

Command Words Decoded

AQA GCSE Media Studies Paper 1: what the examiner wants, word by word

Every command word on Paper 1 tells you which assessment objective is being tested, and therefore what your answer needs to do. Decode it before you write.

ANALYSE

Show how meaning is made. Not what is there, but what it does to the audience. Feature, terminology, intended meaning, in every sentence. (Tests AO2: analysis.)

EXPLAIN HOW

Show knowledge and understanding, applied to the named CSP. Accurate framework knowledge, evidenced from the product, with terminology. (Tests AO1.) When the question says 'contexts', link every contextual point to the product itself.

HOW DO / HOW CAN...?

Explain a process from the industry or audience framework, with the CSP as your evidence throughout. Understanding carries double weight here: explain why, not just that.

STATE / GIVE / DEFINE

Precise recall, one mark per point. Never define a term using the term itself (that scores zero). Two nearly identical points earn one mark, not two. Definition plus example is the safe pattern.

HOW FAR DO YOU AGREE?

Make a judgement and sustain it. Cover all three bullet points, anchor every claim to the named CSPs, and reach a conclusion. One-sided is fine if you prove it. Agree, disagree and 'it depends' are all allowed.

Decode the command word first: it tells you what the examiner wants.