

Cambridge International AS & A Level

MEDIA STUDIES**9607/23**

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 **16** 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 & 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 & 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>The Peripheral</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: • Tracking shot across a sea featuring wooden warships which dissolves into a tracking shot moving across a pond in a park which is then established as 'London 2099' by on screen caption • Birds eye shot (possibly from drone or helicopter) of house in the Blue Ridge Mountains – establishing this is the home of Flynne, Burton and their mother • The first scene in London featuring Wilf / Wolf and Aelita features a range of shots – CUs, MSs, 2 shots, to document an even-handed conversation between the two characters. • In the second captioned scene, the camera tracks, tilts and plans to offer the audience a spatial understanding of the Flynne family home. This establishes the house very securely as a middle-class home • The remainder of the extract uses conventional shot types to illustrate the conversation between Flynne and Burton. The fact that she is standing and he is sitting / lying implies a power dynamic between them where it is Flynne who is the more dominant of the two	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>The Peripheral</i> (episode 1, 'Pilot', 2022, dir. Natali)

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	Sound: - There is a constant mixture of diegetic and non-diegetic sound sources throughout the extract. The first sounds the audience hears are the sounds of battle between the warships – guns pounding and shells flying through the air - These sounds quickly fade away to be replaced by the ambience of quietness in the London park in which Wilf is sitting in 2099. The main aural; focus then becomes the conversation between Wilf and Aelita – which establishes the contours of a connection between the two characters – she gave him her shoes at some undisclosed previous time - As the conversation progresses, she appears to pause or freeze and the incidental music changes to heighten this moment – this could suggest that she is a game character who has been paused - The music is electronically produced, sounding like computerised sounds – interacting with the hints at pause / freeze in the character of Aelita - In the interlude between the captioned sequences, where we see a hand moving pieces around a set or game board, eerie, strings based basic plays to suggest the unusual nature of what is occurring - Futuristic electronic music introduces the audience into the Flynn family home Mise-en-scene: - Locations – London 2099: the initial tracking shot on Wilf suggests London as we know it – both in terms of Wilf's conventional middle-class appearance (suit and tie) and the location itself – the park bench, the pond. There are two quick disruptions – the cutaway shot to reveal two very sizeable statue like objects rising up into the sky which are not part of the known London skyline and also the appearance of Aelita - Location – unknown – a game board with white coloured pieces, some of which are being manoeuvred around the board, the trees and buildings could well be replicas of the environment which we are next introduced to in the second captioned scene 'Blue Ridge Mountains 2032'		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	- Location – Blue Ridge Mountains, 2032 – the overhead shot introduces to a lush green expanse with one farmhouse style dwelling – this is then becomes established as the home of the Flynn family - Props – the robot device which moves around the floor in the Flynn home announces the futuristic setting of the extract – above and beyond the captioned information - Costume – the first character the audience is introduced (Wilf) is in very traditional, conventional male middle class wear (suits, shirt tie and overcoat). This costuming initially indicates that action could be taking place at any point from at least the mid-20th century onwards – however any such assumptions are disruptions when the caption ‘London 2099’ appears on screen. The second character to appear (Aelita) is barefoot (revealed through CU on her lower legs and feet) and is dressed in dirty, dishevelled looking clothing – in some aspects she looks like a character from a Dickensian novel Editing: - The style of the editing is conventional, however the transitions between different times and places pose many enigma questions for the watching audience – when and where are we? – and the answer to these questions is not stable for long. There are two main periods identified in the extract which are divided by the brief interlude with the cut to the game pieces being moved around mid-sequence before the action then cuts to the Blue Ridge Mountains - It remains unclear what / how / if the characters and situations depicted are connected with each other at this stage – though their placement within the same sequence within the same programme would indicate connections between people and place which are yet to be revealed – so the extract is very dense in its use of enigma codes		

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	Meaning: The opening of <i>The Peripheral</i> introduces us to a confusing array of times, places and characters and more enigmas than answers. We feel that they must be connected somehow, but it is a struggle to make sense of the connection. We open in London 2099, apparently in the middle of a battle between old-fashioned war ships, which are then revealed to be small in scale and, perhaps, some kind of amusement or display. We meet Wilf on a bench watching this display and realise that this is a future world that we are going to have to make sense of. In the background we glimpse (in contrast to the shrunken warships) gigantic statues that resemble Greek or Roman antiquities and suggest some kind of military achievement in the past. We are also introduced to Aelita, a young shoeless girl, for whom Wilf/Wolf has been waiting. Their conversation is enigmatic but suggests that they have a history and that Aelita is disappointed in him. Her comment about her shoes is particularly confusing given their apparent ages – how could she have ‘found him’ and given him her shoes? Also, from their conversation, there seems to be some kind of global disaster looming and when the conversation is over her ‘essence’ seems to disappear from her body so that she doesn’t register his hand over her face. We cut to a model of a house, trailer and human figures – a ‘hand of god’ drops a figure into the setting – again we don’t know what this is or its significance, but the dissolve into a real setting shows a house which corresponds with the model – there is clearly a connection between the two. The caption introduces us to another time and place: Blue Ridge Mountains 2032 which sets up another enigma – what can the connection be between this place in the near future, and London a further 67 years in the future? The family home is domestic, familiar. We are introduced to Flynnne and her mother who is clearly sic and blind. We are also introduced to her brother Burton who lives in a trailer and is playing a computer game from which he is, apparently, able to make money. The relationship is fractious – she accuses him of swapping his pills with their mother (money seems to be an issue) – and his tattoos, the photograph of him in uniform, and the strange glowing implants under his skin suggest a military past. He tells Flynnne that he has ‘something big’ on the way – another enigma.		

Marking criteria for Section A Question 1				
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 5 marks	Contexts & 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

Marking criteria for Section A Question 1				
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 5 marks	Contexts & 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 To what extent is your own consumption of media typical? <u>Indicative content</u> With detailed reference to at least one case study, candidates <i>may</i> address: • how their own media use – as an audience, consumer, producer of media ‘paratexts’, or fan, for example – represents any wider trends and patterns in contemporary media audiences • how audiences are grouped and categorised by media industries, including by age, gender and social class, as well as by lifestyle and taste • 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 • 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 • how audiences interact with the media and can be actively involved in media production • 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.	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.

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3	OR Analyse the significance of technological convergence for distribution in the media area you have studied. <u>Indicative content</u> With detailed reference to at least one case study, candidates <i>may</i> address (with a particular focus on distribution, but inevitably with references to production and consumption): • how processes of distribution have been influenced by technological convergence of traditional, digital and social platforms • processes of production, distribution and consumption by organisations, groups and individuals in a global context • the specialised and institutionalised nature of media production, distribution and consumption • the relationship between technological change and media production, distribution and consumption • the regulatory framework of contemporary media and the impact of technological change on media regulation • the impact of convergent media platforms on media production, distribution and consumption.	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.

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 5 marks	Contexts & 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 audience and industry 5 marks	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 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 texts from multiple case studies is used to explore the chosen area in depth Relevant theories are sophisticatedly used to explore the question 5 marks	Insightful and fully appropriate selection of examples from a wide range of texts 5 marks
Thorough understanding of and effective reference to the key concepts of audience and industry 4 marks	Effective understanding of the wider issues explored Factual knowledge of contexts and debates is relevant, and effectively linked to the question 4 marks	A range of media terminology is used accurately, and help to make effective points 4 marks	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 4 marks	Effective and appropriate selection of examples from a range of texts fully 4 marks

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 5 marks	Contexts & 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