

Media Studies

AQA GCSE

Knowledge Book

Year 11

Exam – Serial Television Drama



AQA GCSE Media Studies EXAM Personal Learning Checklist: Serial Television Drama 2018

Assessment Objectives	AO1: Recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding (10%)
	AO3: Demonstrate research, planning and presentation skills (5%)
	AO4: Construct and evaluate own products using creative and technical skills. (5%)

This document gives you an overview and checklist of all topic areas for the Serial Television Drama exam. If you learn and revise all of these topic areas and plan/practice writing appropriate questions linked to these areas, you should succeed. Good luck and happy ticking!

		How confident do you feel?				
		Half-term 1 RED/ AMBER/GREEN	Half-term 2 RED/ AMBER/GREEN	Half-term 3 RED/ AMBER/GREEN	Half-term 4 RED/ AMBER/GREEN	Half-term 5 RED/ AMBER/GREEN
	To succeed in the exam, I should know/understand/analyse/be able to:					
The Exam	The number of questions, type of questions (eg Written, practical etc)					
	The mark scheme - number of marks per question, assessment objectives					
	Timings of the exam and how to work efficiently under timed conditions					
	How to write 'in role' when answering the exam questions					
	A pitch, its purpose, and how to write one					
	How to make my pitch persuasive and memorable					
	How to tackle the knowledge / bullet point based question					
	The different ways of presenting my answers in the exam					
	What the preliminary material is and why it is important					
	How to show an understanding of the preliminary material in my answers					
Genre, Narrative & Language	The conventions of Serial Television Dramas in general - what all dramas must include for them to fall into this major genre category (eg Recognisable settings, sound and dialogue, editing styles, typical camera work, common characters, narratives with plot twists and cliffhangers, series structures, etc) and be able to analyse these referring to case studies.					
	The different sub-genres of Serial Television Drama (eg. Historical/period drama, crime drama, hospital drama, sci-fi drama, etc)					
	The conventions (common features) of the different sub-genres studied (e.g. How do they differ in their look / style? What is different about the settings? How do the narratives compare? Why?)					
	Apply narrative theories to case study texts such as Barthes' enigma codes and the use of cliffhangers - What do these elements add to a drama and why are they appealing?					
	Levi Strauss' binary opposition - What do these elements add to a drama and why are they appealing?					
	Todorov's 5 part narrative structure - What do these elements add to a drama and why are they appealing?					
Audiences	Why have serial television dramas remained so popular with audiences over the years?					
	Who watches / doesn't watch the different sub-genres of Serial Television Drama linked to mass and niche audiences					
	Audience consumption - Reasons why people watch / don't watch Serial Television Drama linked to demographics/psychographics (including how viewing habits have evolved, e.g. 'binge viewing' on-demand)					
	Theories about why people watch Serial Television Drama (Blumler & Katz uses & gratifications, Dyer's star theory, Dyer's utopian solutions theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs)					
	Facts or statistics about audience figures for different case study dramas (e.g Most popular, least popular and why audiences liked them / didn't like them)					

	How Serial Television Dramas try and keep existing audiences and engage new ones referring to examples from my case studies					
Representation	The different character representations within Serial Television Drama including possible reasons why these have been constructed. Refer to case study examples					
	The representation of gender, ethnicity, age, class, within Serial Television Drama. Recognise possible reasons for particular representations and specific examples. Identify whether they conform to/challenge/subvert stereotypes					
	The representations of dominant ideologies including issues and events. Recognise possible reasons for particular representations and specific examples. Identify whether they conform to/challenge/subvert mainstream ideologies					
	Apply Propp's character theory of heroes / villains / princess / donor / dispatcher etc to Serial Television Drama - Why are these characters used, why are they appealing etc?					
	How serial television dramas offer a 'window on the world' and the impact of case study representations on audiences and wider society					
Institutions	Key information about case study broadcasters, eg BBC, ITV, etc (How they function, are funded, their reputations and values, flagship Serial Television Dramas)					
	The differences between Public Service Broadcasting and Commercial broadcasting and the impact this has on programming / dramas					
	On-demand media platforms and their rise in appeal and success, e.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime - How are these institutions impact viewing habits of audiences?					
	The value of synergies, convergence and multi-platform promotion					
	Regulation of TV Channels eg Ofcom, and how this impacts Serial Television Drama, including examples of scandals/complaints etc					
Titles / Opening Sequences	The conventions (using key terminology) of the titles / opening sequences of different Serial Television Dramas					
	Examples of opening sequences / titles, including how they engage the audience / what they connote					
	Ideas about how opening sequences differ, depending on the audience, sub genre, institution etc					
	How to storyboard my own titles / opening sequence for a Serial Television Drama					
Scriptwriting	The conventions (using key terminology) of scripts and how they are used to plan Serial Television Dramas					
	Examples of scripted scenes, including how they engage the audience / what they connote					
	Ideas about how scripts for serial television drama differ, depending on the audience, sub genre, institution etc					
	How to script an opening sequence/scene for a Serial Television Drama					
Posters / Print marketing	The conventions (using key terminology) of posters / print ads /print articles / print magazine covers for Serial Television Dramas					
	Ideas about how print products for Serial Television Dramas differ depending on sub genre, audience, institution etc					
	Pros and cons of using print products to help to market Serial Television Dramas including case study examples					
	How to draw different print products in the exam for my own Serial Television Drama					
Trailers / Promos	The conventions (using key terminology) of trailers/promos of Serial Television Dramas					
	Pros and cons of using moving image to help to market Serial Television Dramas including case study examples					
	Ideas about how promos differ depending on subgenre, audience, institution etc					

	How to do a storyboard for my Serial Television Drama trailer/promo in the exam					
Websites	The conventions (using key terminology) of Serial Television Drama websites					
	Pros and cons of having a website to market a Serial Television Drama including case study examples of successful/unsuccessful website/homepages					
	Ideas about how websites for Serial Television Dramas differ depending on subgenre, audience, institution etc					
	How to draw my Serial Television Drama website in the exam					
Social Media	The conventions (using key terminology) of social networking sites and how they are used to market Serial Television Dramas					
	Pros and cons of using social networking sites to promote Serial Television Dramas including case study examples of successful/unsuccessful social media marketing					
	Ideas about how the use of social media differs depending on the subgenre, audience, institution of the Serial Television Drama etc					
	How to discuss / pitch ideas for social media to promote my Serial Television Drama in the exam					
	How to draw a social media page for my Serial Television Drama in the exam					

Additional Notes:

Serial Television Drama

It is easy to confuse serial television drama with other drama based television programmes – the key word to remember is 'serial'.

What makes a serial drama any different to another drama based TV programme?

- ❑ It is broadcast in **seasons**
- ❑ It has **separate episodes**
- ❑ There is an underlying storyline or '**story arc**' which continues throughout the duration of all seasons
- ❑ There is also a **single storyline** in each of the episodes

This exam topic maybe referred to in a variety of ways:

- Serial TV drama
- TV Serial drama
- Serial drama
- Television serial drama
- TV serial drama

All of the above mean the same thing and are referring to your exam topic.

During your lessons you may hear your teachers abbreviate the topic title to:

- ❑ Serials
- or
- ❑ Dramas

Please remember that when doing this they are referring to the full title **Serial Television Drama**.

Conventions of the Serial Television Drama:

- ❑ Seasons (usually 1–8)
- ❑ Episodes (usually 3–12)
- ❑ Story arc – continuing narrative
- ❑ Single storyline
- ❑ Broadcast weekly, same day, same time
- ❑ Scheduling – during prime time OR post-watershed
- ❑ Duration – typically up to 60 minutes
- ❑ Considered to be realist – enables the audience to identify with the narrative

Exam Structure and Requirements:

- **Exam Topic:** Serial Television Dramas – **this is all you have to revise!** You can forget Radio, forget Magazines, and forget Film Promotion. You are revising and preparing for **ONE** exam topic only.
- **Length of the exam: 1 hour 30 minutes** for all students
OR
If you receive extra time you will receive an additional 23 minutes totaling: **1 hour 53 minutes**.
- **Marks:** There are **60 marks** available
- **Questions:** There are **4 questions** in total (**15 marks each**)

A **preliminary brief** is released four weeks (on or after **Monday 7 May 2018**) before your **exam (Monday 4th June)**.

No formal teaching will take place, but you can work independently on the pre-release material during this time.

You **MUST** respond to the task **in role!**

Theoretical Framework:

You will be expected to cover the following in your answers:

- ❑ Media language
- ❑ Representation
- ❑ Audience
- ❑ Institution

You are being assessed on:

- ❑ AO1: Knowledge and understanding
- ❑ AO3: Research, planning and presentation
- ❑ AO4: Production and evaluation

Sub-genres of Serial TV Drama:

- ❑ **Medical** - The focus is on life and events within a hospital or medical environment. E.g. Holby City, Chicago Med, Casualty
- ❑ **Teen** - The focus is on the 'teen' characters' lives and problems that they deal with daily. E.g. Skins, My Mad Fat Diary, Riverdale
- ❑ **Crime** - The focus here will be on solving a crime, usually a murder or a cold case. It may not involve organisations such as the police, but could include private investigators, authors, or anyone who wants to solve a crime. E.g. Luther, Silent Witness, Sherlock
- ❑ **Period - (sometimes called Historical Drama or Costume Drama)** A focus on a particular historical period will be broadcast. This type of serial TV drama appeals to audiences because they have a sense of nostalgia to them. E.g. Downton Abbey, Victoria, Poldark
- ❑ **Sci-fi** - This type of drama will focus on things that are futuristic, such as modern technology and space travel, among other things. E.g. Stranger Things, Doctor Who
- ❑ **Political** - There will be a political focus on the workings of governments and on the lives and roles of people working within it. There may be an aspect of counterterrorism to it and it may involve key persons in government, such as a president or prime minister. E.g. Designated Survivor, The West Wing, House of Cards
- ❑ **War** - Again, there may be a nostalgic feel to this type of serial TV drama, or an opportunity to identify with those who have been involved in war. E.g. Our Girl

How can we tell what type of subgenre a serial TV drama is in? We look at the mise en scène:

In the Frame	Detail
Settings	These may be filmed in a studio or location based. The time period could be in the past, present or future. There will be clues within 'the frame' to help you identify the setting.
Props	Props will suit the type of subgenre. For example, if it is a police procedural, you will see police badges and police cars, among other things.
Costumes	Costumes will help you to identify the time period the serial TV drama is set in. You should also be able to identify the social class of a character.
Body Language	This tells us the demeanour of the characters – may be facial expressions, or placement and body movements within the scene. You would be able to tell if they were happy, sad or, perhaps, angry.
Lighting	Serial television dramas will be lit according to the scene being recorded. The genre is 'realist' in nature, which means it needs to look like an everyday occurrence.

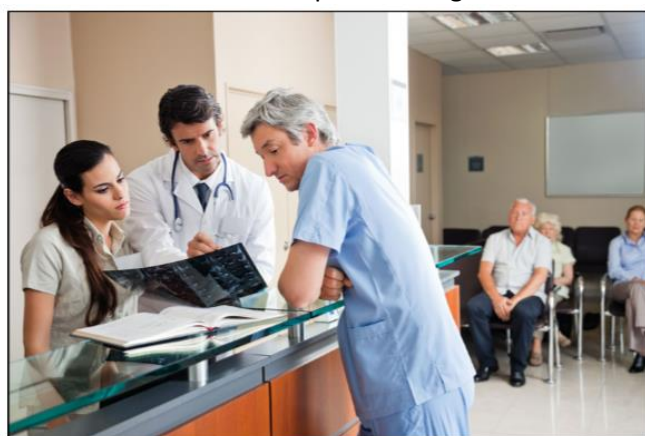
For example, the mise en scene from this serial TV drama tells the audience the specific sub-genre:

Setting
Although we can't really see the setting or location, we can, of course, work out the subgenre from the props and costumes which make us presume that the setting is a hospital waiting room.

Props
We can see stethoscopes around each character's neck. In the foreground the characters are looking at some X-rays.

Costumes
It is quite clear that they are wearing white coats and surgical scrubs. They are modern costumes, so this is most likely set in the present day.

Lighting
The lighting is very bright and just what you would expect in a hospital setting.



Body language
The characters are standing very upright. Their facial expressions make them look proud and determined. Each character in the foreground looks like a professional.

Narrative Structure:

What is a narrative?

- A narrative is the formal name for a story.
- The structure can be as simple as a start, a middle and an end.

Linear structure

- This structure supposes that there will always be a start, a middle and an end.
- However, this is not always the case with respect to a serial TV drama, as there may be a story arc which continues through one or more episodes.
- But this could apply, if an episode has a self-contained storyline.

Non-linear structure

- This structure means that there is no continuity in time.
- If this applies, then the story may start with the ending, perhaps using a flashback technique and we experience the story of how the ending happened.

Closed structure

- The storyline has an ending and is resolved.
- This is the case if an episode has a self-contained storyline.

Open structure

- The storyline is not resolved, and the ending may be open to interpretation.
- This is normally the case with a story arc in a serial TV drama.
- The ending may be a cliff-hanger, which will lead the audience to eagerly anticipate another season.

Multi-stranded structure

- In some serial TV dramas there is the opportunity to tell multiple stories, and this is often the case where the series focuses on different lives.
- An example of this would be a medical drama, where there are stories about the lives of the staff, as well as storylines regarding individual patients.

Narrative Theories:

Todorov	
Todorov's theory states that there are five stages in a narrative.	Stage 1: The equilibrium Everything is normal.
	Stage 2: The disruption Something happens to disrupt the normality.
	Stage 3: The recognition There is a realisation that something has happened and that it needs to be rectified.
	Stage 4: The repair Steps are put in place to put right what has gone wrong.
	Stage 5: The restoration Everything returns to normal.

Lévi-Strauss	
Lévi-Strauss' theory of binary oppositions maintains that we understand the world through a system of power-weighted oppositions. This can be applied to serial television dramas.	Binary oppositions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hero and villain• Good and evil• Police and victim• War and peace• Ugly and beauty

Propp	
<p>Propp says the same type of characters appear in all stories:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hero – This is the main character whom the audience will recognise as the key person in the story. This character is usually good. • The Helper – The main character usually has a companion who helps him/her, gives advice and supports the main character in the story. • The Villain – This character is the opposite of the Hero and is there to create the disruption (Todorov) in the story. This character is usually bad. • The False Hero – This character pretends to support the main character in the story, and generally the audience will know this; however, the main character does not. Could also be the Villain. • The Donor – This character plays a similar role in the story to that of the Helper. The Donor will give the main character something which helps him/her repair (Todorov) the problem in the story. • The Dispatcher – This character could be the Princess's Father (setting the Hero a task) or even a False Hero (sending the Hero on a wild goose chase). • The Princess – This character can be the reward for the Hero, (see Princess's Father) or the person for whom the Hero and False Hero are in competition. • The Princess's Father – This character could be a combination of characters depending on the story being told. Generally, this character will set a task for the Hero, with the reward being the Princess. But it could also be the Villain if he/she didn't want to give the reward.

Barthes	
<p>Barthes suggests that the two main key narrative codes used to keep an audience interested are the action and enigma codes.</p>	<p>1. Action – An action happens and must be resolved. This is intended to build audience interest and suspense as to what is going to happen. Examples include a car starting, someone packing a suitcase, the cock of a gun and flashing blue lights.</p>
	<p>2. Enigma – Anything which is not explained and remains a mystery or poses questions to the audience, which they can find frustrating. This can keep the audience watching right until the end, so that everything is explained.</p>

Camera shots, angles and movement:

Within serial TV dramas, camerawork is used to engage and hook the audience to ensure that they continue watching the drama series. Different shots, angles and movement is used for different reasons during key parts of the narrative and to reveal character details. You will need to refer to specific camerawork from key scenes in your case study texts.

- **Long shot / establishing shot / wide shot** – a shot taken from a distance, it is used to include everything in the frame.
- **Low angle** – a shot taken from below the character, it is used to make a character look powerful. A low angle can be used to frame other subjects, e.g. buildings, something on a shelf etc. which will change the meaning of the shot.
- **Tracking shot** - when the camera moves alongside a character, it often makes the audience feel in amongst the action.
- **Close-up shot** – a shot where the face of a character fills the frame, it is used to show a character's emotions and expressions. A close-up can be used to frame other subjects, e.g. a letter, a sign, a watch etc. which will change the meaning of the shot.
- **High angle** – a shot taken from above a character, it is used to make a character look weak and vulnerable. A high angle can be used to frame other subjects, e.g. city streets, something in a drawer etc. which will change the meaning of the shot.
- **Dolly shot** - when the camera moves behind or in front of a character, it often makes the audience feel in amongst the action.
- **Medium shot / mid shot** - when we only see half of the character's body in a shot, it is used to show more information about the character than a close-up, but still includes details, e.g. costume.

Sound techniques in serial television dramas:

Sound has the ability to help create a certain mood and to signal an event that is about to happen. Music has the ability to manipulate audience reactions, e.g. sad non-diegetic music in an emotional scene.

There are three elements to the **sound techniques** used in serial TV dramas:

- ❑ dialogue (human voice)
- ❑ sound effects
- ❑ music

These can then be categorised into either:

- ❑ diegetic
- or
- ❑ non-diegetic

The two main **sound types** are:

- ❑ **Diegetic sound** - This is the natural sound of what is happening in the Serial TV drama. If we see a fire burning, we will hear it crackling. Diegetic sounds help to create a realistic atmosphere.
- ❑ **Non-diegetic sound** - This is additional sound, such as sound effects placed in the post-production stage. Sounds such as these help to confirm the content of the drama. For example, we may hear the siren of a police car – this would imply that something is happening somewhere. We may not see the police car, but the sound is enough for the audience to establish the connection. Non-diegetic sound refers to anything added in post-production, and this may include music and sound effects to create tension.
- ❑ **Dialogue** - This refers to the human voice which is talking, and allows us to follow the narrative.
- ❑ **Voice-over** - Sometimes there may be a narrator who gives an overview of the narrative.
- ❑ **Direct address** - A character may directly address the audience, which again helps us understand the narrative, but this technique of breaking the fourth wall is quite uncommon and experimental.
- ❑ **Music** - Every serial TV drama will have its own theme music, which is a cue to tell the audience that the show is about to start. The style of the soundtrack may link to the genre of the drama.
- ❑ **Incidental Music** - Incidental music is a technique that is used to add emotion to enhance audience understanding. It may not be very loud and significant to the audience. More often than not, if there is a car chase, then the music accelerates with the chase. Sometimes, incidental music can be linked to a character, e.g. Darth Vader in *Star Wars*.

Editing techniques in serial television dramas:

Serial TV drama uses a variety of editing techniques to help the audience understand what is happening in the narrative. Edits should be seamless and unnoticeable by the audience.

Several editing techniques can be used:

- ❑ **Shot / reverse shot** - This technique is used during conversations. There are usually two characters involved, and the sequence will be filmed from both characters' points of view, using an over-the-shoulder shot. It is then cut together to show the flow of conversation from
- ❑ **Cross-cutting** - This technique is used to create tension. There will usually be two scenes which alternate to show things that are happening at the same time. The audience will link the two scenes, but the characters are unaware.
- ❑ **Fade in / fade out** - This technique is used to create a sense of ending or beginning for the audience.
- ❑ **Dissolve** - This technique may be used to show the passage of time.
- ❑ **Long take** - A long take, meaning a longer-than-average camera shot, may be used to help the audience feel they are following a character on a journey. This technique was used in the sequence from *Downton Abbey* we have been studying. A long take follows Daisy as she sets about her work.
- ❑ **Short take** - Cutting together a lot of short shots will help create a sense of urgency, tension and action. This technique was used in the kitchen sequence from *Downton Abbey* to show the hustle and bustle of life in the kitchen.
- ❑ **Ellipsis** - Sometimes, a section may be removed which otherwise would have made the sequence too long. The audience can join the sequence together. For example, if we are shown a character entering a shop, and then we see the character at the till with a full basket, we know that they have been shopping. We do not need to see the shopping process; we can piece it together ourselves.

Representation in serial TV Drama:

What is a stereotype?

- A stereotype is a simplified and fixed view of a certain type of character, with recognisable characteristics.

What characteristics do we expect a man to have?	What characteristics do we expect a woman to have?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong? • Brave? • Muscular? • Worker? • Provider? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak? • Vulnerable? • Perfect body shape? • Mother?

Our expectations of how men and women should behave change over time. Some serial television dramas support this idea.

Representation refers to how **people, places, objects** and **events** have been reflected in a media text. When a media text is produced, whatever is being reflected is a representation **constructed by the producers**. A key element to understanding this is to ask yourself the question:

‘Do you believe everything you read, listen to or see?’

Representation involves the interpretation of:

- ❑ WHO has been represented?
- ❑ WHAT has been represented?
- ❑ WHERE has the representation taken place?
- ❑ HOW have they / has it been represented?
- ❑ WHY have they / has it been represented?

We have all most probably seen TV programmes or read magazines that give information about our favourite celebrities out having a good time, stumbling into taxis, which represents them in a bad light! But these are merely representations and we do not know the truth behind them. They are constructed for our ‘infotainment’!

Key areas of representation studies are:

- ❑ **GENDER** - Gender studies in this area usually focus on male and female inequality, and how they are portrayed. The general consensus is that a male is more dominant than a female.
- ❑ **AGE** - Studies in this area generally reflect on the young and the old, and our expectations of their behaviour.
- ❑ **ETHNICITY** - This is a wide area, but the general focus in media texts is the under-representation of particular ethnic groups.
- ❑ **CULTURAL DIVERSITY** - Different cultures have a vast expectation of how they expect their culture to behave, and an audience will have different expectations within a media text. These may relate to disability, sexuality and treatment of different groups.
- ❑ **NATIONALITY** - We associate different nations with stereotypical ideals, e.g. Great Britain – stiff upper lip, sense of humour, fish and chips, etc.

Stereotypes of ethnicity:

WHITE	Superior, rich, strong
BLACK	Criminals, inferior, violent
CHINESE/JAPANESE	Intelligent, technological, competitive
MIDDLE EASTERN	Terrorist, religious, aggressive
INDIAN	Poor, traditional

Stereotypes of disability:

PHYSICALLY DISABLED	Outcast, shy, antisocial
MENTALLY DISABLED	Childlike, outcast, odd
ABLE BODIED AND MINDED	Ideal, perfect

Stereotypes of sexuality:

HOMOSEXUAL (GAY)	Feminine, camp, attractive, high- pitched voice
HOMOSEXUAL (LESBIAN)	Butch, hates men, blunt, strong, ugly

Stereotypes of class:

UPPER CLASS	Posh, rich, superior, self-obsessed
MIDDLE CLASS	Normal
WORKING CLASS	Poor, not intelligent

Stereotypes of national/regional identity:

ENGLISH	Posh, drunks, sports obsessed. Like tea, and fish and chips
SCOTTISH	Drunk, rude, mean, like haggis
WELSH	Friendly, like rugby and leeks
IRISH	Stupid, drunks, like Guinness
Northern England	Poorer, lack of education, strong and tough
Southern England	Wealthier, better educated, physically weaker

Audiences and serial television serial drama:

What is demographics?

- This is the study of the population. Studies look at gender, ethnicity, age, education, income level and employment, among other factors. Many organisations will use this information to determine who a target audience may be. There are many different ways of studying demographical information, and many organisations use different systems.

What is the NRS Social Class system?

- A system used for categorising demographical information which is used for audience targeting and market research by advertising sectors. It breaks up the population into specific grades by occupation, focusing on spending power.

Social Grade	Social Status	Occupation
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional e.g. bankers, lawyers, doctors
B	Middle class	Middle managerial, administrative or professional e.g. teachers
C1	Lower middle class	Supervisory or clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional e.g. office supervisors, junior managers, nurses, specialist clerical staff
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers e.g. plumbers, builders
D	Working class	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
E	Lowest level of subsistence	State pensioners or single parents, casual or lowest grade workers, unemployed, students

Audience theory:

Uses and gratifications theory

- Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz developed an audience theory that allows us to see what people 'do' with their media rather than what the media does to them.
 - **Diversion/Entertainment** - Diversion or escape from day-to-day routines.
 - **Personal Relationships** - Where they use the 'text' to form relationships with others, e.g. online communities, discussion with friends.
 - **Surveillance/Information** - Learning about the world, learning new things.
 - **Personal Identity** - Where the 'text' helps you to identify with something and to reinforce your own values.

- It could be suggested that serial television dramas fit this theory really quite well and better than most other media texts. They do, of course, provide great **entertainment** and certainly a diversion or escape from everyday routines.
- The fact that there is a continuing storyline throughout the series and seasons enables the audience to discuss the storyline with others, forming a sense of community and a **relationship** with the programme. An episode may end with a cliff-hanger, leaving unanswered questions which lead the audience to come back to find out the answers.
- They can, of course, learn new things and gather new **information** about life and the different situations represented in the serial TV drama.
- There can also be a sense of **identify** with the pressures the characters in a serial TV drama are reflecting.

Fan sites

- Many people become so involved and interested in a serial TV drama show that they join fan sites where they can discuss their favourite characters and storylines within the shows. There are polls, quizzes and discussions about storylines, as well as lots of other trivia and information.

BARB – Broadcasters Audience Research Board

- The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board is the institution which is responsible for collecting audience viewing figures. Devices which measure viewing figures are put into randomly sampled homes. Other organisations can use this information to identify upward and downward trends and to make alterations to their broadcasting schedules if needed.

Institutions:

There are lots of institutions which will show serial TV dramas. For example, BBC One, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky 1.

TERRESTRIAL BROADCASTING

- BBC** - The BBC is funded by the public, by purchasing a television licence. One of the first serial TV dramas to be broadcast on the BBC was in 1953 and was called *The Quatermass Experiment*. It consisted of six episodes and

was in the sci-fi genre. Another sci-fi series which is still being broadcast now is *Doctor Who*, which was first shown in 1963. Because the BBC is fully funded, there are no commercial breaks in programmes, which means you can watch a programme uninterrupted.

- **ITV** - ITV is considered to be the 'people's television' (Potter, 1983) and was established for a mass audience, particularly the working class, and the content broadcast has always reflected this. ITV is funded by advertising, product placement and sponsorship. One of the first serial TV dramas to be broadcast on ITV was in 1957 and was called *Emergency – Ward 10* – a drama series about the lives of the medical staff, rather like *Holby City*.
- **ITV 3** - Runs repeats of serial TV dramas, generally all day long.
- **CHANNEL 4** - This institution tends to broadcast serial TV dramas that are original and thought-provoking.

SATELLITE BROADCASTING

This is television which is broadcast through digital satellite transmissions and can be pay-per-view channels, but may also be Freeview channels with other free-to-view channels.

- **SKY 1** - This channel is the equivalent of the BBC / ITV / Channel 4 on terrestrial TV; it is Sky's general entertainment channel and will have a variety of content, including serial TV dramas.
- **SKY Atlantic** - This is a dedicated Sky channel which shows back-to-back serial TV drama programmes. A channel like this is aimed at a niche audience – people who like to view dramas.

When a broadcaster decides on a scheduling period, they will initially research on BARB to find out who is watching the genre of programme, together with when they watch it and how they watch it. There are different scheduling segments which account for different time periods throughout the day, and these segments contain the same typical content, day after day. If a broadcaster has a new serial TV drama being broadcast, they will produce trailers or teasers after popular programmes in the evenings preceding, in order to encourage people to watch their new programme. The trailer or teaser helps to create audience anticipation.

Hammocking	An unpopular, weak programme is broadcast between two popular shows so that the audience will watch it, as they are too lazy to switch the channel.
Tent Pole	A strong programme, which holds up the others – <i>Holby City</i> , for example. It is the opposite of hammocking, i.e. a strong programme with weaker programmes either side.
Interstitial	This refers to a trail or ident between two programmes.
Stacking	Two programmes that are similar are broadcast together, one after the other.

Scheduling is important, as an audience will expect a serial TV drama to be broadcast at the same time and on the same day each week. If they enjoy a particular programme, they will remember when it is on, rather than having to consult a scheduling magazine or guide.

As referred to previously, audiences receive gratification from watching programmes and will discuss them with others the following day, or on social networks and other community forums.

6am to 9am Early morning	Generally consists of breakfast TV shows, with news content and lifestyle information.
9am to 4pm Daytime	The types of programme which are broadcast will be aimed at those who are at home during the day. This could be mothers, retired people, shift workers and unemployed people. There will be talk shows, quiz shows and lifestyle shows, as well as a bit of children's TV.
4pm to 7pm Early evening	There will be other lifestyle shows, quiz shows, national news and local news programmes. Content will be aimed at families, who will be sitting down to eat.
7pm to 11pm Prime time Watershed 9pm	This time of the evening is aimed at a mainstream audience, being the most likely time that people will watch TV. A serial TV drama is most likely to be aired, after the watershed of 9pm because of the likely content.

11pm to 6am
Late night

Programmes which are broadcast late at night may contain controversial content, such as sex and/or violence.

Pitching ideas for a serial television drama:

- ❑ Keep it simple
- ❑ Get to the USP as soon as possible in the first 10 seconds
- ❑ Explain the whole idea in two to three minutes
- ❑ Who are you pitching to?
- ❑ Clear beginning, middle and end storyline
- ❑ Be prepared, not over-rehearsed
- ❑ Passion for your idea

What is a pitch?

- ❑ A pitch is a formal way of presenting your ideas, and this is relevant to any industry sector, e.g. entertainment, business, commercial.
- ❑ Formats of pitches may vary, e.g. 60-second pitch, 100-word pitch or a more formal pitch with scripts and storyboards.
- ❑ Pitches can be verbal, or may be visual.
- ❑ It is important to find out the format required for any particular industry sector.

Things to include in a pitch:

- ❑ Subgenre
- ❑ Name of programme
- ❑ Length of programme
- ❑ Scheduling
- ❑ Audience
- ❑ Narrative overview: start, middle and end
- ❑ Characters
- ❑ Mise en scene

Title sequences and storyboarding:

Length	Approximately 30 seconds
Text included	Title of the program, actors' names, name of writer, production team names, production company name
Imagery	Relates to the theme of the programme
Music	Helps to create the feel of the programme

Text: more often than not, the actors' names and production company, as well as production crew, may be included.

What is a title sequence?

- ❑ A title sequence, along with its recognisable music and graphics, alerts the audience to the fact that the serial TV drama is starting.
- ❑ The viewer may be busy doing other things; the music will inform them that the programme is about to start.

What is a storyboard?

- ❑ A storyboard is the visual narrative of something to be filmed. Many members of the film or TV crew use it, so that they know what is to happen and what camera shot to film, together with angles. The editor can also use it when editing the piece, as instructions are given for length and transitions to be used.

This is what the AQA template will look like in the exam. It will include 10 shots in total, 5 on each A4 page. You must complete all 10 shots in order to achieve a good mark for this question.

STORYBOARD SHEET

Edit/Length of Shot	Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement	Dialogue – Sound
----------------------------	--	-------------------------

Below is a list of what you need to include in each section of the storyboard template. Obviously you will chose specific shots and lighting, e.g. you can include both low and high key lighting. Choose one or the other.

1. Close-up / long shot	6. Transition (fade in)
2. Low / high angle	7. The length of the shot
3. High / low key	8. Drawing of the shot
4. Diegetic, non-diegetic, dialogue	9. Shot number
5. Detail of what is happening in the shot	

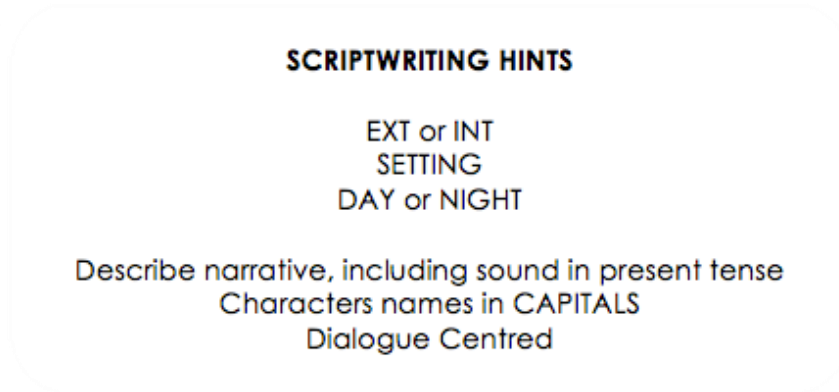
Where should each of these ingredients go on the template?

STORYBOARD SHEET

Edit/Length of Shot Transition (fade in) Length of shot	Shot No./Type of Shot/Camera Movement Shot number Close-up/long shot Low/high angle High/low key lighting Detail of what is happening in the shot	Dialogue – Sound Diegetic/non-diegetic dialogue
--	---	---

Scriptwriting:

- The opening sequence of the first episode will usually set the scene for what is to happen in the series. It will introduce the main characters and the location where it is set.
- As most serial TV dramas have a story arc, there may be a recap of what happened in the previous episode to remind the audience.
- In television there are different formats for scriptwriting, depending on whether there is a multi-camera set-up or just single camera.
- As a guide, one page of script usually equals one minute of time.



Script key terminology:

- ❑ **SLUG LINE** - The slug line lets you know where the narrative is taking place – basically, inside or outside. The location is also provided, as well as the time of day.
- ❑ **ACTION** - The action describes the narrative and the characters, and should be written in present tense.
- ❑ **CHARACTERS** - Characters' names should always be in CAPITALS and centred with the dialogue.
- ❑ **DIALOGUE** - These are the words that the character is speaking. They are centred underneath the character's name.
- ❑ **PARENTHETICALS** - These help to describe any emotions that the character is expressing.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT: Androids

TITLE SEQUENCE FADE OUT

DISSOLVE INTO

INT. JOHN JOHNSON'S HOUSE. DAY 09:00 DAY 1

JOHN JOHNSON is sitting at his desk, his hand rested on his forehead. He looks at his computer screen again. He calls to his girlfriend, SHIRLEY.

JOHN

Hey Shirley, have you seen this website?

SHIRLEY

What website?

SHIRLEY walks across the room and looks over JOHN'S shoulder. She glances at the screen, then moves in closer.

SHIRLEY (shocked)

What on earth.....?

JOHN

Yes, it's strange isn't it? So many people posting about their missing families. It can't be right.....
so many people missing.
I wonder why.....

SHIRLEY

Perhaps you should talk to NIGEL?

JOHN

I could do..... I mean, for so many people to disappear,
There must be a common denominator.

FADE OUT

CUT TO

INT. EX3 FACTORY DAY 09:10 DAY 1

NIGEL strolls along the corridor towards his office. He opens the door and walks towards the very large window at the other end of the room. He looks through the window and down to the factory floor. He returns to his desk and picks up the phone.

NIGEL

Hey DONALD, have you managed to do anything about the glitch in the programming yet?

CHECKLIST

- Is the scene heading set out correctly? i.e. EXT. or INT. SETTING, DAY or NIGHT
- Is the narrative (action) described in present tense?
- Are characters names in CAPITALS?
- Is the dialogue centred?

Promotion and Marketing:

How would you find out about a new serial TV drama?

- TV guide magazine
- TV guide online planner
- TV guide on TV
- Trailer advert on TV
- Interview on radio or TV show

How do the institutions get their information about a new serial television drama so they can promote it?

- A press release is issued to newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasters and other media outlets.

What is a press release?

- By sending a press release to media outlets, the TV broadcasters are enabling a wider audience to be reached. The press release may be released shortly before the scheduled launch date.

OR


- If there is a returning series, a press release may be released before the programme goes into production.

There is a standard format for a press release, which consists of the following:

- ❑ **Headline** - A brief summary of the media product, which is used to grab attention.
- ❑ **Dateline** - This will include the date of the launch, together with scheduling information.
- ❑ **Introduction** - This provides the 'who, what, when, where and why' of the media product.
- ❑ **Body** - This section provides further information, with quotes and background information relating to the media product.
- ❑ **Contact information** - Details such as a contact name, phone number and email address.

Example press release:

Headline → **SS-GB**
BBC One adaptation of Len Deighton's intriguing, alternate history novel



Dateline → **Date:** 13.02.2017 Last updated: 13.02.2017 at 13.17
Category: BBC One; Drama

Introduction → **Produced by Sid Gentle Films Ltd, SS-GB has been adapted from Len Deighton's intriguing, alternate history novel of the same name by one of the UK's most successful writing partnerships – BAFTA Award winners Neal Purvis and Robert Wade (SPECTRE, Skyfall, and Casino Royale).**

Body → Set in Nazi-occupied London, the five-part thriller is based on the premise that the Germans won the Battle of Britain.

Acclaimed British actor Sam Riley plays Douglas Archer and actress Kate Bosworth plays Barbara Barga, the leads in SS-GB. Other names starring in the drama include Jason Flemyng, James Cosmo, Aneurin Barnard and Maeve Dermody as well as German actors Rainer Bock and Lars Eidinger.

Sally Woodward Gentle, Lee Morris, Neal Purvis and Robert Wade are Executive Producers on SS-GB for Sid Gentle Films Ltd. The ambitious series is produced by Patrick Schweitzer and directed by multi award-winning director Philipp Kadelbach.

SS-GB is a complex thriller focusing on British Detective Douglas Archer. Forced to work under the brutal SS in occupied London, Archer is determined to continue to do his job in the service of his country, but against impossible odds.

Broadcasters also put out media packs which contain more detailed information about the programme, which consist of biographies and interviews with the cast, together with other information.

Press Release for Androids

Headline

Assimilation of the Human Race!

Dateline:

26.02.2017

Introduction:

Androids is the latest Serial TV drama being produced by the same team as The Walking Dead. It features stories of the assimilation of humans into android machines. Androids are taking over the human race and there is only one person who realises what is happening –

John Johnson.

Body:

Set in the year 2026, everyone has an android servant. John Johnson realises that all is not as it seems, when families start to disappear.

Benedict Cumberbatch plays the main role in this new Serial drama, supported by Helen George together with Andrew Scott. Cumberbatch and Scott are known for Sherlock and Helen George for Call The Midwife.

The series is produced by AMC Studios and will be broadcast on AMC on Fridays at 10:00PM

Contact details:

Zoe Potter
AMC Studios
zoe@amcstudios.com

There are three platforms that institutions can use to promote and market their serial television drama. Specific promotional texts fall into each platform:

Platform	Method
Print	Magazine advert, magazine interview, newspaper advert, newspaper interview, poster, billboards, vehicle wrapping, press release
Broadcasting	TV advert trailer, TV spot, TV interview, TV film review, radio advert, radio interview
Internet	Official website; YouTube for trailer; banners and pops ups; social media networking sites

What is advertising?

- The purpose of advertising is to entice or persuade an audience to purchase or use services in order to generate income.
- This is done by promotion and marketing campaigns, which advertise the product or service using various forms of media text.
- Advertisers use specific techniques, which are used to attract or entice the audience. These techniques may include using words or images, among other things.
-

Technique	How it is used
Actor or actress	The 'celebrity' star will be a main focal image for the audience, which helps to promote the TV programme. As well as an image, their name will be included.
Reviews	Organisations such as newspapers or magazines may review a TV programme. Reviews may include a 'star' rating. Audiences will trust the reviews and, depending on the review, will watch or not watch the TV programme.
Tag line	A tag line or slogan is a sentence that sums up the TV programme. It may be sensational or humorous depending on the type of product being promoted.
Image	Images attract the audience, as well as using a 'star' actor or actress; there may be a child or animal.
Director's name	The director's name may be used, especially if they had a previous successful programme.
Organisation name	Audiences trust well-known organisations, such as the BBC, and are, therefore, instantly persuaded that it will be a good TV programme.

Fonts: type, style, size, emphasis

The choice of font serves to create meaning. A sans serif font such as Comic Sans is more informal than a serif font such as Times New Roman.

Large letters, especially in **BOLD CAPITALS** usually indicate something that is important and needs to be pointed out. **Bold** text stands out; capital letters even more so. Another type of emphasis, *italics*, is used to create the feeling of movement or urgency.

Colours: connotation

Colours can have a connotation.

RED can signify danger, blood, passion and love.

BLACK can signify death, darkness, evil and destruction.

BLUE can signify a calm blue sea and clear, sunny skies. Depending on the shade, it can have darker connotations, such as a stormy sky, stormy seas, ice blue coolness and water.

YELLOW generally signifies happiness and sunshine.

GREEN implies nature and calmness, but can also mean jealousy.

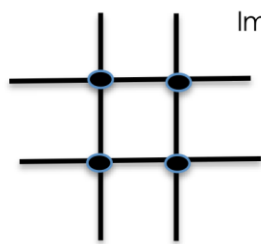
WHITE connotes purity, peace and innocence.

Composition

It is suggested that when a consumer looks at a poster, or the front cover of a magazine, that they scan from left to right in the form of a **Z**.

This is why you will generally see important information, or the suggested USP (unique selling point), at the top left of the poster.

Rule of Thirds



Images or text should be placed where the lines cross for an effective layout.

Using e-media as a form of promotion and advertising:

Online trailers

- Whilst trailers do appear on broadcast platforms and this is typically where they would be traditionally viewed, more and more audiences watch trailers online via YouTube or social media due to our growing online media consumption.
- Trailers for new serial TV drama shows are shown on television prior to the new series, or to promote a new follow-up season. They are shown at regular intervals during prime-time television.
- Their purpose is to entice the audience to watch the programme, by reminding them that a new drama is going to be broadcast.

There seem to be a few different trailers of the same length:

- Launch trails – 30 seconds
- Launch trailers – 30 seconds
- Trailers – 30 seconds

When watching the trailers for your case study texts you should consider the following:

- Does the trailer show the title of the programme?
- Does it tell the audience when it is going to be on TV?
- Does it show the main actor?
- How does it tell you about the main storyline?

YouTube

- This online video database has a vast array of videos including promotional videos and clips from serial television dramas. Some institutions have their own YouTube channel which allows audiences to browse their library of videos. Some popular programmes have their own specific channel which includes a large library of video material specific to that programme across the number of series it has been broadcasting for.

IMDB - Internet Movie Database

- This is a vast database which contains information relating to films and television programmes. It also includes cast, crew, trivia and reviews.
- It also allows the audience to rate the programme out of 10, and gives information about how many people have rated it. Information regarding audience demographics can also be found.

Rotten Tomatoes

- Rotten Tomatoes is a dedicated review website which allows the audience to leave reviews and vote on whether the drama is 'fresh' or 'rotten'.

Reviews

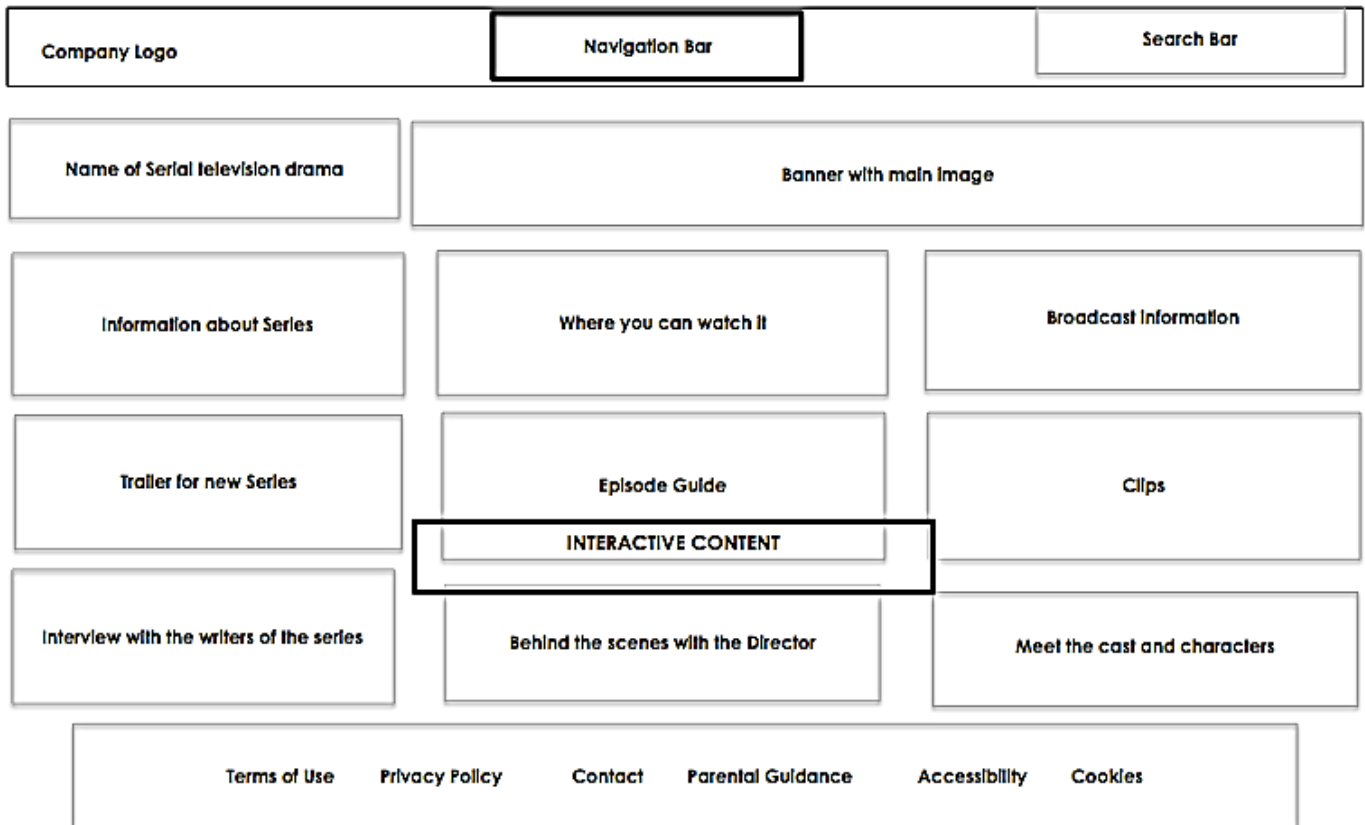
- When audiences write reviews for a TV programme, this can have a huge effect on whether a programme will be successful. Bad reviews and ratings may mean people are less likely to watch the programme.

Official websites

- Websites can be a way for TV production companies to promote their serial television dramas even further.
- The website can provide information about the programme and its episodes, clips and trailers.
- There are also extras, such as interviews with the cast and the director.

- The website for each scene is linked to the broadcaster, rather than each scene having its own independent website.
- They do not seem to feature social networking either, other than a share feature.

Example website layout:



- There are some basic conventions (typical things) of website design and layout, so we all recognise that it is a website and know how to interact with it.
- Websites are usually laid out in a grid format.
- Your web page layout should be annotated with media terminology.
- You should also indicate any colour scheme you would use.

Banners	Horizontal sections on the page, often across the top and bottom. They can have adverts in them.
Sidebars	Vertical sections, usually at the side of the page, often containing separate or additional content.
Navigation bar	Shown at the top of the page to allow the user to navigate between different pages of the website.
Hyperlinks	When you hover over a hyperlink, your cursor turns into a small hand with a pointing finger, this signifies a link to another part of the website or to a linked website.
Video gallery	There may be embedded videos within the webpage, or links to a YouTube channel.
Main image / graphics	There will always be a main, recognisable image on the web page, so that the user will recognise immediately what they are looking at. Graphics includes images and logos.
Interactive content	The user may be able to interact with forums or communities on the website.
Headings	Headings will be clear and placed strategically so that the user can see quite clearly what the website is about.

Social networking

- Social networking is used to allow the audience to feel more personally involved with a serial TV drama. Social network feeds such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram allow the audience to follow them in order to receive notifications and updates.
- This is a good tool for broadcasters to see how popular their programme is, as it allows them to see how many 'followers' or 'likes' they have. Broadcasters can continue to promote the programme by posting updates regularly, so that the audience does not forget about the programme.

Convergence and multi-platform access:

What does convergence mean?

- The coming together of elements to form one.

Technological convergence

- A 'smart' phone can do many things.
- This is an example of how technology has converged to enable you to do multiple things on one device.
- A serial TV drama programme may start on one media platform and converge onto different media platforms.
 - ❑ Broadcast on TV
 - ❑ On demand
 - ❑ DVD / Blu-ray
 - ❑ Streaming service
- There are various platforms other than television on which the consumer can access a broadcast television programme.
- The benefits of these platforms are that the consumer has the ability to watch the programme when they want to, at a time convenient to them, and on a device which is convenient for them.

Digital video recorder

- This is a system which can be set up to record a programme, which can then be watched at a later time. This can be done through set-top boxes, such as Sky, Freesat, Freeview and Virgin Media.

DVD / Blu-ray box sets

- Once a serial TV drama has been broadcast, it may be released on DVD or Blu-ray box sets, which can be purchased to download online, or purchased in shops and supermarkets.

On demand – catch-up service

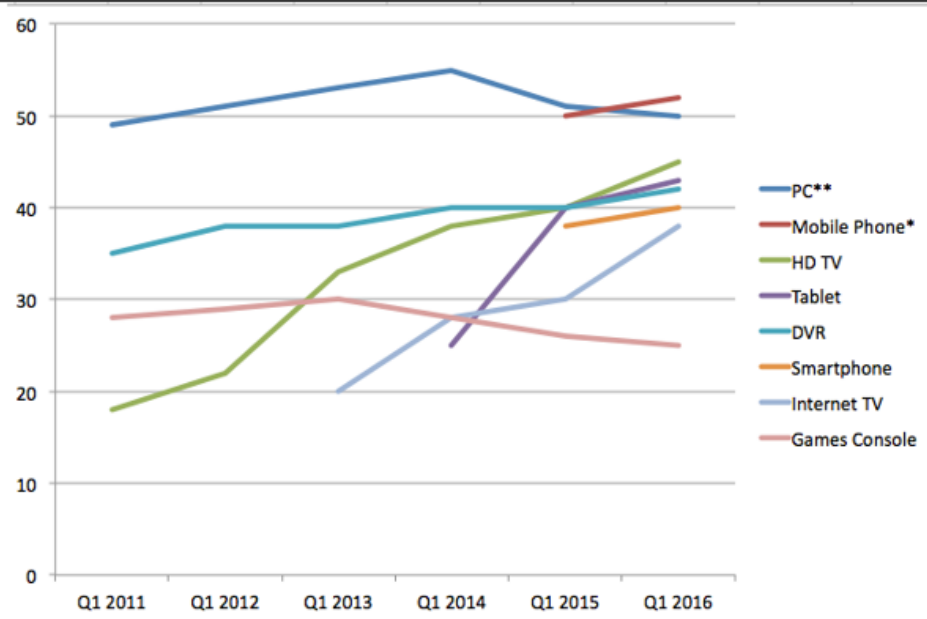
- Many televisions and set-top boxes have the facility for the consumer to access the 'on demand' feature, which allows the user to catch up on an episode they may have missed. These services, such as BBC iPlayer, ITV Hub and Sky Go often have a time limit on the availability of the programme.

Streaming service (VOD – video on demand)

- Streaming services such as Netflix, Google TV, Apple TV and Amazon Prime have now become very popular. These services may have all seasons and all episodes as they become available for the consumer to choose to watch.

DEVICE ACCESS Q1 2010 – Q3 2016, in millions of individuals

GRAPH



Questions to interpret the device usage data:

1. What year did we start using smartphones to access television programmes?
2. Which devices have shown a decline in use?
3. Which devices have shown a steady rise in use?

Regulation:

- Broadcasters have to follow rules which are enforced by an organisation called Ofcom.
- Ofcom's role is to ensure that the general public is not subjected to offensive or harmful material.
- If a consumer finds something in a serial TV drama that they find offensive or harmful, they can complain to Ofcom.
- Ofcom will assess the complaint to ascertain whether rules have been broken.
- If Ofcom officials decide they do not agree that rules have been broken, they will close the complaint.
- If Ofcom officials find that the material is offensive or harmful, they will carry out further investigations, which may take some time.
- In any event, complaints and their outcomes are published by Ofcom for the public to see.

Example:

- ITV's serial TV drama *Jekyll and Hyde* was shown at 6.30pm on a Sunday evening.
- Ofcom received more than 500 complaints regarding violence shown in the drama.
- ITV itself received 280 complaints, while Ofcom received 264 complaints.
- The reasons for the complaints included unnecessary scenes of violence, together with the dark and frightening tone, which they felt was unsuitable for children.
- ITV said they had a pre-broadcast information informing viewers that the programme contained 'violence and scenes younger children may find a bit scary'.
- They also said the programme was similar to *Doctor Who*.
- Ofcom investigated and found that ITV had broken Ofcom rules by broadcasting violent and disturbing scenes at a time unsuitable for children.
- Audience viewing ratings dropped from 3.2 million to 1.1 million during the programme's first season; hence, it was decided not to renew for a second season.

- Once a serial TV drama is released onto DVD or Blu-ray, it is subject to the legal regulations of the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification).
- ***Jekyll and Hyde* was rated as a certificate 12.**
- Once it appears on a VOD (video on demand) service, the BBFC age certificate also applies.

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- ***Jekyll and Hyde* was rated as a certificate 12.**
- Once it appears on a VOD (video on demand) service, the BBFC age certificate also applies.

Watch the following video called: 'Desensitised: Media Violence and Children'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxyTO-Q40u4>

Do serial TV drama programmes contain too much violence, and what effect could this have on younger audiences?

Exam format:

Unit 1: Investigating the Media
Topic: SERIAL TELEVISION DRAMAS

Written paper – 1 hour 30 minutes – 60 marks – 40%
External assessment – based on a pre-released topic with guidance and stimulus.

Assessed on: knowledge and understanding; research, planning and presentation; construction and evaluation.
Each question is worth 15 marks.

Examination

- The date for this examination is 4th June 2018.
- A contextualised scenario, referred to as 'pre-release' is issued four weeks prior to the examination date – 7th May 2018.
- During this time, you are expected to develop your knowledge and understanding of the external assessment topic by completing independent research and preparation in response to the given brief.
- Your teacher will not be able to teach you after the release of the pre-release materials.
- What is being tested is your ability to demonstrate your knowledge of a **range of examples** from serial television dramas. You are also assessed on **creativity and personal engagement**.
- You will have four tasks to complete in the time allocated.
- You can produce responses in continuous prose, but you are also able to respond in a variety of formats, e.g. annotations, bullet points, charts and mind maps.

The assessment objectives are:

- ❑ **AO1:** recall, select and communicate knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed
- ❑ **AO3:** demonstrate research, planning and presentation skills
- ❑ **AO4:** construct and evaluate your own products using creative and technical skills

Below is a 'practice' pre-release scenario – so you get a chance to see what this looks like and what you are to do with it.

SERIAL PRODUCTIONS PRE-RELEASE SCENARIO

- Practice brief
- Please be clear that this is a practice task for your mock exam. You will be issued with a different brief for your actual exam.

You have received this press release, which has been emailed to national and local media, colleges and schools inviting entries to help develop a new serial television drama.

- ❑ Serial Productions
info@serialproductions.co.uk
- ❑ **PRESS RELEASE: NEW SERIAL TELEVISION DRAMA DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION**
- ❑ **DATE: 4th JUNE 2018**

Here at Serial Productions we are excited about our competition, which invites you to suggest a new serial television drama idea. What we have noticed about this type of television broadcast is that many of them are scheduled post-watershed as they may have adult themes within them.

We are looking for something completely different, aimed at a prime-time audience. Themes you could explore are: medical, crime and costume/period drama.

What we need from you is help developing the serial television drama. We would like to see your specific ideas for the following areas, among other things:

- ❑ an appropriate title for the programme
- ❑ the setting and time period
- ❑ a brief synopsis
- ❑ a representation of the main characters
- ❑ details of the appropriate platform and scheduling time.

We will, of course, need help with pre-production paperwork, and we may require you to develop the title sequence by producing a storyboard and even an idea of what path the promotion and marketing campaign may follow.

Other areas you may wish to explore are how serial television dramas are entering the online market, using platforms such as Netflix and the online only BBC Three, which are, of course, accessible on mobile devices, meaning they can reach a much wider audience. Backing up your ideas with existing examples will be invaluable.

The closing date for entries is 4th June 2018. So you need to remember that you only have four weeks to produce and develop your ideas.

Final tips are to keep responses short and focused and, of course, you can use diagrams or illustrations to help make the responses more focused.

- Study the practice pre-release.
- What are the key points?
- Can you identify some possible exam questions?

Key Points:

What is the main thing you are being asked to do?	Think of an idea for a new serial TV drama
Who has asked you to do it?	Serial Productions
Who is the target audience?	Prime time – 6pm to 9pm – which is suitable for families
What specific ideas have you been asked to look at?	Think of a title for the programme Decide the setting and time period Give an overview of the programme Be able to discuss how the main characters are represented Suggest the platform and scheduling time
What other ideas may you have to consider?	A storyboard for the title sequence A promotion and marketing campaign

Possible exam questions:

1	What are the typical codes and conventions of serial TV dramas? Describe, giving examples from two programmes you have researched.
2	How are the main characters represented in serial TV dramas? Discuss, giving examples from two programmes you have researched.
3	Pitch your idea for a new serial TV drama. You need to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an appropriate title for the programme• the setting and time period• two brief main character profiles
4	Tell us why your pitch will be successful. You need to explain why it will be popular with the target audience.
5	We would like to know what advertising materials for your new serial TV drama will be like. Create a 30-second teaser trailer to promote it using the 10-frame storyboard sheet.
6	Explain the elements of a serial TV drama which contribute towards its success and continue to attract mass audiences.
7	Explain how you would use e-marketing strategies to promote and market your new serial TV drama .
8	How do mobile devices allow audiences to access serial TV dramas in different ways? Make sure you give examples.
9	We are having trouble deciding which platform to broadcast this new serial TV drama on. Can you advise which would be the best platform, referring to examples from your research?
10	What is the most appropriate scheduling time for your new serial TV drama? Explain why you have made this choice.

- You should have detailed knowledge of at least two serial TV dramas as your case studies.
- As you will have noticed, some of the exam questions expect you to give examples from your case studies.

Areas you will need to work on for your two serial TV drama case studies:

Case Studies

Choose two serial television dramas you would like to focus your studies on. These will help you be more prepared for the knowledge-and-research-style questions.

Area of Study	Serial Television Drama 1
Codes and conventions	
Subgenre	
Narrative structure	
Audience (demographics)	

The set (mise en scène)	
Characters (representation)	
Music and sound effects	
Cameras, editing and lighting	
Institutions (channel, scheduling)	

Are you prepared?

Check your understanding:

Quick fire questions:

The exam

1. What key concepts will you look at?
2. What is the topic area of study?
3. How long is the exam?
4. How many weeks in advance do you get the brief?
5. What happens once you get the brief?
6. How many questions are you required to answer?
7. How many marks can you get overall?

Sub-genres

- ❑ What are the main sub-genres of serial TV drama?
- ❑ Can you remember the elements of mise en scène that help audiences recognize the sub-genre?

Narrative

- ❑ Can you name the four narrative theorists and their theories used to analyse serial TV drama?

Camera shots, angles and movement

1. What type of shot is used to include everything in the frame?
2. A certain angle is used to make a character look powerful. What type of angle is it?
3. When the camera moves alongside a character, what is this type of shot called?
4. A particular camera shot is used to show a character's emotions and expressions. What is it called?
5. When a camera angle is used to make a character look weak and vulnerable, what type of angle is it?
6. When the camera moves behind or in front of a character, what is this type of shot called?
7. When we only see half of the character's body in a shot, what is this type of shot called?

Sound techniques in serial television dramas

1. What is the difference between diegetic and non-diegetic sound?
2. What are the three sound techniques used in serial television drama?

Editing techniques in serial television dramas

- ❑ What technique is used to show a character's journey?
- ❑ What technique is used to cut out a piece of the story, but the audience can still make sense of it?
- ❑ What technique is used to show conversation?

Representations in serial television drama:

- ❑ What are the key areas of representation?
- ❑ What is a stereotype?

Audiences in serial television drama:

- ❑ What is the name of the audience theory used to analyse why people consume media texts?
- ❑ Which theorists came up with this theory?
- ❑ What does BARB stand for?

Institutions

- ❑ What is the difference between terrestrial and satellite broadcasting?
- ❑ What part of the day do serial television dramas usually broadcast?

Pitching ideas for a serial television drama:

- ❑ What are the key things to include in your pitch?

Storyboarding

- ❑ What ingredients must you include on your storyboard?

Scriptwriting

- ❑ What four things do you need to check when writing your script?

Promotion and Marketing

- ❑ What is the purpose of a press release?
- ❑ What are the three platforms used for promoting and marketing serial television dramas?
- ❑ What advertising techniques are used to promote serial television dramas?

Convergence and technology

- ❑ Explain how technological and cross-media convergence has changed how audiences access serial TV dramas

Regulation

- ❑ Who regulates TV broadcasts?
- ❑ Who certifies DVD releases of serial television drama?