



Key Terms and conventions

ANCHOR, TAGLINE, SLOGAN, FRAMING, TYPOGRAPHY, COLOUR PALETTE, CONNOTATION, HERO, DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, STEREOTYPING, NARRATIVE, COSTUME, ALLITERATION, PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE, REGENCY ERA, DOMINANCE, PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

Brand Identity: Major Quality & Mrs Sweetly

The advert is part of a campaign from this time that uses a similar design. The brand identity of Major Quality and Miss Sweetly goes back to the origin of the product in the 1930s, so it is interesting to look at how their advertising has developed with these characters: www.nestle.com/media/newsandfeatures/quality_street_75

Consider INTERTEXTUALITY

1. The characters in the gold frame, Miss Sweetly and Major Quality, are part of the brand Identity of the product since 1936.
2. The characters are symbolic of the Regency era of British history referenced by the dress codes of the characters in the goldframed picture at the back of the advert.

MEDIA LANGUAGE: How the ADVERT communicates with the audience about the following:

Structure and Design

1. Anchorage of the gold frame – connotations of a halo effect around the man and the product. The QS product takes central framing.
2. Typography is strong, forming the bottom third of the poster, and the strong purple colour stands out to draw the consumers' eyes to the name.
3. Hand-drawn, artistic nature of the design, with a rich colour palette of primary and secondary colours, links to the post-war consumerist culture.

Narrative

1. Connotations of the female characters being dressed similarly to the sweets that are shown close-up on the bottom third of the poster. Inference of a dilemma can be investigated at two levels:
 - male 'hero' choosing between two 'damsels in distress' (Propp's theory)
 - females choosing the chocolate (see Representation section for discussion on female stereotyping).
2. Costume and dress of male character indicating the formal nature of his dilemma; connotations of a higher class and richer society.
3. Patriarchal narrative, which is part of a range of similar adverts of this time.

Written Codes

1. Persuasive language techniques such as alliteration 'Delicious dilemma' and 'delightfully different', emotive language and superlatives are all indicative of a well-read educated audience; further enhanced by the bold, serif font styles connoting richness.

Representation of AGE



To discuss the representation of age, it would be important to make a comparison to a similar advert in this campaign with a much older couple in two chairs (see above).

- This advert is purposely for the young to middle aged adults (25–40), and the target audience could see themselves in the characters in the main section of the advert.

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Women** fit the stereotype of loving chocolate- a stereotype that still exists today.
2. To be successful, **women need to be romantically led by a man**.
3. **Male dominated society** - especially when it comes to choice. The man is in control.
4. **Fits Male Gaze theory**- the framing anchors the male in the middle with women either side.

1950s Gender roles - Men in control, earning the money & women are housewives, looking after the men

REPRESENTATION Ethnicity, Gender and social/cultural Issues

Social Context: 50s Gender Roles

Gender roles in the 1950s were remarkably different to the present day and it is important to consider the advertisement in this context. The product itself was designed and planned for working families and the imagery is very aspirational of a higher class which links to the postwar era in Britain. Much of the branding indicates that the product was symbolic of elegance and aspiration. The two female characters appear to be of a lower class than the man in the suit, and the man in the suit is of a lower class than the two characters in the gold frame. The item that brings all these classes together is the product in the centre of the image.



Representation of GENDER

The image suggests a **male dominated society** with regards to 'choice' – he is in control of the product and is centrally framed. This links to Mulvey's male gaze in relation to the framing (feminist theoretical perspective). The male character anchors the audience's eyes to the product which has significant phallic symbolism.

- The dress code relates to the modern working businessman who may be the 'provider' of the brand.
- The women have two stereotypes being relied upon in the advert: firstly, that of their need for chocolate, a common and very traditional stereotype that still exists today, and secondly their subservient body language to the dominant man. The implication is that to be successful you will need to be romantically led by a man.
- There is also a secondary and deeper analysis here – a sense of manipulation with the women distracting the man through romance to access the 'prize' that is the product in the gentleman's lap. This advert could be seen to be representative of the way in which society was moving at this time.
- The historical representations of the Regency characters show typical strong feminine colours, and the showing of flesh for Miss Sweetly, and the formal uniform dress of Major Quality signify importance and power in their own relationship.



Product Context

Quality Street sweet tin made by Mackintosh, originally created in 1936. In the 1930s, only the wealthy could afford chocolate boxes but the creator Harold Mackintosh aimed to sell them at a more reasonable cost to appeal to working families. **By the 1950s, when this campaign started, society was in a post-rationing period where luxuries were once again becoming an acceptable part of grocery shopping.**

Historical Context

The icons of the Quality Street brand, Major Quality and Mrs Sweetly, were two characters from the Regency era of British history. In the Regency era, Britain went through a period of elegance with regard to Fine Art and Architecture. **The Regency era could also be compared to the 1950s for its significant social and cultural development.** Between 1811 and 1837 the country was under the rule of Prince Regent and developments in technology (e.g. the steam-powered printing press), fashion and architecture were mirrored by a population boom. These similarities can be compared to England in the 1950s.

Social and Cultural Context

The 1950s saw a change in "high culture", a time where fine art, decadence and theatre that had previously only been accessed by the upper classes and those with money were now going to be made **more affordable to the mass audience**. The Conservative Party's 1951 election campaign was led by the slogan "Set the People Free", and this supported drastic change as entertainment and arts became more accessible and affordable.



THIS GIRL CAN: CONTEXTS

Background Context

TGC is a **national campaign developed by Sport England (SE)** and in conjunction with a wide range of partnership organisations.

The purpose of the campaign is to break down the primary barrier holding women back from participating in sport – **the fear of judgement**. The campaign seeks to target and celebrate **‘active women who are doing their thing, whatever that may be, no matter how well they do it, no matter how they look or even how red their face gets’**. The campaign is currently funded by the National Lottery and backed by a government body, Sport England; there is no commercial aspect to it at all.

Social and Cultural Context

SE carried out research to find out why there was such a **big gender gap in sports participation** and discovered **2million fewer 14-40 year old women than men partake in sport regularly**. They wanted to know why. They found:

- **13 million women said they would like to do more sport/physical activity.**
- **Just over 6 million of these were not active at all.**
- **Fear of being judged was the number 1 thing stopping most women taking part in sport/physical activity.**

As a result of the campaign, 1.6m women have started exercising and the number of women playing sport and being active is increasing faster than the number of men.

Soon after the launch of the “This Girl Can” campaign, Nike released a more motivational campaign called “Better for it” which also portrayed a more ‘real’ side to fitness.

Key Terms and conventions

Central image, protagonist, slogan, logo, tagline, persuasive language, call to action, mise en scene, signify, mid shot, facial expression, body language, colour, facial expressions, gender, feminism, stereotype, mantra, focal point, logo, hashtag.

Lack of CELEBRITY

The lack of celebrity means that the woman in the advert feels familiar. The female in the image has her hair scraped up into a ponytail, she is sweating a lot and her clothes are not what society would consider fashionable. For all these reasons, there is a sense that you know someone like her or, in fact, you are her.

Consider NARRATIVE

The dominance of this image suggests she is the protagonist of this narrative, the ‘hero’ according to Vladimir Propp’s character theory. She is heroic because she is embracing sport; she doesn’t appear to care what anyone thinks and has shed any inhibitions. She is an inspiration to other women as it is obvious from her facial expression that she is really enjoying herself and is completely lost in the moment.

MEDIA LANGUAGE: How the ADVERT communicates with the audience using the different codes:

Technical Codes

1. Central striking image that encourages the reader to become intrigued to find out more about the advert
2. Mid-shot of a woman in her thirties, exercising. Unlike many advertising campaigns, this female is not a celebrity. By purposefully avoiding using a sporting legend or an athletic goddess, the campaign is able to target ordinary women of all ages, encouraging them to take part in sport and showing them that they can achieve.
3. Background is not in focus, making the central character the main focus and most important object in the frame, connoting the protagonist of the narrative.
4. Focal point: facial expression, connotes independence, confidence and happiness.

Symbolic Codes

1. Costume: gym/sports wear, communicating a relatable character in everyday clothing that you would expect to see someone wearing when taking part in physical activity. Loose, baggy costume communicates that the character is comfortable wearing these and not concerned about how they look. The top is not typically female in colour.
2. Facial expressions: happy and ‘lost in the moment’, connoting being happy and comfortable working out and not caring about judgements of others
3. Body language: in the moment- again connoting feeling at ease and comfortable taking part in physical exercise

Written Codes

1. Mantra: “Sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox.” Connotations of pigs are unattractive animals. Historically it was considered un-ladylike to break into a sweat and, for many women, it is still the case., not wanting to be seen sweating as it makes them red in the face, ruins their make-up and makes them feel unattractive. However, this mantra turns this on its head and suggests that by working out, you are becoming healthier and therefore will become more attractive, “like a fox” - a fox being a young, beautiful lady.
2. Brand logo “This Girl Can” - very positive statement with connotations of determination. Used to reinforce the idea that all women should exercise and also to convince them that if they try they can succeed in sport.
3. Limited text: Unaware of the campaign, the limited text and unusual image would act like an enigma code for the audience, as we want to find out who this character is and what the advert means by, “This Girl Can”.
4. Hashtag “#thisgirlcan” connects readers to the campaign’s social media pages, should they wish to follow it or find out more, connect women with like-minded others and bring a sense of social togetherness. Also calls to action to watch the YouTube advert, so they understand TGC and see more positive representations of women enjoying sport.
5. Logos: Sport England and the Lottery. Much smaller, tucked away so as not to detract from the visuals.

REPRESENTATION *Ethnicity, Gender and social/cultural Issues*

WOMEN and SPORT

The campaign’s agenda is to encourage women to participate in physical activities by challenging the dominant ideology. In order to do this, the campaign portrays women extremely positively.

Stereotypically, women have often been thought of as the weaker sex and often less successful, particularly where sport is concerned. However, this advertising campaign is seeking to challenge these stereotypes and convince women of their potential.

The female in this image is portrayed from a positive viewpoint: she is represented as independent, confident and happy. There is a clear focus on her face, showing an expression of enjoyment and fun. By selecting such an image, the producers are seeking to challenge the sexism and male dominance in sport. The processes of selection and production have been carefully managed. This advert, like the others in this campaign, has a certain ‘rawness’ to it, focusing on ‘real’ women. There is no glossy finish and it doesn’t resemble any of the high-end adverts produced by commercial sporting brands.

The females are supposed to be seen as heroic- aspirational role models for the readers. Audience members should see something of themselves in these women, bringing their own fear of judgement to the forefront and considering whether it is actually an appropriate fear to have when they see the amount of fun and enjoyment these women seem to be experiencing.

In addition, the brand name, “This Girl Can” uses the noun “girl” as an all-encompassing term. It is used to represent (and target) the whole of the female population and make them feel included, a force to be reckoned with, a team, a united front.

When used in the context of sport, “girl” can be thought of as having some negative connotations – “throw like a girl” is a common simile used to mock someone who cannot throw. It plays on the stereotype that girls can’t do sport. Perhaps then this statement is in response to that idea, “This Girl Can”.

Interestingly though, considering that the campaign is targeting females of all ages, the word “girl” has been used rather than “woman”. “Girl” is usually associated with younger females and there is an argument to say that women over a certain age may feel disconnected from this campaign.

KEY MESSAGES

Key messages:

1. **Women** can be strong, powerful, independent and good at sport.
2. **Women** should partake in physical activity without judgement and if they do, they will feel great.

GQ magazine front cover

(July, 2016)



GQ magazine front cover

(July, 2016)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas:
Media language
Representation
Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Launched in 1931, *GQ* began its life as a quarterly publication called Gentleman's Quarterly, aimed specifically at fashion industry insiders. Its popularity with customers caused its rebranding in 1967 to *GQ*.
- Produced by Condé Nast, today *GQ* is a multi-platform brand. Each issue is published in print and on the iPad; it has its own acclaimed website, iPhone apps and an annual event called 'GQ Men of the Year'.
- GQ* has an average circulation of around 115,000 and a readership of almost 400,000 through its various platforms.
- GQ*'s catch phrase is 'the magazine for men with an IQ.' The brand is built around more traditional ideas of masculinity. It includes coverage of executive concerns and targets a more serious minded, conservative, older reader than some other men's lifestyle magazines such as *Loaded* and *FHM*.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Social and cultural contexts:

In 1994, Mark Simpson an author and journalist coined the word '**Metrosexual**' in an article for the Independent newspaper after he attended Britain's first *GQ* style exhibition. He is famously quoted as saying "I had seen the future of masculinity and it was moisturised." This term gained global popularity in the early 2000s, epitomised by men like David Beckham, when it became more **socially acceptable**

for men to openly care about their **looks, clothing and skincare** regime. **Men's magazines** embraced this through their **content and advertising**. Arguably, the primary role of such magazines is to encourage spending amongst its readers.

In 2014, Simpson then introduced the term 'spornosexuals', men who are extremely body-focused, who spend all their time at the gym and make their bodies their best accessory. The selection of the *GQ* cover shot, with Johnson's bicep in the foreground and the rest of his image secondary to it, and the choice of cover lines surrounding it all support this concept.

Consider how choice of elements of media language influences meaning:

- The overarching **theme** for this issue appears to surround ideas of **masculinity**:
 - The **strapline** tells us it is a special issue dealing with "**Mind, Body & Masculinity**".
 - There is an **extreme close up** of Dwayne Johnson with his huge bicep in the foreground.
 - The **cover line** to the right tells the reader to "Man up! How to be a man in 2016".
 - If we consider the **selection** process that takes place when creating a magazine cover, there was clearly a conscious decision to **associate** ideas of **masculinity with physical strength**.

Semiotic analysis:

- The red, black and white **colour palette** used for this particular cover helps to support the idea of **power**. Red is associated with strength and the black is also a strong, bold statement.
- Johnson is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common **convention** of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could also suggest how seriously he expects to

be taken and maybe how seriously the readers should take themselves and their own bodies.

- Johnson's experience as a professional wrestler earned him the ring name, '**The Rock**', which has **connotations of strength and stability**. This name is used prominently here, across his image, with his actual name appearing smaller and below it. Perhaps he is more famous as 'The Rock' or perhaps the magazine is suggesting that his persona and look are more important than the man beneath.

Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- The **strapline** on the right third of the cover, "Your ideal beach watch. The best for under £300" should be considered when thinking about the magazine's **target audience**. Modern print magazines survive predominantly because of their advertising revenue, they are adept at selling you things you didn't even know you wanted – a £300 watch specifically for the beach implies a certain level of wealth of the target audience.
- Further down the page, there is another **cover line** advertising 'The Style Guide', a new section inside. In today's competitive society, which focuses heavily on **aesthetics** and where having the 'right' look is apparently very important, the reader then begins to think of this magazine as a casual 'how to' guide when it comes to being a man.
- Finally, at the very bottom of the page there is a more **newsworthy topic** mentioned, "The extraordinary truth behind the Viola beach tragedy." This is a reference to the band Viola Beach who all died in a tragic car crash in Sweden. There is a lot of speculation around the crash and this cover lines suggests that *GQ* has the answers. By including some **serious journalism** as well as entertainment and fashion advice, the magazine is broadening its range of offerings for its audience members.

Possible areas for further investigation are:

- **Genre: codes and conventions** of magazine covers: layout, use of cover star, house style, mastheads. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever changing nature and hybridity. For example, Men's Lifestyle magazines could be specifically about fashion or health and fitness and still come under the umbrella term 'lifestyle'. It might be helpful to compare two quite different types of men's lifestyle magazine such as FHM.

- **Narrative** - cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes' enigma codes).

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Historical and Political Contexts:

African Americans have had a long and complex **history** in the motion picture industry. At the start of the 20th century, many films depicted black characters that supported the dominant stereotype of the time: incompetent, hyper-sexualised and/or criminals. It wasn't until the growing momentum of the **Civil Rights Movement** that there was a push against this status quo and there evidently there is still a way to go.

In 2015 April Reign, the Broadway Black managing editor, created the hashtag **#OscarSoWhite** to bring attention to the Academy's tendency to overlook performances and achievements by non-white professionals. By 2016, little had changed and so many actors and actresses boycotted the 2016 Oscars, branding it 'racist' and 'too white'.

Consider the representation of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a hugely successful black **cover star** (Dwayne Johnson is half Samoan and half African American) as their dominant image, *GQ* is presenting a role model for its readers, someone to **aspire** to be like. Although Johnson's Hollywood success might be outside of most reader's possibilities, his work ethic and desire to want to better himself isn't.
- Johnson's success as a wrestling character allowed him to cross over into more **mainstream culture**, most importantly an actor. Black actors have, historically, always been paid less than their white counterparts and so for Johnson to be considered one of the most bankable **Hollywood stars** is an achievement and his success is even greater than one first realises.
- The use of Johnson's **iconic** bicep with its Brahma bull tattoo reinforces the **stereotype** of men as having to be **hyper masculine, strong and muscular**.

Consider the social, cultural and political significance of particular representations:

- For modern men, there is a **societal expectation** that they have to 'have it all': health, wealth and strength and the image of Johnson supports

this as he epitomizes all three. Also, just like their female counterparts, the very essence of men's lifestyle magazines is **consumerism** and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this, informing men of what they supposedly need, "the essential wellness gadgets" and also showing them thing to covet, "your ideal beach watch".

- The cover line reads, "How Dwayne Johnson became the Hollywood's most bankable star." The reader understands this to mean that he is a success in Hollywood, he brings in a lot of revenue for film companies. This is reinforcing the **capitalist ideology** that for a man to be thought of as successful you must be wealthy and make a lot of money.
- Cover lines such as "How to be a man in 2016" suggest that the reader cannot possibly

already know this and will need the magazine to help show him the way. This is similar to the female magazines that tell their readers how to be beautiful, get fit and dress well. The importance of **body image and consumerism** doesn't change just because of gender.

Possible areas for further investigation are:

- We might want to consider the **image as a commodity**. Most of the images used in magazines are to sell and advertise both the magazine and its advertised products. Celebrity cover stars sell magazines as people often want a window into their lives.
- This could be further considered in relation to Blumler and Katz's '**Uses and Gratifications**' theory which considers why people interact with media texts.

Pride magazine

(November, 2015)



Pride magazine

(November, 2015)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas: Media language Representation Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *Pride* is a UK monthly women's lifestyle magazine that targets women of colour.
- It has been in publication since 1990 and has a circulation of over 30 000 copies per month and a readership of over 146 000.
- *Pride* is distributed in the UK by COMAG, part of Condé Nast.
- It's easy to see how people may mistake *Pride* for a gay magazine, as this word has become synonymous with the gay community over recent decades. In fact, the modern gay movement has its roots in the black liberation movement of the 1960s with Gay Pride borrowing its name from Black Pride.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Social and cultural context

In the 1950s and 60s, women's magazines moved away from articles on homemaking and moved towards articles on beauty. Fashion also moved up the agenda, with less about how to make it and more about how to wear it. So, with consumption at the top of the agenda, readers were being reminded that they should look and feel the best they could and the best way to achieve this was by purchasing the latest cosmetics and hair care advertised within the magazine's pages. This is still very much the case today and is evident in this magazine.

The 'Uses and Gratifications Model' suggests that audiences interact with texts for different reasons: information, personal identity, social interaction and entertainment. Although all of these reasons could be argued for why *Pride* has such high readership figures, arguably the personal identity aspect is

probably the main one. In fact, its unique selling point is that it is the only black media company that still remains in black British ownership.

Consider how media language creates and communicates meaning:

- **Title** of the magazine, *Pride*, has connotations of self-respect, self-esteem, dignity and strength. There is a subtext of resistance and an affirmation of cultural identity.
- Some of the **masthead** is lost behind the cover star's head, suggesting her dominance and showing how confident the magazine is that their readers will still recognise their brand, despite not being able to see all of the title.
- The **strapline** tells us that the magazine is "celebrating 24 years at the top!". At the top of what, we're not entirely sure, but the phrasing encourages the reader to feel a part of something great. The assumption is that they are reading one of the best magazines of its kind.
- The red and black **colour palette** used for the cover lines helps to support the idea of pride. Red is associated with pride and strength and the black is a strong, bold statement, perhaps representative of their target audience, women of colour.
- The **pose** used by the **cover star**, Harris, with her hand on her hip suggests confidence and sass. It's also a photographer's trick to lengthen the appearance of the torso, helping to make her look taller and slimmer, trying to add to her beauty and further improve her body shape making her figure aspirational to the target audience.
- Harris is **looking directly** at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention of magazines and helps to add to the more personal approach of this format.

Consider how media language portrays aspects of reality, constructs points of view and conveys messages and values:

- Many of the cover lines focus on **body image** reminding readers that they could and should look better, and also that they

will be judged on their appearance.

- One **cover line** references Female Genital Mutilation but uses only its acronym (FGM). There's an assumption then that the reader will understand this and so have a certain level of social and cultural understanding of the practice. It's a controversial topic, illustrating how the magazine is comfortable covering such serious topics through investigative journalism and sees their target audience as mature enough to handle the subject matter, and educated enough to engage with it.
- **Harris' cover line**, "Bond And Beyond", suggests that her role as Eve Money Penny in the Bond film was a defining role for her, and her career has continued to improve ever since. However, it's argued that her defining role was in fact Tia Dalma in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Perhaps though, this image of her as a voodoo witch doesn't fit with the mainstream ideals of feminine beauty. Whereas Bond females have certain attributes associated with them – those of beauty, femininity and overt sexuality.

Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Genre codes and conventions** of magazine covers: layout, use of cover star, house style, mastheads. Genre conventions of magazines, their ever-changing nature and **hybridity**. For example, lifestyle magazines could be specifically about cookery, fashion or health and fitness and still come under the umbrella term 'lifestyle'.
- **Narrative** – cover lines on the front cover tease people to want to read certain stories within the magazine (could be linked to Roland Barthes – enigma codes).
- The **function** of magazines – linked to media language and cultural context – "to provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in this mythic feminine identity" ('Media Semiotics', Bignell, 1997, p61). Magazines promote a "feminine culture" and therefore "define and shape the woman's world" ('Feminism and Youth Culture', McRobbie, 2000, p69), so they become a familiar friend for the female filled with advice, entertainment and provide a form of escapism for the reader.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and cultural context

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an international

activist movement which originated in the African American community. It campaigns against violence and systematic racism towards black people. The movement started in 2013, with the spread of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter after the controversial acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting of Trayvon Martin. It then became nationally recognized through social media and street demonstrations following two more black deaths in 2014. The dominance of this movement on social media may possibly have something to do with the huge number of twitter followers and Facebook likes *Pride* magazine now has. According to their website, they have 300% more followers and likes than any other title in the ethnic market – (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>)

Historical and political context

Around the time of The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, Black Pride was a response to dominant white cultures and ideologies that encouraged black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage. At this time, the Afro hairstyle, which was associated with everything natural, came to symbolise Black Pride and Power, in contrast with the artificial hairstyles of those wearing wigs or having relaxed hair, both of which were seen as pandering to European notions of beauty. Interestingly then, this text has a cover line which references "The wig revolution" and Harris herself has straight hair rather than her natural curls. Could this have something to do with the consumerist context of the magazine, a text most likely filled with adverts for hair care products such as relaxers, and featuring photographs of black women with long, flowing, straightened hair?

Consider the representation of ethnicity and gender:

- Using a successful, black, British **cover star** as their dominant image, *Pride* is presenting a **role model** for its readers but, importantly, someone from their community. Harris was raised in a single-parent household and came from a working class background. This very 'normal' upbringing makes it easier for the readers to aspire to be like her. The magazine declares itself to be "the face of this new young black Britain; outgoing, confident and ambitious, whilst still maintaining pride in their culture and origins" (<http://pridemagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pride-MediaPack2015.pdf>), so having Naomie Harris, who appears to epitomise all of this, works very well.

- **Stereotypical representation of femininity**, especially in relation to body image:
 - » Harris is also attractive and slim – this is no coincidence. For women, it is a constant struggle to be successful by holding down a job, whilst also looking good and dressing fashionably. The very essence of all women's lifestyle magazines is consumerism, and so the images and cover lines will always seek to support this. This is just as true of *Pride* as it is of *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*.
 - » Cover lines like “How far would you go to be beautiful?” suggest that the reader cannot already be naturally beautiful, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, black women reading or starring in *Pride* are represented as having just as many beauty problems as their white peers. The importance of body image and consumerism doesn't change just because of skin colour.
 - » In *Pride*, readers are reminded that they could and should look better and that they will be judged on their appearance – “objectified, sexualised, mocked. Black women's bodies examined.” The subtext of all of this is no different from any other lifestyle magazine – you are inadequate.

Consider the representation of issues:

- It's also worth considering the representation of the issue of FGM. The initial belief that the magazine is including some hard hitting journalism doesn't completely hold together when you read the second line, stating that it is happening on Harley Street, an area of London well known for cosmetic procedures. From this, we could argue that the magazine's only angle when covering this issue is wholly focused on beauty and body image.
- However, perhaps it could still be seen as a brave move to put it on the cover of a popular lifestyle magazine, bringing a very serious topic into the public domain.
- Furthermore, the exclamation mark makes the magazine's point of view on the topic clear, illustrating a tone of shock. The statement suggests that, for some people, the practice is more about aesthetics than religion, culture or tradition. This is another way that the magazine is able to engage with their target audience as, for them, the idea that some women are paying for FGM at expensive clinics is shocking.

Possible areas for further investigation:

- **Theoretical perspectives** on representation (could reference theorists, e.g. Stuart Hall) –stereotyping, selection and perhaps how, in some ways, this magazine seeks to move away from the typical representations of ethnicity and gender, but in other ways cannot help but reinforce them.
- We might want to consider the **image as a commodity**. Most of the images used on a women's magazine cover are produced to sell and advertise the magazine. If there wasn't an attractive figure on the front, the magazine may not stand out and sell as many copies.

The Man with The Golden Gun film poster

(December 1974)



© Danjaq/EON/UA/Kobal/REX/Shutterstock

The Man with The Golden Gun film poster

(December 1974)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas:
Media language
Representation
Media contexts

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- *The Man with the Golden Gun* is a James Bond film released on 19 December 1974, starring Roger Moore as 007. This was only Moore's second appearance as the fictional MI6 agent.
- Based on a book of the same name, written by Ian Fleming, the film was produced by the British company Eon (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed by United Artists. The film was created with an estimated \$7 million budget and grossed over \$97 million at the world wide box office.
- To reflect the popularity of the Martial Arts film genre, with the rise of stars such as Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, there were several Kung Fu scenes and the film was filmed predominantly in Asia, having being shot in Hong Kong, Thailand and Macau.
- The artwork for poster itself was produced by artist and illustrator Robert McGinnis.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Historical Context:

Prior to the 1990s, illustrations were much more commonly used on film posters due to the limited **technology** that was available.

The film was set in the middle of the 1973 energy crisis, when the oil producing Arab nations proclaimed an oil embargo causing an oil crisis which had both short and long-term effects across on **politics and the economy** across the globe. This is hinted at through the poster's

iconography of the power plant in the lower left corner and the energy beam directed at Bond.

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:

- Typically, film posters are very **visual** and rely on **images** and limited text to promote the film. The images need to give the audience an idea of the film **genre** and hint at the **narrative** – here, rather than just one dominant image, there is so much going on that the reader is expected to work through the images to understand the film's plot.
- The **central image** is a **mid-shot** of James Bond, smartly dressed holding a gun across his body. The dominance of his image suggests he is the film's **protagonist** and so probably a 'good guy'. According to Vladimir **Propp's** theory, he would be considered the '**hero**'.
- Bond's **attire** connotes business and professionalism and the gun, an iconic part of Bond's 'uniform', **signifies** danger and action.
- Bond is **looking directly at the audience**, seemingly making eye contact. The intensity of his stare and the lack of a smile could **connote** how seriously he expects to be taken and that he appears calm despite the chaos surrounding him. This informs the audience of one of his great strengths, his ability to keep his composure in any situation.
- A common convention for film posters is to have the **actor's name(s)** placed prominently as another way to entice the **audience**. Roger Moore had become a household name after starring in the well-known TV series *The Saint* and playing Bond in the previous film, *Live and Let Die*, so his name is placed directly above Bond's image to reinforce the link.
- The **title** of the film appears with the name of the author who wrote the books (on which the films are based) at the bottom of the poster. The

credit block, detailing **industry information** such as other star's names, directors and producers, is much smaller and tucked away so as not to divert the audience away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

Consider narrative:

- At the bottom of the frame, in the foreground, is an extreme close up of a golden gun. It is pointed right at Bond and someone is loading it with a bullet engraved with his name so the reader can interpret this as an attempted assassination on the protagonist.
 - » The **colour** of the gun **connotes** wealth and status and the fact we can only see the hand of the shooter creates intrigue and what Roland Barthes would term an **enigma** code for the audience, as we want to find out who is trying to kill Bond.
 - » Also, continuing **Propp's** character theory, we would consider this person to be the '**villain**'.
- Surrounding Bond are even more enemies and people trying to kill him. These images, combined with the images of destruction and explosions, are **codes that signify** to the audience this is from the action/thriller **genre**.
- As is **typical** of Bond films, the protagonist is flanked by **females** wearing very few clothes:
 - » Two of these women are highly **sexualised**: bikini-clad, slim with perfect hour glass figure and long flowing hair.
 - » **Body language**: one appears to be looking at the golden gun assassin whilst pointing at Bond whilst the other seems to be putting her arm out in front of him, seemingly protecting him. Barthes might argue that this is another enigma code, suggesting to the audience that Bond has female allies and enemies, yet all look the same making it hard for him to distinguish between them.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Representation

Social and Cultural Contexts:

At the start of the 20th century, many film depictions of minority ethnic groups supported the dominant **stereotypes** of the time: to be pitied, to be laughed at, the exotic and/or dangerous. While society was progressing towards racial equality by the 1970s, some of these stereotypes were still in evidence in mainstream films. In addition, it is interesting to consider this poster in the context of the move towards gender equality and

increased women's rights in the 1960s and 70s.

Consider the representation of gender and ethnicity:

- At this time, Bond was already **iconic**. He was the nation's favourite secret agent; charming, suave, good looking and, most importantly, always caught the 'bad guys'. This **representation of masculinity** told audiences that this was what a man had to be at the time – intelligent, strong and prepared to put yourself in dangerous situations. If you were all of those things, you would be successful, gain respect and women would want you. The assumption then is that men should also be heterosexual.
- Two of the three **females** on the poster are wearing bikinis which show off their slim bodies. Both are heavily made up and wear earrings and bracelets as accessories to the 'outfit'. The two women also have long flowing hair.
 - » A feminist theoretical perspective would argue that this **sexualised representation** of women suggests that they are little more than bodies to be looked at.
- Another female, however, is dressed in a karate uniform and is shown in a martial arts pose, and appears to go against this **stereotype**. She too has flowing hair but this time it is much darker and her skin tone suggests she is from a different ethnic group to the other females. This goes some way to explaining why she seems not to support the dominant sexualised stereotype portrayed by the other females; she is seen as exotic, different, the 'other'.

Consider the representation of issues and events:

- Interestingly, one of the main themes in this Bond film was an actual world event – the 1973 **global energy crisis**. With the embargo on oil, countries were considering alternative power sources and this is portrayed through the **iconography** of the power plant and the related explosions. By including this theme, the producers are encouraging audiences to consider what might happen if oil really did run out and predict what the outcomes would be for society.

Possible areas for further investigation:

- Consider ideas about **encoding** and **decoding** texts (could reference theorists e.g. Stuart Hall). The producers have encoded certain ideas into this text but it depends on the viewer's own social and cultural context how this image is decoded:
 - » **For example**, the depiction of a female

doing martial arts could be seen to support the idea that she is dangerous and to be feared or could be seen as a progressive way of looking at females, those who are strong, confident and fearless.

- **Feminist theoretical perspectives** - Laura Mulvey (in her 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema') coined the term the '**male gaze**' which discussed how the audience is put into the perspective of a heterosexual man. In this poster, the audience is forced to

focus on the curves of the women's bodies, putting them in the eyes of a male.

- » Mulvey goes on to argue then that this denies the women human identity and relegates them to the status of **objects** to be admired for physical appearance. This could be further argued as the producer of the artwork was a male, Robert McGinnis.

No Time to Die

(2021)

GCSE Component 1: Exploring the media

Focus areas:

- **Media language (Section A)**
- **Representation (Section A)**
- **Media industries (Section B)**
- **Media contexts (Section A & B)**

THE PRODUCT

- *No Time to Die* is a James Bond film that was released in the UK on 30 September 2021, after a global premiere at the Royal Albert Hall on 28 September 2021. Starring Daniel Craig as 007, this is his fifth and final performance as the fictional MI6 agent. The release was significantly delayed from April 2020, following a change in director and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The film was produced by the British company EON (Everything or Nothing) Productions and distributed in UK cinemas by Universal Pictures. *No Time to Die* is available to stream on Amazon Prime.
- The film's budget was an estimated \$250-301 million, making it the most expensive Bond film to date. So far it has grossed over \$774 million worldwide at the box office.
- The poster was designed by Empire Designs, a British film promotion agency. The first teaser poster for the film was released on James Bond Day, 5th October 2019, as part of a global marketing campaign for the film. The typographical logo of the film title, *No Time to Die*, is in Futura Black.

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media language

Consider the codes and conventions of media language and how elements of media language influence meaning:

- The dominant image is a mid-shot of James Bond, smartly dressed. This suggests that he is the film's protagonist. According to Vladimir Propp's theory, he would be considered the 'hero'.
- This is reinforced by the action shots of him on a bike and in a car, which connote he is on a quest.
- Guns are commonly used as props in the action/thriller genre therefore audiences can expect violence, action, and danger. Each gun is casually pointed, connoting that the figures are alert and ready for action.
- Nomi is wearing a military costume with an earpiece, which connotes her role as an active agent. Like Bond, as a 00 agent, she is a trained assassin. Her calm and focused facial expression connotes that she is in control. This reflects the shift in the Bond narrative towards more contemporary depictions of women. However, Paloma's (Ana De Armas) costume is a glamorous, revealing, navy-blue evening dress cut to her waist. This type of dress would be historically more typical of how 'Bond Girls' have been depicted by the franchise.
- Saffin (Rami Malek), Q (Ben Whishaw) and Swann are looking directly at the audience, seemingly making eye contact. This is a common convention in film posters and helps give a more personal approach to this format.
- A common convention for film posters is to have the names of the actors placed in quite a prominent position as another way to entice the

audience, but this poster does not do that. This may be because the producers are confident that the audiences will recognise Daniel Craig and any text may detract from the visuals.

- This poster uses plenty of visual ‘star appeal’, as Lashana Lynch would also be recognisable to fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe given her role in *Captain Marvel* (2019).
- The large iconic 007 logo at the top of the poster is eye-catching and bold. The choice of a worn, aged, blue tone for the typography hints at the content of the film, which shows a more experienced Bond. The colour also creates a sense of cohesion with the blue tones of the El Nido bar, the villain’s suit, and the glamorous dress of CIA agent (Paloma).
- Towards the bottom of the poster, the title of the film appears along with another smaller 007 logo. The gold font for 007 represents luxury, wealth, aspiration, and exclusivity—all traits that are associated with the Bond franchise. The capitalised title suggests power and strength.
- The title *No Time to Die* can be read in several ways – either that Bond could be so active that he doesn’t even have the time to die, suggesting that the film will be fast paced and exciting, or it could be read as a bad time to die, suggesting a more sombre tone to the film. It also suggests there are going to be some significant deaths in the narrative.
- Beneath the title are more typical conventions of film posters – release date, social media, production companies and distributors. The latter are much smaller so as not to divert the audience’s attention away from the main image or the rest of the poster.

Intertextuality:

- The montage design, where separate images are laid over each other, references previous Bond films, providing a sense of familiarity, nostalgia and pleasure to fans who recognise the link. The 007 gun logo acts as an intertextual link between *No Time to Die* and previous Bond films. It has become synonymous with Bond.
- It is significant that there is no intertextual

reference to Ian Fleming (the author of the James Bond books) on this poster – this is a departure from previous Bond films, signifying *No Time to Die* is not based on one of his original books.

Narrative:

- The exotic locations that we expect for a Hollywood spy thriller and Bond film are shown in the background shots. Italy and Cuba are contrasted by using warm daylight and cold neon lights at night for Bar El Nido. This opposition echoes other oppositions in the poster, making for a more cohesive design.
- There is an image of a man wearing a mask and carrying a gun – this character would be Propp’s ‘villain’. There are connotations of death and danger here. The mask is covering up his identity, suggesting that he wishes to remain hidden. This acts as an enigma code for the audience (Roland Barthes) as we want to find out who this character is and his role in the plot.
- The denotation of the motorbike and Aston Martin suggests that there will be action sequences and excitement within the narrative, both of which are conventions of action films.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Contexts and representations

Social and cultural context:

- James Bond is an action hero who, since the 1960s, has been constructed to embody historical masculine stereotypes such as strength, skill, independence, etc.
- The representation of women in the franchise has also historically been stereotypical: ‘Bond Girls’, who are the beautiful ‘love interest’ for Bond, are often insignificant to the narrative and ultimately disposable (Propp’s ‘princess’).
- The representation of gender in the Bond franchise has evolved over time, to an extent, in a bid to reflect the changing social context. It would be useful to consider the poster for *The Man with The Golden Gun* (1974) here.
- Craig’s Bond is not as sexist and overtly stereotypical as the earlier incarnations of

the character and reflects some contemporary notions of masculinity as his Bond is older, more thoughtful and shows signs of vulnerability. The poster, however, needing to communicate the genre and franchise quickly, only lightly reflects some of these character developments and continues to represent Bond as the familiar action hero.

- Hollywood's representation of race and ethnicity has shifted significantly over the decades. Mainstream audience expectations have changed because of numerous events and individuals. Two of the most significant events to prompt audiences to question what they are seeing in Hollywood was the #OscarsSoWhite campaign in 2016, and the killing of a black, American man, George Floyd, by the police force in 2020. The latter ignited a wave of US and global protests, which challenged long-established symbols of racism (e.g. flags, statues, buildings), calling on corporations and institutions to change.
- Aston Martin has a longstanding brand relationship with the James Bond franchise. In *No Time to Die* several different models appear, but on the poster, Bond can be seen in a DB5. This model was the first ever Aston Martin used in the films, when Sean Connery drove it in *Goldfinger* in 1964.
- Dr Madeleine Swann (Léa Seydoux) is pictured twice on the poster. A French psychiatrist and one of Bond's love interests, she would be recognisable to fans, as she also appeared in *Spectre* (2015).
- James Bond has retired to Jamaica in *No Time to Die*, and his 007 title is reassigned to a new MI6 agent, Nomi (Lashana Lynch). This was widely reported before the launch of the film and the announcement of a black, female 007 led to a minority of racists trolling the actor Lashana Lynch online. On being cast, Lynch stated "We [Black women] know how it feels to be mis- and underrepresented and we know how it feels to yearn for someone, anyone in the world to speak our truth for us when we feel like we don't have a voice. And I'm hoping that my career and my choice in roles and me just being me, authentically, is shining a light on our power."

(<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2021-08-26/no-time-to-die-lashana-lynch>)

- There are three gun props used in the poster. The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) states that "ads for computer games, films, TV programmes, should ensure that they do not promote violence or anti-social behaviour by depicting weapons in a threatening context or in a manner that could be seen to be glamorising violence". (<https://bit.ly/3l0Ga7W>). Therefore it is significant that each of these weapons are relatively small or partially seen, and are not actively being used.

Representations of gender

- Bond is pictured three times in the poster and in all instances, he provides an image of masculinity that connotes skill, intelligence, and strength. In the larger image, although facing side on, Bond's posture is strong, relaxed, and dominant, acting as a frame for the rest of the characters. His facial expression is thoughtful and care-worn, reflecting more contemporary ideas of masculinity. In the smaller images, he is represented as calm, skilled and determined while driving at speed – all traits that we would expect in a hero and a spy. Interestingly, he is not represented with a weapon, which is unconventional for masculine representations in spy thrillers.
- The second most dominant character on the poster is also a male – Rami Malek as Lyutsifer Safin. His size in the poster could reflect the male-dominated nature of the franchise – the main protagonist and antagonist who drive the narrative are both male.
- The use of key light and make-up on all three women on the poster represents them as beautiful, which is what we would expect for a Hollywood blockbuster. Two women on the poster are given agency through their use of weapons – the guns suggest danger, but their posture connotes confidence with a relaxed attitude toward such dangers. Arguably, Nomi and Swann are more than the 'Bond Girls' of the past within the film. Nomi's military costume and earpiece suggest her actions are central

to the plot, and her presence is not merely for the development of the male characters. Each woman is independent and not shown as a ‘damsel in distress’ or ‘Proppian princess’, reflecting the shift in Hollywood to represent women more equally to meet the expectations of a modern mainstream audience.

Consider representations of ethnicity and race

- The cast is predominantly white, which is typical of both Hollywood movies and the Bond franchise. Lashana Lynch as Nomi is British Jamaican and is represented as skilled and determined by using the military costume, earpiece, and gun. Very few people of colour have been represented on Bond posters in the past and the majority have been cast as villains or ‘Bond Girls’, therefore a black woman taking on the role of 007 is a significant piece of Hollywood and franchise history. Representations of Grace Jones, Gloria Hendry, Halle Berry and Naomie Harris on previous theatrical release posters could provide some good exploratory talk/activities.
- Safin, the centrally pictured villain, is played by Rami Malek, an American actor of Egyptian heritage. Bond villains typically stand in opposition to Bond, and not just morally, as this often extends to ethnicity too.
- There is a villain pictured in a parka jacket wearing a Japanese Noh mask, which are often used for ghostly or demonic characters in Japanese theatre.

Consider representations of age

- The use of light on Bond’s main image highlights his older age, constructing a representation of wisdom and experience. Most of the characters are represented as youthful, in contrast to Bond, and as a result less experienced and skilled.

Possible areas for further investigation:

- Ben Whishaw’s Q and the representation of stereotypical ‘geeks’ or LGBTQIA+ characters.
- Safin is represented as having facial scarring with disfigurement makeup conforming to the historical (and widely criticised) Hollywood

stereotype of villains having some form of physical difference.

PART 3: STARTING POINTS – Industry

Historical and cultural context

- Hollywood is the oldest film industry in the world, originating in the 1890s. The first motion pictures were less than a minute long, due to the limitations of technology, and sound was not introduced into films until 1927. Hollywood is considered the ‘film factory’ of the world and exports its products to most countries. The first Bond film was released in 1962.

Consider the nature of media production, by large organisations who own the products they produce, and by individuals and groups:

- Film production consists of five major stages: development, pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution.
 - Development – This is when the ideas are created, if necessary, the rights are bought, the screenplay is written and financing is sought from producers, partner studios and (for big budget productions) product placement relationships.
 - Pre-production – During this stage cast and film crew are found, locations are chosen, and sets are built.
 - Production – This is when the film is shot.
 - Post-production – This stage is when the film is edited. The crew work on the sound, images, and visual effects.
 - Distribution – This is when the finished film is distributed. The film is marketed and promoted. Big budget Hollywood films are screened at the cinema and released for home viewing.
- While the poster above is set for Section A, and does not need to be analysed textually for Section B, it can be used as a starting point for exploring industry issues:
 - Company names: universal, United Artists Releasing, MGM, EON can be researched in terms of production and distribution, ownership issues, including conglomerates.

- Actors – exploration of previous roles, ‘star’ appeal.
- Hashtag, website – role of new technology and social media in marketing film products.

Other areas to research:

- Director, writers, other crew e.g. DOP, Costume Designer – exploration of these roles and their position in the production process.
- IMAX – the role of technology in the distribution of products.
- Soundtrack by Billie Eilish on Interscope (owned by Universal) – ‘star appeal’, synergy and convergence of different platforms to promote the film.
- Synergy with other brands (e.g. Nokia, Triumph, Omega) to fund production and/or market the film.

Consider the effect of ownership and the control of media organisations, including conglomerate ownership, diversification, and vertical integration:

- The James Bond series is produced by EON productions, a British film production company based in London. It is the first Bond film to be distributed by Universal Pictures, which acquired the international distribution rights following the expiration of Sony Pictures’ contract after the release of *Spectre* in 2015. Universal also holds the worldwide rights for physical home media (DVD/Blu-Ray). United Artists Releasing (owned by MGM) holds the rights for North America, as well as worldwide digital and television rights. Amazon bought MGM in 2022 and with it the rights to stream the whole James Bond catalogue on Amazon Prime, a video on demand subscription service.
- Bond has always been well known for its exotic locations across the globe and *No Time to Die* was no exception, using locations in Italy, Jamaica, Norway, and the Faroe Islands. Pinewood studios in London was also used for the scene which needed big sets.

Consider the functions and types of regulation of the media:

- Film and video releases in Britain are amongst the most tightly regulated in the Western world.
- Age restrictions are placed on all commercially released films by the BBFC and some are even expected to make cuts or alter the film in some way to conform to the guidelines.
- To secure a wide audience, *No Time to Die* had a 12A UK rating for its cinematic release and 12 for its physical media and VOD/streaming release.

Consider how the media operate as commercial industries on a global scale and reach both large and specialised audiences:

- The long-running Bond franchise has an established fan-base and *No Time to Die*, a US/UK co-production, received global distribution (theatrically, on DVD/Blu-ray and VOD/streaming) to reach a mass audience.
- *No Time to Die* is clearly intended for mainstream audiences and has great commercial appeal:
 - Bond as a character is iconic and has universal appeal – he is skilled, charming, good looking and, arguably, in Craig’s version of the character he has more depth.
 - The narratives of the films provide familiarity and comfort (‘bad guy’ does something wrong, ‘good guy’ catches him and wins the day) which reinforces dominant messages and values about ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘duty’ and ‘loyalty’.
- *No Time to Die* can be seen as making an active effort to appeal to a contemporary audience that is less likely to tolerate the flimsy gender and racial stereotypes of past Bond films. Producers hired Phoebe Waller-Bridge, only the second ever female scriptwriter to work on a Bond film, to develop the female characters and make their dialogue and characterisation more convincing. However, the specialised audience of core Bond fans are still reached using nostalgia and typical narrative conventions.

Fortnite

(2017)



Fortnite

(2017)

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas: Media industries Audiences

PRODUCT CONTEXT

- Produced by Epic Games, the *Fortnite* franchise is a series of multiplayer **free-to-play** battleground games available on a number of platforms and devices. It was launched in July 2017
- The franchise includes *Fortnite: Battle Royale*, *Fortnite: Save The World*, and *Fortnite: Creative*
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* is the most successful free-to-play videogame ever, making \$1.2 billion in the first 10 months of release. Initially, players had to buy 'battle passes' to play, but in September 2018 the *Battle Royale* version was offered for free.
- The *Fortnite* franchise had **revenue** of £2.4 billion in 2018
- The franchise has helped make Epic Games a hugely successful company. In 2012 they were worth \$825 million; in 2018 they were worth \$5.8 billion.
- Fortnite: Battle Royale* won 'Best Ongoing Game' in the PC Gamer and IGN awards in 2018.

Gameplay

- Players, in groups of 100, are dropped via a flying bus onto a deserted island that is about to be hit by a natural disaster.
- The aim of the game is to fight to the death, with the last player standing the winner. Players seek out weapons and other materials, but are also able to demolish structures and rebuild them into forts, towers etc.
- As the game continues, the storm starts to encroach, driving the players into smaller and smaller areas and forcing conflict.
- In terms of **genre**, *Fortnite* could be considered as fusion of battle games (like *Battlegrounds*) and construction games (like *Minecraft*).

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media industries

Social and cultural contexts:

The global videogame industry has been growing since the early days of Atari home entertainment in the 1980s. In recent years, the diversity of game genres and platforms on which they can be played has meant an explosion in the gaming industry. Based on a 2015 economic forecast videogame sales are expected to reach \$90 billion by 2020.

In 2014, it was calculated there were 1.8 billion gamers in the world - 25% of the global population. This challenges the stereotype of gamers as young geeky men. In 2018 in the USA, 28% of gamers were under 18, but 23% were over 50 years old. There was a 66/44% male/female gender split.

The range of genres - from first-person-shooters to puzzles and learning tools - has varied the demographic for gamers. The variety of platforms - not just home consoles, but on tablets and smartphones - that high quality, complex and engaging games can be accessed has also led to the growth of the industry.

Gaming has increasingly become a social activity. In 1997 Ultima Online became the first on-line multiplayer game, and since then socialising in the game world has become an everyday activity for millions of people, usually geographically far apart. People develop alliances, friendships and even romantic relationships as their game characters. 'eSports' - live competitive gaming events between celebrity players has also become popular, attracting millions of viewers through sites like Twitch and even packing huge stadiums like traditional sporting events.

Consider the impact of new technology and convergence:

- One of the things that have made *Fortnite* so popular is the ability to access the game from consoles, PCs, laptops, smartphones or tablets. You can also download it for a range of operating systems. Not only this but you

can move, mid-game, between devices without interrupting gameplay. This means it can be played at home, or on the move, on a tiny screen or a video projector. This is a good example of **technological convergence**.

- Epic Games use an operating system called Unreal Engine to develop *Fortnite*. They have made this available on their website, and encourage their audience to use it to develop their own games. Unreal Engine has also been used by professional game developers to create titles like *Batman: Arkham City* and *Infinity Blade*.
- *Fortnite* is also a good example of **cross-media convergence**, where more than one media brand or form joins to promote each other. *Fortnite* is the most viewed game on YouTube, and has also used streaming platforms like Twitch (owned by Amazon) to broadcast live competitions.
- It has also incorporated other media **brands** and **franchises**. In collaboration with Marvel Studios, there was a special *Avengers: Infinity War* segment and recently a tie-in with *Godzilla*. The format of *Fortnite* means that any kind of costumes, weapons and games can be introduced to keep the game fresh. Films/TV/sports can promote their brands to over 20 million of players, whilst famous collaborations keep *Fortnite* in the news and social media.
- Epic Games has a good relationship with various non-gaming celebrities such as Drake and basketball star Ben Simmons. This helps to promote the game beyond the traditional gaming market.

Consider Epic Games as an institution:

- Epic Games was started by Tim Sweeney in 1991 and was originally run from his parent's house. These humble beginnings may explain Epic's decision to make the Unreal Engine available to amateur games designers.
- In 2014, the *Guinness Book Of Records* named Unreal Engine as the 'most successful videogame engine'
- Epic Games owns video game developer Chair Entertainment and cloud-based software developer Cloudgine, and has sub-studios in the UK, Japan, and Germany.
- Tencent - a Chinese investment company focused on internet and AI development - bought a 42% stake in Epic in 2012.

Consider different funding and profit models:

- *Fortnite* is an example of the '**Games as a Service**' (GaaS) model - where there is a constant revenue stream from '**in-game purchases**' after the initial purchase (or providing the game for free)
- Some of these are '**micro transactions**' where players pay for weapon, costume and game upgrades rather than 'grinding through' the gameplay to score them. In *Fortnite*, players use V-bucks to purchase these items, and these can be earned in the game or bought using 'real world' money. Another game that does this is *Candy Crush*.
- Unusually in *Fortnite* the upgrades are purely 'cosmetic' i.e. they don't actually affect the gameplay. They often consist of new 'skins' (to alter your character's appearance) and 'emotes' (victory dance moves after a kill). These are only available for a short period of time, increasing their value and encouraging players to pay rather than 'grind' for them.
- Another revenue stream for GaaS titles is to offer '**season passes**' - like a subscription that allows you to access new content over the course of a period of gameplay (the 'season') that play-for-free users can't access.
- *Fortnite* offers players 'battle passes' and then drip-feeds limited edition and exclusive content to these players over the course of the season.

Consider regulation of the media:

- **Age ratings** are systems used to ensure that entertainment content, such as computer games, are clearly labelled by age according to the content they contain. Age ratings provide guidance to consumers (particularly parents) to help them decide whether or not to buy a particular product. The rating on a game confirms that it is suitable for players over a certain age.
- In 2012 the **PEGI** system was incorporated into UK law and The Video Standards Council was appointed as the statutory body responsible for the age rating of video games in the UK using the PEGI system.
- *Fortnite* has the PEGI rating of 12 for "frequent scenes of mild violence". It seems that parents are more concerned with issues surrounding addiction than the levels of violence.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audience

Historical and Political Contexts

The relationship between videogames and audiences has been a controversial area, with many **moral panics**. These ranged from fears that violent games encourage **copycat** behaviour, to worries about addiction and the amount of ‘**screen time**’ that is healthy. *Fortnite*, when compared to other successful titles like *Grand Theft Auto* or *Call Of Duty* contains very little explicit or realistic violence, and the cartoon-like graphics also make the game suitable for younger players.

In addition, there seems to be little racism or misogyny expressed by the players compared to other videogames - perhaps because free players are randomly assigned race and gender ‘skins’ at the start of each round. Critics have also praised the **collaborative** nature of the gameplay that encourages players to work together and protect each other (until the finale).

The main concern seems to be about addiction: with reports from teachers and parents that children are distracted from school work due to their engagement. One psychologist even compared it to heroin! There have been reports that Premier League footballers were being treated for addiction, and Prince Harry said the game is ‘dangerous’.

Consider the way media industries target audiences:

- *Fortnite* has used a combination of addictive gameplay, media/technological convergence and marketing to target a diverse and varied audience. 78% are male, 22% are female, 53% are 10-25, and 42% are in full time employment.
- The unrealistic violence and cartoon-style graphics, along with the emphasis on construction as much as killing, make it appealing to a younger audience.
- The rise of ‘eSports’ stars, mainly consumed via streaming platforms like YouTube and Twitch (where *Fortnite* is the most watched game) has led to players becoming major

celebrities. Ninja, the most famous *Fortnite* player has over 10 million subscribers and earns over half a million dollars a month. Ninja ranks highest in the world for social media interactions (i.e. people posting or sharing using their name - no.2 is Cristiano Ronaldo!

- This creates gamer celebrities that have become **aspirational role-models** for some audiences.
- The use of **non-traditional** gamer celebrities such as rappers and NBA athletes widen the appeal of the game. The popularity of ‘Twitch Girls’ (female streamers like KatyPlaysGames) has also appealed to women.
- *Fortnite*’s use of ‘seasons’ - with rumours and gossip about future seasons - follows the cable TV/ on-line subscription style of **long-form TV drama**.

Consider active and passive audience responses:

- The basic gameplay of *Fortnite: Battle Royale* is interactive and collaborative, encouraging players to work together. By being able to deconstruct and rebuild the game environment, players are encouraged to be creative.
- *Fortnite: Creative* is a different format that allows even more creativity in designing ‘skins’, ‘emotes’ and landscapes.
- In addition, Epic Games have made their operating system Unreal Engine available (at a price) to encourage the next generation of games developers.

Consider theoretical perspectives:

- Blumler and Katz’s ‘**Uses and Gratifications**’ theory considers why people interact with media texts.
- *Fortnite* - along with many videogames - could relate to the ‘**escapism**’ and ‘**catharses**’.
- However, the collaborative nature of the gameplay could also provide **social interaction**.
- The use of gamer and non-gamer celebrities could also relate to the search for role-models that contribute to personal identity. This could be linked to **Dyer’s ‘Star Theory’**.

The Archers

Component 1: Exploring the Media

Focus areas: Media Industries Audiences Media Contexts

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- *The Archers* is aired on Radio Four, has over 5 million listeners and is considered a significant part of British popular culture. Running for 65 years, with six episodes a week and an omnibus on a Sunday, it is the world's longest running radio soap opera.
- *The Archers* follows the residents of the fictional farming community of Ambridge, in the fictional county of Dorsetshire, in the English Midlands. Its tagline is, "contemporary drama in a rural setting".

PART 1: STARTING POINTS – Media Industries

Historical Context:

- *The Archers* was originally established in 1951 to **educate** farmers which, it was hoped, would increase food production after the second world war. It was thought that the show could be used as a way for the Ministry of Agriculture to communicate important **information** to farmers.

Social and Cultural Context

- Wherever possible, *The Archers* happens in **real time** i.e. it portrays **events** taking place on the date of broadcast, allowing a variety of **topical subjects** to be included. If a real-life event can be predicted, it is often written into the script. Even unforeseen events have been weaved into the script with scenes being re-written and re-recorded at short notice such as the 9/11 attacks, the death of Princess Margaret and the 2001 foot and mouth crisis.

Consider the importance of different funding models and production processes:

- Like TV, radio broadcasting falls into two categories: **public service** and **commercial** broadcasting. Commercial broadcasting is funded

by the sale of advertising slots and public service broadcasting is funded by public money either directly from the government or a licence fee. In the UK, **BBC radio is funded by a licence fee**.

- *The Archers* is aired on **Radio Four**, the BBC's main spoken-word channel, and so is funded by the licence fee. The BBC has a **public service remit** (to educate, inform and entertain) and *The Archers* was originally established to **educate** farmers. The show soon became a major source of **entertainment** for people from all walks of life, not just the rural community. However, the show still prides itself on the quality of its research and its ability to portray real rural life.
- **Producing** a radio series like *The Archers* requires tight **schedules** and long term **planning**.
 - » The production team meet biannually to plan the following months, and sometimes even years' worth of storylines.
 - » Monthly script meetings then take place where four writers have to produce a week's worth of scripts each.
 - » Recording takes place every four weeks and actors only receive their scripts a few days before. Actors are employed for six days in which they record 24 episodes. There is very little room for error as each 13 minute episode is only allocated two hours of studio time.
 - » Episodes are then broadcast 3-6 weeks after recording.
- Due to these recording schedules, actors are not held on retainers and are not employed full time on a show and often have careers in film, theatre, television and other radio shows.

Consider regulation of the media:

- Radio broadcasting is regulated by **Ofcom**, the government-approved regulatory authority for broadcasting. Ofcom sets **standards** for programmes and one of its duties is to examine specific **complaints** by listeners about programmes broadcast on channels that it has licenced.

Consider the impact of technologies and convergence:

- In order to keep up with the different

ways people prefer to **consume** their media, there are a variety of **ways for fans to engage** with the show:

- » Aside from the **regular radio slot**, listeners can catch up with the **omnibus** on a Sunday, hear recent episodes repeated on **BBC Radio Four Extra**, download the **podcast**, or listen 'on demand' through **BBC iPlayer Radio**.
- » Alternatively, they can check out *The Archers*' page on the **BBC website**, follow the show on **social media** by following it on **Twitter** or liking their **Facebook** page.
- » All of these **platforms** are provided to help audiences increase their enjoyment of the show and make it as accessible as possible for them to keep up to date with it.

The Brand

- *The Archers* is big business for the BBC as it's the most listened to BBC programme online. In today's society, **market share and brand identity** are massively important and *The Archers* succeeds on both of these. If the BBC was ever to lose its **licence fee**, there are certain shows that it is guaranteed people would pay to subscribe to – *The Archers* is one of these. Therefore, it's important that the producers keep the show fresh. One way of doing this is by introducing new characters or pushing the boundaries on plotlines.

PART 2: STARTING POINTS – Audiences

Social Context

Not one to shy away from controversy, the BBC has opened the gates to less talked about topics and issues in recent years. The **domestic abuse storyline** of Rob and Helen has been building for some time. The **listeners' privileged position** of being able to eavesdrop in on characters' private conversation has added a very real touch to the storyline. Audiences have witnessed first-hand Rob's controlling nature, his coercive behaviour and insidious ways (e.g. constantly undermining Helen's looks and clothing), and listened whilst he has progressively isolated her from friends and family. The **realistic portrayal** of this storyline has even prompted audiences to raise over £100,000 in charitable donations, proving the **importance** of such a show – and the strong relationship it has forged with its **audience**.

Consider the ways in which media organisations target audiences:

- Historically, radio soap operas have always

focused primarily on women's lives, particularly family relationships, domesticity and marriage. Therefore the target audience was traditionally **females** who looked after the home.

- Listeners from different walks of life could engage with the show in different ways due to its multi-stranded **narratives**. As a listener you might be rooting for one particular character whilst your friend might be interested in another character relationship entirely.
- *The Archers* is perceived as a high quality soap opera and distinguishes itself from TV soaps by providing soap for the educated middle-classes. Radio Four has a **high cultural status** and so the audience for *The Archers* consists mainly of well-educated middle-class professionals, most of whom are middle aged and above, white women.

Consider how audiences may respond to and interpret media products, and the social, cultural and political significance of media products:

- For many of these listeners, *The Archers* was a **familiar friend** which provided a comforting background and, until fairly recently, there was an unwritten rule that nothing too terrible would ever happen.
- However, in recent years some listeners have complained that *The Archers* is beginning to mimic the excesses of TV soaps such as *EastEnders*. The most notable example of this is the 2016/17 storyline of Rob's abusive relationship with his wife. For some listeners, the show they once considered to be light, mellow drama, has now morphed into actual **melodrama**.
- That being said, such a move has attracted **new listeners** which are welcomed by the broadcasters, and there is an argument that such shows should reflect the **society** in which they are aired. This move has also given the BBC the opportunity to open a conversation about **topics** like domestic violence.
- Because the BBC can be accessed from around the world, it's important to understand that some of the online audience is **global**, including British people living abroad. Listening to *The Archers* is a crucial way for them to keep in touch with **British life**. In fact, even within the UK, some listeners from urban areas have stated how they like the sense of rural life that is evident in the show. Perhaps, like many, they dream of getting away from the city and moving to the country and *The Archers*

helps them imagine this for a short time.

- If we consider Blumler and Katz's **Uses and Gratifications theory**, we could argue that audience members listen for all of those given reasons:
 - » simply for **entertainment**/diversion from their everyday lives
 - » to be **informed or educated** about rural life or topical issues that the

storyline may be dealing with

- » for **social interaction** to discuss with family/friends or by continuing the conversation on Twitter or Facebook
- » for **personal identity**, to compare their life experiences with those of the characters.