

Cambridge International AS & A Level

DIGITAL MEDIA & DESIGN**9481/03**

Paper 3 Personal Investigation

May/June 2026**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 100

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **6** printed pages.

General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: - the specific content defined in the mark scheme - the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions - the standard of response required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award whole marks (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks positively . This means that: - marks are not deducted for errors or omissions - marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for other valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate - the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged only when the mark scheme indicates that these features are specifically assessed in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must consistently apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and must not award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Indicates that a page has been seen by the examiner

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.	AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.	AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding.	AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design.
Excellent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. Highly accomplished ability to reflect critically on work and progress. Excellent use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology is excellent . Highly accomplished and sophisticated ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. Excellent communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	Excellent development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through highly accomplished and mature referencing of feedback and constraints. Perceptive integration of practical and written elements.	Excellent realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. Highly accomplished and mature connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates an excellent level of engagement and independence.
21–25 marks	21–25 marks	21–25 marks	21–25 marks
Confident skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. Highly effective ability to reflect critically on work and progress. Confident use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Confidently explores and selects relevant media, materials and technology. Highly effective ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. Confident communication of ideas and other forms.	Confident development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding confidently demonstrated through thorough and careful referencing of feedback and constraints. Highly effective integration of practical and written elements.	Confident realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. Highly effective connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a highly effective level of engagement and independence.
16–20 marks	16–20 marks	16–20 marks	16–20 marks

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.	AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.	AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding.	AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design.
Competent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. Good ability to reflect critically on work and progress. Competent use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Competent exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. Good ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. Good communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	Competent development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Good analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback and constraints. Good integration of practical and written elements.	Competent realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. Good connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a competent level of engagement and independence.
11–15 marks	11–15 marks	11–15 marks	11–15 marks
Satisfactory skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. Adequate ability to reflect critically on work and progress. Satisfactory use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Adequate exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. Satisfactory ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. Satisfactory communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	Satisfactory development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Adequate analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback and constraints. Adequate integration of practical and written elements.	Satisfactory realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. Adequate connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates an adequate level of engagement and independence.
6–10 marks	6–10 marks	6–10 marks	6–10 marks

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AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.	AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.	AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding.	AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design.
Limited skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. Basic ability to reflect critically on work and progress. Limited use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Limited exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. Basic ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. Basic communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	Basic development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided. Limited analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback and constraints. Limited integration of practical and written elements.	Limited realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. Basic connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a basic level of engagement and independence.
1–5 marks	1–5 marks	1–5 marks	1–5 marks
No creditable work.	No creditable work.	No creditable work.	No creditable work.
0 marks	0 marks	0 marks	0 marks