

Cambridge International AS & A Level

MEDIA STUDIES**9607/22**

Paper 2 Key Media Concepts

May/June 2026

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

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 **19** 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.

English & Media-Specific Marking Principles**(To be read in conjunction with the General Marking Principles (and requiring further guidance on how to place marks within levels))****Components using level descriptions:**

- We use level descriptions as a guide to broad understanding of the qualities normally expected of, or typical of, work in a level.
- Level descriptions are a means of general guidance and should not be interpreted as hurdle statements.
- Where indicative content notes are supplied for a question, these are *not* a prescription of required content and must not be treated as such. Alternative correct points and unexpected answers in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the knowledge and skills demonstrated.
- While we may have legitimate expectations as to the ground most answers may occupy, we must at all times be prepared to meet candidates on their chosen ground, provided it is relevant ground (e.g. clearly related to and derived from a relevant passage/text and meeting the mark scheme requirements for the question).

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
	Unclear expression
	Credit-worthy point made
	Unclear expression
	Valid point/answer
	Blank page
	Example used
	Knowledge
	Response is mainly narrative
	Directly addressing the question
	Page has been seen by examiner
	Use of appropriate terminology

Assessment Objectives

The Assessment Objectives are applied to each question. The assessment objectives for the paper are:

- **AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates, using terminology appropriately (60%).
- **AO2** Analyse media products, and evaluate their own work, by applying knowledge and understanding of theoretical and creative approaches, supported with relevant textual evidence (40%).

The Level Descriptors guide examiners to an understanding of the qualities normally expected of, or typical of, work in a band. They are a means of general guidance and must not be interpreted as hurdle statements. For the purposes of standardisation of marking, they are to be used in conjunction with the Standardisation scripts discussed during the coordination meeting and with Team Leaders, as well as the question-specific notes.

The indicative content provided is for general guidance; it is not designed as prescriptions of required content and must not be treated as such. Whilst there are legitimate expectations of the content of most answers, examiners may see responses that include ideas not covered in the indicative content. For these cases, examiners should credit valid responses fairly and not penalise candidates for including valid points outside the mark scheme.

Using a banded mark scheme

Place the answer in a level first. Look for the “best fit” of the answer into a level. An answer needs to show evidence of most but not necessarily ALL of the qualities described in a level in order to be placed in that band. Then award a mark for the relative position of the answer within the level.

Higher level responses (Levels 4 and 5) will demonstrate excellent knowledge and understanding of the key concepts (AO1). They should use a wide range of terminology accurately (AO1). They should show clear understanding of how meaning is created in the text (AO2). They should support their answer with many detailed references to the text (AO2).

Middle range responses (Level 3) will demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the key concepts – there may be uneven coverage or some misunderstanding (AO1). They should use some terminology, but not always accurately (AO1). They should show some understanding of how meaning is created in the text (AO2). They should support their answer with some references to the text (AO2).

Basic responses (Levels 1 and 2) will demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of the key concepts – misunderstanding might be common (AO1). They might use some terminology, but rarely accurately (AO1). They will have limited understanding of how meaning is created in the text (AO2). They rarely support their answer with references to the text (AO2).

Section A: Media Texts

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	Analyse how the extract from <i>Ripley</i> constructs meaning, including the specific representations of individuals, groups, events or places, through the following technical elements: • camera shots, angles, movement and composition • sound • mise-en-scène • editing. <u>Specific notes on the sequence – likely areas of coverage</u> Camera: • Stillness of the camera – some slight camera movements but majority of shots are still – offering the viewer lots to observe. • The visual ‘quietness’ of the still style reflects the content of the wider episode / series and title character – where so much goes on beyond the surface • Lots of close ups / medium close ups – in the first half of the extract the audience is presented with a study of two different lifestyles in two different apartments – reflecting very different financial; / social class status. The extract commences with some glimpses into a very ornate middle class apartment / lifestyle	25	Candidates will be assessed on their ability to understand how meaning is constructed in a media text through the analysis of different technical areas. Marks are awarded for exploration of the following areas of the AOs: • Media concepts (AO1) [5 marks] • Contexts and debates (AO1) [5 marks] • Use of terminology (AO1) [5 marks] • Analysis of how meaning is created (AO2) [5 marks] • Use of examples (AO2) [5 marks] Candidates’ work should be judged on each of these criteria, and marks awarded according to the level attained. It should be noted that it is possible for a candidate to achieve a different level for each assessment criterion. A positive approach to marking is encouraged. Reward alternative valid responses. Clip details: Extract: <i>Ripley</i> (episode 1, ‘A Hard Man to Find’, 2024, dir. Zaillian)

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	• These observational shots of the well furnished apartment are intercut with some repeated shots of a bathroom – the repetition thus establishes the significance of the location to another action – where we see a character (Ripley) dragging a large package down a long flight of stairs (a body). – the more distanced medium shots / MLS's partly obscure the nature of the package – creating an enigma code for the audience at this stage • As the extract progresses, the audience is visually introduced to a second apartment – documenting a much more financially restrained life – but again using the same quiet visual style – giving the audience observational insights into a life where material possessions and ornaments are restricted. Thus an oppositional representation of class and status formed regards the first apartment • The use of black and white cinematography and aspects of chiaroscuro lighting both reflect the influence of film noir and Italian neo-realism – which is fitting, foreshadowing that much of the action of the series will unfold in Italy • Whilst there are many MCUs / CUs – it is nearly two minutes into the extract (1 min 53 seconds) before we see the protagonist's face – so the camera is working to orientate the viewer into this fictional world and enable to understand time, place and socio-economic situation, without learning anything particularly about the main character		

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	Sound: - The extract begins with shots of a series of clocks – sound wise the audience hears the ticking of different clocks and this progresses to the sound of a church bell being rang. This hyper focus on time then establishes time as important. The tolling of the church bell invites the connotation of – for whom the bell tolls’ – giving an audible enigma code – who does the bell toll for and why? - As the events segue from ‘Rome 1961’ to New York (evident by aspects of iconography), Roy Orbison’s ‘In Dreams’ is introduced into the soundtrack – it commences non-diegetic sound which then transitions into diegetic sound in the second apartment where we again see Ripley. This shifting from non-diegetic to diegetic, combined with the choice of song, anchors Ripley as a dreamer who aspires for other, greater things – offering another element of character details from what has been introduced previously visually - In keeping with the approach to camera and editing, the soundscape throughout is quite restrained – there is some low key incidental music, dialogue and voiceover narration - The same minimalist approach to sound design is retained as the extract enters its final scene – in a bar where Ripley meets the dark suited man – Alvin McCarron Mise-en-scene: - The two apartment locations establish a sense of class and status – but very different ones: the first – with its ornaments and elaborate furnishings suggesting a more expensive apartment – and that implies a certain level of income / wealth		

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	- The much more spartan appearance of the second apartment location suggests a very different – far lesser – sense of income / wealth available to its resident: Ripley – thus offering motivation for why we see Ripley dragging the large package down the stairs from the expensive appearing apartment - After the caption ‘Six Months Earlier’, the events then move to New York City (which is also captioned to definitively anchor the action for the audience) but will be known to an audience more literate with New York visual markers – such as the bridge (the Manhattan Bridge – this may also get referred to as the Brooklyn Bridge – accept as valid if used about how iconography is used to anchor and orientate the viewer), the uniform of the police officer, and the screeching of the subway trains Editing: - Continuous editing used throughout the extract - whilst there are a number of cutaways to highlight particular details (such as the clocks on the mantel shelf) there is no disruption to the viewer’s sense of time. - Shot transitions are only straight cuts – keeping visual disruption minimal - The tempo of the cuts is mid to slow paced – the extract with shots with on screen durations of a couple of seconds and the this stretches out to a number of ‘long takes’ as the Italy segment progresses and then revert back to more mid tempo cutting as the action segues to New York		

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	Meaning: <i>Ripley</i> opens <i>in media res</i> as we see someone apparently disposing of a body from what appears to be an expensive apartment. The caption tells us that it is Rome in 1961. The photography is striking, high contrast, black and white which conjures up the era of film noir, and every shot is beautifully composed, often using canted angles suggesting a world askew, and static. There is a shift signalled by the caption 'six months earlier' suggests that we are going to discover the events which led to this point. The extract introduces us to Ripley who seems to be living in reduced circumstances – the low angle shots of fire escapes suggest that he is literally at the bottom. Other shots of a mouse trap, peeling plaster and haphazard electric wiring confirm this impression. The caption tells us we are now in New York City. We witness Ripley's clearly practised, fluent deception as he travels to the office of a doctor to intercept a patient's cheque from the postman and subsequently write a letter to the patient pretending to be from a collection agency asking for payment. This seems to be how Ripley makes a living – his collection of office stamps and typewriter with fake headed paper indicate that he has invested in this scam. The extract culminates in his meeting in a bar with a dark, mysterious figure who already knows his name and has been searching for him. A sense of danger, threat and the risk of discovery permeates Ripley's world.		

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Marking criteria for Section A Question 1				
AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates, using terminology appropriately. 15 marks			AO2: Analyse media products, and evaluate their own work, by applying knowledge and understanding of theoretical and creative approaches, to explain how meaning is created, supported with relevant textual evidence. 10 marks	
Media Concepts 5 marks	Contexts and Critical Debates 5 marks	Use of Terminology 5 marks	Analysis of how meaning is created, including use of theory 5 marks	Use of Examples 5 marks
Sophisticated understanding of and insightful reference to the key concepts of language and representation 5 marks	Insightful understanding of the social significances explored in the extract 5 marks	A wide range of media terminology is used precisely and accurately, and with sophistication, to make subtle points 5 marks	Sophisticated and insightful analysis of the ways technical aspects are used to construct meaning in the extract 5 marks	Insightful and fully appropriate selection of examples fully supports expression 5 marks
Thorough understanding of and effective reference to the key concepts of language and representation 4 marks	Effective understanding of the social significances explored in the extract 4 marks	A range of media terminology is used accurately, and help to make effective points 4 marks	Thorough and effective analysis of the ways technical aspects are used to construct meaning in the extract 4 marks	Effective and appropriate selection of examples fully supports expression 4 marks
Clear understanding of and appropriate reference to the key concepts of language and representation 3 marks	Clear understanding of the social significances explored in the extract 3 marks	Media terminology is used appropriately, to make clear points 3 marks	Clear analysis of the ways technical aspects are used to construct meaning in the extract 3 marks	Clear and appropriate selection of examples supports expression 3 marks

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Marking criteria for Section A Question 1				
AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates, using terminology appropriately. 15 marks			AO2: Analyse media products, and evaluate their own work, by applying knowledge and understanding of theoretical and creative approaches, to explain how meaning is created, supported with relevant textual evidence. 10 marks	
Media Concepts 5 marks	Contexts and Critical Debates 5 marks	Use of Terminology 5 marks	Analysis of how meaning is created, including use of theory 5 marks	Use of Examples 5 marks
Limited understanding of but generally appropriate reference to the key concepts of language and representation 2 marks	Limited understanding of the social significances explored in the extract 2 marks	Limited use of media terminology is mainly used accurately, to make simple or obvious points 2 marks	Limited analysis of the ways technical aspects are used to construct meaning in the extract 2 marks	Limited but generally appropriate selection of examples supports expression 2 marks
Basic understanding of and minimal reference to the key concepts of language and representation 1 mark	Basic understanding of the social significances explored in the extract 1 mark	Basic use of media terminology, with frequent errors which impede communication 1 mark	Basic analysis of the ways technical aspects are used to construct meaning in the extract 1 mark	Basic and minimal selection of examples, may lack relevance in parts 1 mark
No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks

Section B: Media Contexts

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2	EITHER Explain why it is important to know who owns media companies. <u>Indicative content</u> With detailed reference to at least one case study, candidates <i>may</i> address: • how ownership shapes media products and content • processes of production, distribution and consumption by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context • the significance of patterns of ownership and control, including conglomerate ownership, vertical integration and diversification • the significance of economic factors, including commercial and not-for-profit public funding, to media industries and their products • how media organisations maintain varieties of audiences locally, nationally and globally, including marketing • the regulatory framework of contemporary media, particularly in relation to ownership, and the impact of technological change on media regulation • the impact of convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and consumption • the effects on plurality and democracy of the concentration of ownership of media companies	25	Candidates should be given credit for their knowledge and understanding, illustrated through case study material, relevant to the question. Marks are awarded for exploration of the following areas of the AOs: • Media concepts (AO1) [5 marks] • Contexts and debates (AO1) [5 marks] • Use of terminology (AO1) [5 marks] • Analysis of how meaning is created (AO2) [5 marks] • Use of examples (AO2) [5 marks] Candidates' work should be judged on each of these criteria individually and marks awarded according to the level attained. It should be noted that it is possible for a candidate to achieve a different level for each assessment criterion. The indicative content demonstrates how candidates might approach the question. It is a description of possible content only. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2	• 'Who' is likely to be fined as an individual – e.g. Rupert Murdoch (News UK, Fox News, Jeff Bezos (Amazon Studios / MGM, Prime Video) or corporately – e.g. – Disney owning Marvel, Comcast owning Sky News / Sky TV • Alternatively, candidates may reject the assertion that ownership is important and focus on how audience behaviour shapes content - what is / is not produced (cancelled TV series / films)		

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	OR ‘Audiences may consume the same media product, but interpret it completely differently.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement? <u>Indicative content</u> With detailed reference to at least one case study, candidates <i>may</i> address: • how media producers target, attract, reach, address and construct audiences • how media industries target audiences through the content and appeal of media products and through the ways in which they are marketed, distributed and consumed • how factors such as class, age, gender, ethnicity, and other factors relating to identity affect audiences’ tendency to accept or resist media messages – can incorporate any elements of demographics and / or psychographics • the interrelationship between media technologies and patterns of consumption and response • how audiences interpret the media, including how they may interpret the same texts in different ways, using a variety of theories or ideologies (theories of interpretation might include references to Blumler and Katz, David Morley, Annette Hill, Stuart Hall, Martin Barker, Sonia Livingstone, Lisbet van Zoonen, bell hooks) • how specialised audiences can be reached, and addressed, on a local, national and global scale, through different media technologies and platforms	25	Candidates should be given credit for their knowledge and understanding, illustrated through case study material, relevant to the question. Marks are awarded for exploration of the following areas of the AOs: • Media concepts (AO1) [5 marks] • Contexts and debates (AO1) [5 marks] • Use of terminology (AO1) [5 marks] • Analysis of how meaning is created (AO2) [5 marks] • Use of examples (AO2) [5 marks] Candidates’ work should be judged on each of these criteria individually and marks awarded according to the level attained. It should be noted that it is possible for a candidate to achieve a different level for each assessment criterion. The indicative content demonstrates how candidates might approach the question. It is a description of possible content only. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; examiners must be careful to reward original but well-focused answers.

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	• how media organisations reflect the different needs of mass and specialised audiences, including through targeting • how audiences use media in different ways, reflecting demographic factors as well as aspects of identity and culture • the role and significance of specialised audiences, including niche and fan, to the media • How time and place of production may be very different to the time and place of consumption – and the according differences which this may make to audience interpretation		

Marking criteria for Section B Question 2 and Question 3				
AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates, using terminology appropriately.			AO2: Analyse media products, and evaluate their own work, by applying knowledge and understanding of theoretical and creative approaches, to explain how meaning is created, supported with relevant textual evidence.	
15 marks			10 marks	
Media Concepts	Contexts and Critical Debates	Use of Terminology	Analysis of how meaning is created, including use of theory	Use of Examples
5 mark	5 marks	5 marks	5 marks	5 marks
Sophisticated understanding of and insightful reference to the key concepts of audience and industry	Insightful understanding of the wider issues, explored with sophistication in the response Factual knowledge of contexts and debates is relevant, detailed and accurate, and sophisticatedly linked to the question	A wide range of media terminology is used precisely and accurately, and with sophistication, to make subtle points	Sophisticated and insightful analysis of texts from multiple case studies is used to explore the chosen area in depth Relevant theories are sophisticatedly used to explore the question	Insightful and fully appropriate selection of examples from a wide range of texts
5 marks	5 marks	5 marks	5 marks	5 marks
Thorough understanding of and effective reference to the key concepts of audience and industry	Effective understanding of the wider issues explored Factual knowledge of contexts and debates is relevant, and effectively linked to the question	A range of media terminology is used accurately, and help to make effective points	Thorough and effective analysis of texts from multiple case studies is used to explore the chosen area Relevant theories are used effectively in response to the question	Effective and appropriate selection of examples from a range of texts fully
4 marks	4 marks	4 marks	4 marks	4 marks

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Marking criteria for Section B Question 2 and Question 3				
AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of media concepts, contexts and critical debates, using terminology appropriately. 15 marks			AO2: Analyse media products, and evaluate their own work, by applying knowledge and understanding of theoretical and creative approaches, to explain how meaning is created, supported with relevant textual evidence. 10 marks	
Media Concepts 5 mark	Contexts and Critical Debates 5 marks	Use of Terminology 5 marks	Analysis of how meaning is created, including use of theory 5 marks	Use of Examples 5 marks
Basic understanding of and minimal reference to the key concepts of audience and industry 1 mark	Basic understanding of the wider issues explored Minimal knowledge of the relevant contexts and debates 1 mark	Basic use of media terminology, with frequent errors which impede communication 1 mark	Basic analysis, from case studies which may not be appropriate to the question Minimal references to even basic media theory. 1 mark	Basic and minimal selection of examples, may lack relevance in parts 1 mark
No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks	No creditable content 0 marks