses, there is no conclusive evidence these games actually cause violent behaviour. As Harvard video-game researcher Dr Cheryl Olson has also pointed out, kids play violent video games for a variety of reasons, including testing boundaries, exploring moral decisions, catharsis and ‘just plain fun’. The Uses and gratification theory would seem to apply here, as according to this theory, people use the media to gratify their individual needs based on pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. The Uses and gratification theory states that the media has little power to influence audiences who are seen as self-motivated and self-aware. From this perspective, Grossman’s claim that violent video games ‘teach kids to kill’ becomes questionable, as soldiers may use these games to train in killing, but the vast majority of teenage gamers use them for entertainment. While Breivik may have used them to train to kill, there are other factors, such as psychological dysfunction, family, education and environment, that contributed to his behaviour, suggesting that, as Olson points out, blaming violent video games for violence in society is a simplistic solution to a complex problem.

**Mark allocation: 8 marks**

- 7–8 marks for a comprehensive and well-substantiated analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of arguments used in relation to the influence of a specific media form and/or text on a particular audience. The response makes reference to two communication theories or models, and the evidence used to substantiate arguments is insightful and perceptive.
- 5–6 marks for a relevant and substantiated analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of arguments used in relation to the influence of a specific media form and/or text on a particular audience. The response makes reference to two communication theories or models, and the evidence used to substantiate arguments is well chosen and clear.
- 3–4 marks for an appropriate response that provides some analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of arguments used in relation to the influence of a specific media form and/or text on a particular audience but lacks sufficient substantiation. The response may give reference to two communication theories or models, but the evidence used to substantiate arguments is very general or includes inaccuracies.
- 1–2 marks for a limited analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of arguments used in relation to the influence of a specific media form and/or text on a particular audience. The audience may not have been identified, and the response lacks substantiation. The reference to two communication theories or models is limited and/or inaccurate.

**Tips**

- *Make sure you can apply communication theories or models to examples of media texts that are claimed to influence their audience, and that you are specific about the audience that is seen to be influenced.*
- *Make sure you conduct independent research into studies of media influence and can present different perspectives about the same media forms and/or texts.*
- *Make sure you collect any articles or news stories about the media forms and/or texts you are studying.*

**END OF SAMPLE RESPONSES**