

AQA GCSE MEDIA STUDIES (8572) · NEW TO TEACHING MEDIA?

The Deep End Starter Kit

Just been handed Media Studies for September? The whole course on one page, every Close Study Product mapped, and your first 30 days sorted.

Media Studies is often a second subject and a one-person department, and plenty of brilliant teachers meet it for the first time on a timetable in July. Take a breath: the course has a clear shape, and once you can see all of it, none of it is frightening. This is the map.

The course on one page

Paper 1: Media One (1 hour 30 minutes, 84 marks, 35 per cent)

Section A tests Media Language and Media Representations; Section B tests Media Industries and Media Audiences. Each section draws on two media forms, answered through the Close Study Products, plus an unseen source in Section A. The paper ends with a 20-mark extended response.

Paper 2: Media Two (1 hour 30 minutes, 84 marks, 35 per cent)

Section A is based on a screening of an extract from one of the television Close Study Products, shown in the exam room. Section B is based on newspapers or on online, social and participatory media and video games. Both sections can test any area of the framework, with short, medium and extended questions.

NEA: creating a media product (60 marks, 30 per cent)

Students choose one of five briefs set by AQA each year and produce a statement of intent plus a media product for an intended audience. Marked by you, moderated by AQA. The current briefs live on Centre Services.

The theoretical framework: four lenses on everything

Media Language (how meaning is made: codes, conventions, semiotics), **Media Representations** (how people, groups and issues are shown), **Media Industries** (who makes and owns media, and why), **Media Audiences** (who consumes it, how and with what effect). Every question on both papers comes back to these four. Learn the order L-R-I-A and you can place any question in seconds.

Every Close Study Product, mapped

CSPs are the set texts of Media Studies: AQA names them in a booklet on Centre Services and exam questions are answered through them. In-depth CSPs are studied through all four lenses; targeted CSPs through the lenses shown. This table follows the AQA booklet for 2028 exams.

CSP	Form	Framework areas	Tested in
His Dark Materials (2020)	Television	All four (in-depth)	Paper 2 Section A
Doctor Who: An Unearthly Child (1963)	Television	All four (in-depth)	Paper 2 Section A
Kim Kardashian	Online, social + participatory	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
Marcus Rashford	Online, social + participatory	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
Lara Croft Go	Video games	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
Blackpink: The Game removed by AQA: awaiting information regarding a replacement	Video games	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
The Times (16 Jan 2026)	Newspapers	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
Daily Mirror (16 Jan 2026)	Newspapers	All four (in-depth)	P1 Sec A, P1 Sec B, P2 Sec B
Galaxy advertisement	Advertising + marketing	Language, Representations	Paper 1 Section A
NHS Represent (advert)	Advertising + marketing	Language, Representations	Paper 1 Section A
OMO advertisement (1955)	Advertising + marketing	Language, Representations	Paper 1 Section A
Tatler (Jan 2021)	Magazines	Language, Representations	Paper 1 Section A
Heat (Nov 2020)	Magazines	Language, Representations	Paper 1 Section A
Radio 1 Launch Day (1967)	Radio	Industries, Audiences	Paper 1 Section B
KISS Breakfast	Radio	Industries, Audiences	Paper 1 Section B
Arctic Monkeys: I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor	Music video	Industries, Audiences	Paper 1 Section B
Blackpink: How You Like That	Music video	Industries, Audiences	Paper 1 Section B
Black Widow (2021)	Film	Industries only	Paper 1 Section B
I, Daniel Blake (2016)	Film	Industries only	Paper 1 Section B

Products can change between exam series, so always download the CSP booklet for YOUR cohort's exam year from Centre Services and check it against this map. Your exams officer can set up your login.

One sensible route through the two years

There is no compulsory order: this is simply a route that builds skills in a sane sequence. Swap things freely to fit your timetable and your classes.

Year 10, autumn

Start with the framework through adverts and magazines (Galaxy, Represent, OMO, Tatler, Heat). Single still images, quick wins, and Media Language + Representations foundations that everything else builds on.

Year 10, spring

Newspapers (The Times + Daily Mirror): the big in-depth pair, covering all four lenses and appearing on both papers. Teach unseen-analysis technique alongside.

Year 10, summer

Industries + Audiences through the targeted set: Radio 1 Launch Day, KISS, the two music videos, and the film pair. Introduce the NEA and look at past briefs.

Year 11, autumn

NEA production, alongside the online, social and participatory CSPs (Kim Kardashian, Marcus Rashford) and the video game CSP: the in-depth studies for Paper 2 Section B.

Year 11, spring

Television (His Dark Materials + Doctor Who) with extract-screening practice for Paper 2 Section A, then whole-course revision and mocks.

Your first 30 days: the checklist

- Get logins sorted: ask your exams officer for Centre Services access, then download the specification, the CSP booklet for your cohorts' exam years, and this year's NEA briefs.
- Download the last three years of past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports from the AQA website: they show you exactly what the exam rewards.
- Source the set products themselves (the actual front pages, covers, adverts and episodes): you analyse the real artefacts, not descriptions of them.
- Plan only the first half-term in detail. One form at a time: nobody teaches the whole CSP table in September.
- Find out which exam years your classes are: Year 10 and Year 11 may use different CSP booklets.
- Baseline your classes with one image analysis lesson: denotation, connotation, and what the maker wants you to think. That is the core skill of the whole course.
- Join the subject community: teacher Facebook groups and the Media Education Association are full of people who were also once handed Media at short notice.
- Be kind to yourself. The framework repeats across every topic, so the course gets lighter every single week you teach it.

Nearly every CSP in the map above has a ready-to-teach Margin Notes unit (5 lessons, student booklet, model answers), built for exactly this moment. Search Margin Notes on Tes.