

Getting Started with...

A Level Media

Welcome!

If you'd like to have a look at the exam board outline of the A level course then it's here: [https://www.educas.co.uk/ed/qualifications/media-studies-as-a-level/#tab overview](https://www.educas.co.uk/ed/qualifications/media-studies-as-a-level/#tab%20overview), but the most important thing you can be doing is to open your mind to a wide range of media products, and so here's a range of ways in which you can do this between now and the start of the course:

Core skills: Tasks to do before you start in September:

1. Research and write a definition list of **key words** that we will use throughout the course:

- Connotation
- Denotation
- Demographic
- Psychographic
- Audience
- Narrative
- Ideology
- Encode and Decode
- Genre
- Hegemony

2. Research and start to write your own definitions of **key theories** that we will apply to a range of media products. (Just google and you'll find lots of websites, blogs, educational websites and You Tube videos that will help you with this)

- Representation Theory
- Hypodermic Needle Model
- Uses and Gratifications Theory
- Cultivation Theory

Exploring further:

1. A large part of Media studies is being able to explain **how media producers have made a product for a specific audience**. It is important that you are able to look at a variety of media products, some of which may not be your specific taste, then be able to explain how these audiences have been targeted. These tasks will help you on your path towards being able to do this:
 - *Read a newspaper and consider the type of audience it's targeted at.* Consider what stories have been selected and how they have been reported: do they lead the audience into a certain way of thinking?
 - *Watch a TV or streaming service show of a specific genre.* Consider how this show is constructed in terms of soundtrack, camera angles, setting, location and the story. How does it fit into categories of the same genre?
 - *Watch a big budget and a low budget film* - you will be able to research what this means and find your own examples on Google. Consider the difference between these films: How do they look? What stories are they telling? Are there famous actors and actresses included? How were the films promoted? How much money did they cost to make and how much did they make?
 - *Look at a magazine cover and consider who the target audience for this magazine is.* How do you know this? Consider layout, colour scheme, articles, celebrity endorsements and the magazine title.
2. Another crucial aspect of Media Studies is being able to **discuss and debate social issues** that have been highlighted by the media.

For example: Caroline Flack recently committed suicide after receiving both audience and paparazzi backlash over a domestic abuse claim against her. She was the third person connected to the show Love Island who has committed suicide. This resulted in the show receiving a lot of negative attention, with some audiences calling for it to be cancelled, similarly to Jeremy Kyle's show after one of his contestants committed suicide having failed a lie detector test. *What are the moral implications of these so-called reality TV shows?*

These are the sort of issues we will discuss throughout media studies. Explore some more over the page.....

..... You can explore all of these issues through websites, articles, and you tube videos with lots of different opinions and ideas. The important thing is for you to begin to consider some of the wider social implications of media texts:

- Should a 12 year old be able to play Call of Duty? What might be some of the negative implications of this?
 - Do Violent Videos games make people violent? Are some gamers more likely to behave aggressively after playing games?
 - Are video games addictive?
 - Is social media addictive? What are the positives and negative of social media use? Are some apps more addictive than others? What keeps people engaged in social media apps?
 - What are the positive and negative implications of the internet?
3. Try completing a **media log**. Over a week consider and record all the media products you engage with, from newspapers to podcasts to mobile phone use: consider the positive traits and negative habits you have developed from these products. For example, a Podcast about the Coronavirus might be very informative and educational, however, if you watch nothing but Coronavirus videos, you might become scared or this might affect your mental health.

Lastly, Media Studies necessitates students have a critical and open-minded nature; you'll need to be able to detach yourself from products you may like or dislike and critically explore them. Try and engage with a range of media products, particularly those that you may not have before, such as documentaries, or foreign films. Try and look at newspapers and news websites, consider how different news outlets cover the same story, is there an agenda? The experience of these new media texts is invaluable and will serve you well when we commence our studies in September.

Any questions? Feel free to contact the subject leader on

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