

A LEVEL

MEDIA STUDIES



TRANSITION PACK

COURSE

INFORMATION

A level Media Studies is a two year course. You will study all three areas of the media (Print, Broadcast and Interactive media) in depth covering a range of set texts.

We currently teach the AQA A level Media Studies course.

The course is made up of two final exams at the end of the second year and coursework. These are made up of the following:

Exams: 70% of total grade

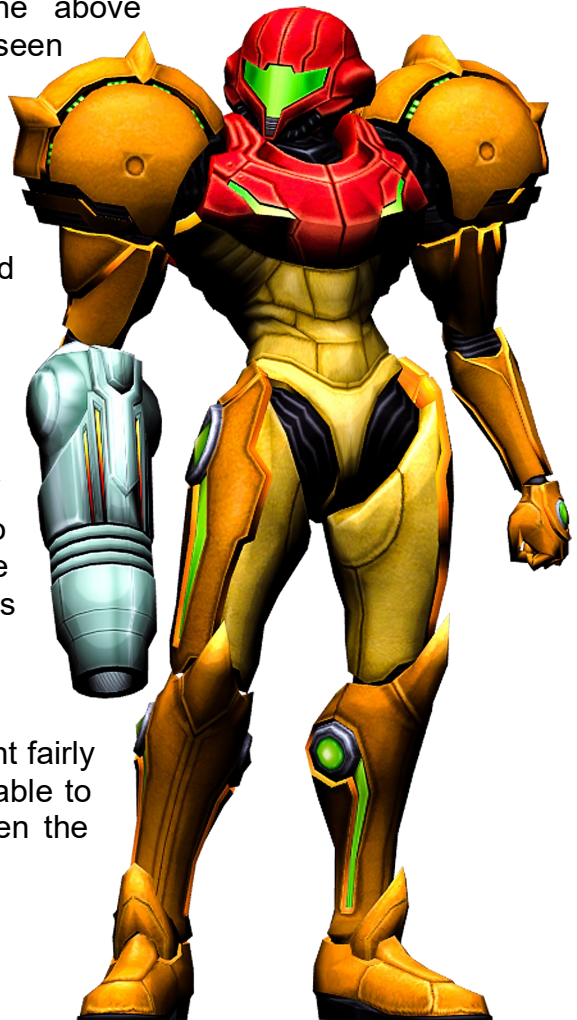
These are designed to test:

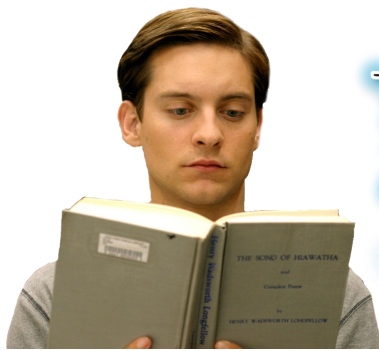
- 1) your knowledge and understanding of a wide range of media theories, and your ability to apply these freely to any media text.
- 2) Your knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues around Audience, Industry, Representations, Production, Marketing etc. and how they relate to a set of texts set by the board (the close study products—or CSPs as they are called)
- 3) Your ability to apply all of the above understanding to previously unseen media products.
- 4) Essentially this is building your ability to “read” media products in all their forms, infer meaning and context, and understand their wider role in influencing and shaping society,

Coursework: 30% of total grade

This work is based on one of a set of fixed briefs set each year by the exam board. For each brief you are required to write a “statement of intent” (plan) and then research and produce two connected media products. The briefs change every year but always cover a range of mediums and potential audiences.

We typically complete the coursework element fairly early on in the course. This is to ensure you are able to focus on the exam content towards the end (when the exams are).





Reading List

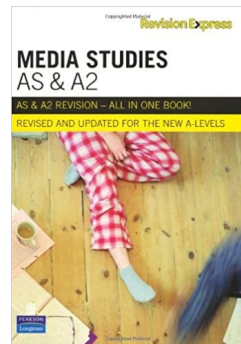


Reading around your subject makes a huge difference in your depth of appreciation for a topic. Whilst Course specific text books are not often available, and tend to be out of date quite quickly, there are some more general guides which can be helpful. Many of the theorists we study have books published, but these are often highly specialised academic texts and beyond the scope of transition to A level. That doesn't mean there aren't plenty of things you can be doing to help prepare yourself for A level study however.

Revision Express AS and A2 Media Studies

(~£2.50 second hand on Amazon)

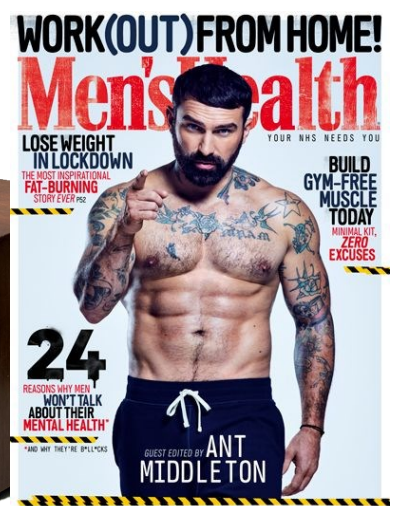
While this is quite an old book it covers the core knowledge required by all media courses in a clear and easy to follow style. It makes a useful reference tool for checking your core theory is strong. This won't get you right through the course, but given how cheap they are to pick up used, it's worth having a copy on hand. Other similar types of book will also turn up cheap second hand, but be aware exam board specific ones will have old course details due to recent changes.



Actually **READING** media texts in all their forms.

This may sound a little obvious, but if you plan to study the media, it would be very sensible to actually interact with a wide range of media products. Trying to study Media at A Level when you only care about Youtube, or Games or Netflix or whatever; is like trying to study Maths when you are only interested in addition! Read some magazines, buy a newspaper, watch various types of show on TV, watch some classic films, listen to the radio. All of this will help you build a wide, varied and *DEEP* appreciation of the subject you wish to study.

Honestly this is the best thing you can do at this stage to help prepare yourself!



WATCH LIST



While there are hundreds of videos online about all manner of aspects of media studies, not all are of equal quality or relevance. However there are certain platforms and channels which are more reliable. There are several channels run by teachers who break down media theories relevant to the exams in a way that is clear and easy to understand. Some

of these talk about a different exam board to ours, but as you can imagine, the theories are the same regardless. I have provided a selection of suggested viewing, based on what we teach, below:



Semiotics (mise en scène)

<https://youtu.be/SlpOaY-HMk>



Narrative theory—Levi
Strauss



Neale—Genre Theory

<https://youtu.be/hNaDStRuPdI>



Propp—Character Types

https://youtu.be/_vINP4yXsFI



Barthes—Narrative Codes

<https://youtu.be/bow0Y9QUIBU>



TASK ONE

ANALYSIS TASK

A key part of media studies is learning to use the various tools (theory, media language etc) to analyse and understand not just *what* a media text is trying to communicate, but also *how* it has been deliberately designed to contain that message. This first task will give you chance to practice applying some of the core skills to a set product.

For this task you will write an analysis of the poster for Olympus has Fallen (on page 7). I have provided you a “framework for analysis” (page 6), a list of prompts and question to encourage you to consider all aspects of the text.

To help with this I recommend you start by watching the first video on the Watch List page, the one on Semiotics. This will give you an overview of the core ideas.

Please write this up as a detailed, essay style response. Media Studies essays will follow a similar pattern to ones you have written in the past. You should aim to use the P.E.E format (make your **point**, state the **evidence** from the text you are using to backup that point and **explain** how it supports your point)



A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

(MEDIA LANGUAGE)

LIGHTING

- Can emphasise / accentuate / disguise / reveal / conceal / imply
- Creates atmosphere of a particular scene or shot - how? What atmosphere is created by the lighting?

COLOURS

- What are the predominant colours?
- How is colour used to evoke a reaction from the viewer?

PROPS

- What are the main props?
- What can the audience gather about the poster just from the props?

COSTUME

- What are the main characters wearing?
- Do these clothes hint at the genre?

REPRESENTATION

- How are the people in the poster represented?
- Do you think the producer has created a fair and accurate representation of the people and places?

FRAMING

- What is being included or excluded from the poster?
- Is our attention being directed or diverted for a particular reason?
- Does the framing suggest that we are seeing something from one person's viewpoint, or from a neutral standpoint?

CAMERA ANGLE

- Is the camera held steady or does it move around?
- What effect does this have on the ways in which we understand what is happening?

FOCUS

- Is the focus hard or soft?
- What effect does the focus have on the poster?



WHEN OUR FLAG FALLS
OUR NATION WILL RISE

GERARD BUTLER AARON ECKHART AND MORGAN FREEMAN

OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING DAY

MARCH 22

OLYMPUSMOVIE.COM

FILMDISTRICT

TASK TWO

MEDIA PRODUCT DESIGN TASK

The second task requires you to consider how you would *apply* media language to create appropriate representations of your own.

So here's the situation. A TV Soap Opera is currently popular within their core demographic of 55-75 year old White British Females from lower middle and working class backgrounds. Their secondary demographic is Males from the same categories. They are looking to try and expand their viewership into their tertiary audiences. They would like to encourage some younger viewers (35+) of both genders and increase the range of character representations. They have approached YOU (a well renowned writer!) to provide profiles for three new characters.

Each profile should contain details on:

- Name
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Their background/storylines
- Where the character works and lives
- What props do they use?
- How are their personalities reflected?

They would also like to know your thinking behind these ideas. So please explain how you feel these character ideas could help increase their audience range. Any other additional information you think would be useful is also welcomed.

