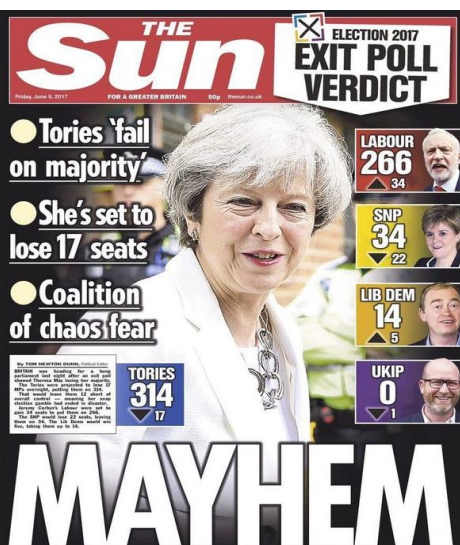


A Level Media Studies



MEDIA STUDIES

WHY STUDY THE MEDIA?



We live in an age of **Post-Truth** fake news where old is new, new is old, everyone has a voice and fear surrounds us. An age where stories of celebrity sit at the same table as 1000's migrant deaths. Presidential election campaigns snipe, poke fun and **twist facts** to gain traction with voters and audiences. **Power is invisible**, distant and yet right in your face.

An age where digital media is fully entwined into the menus of our world. We dine out on a full fat diet of saturated media consumption. The chalked

specials board is provided by **corporations** and brands desperate to claim every inch of space on every screen you own. Whatever you want whenever you want it is the mantra of media producers insatiably looking for new trends, new directions, new profits. Your **data** is farmed, analysed and fed back to open paralysed mouths as ads, pop ups, ideas and suggestions for you.



An age where TV series cost £100 **million** to make and yet, if your savvy enough, can be downloaded for free. Traditional bloated systems of

ownership and control have been ruptured and burst. The sharpened pin of the **millennial**, tech-centric super picky audience is primed and thrust at their will. **Cinema is dead**—long live the binge!



Don't wait just stream, don't think just do, don't read the terms and conditions—**Just accept.**



An age where **tabloid** newspapers grasp and claw at audiences. Flicking a page is sent to **trash** and the swipe is your new backdrop. Moving swiftly and smoothly through information only stopping when the eye is caught. Print media stands on the edge of a precipice and stares its digital death in the face.

Editors stir up their bubbly broth of **sensationalism and panic** offering their cup to whoever will **pay the price**—but at what cost?



An age where **social change** and revolutions ride

roughshod on the back of **social media**. Opinions are loud, crass and heartfelt. Politically and morally driven through endless streets of comments,



re-tweets, like, and shares. **Identities** shift from fluid and flexible to fixed and stubborn. You're the main part in your own **reality TV show**—pick and choose, whatever floats your boat, each to their own. Choose your platform, its there for you, it will support you. It is who you are now and who you will become.

THIS IS WHY WE STUDY THE MEDIA



Where can A Level Media Studies take you?

Working in the media is fast-paced and extremely competitive. What's more, there are literally thousands of different roles you can explore. This page from Target Careers looks at the different opportunities in the Media and the average pay:

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/career-sectors/media/136-jobs-in-the-media-what-options-do-you-have>

Over one hundred universities offer courses in Media, Communications and Cultural Studies in the UK. A GCE in Media Studies helps you to progress to these courses, as well as to those in other areas such as English, Humanities and Social Sciences. There is a huge array of career opportunities in the media, which is an industry that is growing at an exponential rate. According to accountancy giant

PwC's latest Global Entertainment & Media Outlook 2018-2022, the entertainment and media sector will be worth £76 billion by 2021² and the video games sector is currently valued at more than half the UK's whole entertainment industry³. If you are looking for a job in this area, **studying Media at A Level and at degree level is a route into careers such as TV and film production, advertising, journalism, interactive media, and digital marketing**. It could help to provide you with the foundation to secure roles in technical production, special effects, web design and postproduction.

Not interested in university? This page looks at the different apprenticeships available within this industry:

<https://www.allaboutschooleavers.co.uk/articles/article/161/media-apprenticeships-what-could-i-do>

What skills will I develop?

Media Studies will help you to develop valuable transferable skills such as critical thinking, analysis, research, planning, skills of enquiry and evaluation, practical skills, creativity, time management, essay writing skills and more. Your studies will complement and assist your learning in other subjects such as English Language and Literature, Humanities, Sociology, Film, ICT and the Extended Project.

What is the Media?

'The media' refers to the different channels we use to communicate information in the everyday world.

'Media' is the plural of *medium* (of communication), and the main media are

- Television
- Magazines
- Film
- Radio
- Advertising
- Music
- Newspapers
- Internet

Why study the media?

1. **The mass media is very powerful.** Advertisers and politicians use it to influence society. To be media literate is part of being an educated citizen.
2. Education has traditionally concentrated on literacy. **In today's society, the visual image is as important as the printed word.** Students of media studies learn to construct visual images.
3. **The ability to design, construct and edit media products are relevant, modern, practical skills.** Skilled media studies students are employable.
4. **The media is an expanding industry.** A Level Media Studies can help start students on the road to careers in the media.
5. **A Level Media Studies develops critical thinking, analytical skills and creativity.**
6. **A Level Media Studies develops group work skills and independent evaluative skills.**
7. **We spend a large proportion of our time exposed to the media.** A Level Media Studies helps us examine the impact the media has on our lives.
8. **A Level Media Studies helps us to understand the impact of media on the development of western society today.**
9. **Because the media studies us!**

Why Media Studies?

Write a paragraph or two (approximately 100 words) telling me why you chose to take Media Studies at A Level.

Include answers to the following questions:

1. What sort of things do you expect to do during the course?
2. What do you hope to gain from it?

[Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Tell me about your use of media.

Put a tick or cross in the appropriate box to show what types of media you use regularly.

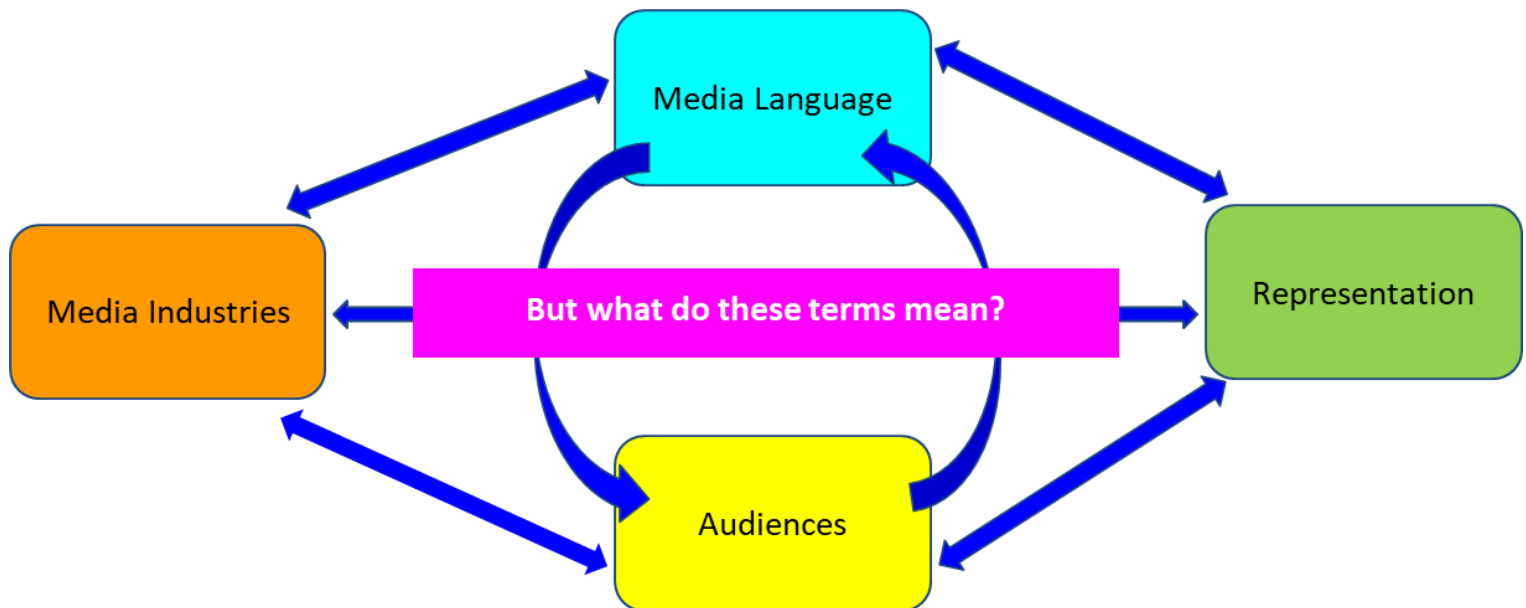
Type of media	Yes	No
Watch TV when it's broadcasted on air (not using streaming sites e.g. Netflix, iPlayer etc.		
Watch TV shows and films available on streaming sites e.g. Netflix and iPlayer.		
Go to the cinema to watch recently released films		
Read magazines?		
Read blogs?		
Watch YouTube content such as vlogs, hauls, tutorials, 'play with me' video streams		
Use social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat		
Read Newspapers (printed, hard copies)		
Read newspapers online?		
Have an app for a newspaper or news site downloaded?		
Play video games?		
Listen to the radio?		
Listen to podcasts?		
Stream music from services such as Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal etc.		

Media theoretical framework:

Over the course you will be expected to know and apply the theoretical framework to the set text that we study.

What do we need to know?

The theoretical framework refers to the method of analysing and creating media. It provides us with the tools to develop a critical understanding and appreciation of the media. The framework consists of four inter-related areas:



An easy way to remember this is RAIL:

R= Representation

A= Audience

I= Industry

L= Language (Media Language)

But what do these terms mean?

Representation

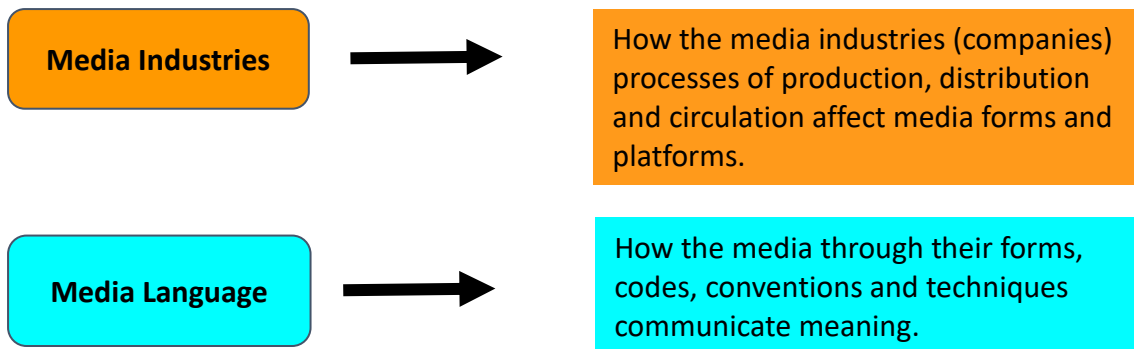


How the media portrays events, issues, individuals and social groups

Audiences



How media forms targets, reaches and addresses the audience, how audiences interpret and respond to them and how the audience become producers themselves

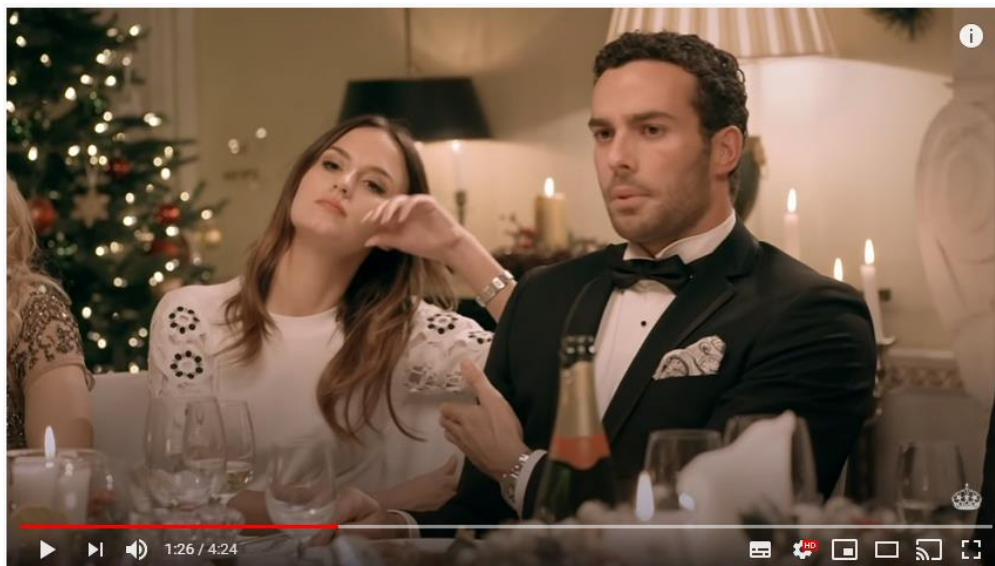


Applying RAIL:

Let us practice applying the RAIL theoretical framework to two different TV shows.

First is Made in Chelsea a structured British reality TV show about the lives of residents of Chelsea in London a seemingly exclusive and wealthy area. The reality show was first broadcast in May 2011 and is now in its ninth season and has had six spin off shows. The TV show is often criticised in the media for its lack of diversity; negative representations of romantic relationships and genders and unrealistic depictions (portrayal) of London.

Watch this scene from season 10 of the show featuring the majority of the cast at a Christmas dinner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiO4SY-5xvQ>



#MadeInChelsea #MarkFrancis #MIC

"How Dare You" - Ollie Locke & Mark Francis KICK OFF During Dinner Party | Made in Chelsea S10

Representation:

1. How is London represented?

Imagine showing this scene to someone who has never visited London before. Would it represent most London homes or parties?

In the *Made in Chelsea* clip the setting is represented as _____ (upper-class, wealthy, elegant, luxurious). This can be seen through _____ in the background of the scenes. This reinforces the idea that the London based setting is luxurious and the cast members are from an upper-class context. _____ and creates an

2. Re-watch the clip and choose two female characters to focus on, **how are women represented in this scene?** What message might this send to the audience? Consider their choice of clothing, makeup, facial expressions, speech and accent.

In the *Made in Chelsea* clip the women are represented as _____ (upper-class, wealthy, elegant, fashionable, arrogant, impolite, rude, exclusive). This can be seen through their choice of clothing as some women are dressed in _____ which has connotations or suggestions of _____ and makes them appear _____.

In addition to this, the speech and accent of the women also represents them as _____ (formal, polite, superior, arrogant, rude) which is evident when one says "_____". This comment and the speech and accent used reinforces the initial connotation that the women are _____.

A member of the audience watching from outside of London may receive the message that women in Chelsea, London are _____.

Whereas an audience member watching the show and living in London may feel the show _____.

3. Re-watch the clip and choose two male characters to focus on, **how are men represented in this scene?** What message might this send to the audience? Consider their choice of clothing, makeup, facial expressions, speech and accent

In the *Made in Chelsea* clip the men are represented as _____

(upper-class, wealthy, stylish, handsome, arrogant, superior, rude). This can be seen through their choice of clothing as some men are dressed in

_____ which has connotations or suggestions of _____ and makes them appear _____.

In addition to this, _____

A member of the audience watching from outside of London may receive the message that men in Chelsea, London are

Whereas an audience member watching the show and living in London may feel the show

4. **How is social class represented in *Made in Chelsea*?** Does it reinforce or challenge stereotypes about the British class system? If you don't know or would like to revise the British class system this video provides a brief but good explanation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN66jJWFGNk>

5. **How are White British people represented?** If an audience member from China or India watched this scene what perception or belief would they receive about White British people?

Reading task:



In the past the show has been criticised for a lack of diversity in its casting. In its sixth season the show recruited Akin Solanke-Caulke, the first black cast member. The Vice article below reports that 55% of London's population are from an ethnic minority background but British reality shows like *Made in Chelsea* do not reflect this.

To learn why this a representation issue for some audience members read the following article from Vice here:

British Reality TV Has a Diversity Problem

There has never been a scripted reality show with a BME cast.

By Ruth Faj

There's very little that hasn't happened on British reality TV in the past few years. Women have picked a partner based on their penises, people have been chased by a pack of wild dogs and celebrities have tried to make contact with the dead. Yet despite the diversity of formats, there's been much less diversity of talent. Of the traditional scripted reality shows, very few have more than one black cast member, and there has never been one with a majority BME cast.

The Only Way Is Essex regularly has well over one million views per episode, and is by far the most popular programme on ITVBe. *Made in Chelsea*, the other of the two reality titans, also has a terrible record on diversity. The two shows have had 177 main cast members between them; just six of those have been people of colour, and only three have been black. It's the same story for *The Real Housewives of Cheshire*, *Ladies of London*, *Geordie Shore*, *Teen Mom UK* and *The Valley*. Most of these shows have no permanent BME cast members, and those that do only have one, leaving them open to accusations of tokenism.

Fifty-five percent of London's populace are BME, and with the influx of affluent international rich kids – many of them of Nigerian descent – to the capital's upscale neighbourhoods, areas like Chelsea and Westminster are nowhere near as white as presented on *Made In Chelsea*. In Essex, 9.2 percent of residents are people of colour, but only 5.6 percent of the cast members on *TOWIE* have been minorities during the seven years the show has existed.

Rachael Wilson, managing director of The EW Group – a diversity consultancy firm that has worked with the BBC – agrees there's a problem, telling me on the

phone, "The clue's in the title, isn't it? It's supposed to be a reality television programme, and it's not reflective of the geographical location where it's based. Essex is not white and homogenous and completely heterosexual. They're missing a trick to widen their audiences."



MADE IN CHELSEA/ MONKEY PRODUCTIONS

Even when there are black cast members, they're not always made to feel welcome. One of the few black cast members to have appeared on a British scripted-reality TV show was *Made in Chelsea's* Akin Solanke-Caulker. Akin, a former rugby player, was school friends with MIC regulars Alex Mytton and Josh "JP" Patterson and now has a [sports management agency](#). He said that while he was happy to get on the show, he always felt a sense of otherness.

"I definitely wasn't stereotyped in any way, but there were cultural differences – like, I like different music to them and dress differently, but maybe that's just me in general," he says. "I just hoped a lot of young people – young black guys – could watch me on the TV and be like, 'That's the kind of guy I want to be like.' Or, 'I like the way he does his thing,' irrespective of the colour of my skin."

The lack of diversity in this genre of TV is particularly disappointing considering Asian and black minorities are some of the biggest consumers of reality TV, and are far more likely to watch ITVBe, home of *The Only Way Is Essex*, than other demographics.

"There was one stat around how authentic people of different sexual orientations felt their representation was on screen, and the results were overwhelmingly that people felt that, unless they were heterosexual, the way they were represented on screen was not authentic," says Rachael Wilson. "They did not see themselves represented properly. And that figure increases for people of colour. I don't think those groups do see themselves represented, not in an authentic way."

Actor David Oyelowo echoed this sentiment when he told an audience in London that black people's experience had been "expunged" from the version of Britain shown on screen.

"It's a common theme. If the casting directors and producers are white and heterosexual, their natural affinity for selection is going to be towards people that are more like them."

There can be little doubt that if there were more BME reality contestants, these BME-skewed audiences would appreciate it. So if it's not a commercial imperative preventing a black reality show being commissioned, then what could it be? One possibility is the lack of minorities behind the camera and at senior level, despite initiatives like Diamond, the industry-wide online monitoring and reporting system requiring all new TV productions to submit diversity data. Between 2006 and 2012, there was a 31 percent decline in BME workers in the UK TV field. Wilson reasoned that this is down to unconscious bias, saying, "It's a common theme. If the profile of casting directors and producers on these sorts of shows is white and heterosexual, their natural affinity for selection is going to be towards people that are more like them."

Change is slowly happening in 2017. Shows like *Love Island* – the most popular reality show of the year – are taking steps to be more inclusive. There were a total of six black or mixed race contestants throughout the duration of the summer show, even though it caught a lot of flack for its predominantly blonde cast.

Competition shows like the *Great British Bake Off* and *Strictly Come Dancing* have a better track record of including BME participants, but shows which have a public vote face their own problems. *Strictly* came under fire this

year as, once again, the first few people to get the boot after the phone vote were people of colour. Celebrities who are from a minority ethnic background are 71 percent more likely to be in the bottom two, and that rises to 83 percent if the celebrity is black and female. Melvin Odoom, a KISS FM DJ, and actress Chizzy Akudolu were two black contestants on the 2016 and 2017 series of *Strictly*, respectively. They were both voted out by the public in the first week. When Akudolu was voted off, Melvin tweeted her saying, "If anyone knows what you're going through it's me."

After appearing on *The X-Factor*, two contestants, Gifty and Hannah Barrett, spoke out about the racism they've experienced at the hands of some of the show's viewers. Hannah discussed the lack of representation of darker-skinned black women in the music industry and how that can have a detrimental effect on a young girl's confidence, telling BBC Newsbeat, "A lot of black girls feel the same. When you feel like that, your self-esteem goes low."

Reality TV is a genre full of cliché and fake drama, but just because the shows are about froth, doesn't mean they shouldn't be serious about diversity.

https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/qv3kkd/why-is-there-so-little-diversity-in-british-reality-tv