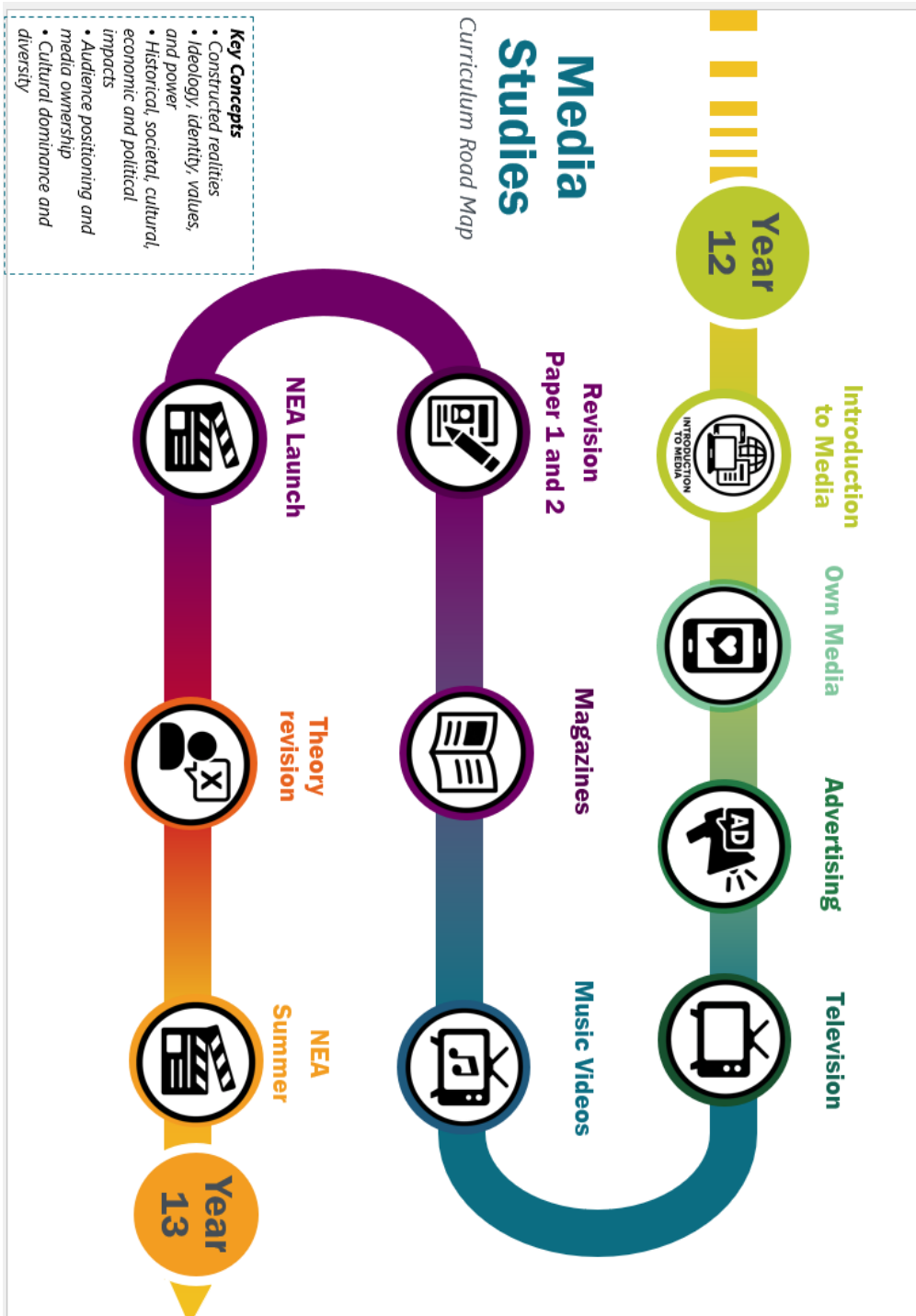
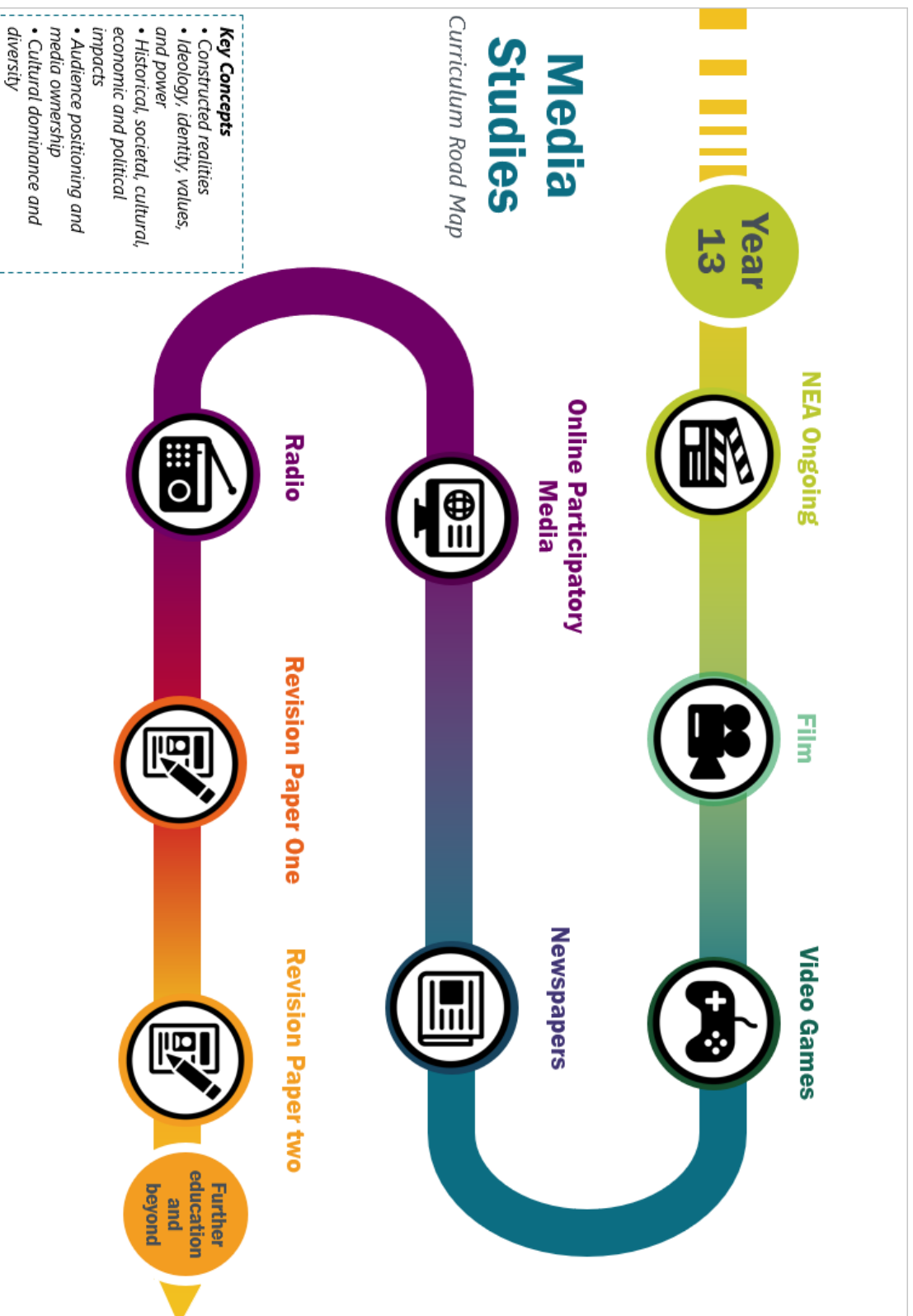


KS5 Media Studies





A Level Media Studies

Entry requirements: Five or more GCSEs Grade 9-4 or equivalent. Minimum of Grade 5 in English Language or Literature. It is an essay-based subject and suits students who have flourished in subjects like English Literature or History.

EXam Board: AQA

Teachers: M Gray, and C Morton

A level breakdown of three components:

Media One: Worth: 35% of A Level

Length: 2 hours

Focus: Media language, representation, industries, and audiences

What students study:

Students analyse set products (CSPs – Close Study Products) from a range of media forms, for example:

- Advertising
- Music videos
- Newspapers
- Film marketing
- Radio

Key areas:

- Media Language – how meaning is created (camera, editing, design, layout)
- Representation – how individuals, groups and issues are portrayed
- Media Industries – ownership, regulation, production, distribution
- Audiences – how audiences interpret and respond to media

Exam structure:

- Section A: Short and medium responses analysing media language and representation plus one extended response.
- Unseen analysis
- Music video and advertising

- Section B: Short and medium responses analysing media industry and audience plus one extended response.
- Radio
- Film
- Newspapers

Media Two: 35% of A Level

Length: 2 hours

Focus: In-depth study of media forms and theoretical perspectives

What students study:

Students explore four key media areas:

- Television
- Magazines
- Online, social and participatory media
- Video games

Key areas:

- Media Language – how meaning is created (camera, editing, design, layout)
- Representation – how individuals, groups and issues are portrayed
- Media Industries – ownership, regulation, production, distribution
- Audiences – how audiences interpret and respond to media

Exam structure:

- One unseen short response question
- Three extended essay questions
- Each question focuses on a different media form
- Strong emphasis on applying theory and making comparisons

NEA: Creating Media

Worth: 30% of A Level

Type: Practical coursework

What students do:

Students create their own media products in response to a set brief released by AQA each year.

Typical options include:

- Film opening
- Magazine
- Music video
- Online media product
- Advertising

Assessment components:

1. Production (practical work)
 - Create media using industry conventions
 - Demonstrate technical and creative skills
2. Statement of Intent (written)
 - Explain creative decisions
 - Refer to target audience and media theories

Skills developed:

- Planning and research
- Creativity and design
- Technical production skills
- Application of media theory in practice

Main syllabus area: This course introduces students to the critical study of media across a wide range of platforms, exploring media disciplines both new and traditional. Students will study forms such as television, film marketing, music video, advertising, newspapers and online media, examining texts from different historical periods and global contexts. The course provides opportunities to analyse media within social, cultural and political contexts, encouraging students to develop a range of interpretations and a deeper understanding of how media shapes our world.

Students will explore key theoretical areas including media language, audience reception, representation and media industries, developing the ability to question

the validity of the information they encounter in everyday life and to recognise bias within the media. Through this, they gain a more informed and critical awareness of contemporary society.

Alongside analytical work, the course also offers opportunities to translate theory into practice through a creative cross-media project. Students will plan and produce their own media product within a chosen platform, developing practical skills in design, production and audience engagement while applying their theoretical knowledge in a creative context.

Method of assessment: Students will be assessed by a combination of coursework (30%) and examination (70%). It should be noted that this is an essay based course.

Qualities Required: You will have an interest in the media and a willingness to extend and develop your understanding of a wide range of media forms and platforms. We will explore the impact Media has had on the world historically and socially. Media texts can often seem familiar and easy to engage with; however, analysing them critically requires depth, insight and precision. Therefore, you need an open and enquiring mind, established writing skills, and a willingness to enter debate and discussion.

A strong and critical interest in the media is essential for doing well in A Level Media Studies, but it is not necessary to have studied Media at GCSE.

Links with other subjects: Because the content of A Level Media Studies is firmly embedded within cultural, socio-political and economic life, it sits well alongside and supports work in subjects like English literature, History, Sociology, Psychology and Politics. Analytical skills from subjects such as English Language is also beneficial.

Future prospects: The skills developed during this course link to a wide range of subjects at Higher Education, as well as a broad variety of careers. A Level Media Studies students can go on to study Media, TV or Film at university as a practical degree, a theoretical degree, or a combination of the two. This can lead to a wide range of professions in media, film and journalism, as well as marketing, advertising, digital content creation, research, arts administration and related creative industries.

Media Studies also develops a range of highly transferable skills, including analysis, visual communication, problem-solving, presentation, communication and organisation. These are valued across many employment sectors.

Future prospects in these areas are strong, as the creative industries continue to play a significant role in the UK economy. This course provides students with an understanding of forms of media that have major cultural significance and influence in contemporary society.

Extension and Enrichment Opportunities

University trip. Area being developed for 2026/2027.

Reading list

Many resources will be provided for you. These will be in the form of booklets, but also a reading list sheet will be provided at the start of your study. Below are the media theories we will study in depth that can be researched further out of lesson:

1. Media Language & Representation

- **Roland Barthes:** Semiotics, denotation vs. connotation, and enigma codes.
- **Tzvetan Todorov:** Narrative structure (Equilibrium, Disruption, Recognition, Repair, New Equilibrium).
- **Claude Lévi-Strauss:** Structuralism and binary oppositions.
- **Steve Neale:** Genre theory (repetition and difference).
- **Jean Baudrillard:** Postmodernism and hyperreality.
- **Stuart Hall:** Representation theory (stereotyping and constructed meaning).
- **David Gauntlett:** Identity theory (media as a tool for creating modern identity).
- **Judith Butler:** Queer theory and gender performativity.
- **bell hooks:** Feminist theory (intersectional feminism and representation).
- **Liesbet van Zoonen:** Feminist theory (patriarchal media shaping gender).
- **Paul Gilroy:** Postcolonial theory (how race and ethnicity are represented in postcolonial contexts).

2. Media Industries & Audiences

- **Stuart Hall:** Reception theory (encoding/decoding: dominant, negotiated, oppositional readings).
- **Albert Bandura:** Media effects (Social Learning Theory).
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- **George Gerbner:** Cultivation theory (repeated exposure shapes audience worldviews).
- **Henry Jenkins:** Fandom theory (participatory culture in the digital age).
- **Clay Shirky:** "End of Audience" (passive consumers vs. active prosumers).
- **Curran and Seaton:** Power and media industries (concentration of ownership limits diversity).
- **David Hesmondhalgh:** Cultural industries (maximizing profit, minimizing risk, and horizontal/vertical integration).

Independent study: Consolidating notes using the Course Textbook available in the Library as well as your own from lesson is key. Completing home learning tasks and further research on topics and theories is also expected.

Useful websites:

- AQA Media Studies- This will give you an overview of the course
- <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/media-studies/a-level/media-studies-7572/specification>
- Content website
- <https://media-studies.com/>
- Media Theory- This will give you an introduction to some of the theories that we will be covering regarding the study of different Medias.
- <http://lr-media.blogspot.com/2018/09/theorists-and-theories.html><https://jpgayfordefm.wordpress.com/media/aqa>
- <https://jpgayfordefm.wordpress.com/media/aqa-media-studies-feminist-theory-and-the-csps/> - feminism theory (representation)
- <https://guilbsboroughschoolmedia.wordpress.com/2017/06/15/paul-gilroy/> - Postcolonial theory (representation)
- <https://guilbsboroughschoolmedia.wordpress.com/2019/06/12/david-gauntlett-identitytheory/> - Identity theory (representation)
- <https://ehrhaskewa2.wordpress.com/2017/09/21/todorovs-narrativetheory/#:~:text=Todorov's%20narrative%20theory%20suggests%20that,reach%20to%20re%20store%20the%20equilibrium> - Narrative theory (language)

- <https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/media-studies-level-revision/moral-panictheory#:~:text=Moral%20Panic%20occurs%20when%20someone,panic%20theorist%20is%20Stanley%20Cohen.&text=The%20moral%20panic%20depicted%20by,creates%20mass%20hysteria%20within%20society.> - Moral Panic (Media Audiences)
- <https://guiltsboroughschoolmedia.wordpress.com/2019/06/27/hesmondhalgh-culturalindustries-theory/> - Cultural Industries (Media industries)
- Wider Reading
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55180055> - Production of Medias
- https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/jul/27/instagram-news-source-socialmedia?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other - A change that looks at social Media
- <https://www.theguardian.com/gnmeducationcentre/2018/jan/08/resources-for-teachers-usefulinformation-about-the-guardian-and-journalism> - Resources and links on the Guardian's ownership and organisation; its history; writing and producing news; photography and multimedia; advertising campaigns and trust in journalism
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-53477377> - Magazine closure
- <https://www.wired.com/story/e3-2019-female-representation-videogames/> - Representation of females in video games
- <https://feministfrequency.com/video/the-bechdel-test-for-women-in-movies/> - The Bechdel test in film
- <https://lr-media.blogspot.com/2019/05/bonus-session-1-explore-how.html> - an analysis of Childish Gambino's- This is America-