

Teacher Resource Bank

GCSE Media Studies

Other Guidance

- Glossary of Key Words from the Specification



Glossary – Key Words from the Specification

Word	Definition
A&R	The division of a record label responsible for talent scouting and the development of recording artists. Often also acts as liaison between the label and the acts.
Bedding Music (radio)	Instrumental music played behind dialogue/ action/ speech, generally in live programmes. Often used to identify particular repeating segments (for example, news reports)
Billboard	A large, outdoor display board used to display advertising posters.
Blog	Short for “web-log”, literally an on-line diary which is generally focused on some subject of interest to the “blogger” and which allows for readers to post responses, useful links etc. An aspect of social networking , with many sites such as Facebook featuring blogs ; increasingly considered as a viable aspect of journalism
Boxout	A roughly square-shaped design element containing text or graphics separated from the main body of text/ graphics on a magazine, newspaper or web-page. Usually contains information separate from the main content/ article whilst being connected to it (for example, statistics, web-links or glossaries)
Brief	Information provided by a client about the content and purpose of a media product. Often contains details of target audience, intended outcome and desired features. Sometimes gives specifics about form/ platform. Consideration of the brief usually comes at the start of a pre-production process and all decisions made during that process should be related back to the brief
Cable (platform)	The name given to a media platform which utilises wires or (increasingly) optical cables to communicate information. The “cable” is hard-wired from a local junction box to the domestic user (unlike satellite or other platforms which utilise signals). The user usually needs a set-top box in order to decode the signal. The main cable media company in the UK is Virgin Media, which uses fibre optic cables to transmit television and broadband internet (as well as some radio and telephone services). Most cable output is now digital
Call to action (advertising)	The intended response to an advert from its audience (for example, to buy a particular product, subscribe to a particular cause)
Client	Individual or organisation for whom a media product is created; sometimes (although not always) the target audience. Usually originates the Brief
Commercial Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station or website which relies on advertising and/ or sponsorship (for example: ITV, Five, Galaxy, Century FM)

Community Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station which is based in and run by community groups. This may be on based on a restricted service licence, which allows community groups to broadcast for up to a month, or more permanent licenses. Some digital community broadcasters also exist
Contact-sheet	A sheet containing many small images, usually produced from a camera film or memory card and used by a photographer and/ or a client to choose an image or images to be used as part of a product or campaign. Used in order to save time and resources.
Copy	The original manuscript or typescript from which text used in newspapers, magazines or adverts is taken
Corporate (Video)	A video produced to show a company (or occasionally individual) in a good light, sometimes linked to an advertising or marketing campaign (see also Promotional Video)
Cross-head	A centred sub-heading
Cut	The normal, sudden transition from one shot or audio sequence to the next. Also the name given to the action of separating scenes or sequences and joining them up in the required order and duration
Desk Top Publishing	The generic name given to any software designed to allow a user to create magazines, posters or other print (and increasingly web) media online. Some examples include Microsoft Publisher, Adobe InDesign and Quark Express
Digital (platform)	Any media output which does not rely on an analogue signal but depends upon a digital signal transmission. Generally of higher quality and more reliable than analogue broadcasting. Allows for more economical use of the signal meaning that more information (channels etc.) can be accessed, as well as platforms such as HDTV and On Demand services which cannot be supported by analogue signals.
Distribution	The process of making sure a feature or short is available to screen in a cinema or at a film festival. Also the process by which films are made available on DVD. Preceded by production and followed by exhibition
Edit	When used in relation to photography, the process by which an image is treated to optimise it (editing might include cropping, changing the brightness or contrast or using software such as Adobe Photoshop to add special effects). When used in relation to moving image or audio, the process by which material a director does not wish to use is removed (generally using software such as Adobe Premiere, Final Cut or Garage Band). When used in relation to websites, the process by which an existing site is updated and changed using software such as Microsoft Sharepoint or Adobe Dreamweaver/ Contribute. Used as a noun, an “edit” describes the changes/ alterations bade during the process of “editing”.
Exhibition (film)	The point at which a feature or short is screened for the viewing public; preceded by production and distribution

Feature (Film)	A long-form film, usually produced to be shown commercially at the cinema and often between 80-180 minutes in length (although both shorter and longer feature films exist).
Flat Plan	A hard copy (either paper or electronic) where a design layout of a newspaper, magazine or web-page can be planned and plotted. Basically a storyboard for a print/ web publication. Similar to a mock-up
Font	Usually now used to describe “type families” – different styles of lettering available (mainly) on a computer.
Form	An individual medium (for example, newspapers, television, web-page etc.) – “the type, content or communication [...] used to create [...] content” (see spec page 5 for more details)
Framing	The process by which a photographer, director or camera operator chooses what to include within a photograph or shot. Can also refer to the process of designing a web-page or magazine cover. Linked to mise-en-scene
Franchise	A series of films, TV programmes, games or other media products based on the same background characters or situations. Often crosses a range of media forms and platforms (for example, <i>Star Wars</i> films, TV series, website, games, toys etc.) Any product which has a sequel or spin-off can be considered the start of a franchise.
Gaming	The umbrella name given to any activity which involves playing games on a digital platform. Can include consoles (e.g. X-Box 360, Nintendo Wii), PCs and Macs , handhelds (e.g. Nintendo DS, PSP) and mobile phones
Genre	Style or type of a media product (e.g. lifestyle magazine, sci-fi film, situation comedy, social-networking website, “shoot-‘em-up” game)
Headline	The text at the top of a newspaper, magazine or website article indicating the nature of the content included within it. Usually written in a much larger type size than that used within the main article, and often using a different font in order to attract attention and emphasise importance
Home Page (web)	The first page of a website a user will access when they type in the web address. Usually contains direct links to other parts of the site. The equivalent to the cover/ contents page of a magazine or the front page of a newspaper.
House style	The name given to the overall design concept applied to a magazine, website, or media company. Can include the use of particular fonts , colours, layouts, images, idents, logos etc. The House Style is designed to differentiate the product or company from its competitors and is often part of an overall campaign
Ident	An identifying symbol or sequence associated with a media institution or product. Can be a still image, a short video sequence, an audio stinger or a logo . Almost all television channels, radio stations, film studios and games houses have bespoke idents which appear as part of their products in order to identify who is responsible for production

Imperative (advertising)	The language of persuasion within advertising (for example, the use of positive, active words and phrases, e.g. “8/10 cats prefer...”) used in order to maximise the sales potential of a product or cause (linked to slogans and the call to action)
Insert (radio)	A short piece or package included within a longer radio show, often not associated with the content included before or after. Can be informative or amusing. <i>Thought for the Day</i> , included within Radio 4’s <i>Today</i> programme, is an example of an insert.
Jingle	A short, catchy piece of music or song/ phrase often associated with advertising and/ or promotion and designed to embed a message in the minds of consumers.
Links (web)	Text or images on a website which, when clicked, take the user to a new web page either within the current website or in a new website. Important when creating websites with more than one page in order to enable navigation
Logo	Usually a simple image, sometimes including the name of a product or company, used to identify that product or company. A key element of house style
Mac	Short for Apple Macintosh , the only major rival to PCs . Apple have produced a range of computers which use different hardware and software to PCs , although these are less popular with home users. Macs are often used by Media professionals, particularly for video editing and graphic design
Mise-en-scene	Linked to framing , the technical name for the choice a director, photographer or camera operator chooses with regard to what is included within a particular shot . Mise-en-scene is linked to mood and genre and can give an audience visual clues about the image or film. For example, including a Christmas Tree in a shot would tell an audience roughly when in the year a scene was taking place; including a space-ship would tell an audience they were probably watching a science fiction film or programme.
Mock-up	Generally applied to print media, although also used when creating websites, a rough version of a final outcome created as part of the pre-production process (sometimes included within the treatment although often used as part of the planning stage). Similar to a flat plan
Narration	Any spoken voiceover used within a television programme, film or radio drama in order to set the scene, describe action or link sequences. Also often used in adverts as part of the marketing process and within corporate or training videos as well as during cut-scenes in video games
Opening Sequence (film)	The first part of a film/ TV programme, usually including or leading up to a credits sequence and often setting up the story/ plot/ characters. Often ends in a cliff-hanger or moment of tension in order to persuade the audience to watch the rest of the film/ programme.

PC	Short for Personal Computer , often used to define a computer which uses the Microsoft Windows operating system (although PCs can also run using Linux and other OSs). Increasingly also used to describe laptop computers. The most widespread form of computer.
Platform	A delivery mechanism for a media form (for example, the internet, On-Demand etc.) – “the technology used to deliver and access [...] content” (see spec page 5 for more details)
Podcast	Effectively, an audio- blog , recorded and posted on the internet to be downloaded and played back by a listener using an mp3-player (such as an iPod), often via subscription so it is automatically downloaded and delivered when the device is connected to a computer. Now the generic name for any downloadable audio programme (for example, the BBC makes most of its output available as “podcasts”). Includes a whole range of audio genre programmes such as music, analysis, news and documentary.
Pre-Production	Period during which a media product is planned (including, for example, creation of storyboards , flat-plans , scripts, mock-ups etc.) Also includes primary and secondary research, focus groups etc.)
Product	The final outcome of a production process (for example, the front page of a magazine, a completed movie trailer , an active website homepage)
Production (Process)	Period during which a media product is created (including, for example, filming, photographing, editing , printing, publishing etc.) leading to the final outcome(s)
Promotional (Video)	The technical name for a music video “promoting” a particular artist or group. Also the name for a video designed to publicise a particular organisation or group (see also Corporate video)
Public Service Broadcasting	The name given to any radio or television station which relies on public funding (i.e. the licence fee) (for example, BBC1, Radio 1, Five Live)
Satellite (platform)	The name given to a media platform which utilises a signal beamed from a satellite to a receiver dish stationed on or near an end-users home. The signal from the dish is then communicated to a set-top box which allows it to be unscrambled. The satellite signal can carry television, radio, internet and telephone services. The main satellite provider in the UK is BSkyB. Most satellite output is now digital .
Scene	A dramatic unit composed of a single or several shots (or a similar audio sequence). A scene usually takes place in a continuous time period, in the same setting, and involves the same characters
Schedule	In television or radio, the name given to the process of deciding where and when a particular programme or advert will be shown. In production, the name given to the plan made which details the tasks to be accomplished during the pre-production and production processes, as well as the timescale, allocation of roles, resources required etc. Planning the schedule is usually one of the first things to be done during pre-production .

Script	Usually the starting point of a feature , short , radio or television programme. Includes lines of dialogue and often direction for actors (and sometimes camera operators/ audio technicians/ sound effects supervisors etc.) Used to help create the storyboard . Usually produced as part of the pre-production process after a brief has been allocated and a treatment accepted by a client
Scrolling text (web)	Words and phrases on a website which are animated to move in a vertical or horizontal direction in order to create emphasis
Short(s) (Film)	A short-form film, usually produced to be shown at film festivals or on television. Can be anything from 5-60 minutes in length (although can be longer)
Shot	A single photograph (when used in relation to still images) or a single take (when used in relation to moving images). Shots can be static or mobile, depending upon the choice of the director and the needs of the scene.
Signposting	The technique used to establish the location at the beginning of a particular scene, often using visual or audio effects. On film, this will involve the use of an establishing shot which sets up spatial relationships. For example, a scene taking place by the seaside might be signposted by the use of an audio effect of seagulls; a scene taking place in the desert might be signposted by a wide-angle shot of many dunes under a hot sun
Slogan	A catchy, memorable phrase, often used as part of a jingle and forming an element of a house style . Usually fairly simple and repetitive, e.g. 'A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play'
Social Networking	Websites and other software designed to allow internet users from across the world to communicate with each other. Includes sites such as Facebook, Youtube and Bebo as well as interactive software such as Second Life, messaging software such as Windows Live Messenger and blogs/ vblogs
Storyboard	A visual breakdown of a script often produced by a director in order to demonstrate to a camera operator or production team how a scene is designed to be shot. Often includes elements of mise-en-scene as well as camera movements, types of shot, accompanying sound and other technical information which a camera operator might need. Might also be used during the editing process. Can be very simple or quite complicated, depending on the needs of the production or the team. Usually produced as part of the pre-production process after a script has been produced
Strapline	A cross-column subheading directly over a headline; generally used to emphasise a key aspect of that headline. Often used in newspapers, on websites and in advertising. For example, the strapline used by Nike is the slogan "Just Do It" whilst a newspaper strapline might be "No sign of Baby Madeleine" if the headline is "Still Lost".
Subscription Broadcasting	The name given to any radio, television or website which involves direct payment for access (for example, Sky, Virgin etc.) Note: many subscription broadcasters can also be regarded as commercial broadcasters (since they also carry adverts).

Synergy	A portmanteau word made up of the words “synthesis” and “energy”. The name given to the process whereby two or more media products are interlinked, for commercial or artistic purposes. Linked to the concept of franchises . For example, <i>The Matrix</i> franchise contains synergistic products including the films, the <i>Animatrix</i> DVD, the <i>Enter the Matrix</i> game and soundtrack CDS amongst others. Synergy is also linked to 360. Synergy is also linked to 360° marketing
Teaser	A short trailer (usually lasting between 10-30 seconds) designed to be shown several months before the release of a feature film (or increasingly a television programme). Often quite cryptic and designed to create a sense of tension for the audience; usually linked in some way to the corresponding feature trailer .
Terrestrial (platform)	The name given to a media platform which utilises an analogue signal beamed from a local television or radio transmitter to an aerial stationed in or near an end-users home. The signal from the aerial is received directly by a radio or via a cable to the television. There are a number of terrestrial radio broadcasters (e.g. Galaxy, Radio 1) and five television broadcasters (BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Five). The terrestrial analogue signal is due to be switched off in 2012, with all terrestrial output being routed to Digital
Titles	The opening credits of a film, television programme or game during which the title of the product is given (as well as, often, the names of the lead actors, director, scriptwriter etc.) Usually also includes images from or associated with the product and appropriate theme music. Usually around 30 seconds long for a TV programme, although can be varying lengths for games and films (the opening titles of <i>Watchmen</i> were 7 minutes long)
Trailer	A short advert, usually shown before a feature film at a cinema screening (although also found on television and DVD releases) promoting a forthcoming film. Usually last between 60-120 seconds. Generally made up of edited highlights of the film being promoted, often including a voice-over and giving key information about elements such as stars, genre and release date. Shorter trailers are used for TV programmes, games and other media products.
Training (Video)	These can be technical, practical or management techniques demonstrated in standalone videos or distance learning packages
Treatment	A short outline of a media production designed to give a client or production team an overview of what the production might include based on a brief . Treatments are usually written descriptions, but might include sketches, mock-ups , images and other draft items designed to demonstrate the intention of a production. A treatment is often used to “sell” an idea to a client . There is no hard and fast way to produce a treatment, although it is an integral aspect of the pre-production process. The content of a treatment will depend on the media form/platform being utilised
Type-size	The size of a font , usually described in “points”. Point 12 is generally the standard size used in Word Processors.

VBlog	Short for “Video Blog”. An on-line video diary, usually shot using a webcam, and posted on the internet using social networking sites such as Facebook or YouTube. Usually short, focusing on a particular subject or issue which the “VBlogger” is interested in. Often allows viewers to post blog or Vblog entries in response. Increasingly considered as a viable aspect of journalism
Viral (advertisement)	The name given to any kind of promotion (often involving short video clips) which spreads in the manner of a virus (usually starting on the internet) via e-mail, mobile phones, texting or social networking sites. Often communicated via word-of-mouth rather than more traditional distribution mechanisms giving the viral an exclusive quality. Users are encouraged to pass on materials by themselves. Increasingly used by media companies in order to explore new ways of advertising their products
Voice-over	Any spoken narrative or description which has a non-diegetic relationship with the scene within which it is included. Sometimes utilised in the opening sequence of a film or television programme, but can also be used as off-camera commentary (for example, as part of a sports report) or during news packages