

A2 Media Studies

Nailing Med 5: The Independent Study



Nailing Med 5: Contents

3000 words of independent research	5
Deadlines	5
Preparing to begin	7
Objectives (or What are the examiners looking for?)	7
Content (or What am I allowed to write about?)	7
Getting the focus right	8
Ten Top Topics	9
10 steps to a top-flight essay	11
Conducting Independent research	13
Guidance on research methods (or How do I do this properly?).....	13
Using books: Rigorous Reading	13
Using the Internet: Successful Surfing	14
Ten tips for Successful Searching.....	15
Evaluating your research	17
The Seven Sins of flawed research	17
Logging and evidencing your research	18
Writing a Bibliography	21
Final tips	23
Appendix: More titles to think about	25

3000 words of independent research

Module 5 of the AQA Media Studies A2 qualification is an independent research study. You will write a 3000-word essay on

- **either** a contemporary media text or texts
- **or** a topic/issue arising out of or suggested by a contemporary media text(s).
- Independent research skills are vital
- You must use the *Key Concepts* to analyse your text(s) and place them in *social, historical, economic and political contexts* (as appropriate)..
- This project constitutes 40% of your A2 year (20% of your final A level grade).

Deadlines

We have a carefully structured schedule for you to follow, and it is vital that you meet the deadlines for this module. Experience shows us that students who don't keep to these dates haemorrhage marks. Remember, as the year goes on, the coursework deadlines in your other subjects will also loom.

	Deadline
Essay pitch A verbal, audio-visual presentation of your essay plans. You will get feedback from your classmates and teacher. These will be completed before the autumn half term.	
Essay outline: 500 words A detailed outline of your proposal (at least 500 words), reflecting any feedback you received during your essay pitch. This will be handed in immediately after half term. It will be returned to you in a one-to-one tutorial with your teacher before Christmas.	
Essay draft: 2000 words This should be a full draft, with a beginning, middle, end, references and bibliography. It is due in the first week <i>after</i> the Christmas holiday and must be typed. It will peer-assessed in class, then handed in. It will be returned, annotated, in a second one-to-one tutorial with your teacher.	
Final draft: 3000 words This must be handed in immediately after the Spring half term.	

There are only two teachers available to handle a large cohort of students sitting this module. We can only support you if you do your job by meeting these deadlines.

Except in the rarest of cases where special circumstances apply, a deadline missed will be an opportunity lost.

Preparing to begin

Objectives (or What are the examiners looking for?)

As with any assignment, there are objectives to meet. The table below shows how these are allocated for Med5. Note that appropriate research earns by far the highest proportion of the marks.

Assessment objectives	Percentage marks
AO1: knowledge and application of the Key Concepts employed within Media Studies and the evaluation of texts and ideas using the Key Concepts.	12.5%
AO2: knowledge and application of the wider contexts (historical, social, political, economic) relevant to Media Studies.	12.5%
AO5: the ability to use appropriate investigative and research techniques in carrying out an independent study of a media text, topic or issue.	75%

Content (or What am I allowed to write about?)

- 1 The Independent Study should be clearly textually centred; that is, a media text or texts should lie at the *heart* of your essay. It should also be **investigative** or **research-based**. It should seek, for example, to answer a question, clarify an issue, or test a hypothesis. You will be expected to use appropriate investigative and research techniques in carrying out the study. (*see below*)
- 2 Note that you must write about *Contemporary texts*. That is, they must have been **produced or released within the two years before the start of your AS course**. Repeats of programmes made outside this period don't count.
- 3 You *may* use historical texts for the purposes of *comparison* with your contemporary text, but they must be secondary to your contemporary text(s).
- 4 Your essay should also be **investigative** or **research-based**. It should seek, for example, to answer a question, clarify an issue, or test a hypothesis. You will be expected to use appropriate investigative and research techniques in carrying out the study. (*see below*)
- 5 Any text studied should be given a **context**, *such as* relevant historical, social, political or economic contexts. You could also include the contexts of production, distribution and reception. A simple textual analysis of a film or soap opera, would

not be appropriate. You must research your chosen area and give it a context which illuminates your text or topic without overshadowing it.

- ⑥ Your evaluation and analysis **must** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the relevant Key Concepts.

Before you begin, you **must** have a clearly focused and carefully considered title. You need to have agreed this with your tutor **BEFORE** you start writing either the essay outline or the final 3,000 word essay.

Getting the focus right

One or more texts from contemporary the media will be the basis for your commentary, analysis and evaluation, so you will **not** need to create questionnaires, surveys and interviews for research. Nor will you be likely to present information in the form of charts, graphs of computer analysis.

A different ‘methodology’ is required for the type of study you will be doing.

1. Your *argument* or *hypothesis* must be drawn primarily from an analysis/ evaluation of the text or texts. Therefore your choice of text(s) will be vital.
For example: if you were interested in researching a comparative analysis of representations of asylum seekers in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers then simply select two examples for close analysis. Don’t overburden yourself with excess material for analysis. Wider issues (such as ideology, media values, institution, values) can then be explored through the texts you have selected.
2. It sounds obvious but make sure the text(s) you use for analysis are clearly **relevant** and **appropriate** to the task you have set yourself.
3. Fully exploit the research opportunities that surround you. The **Internet** can be a terrific source of information and material, but it can also be unreliable. Books and academic journals are still the best sources of research, and earn more marks from examiners: you **must** get to know both the school and your local **library**.
There is more on getting the most from your research later in this booklet.



Ten Top Topics

The beauty of the AQA Independent Essay is that it provides a massive scope for you to pursue an aspect of the media that interests you. This can also daunt many students, however: where do they begin in choosing a topic?

Here are a few starting points you might like to consider; there is an appendix of additional ideas at the back of this booklet.

1 How successful was the marketing campaign of (a current film)?

An evaluation of the appropriateness of the objectives, structure, techniques and target audience of the marketing of the film in the light of an analysis of the film. The study will analyse both the film and the campaign as texts.

2 How important are interactive services in televised sport?

A textual analysis of a range of interactive TV sport services will be placed within the context of the publicity for such services, and their actual use by a small sample audience. Particular attention will be paid to the economic contexts of production and reception.

3 Is the research on representations of women in the media still valid?

A review of the research and literature on images of women in the media, followed by a summary of its major findings. These are tested against a random selection of contemporary representations of woman taken from three different media. The similarities and differences between the research and this contemporary evidence is then accounted for.

4 What are the major differences between contemporary sitcoms and their historical predecessors?

The contemporary sitcom *My Family* is compared with an episode of *Butterflies* first shown in 1978. Major differences are analysed and accounted for in terms of issues of class, geography, the institution of television itself, and changing social attitudes. Similarities and differences in the representation of motherhood and fatherhood are also analysed.

5 How important are visual criteria to television news values?

A review of the research and literature on television news is carried out to ascertain the significance attributed to visual criteria in the selection of news by academics, researchers and broadcasters. These findings are then tested in an analysis of three randomly selected television news broadcasts in the same week.

6 How has a (film / programme) made an impact on the development of its genre?

The contemporary film would be analysed in the context of its current social context and the context of past genre pieces.

7 Is there an argument for banning all television advertising targeted at children?

The advertisements shown across one hour of typical children's programmes on a commercial station are logged and analysed to recognise types of products being promoted. A close analysis of the persuasive techniques of (say) two adverts follows, and this is weighed against the wider arguments surrounding the effects debate, 'pester power' and the institutions which claim they cannot fund children's programmes without advertising.

8 How has 24-hour broadcasting changed the coverage of major news stories in the UK?

Briefly explore the advent of Sky News and BBC News 24, in the context of an expanding television marketplace. Using textual analysis, compare and contrast their approach to a news story as compared with terrestrial news programmes and newspapers. Discuss audience, institution and the production and manufacture of news.

9 Are Hollywood remakes a sure thing?

Explore the institutional imperatives and economic contexts behind the re-making of famous films such as Poseidon and The Omen. Offer close analysis, and some comparison with comparable scenes from the original film versions. Explore the history of multiple remakes over time, and identify the factors that determine their success (e.g. Jackson's King Kong, 2005) and failure (e.g. Guillermin's King Kong, 1976).

10 Your turn!



V



10 steps to a top-flight essay

1 Find a topic area

What is going on in the media at the moment or in the recent past? Is there a new film coming out in the next couple of months, a big event coming up in the news, or a new album and tour by your favourite band? Whatever you choose, make sure that you will be able to collect sufficient materials to write a 3000 word essay. The topic should also give you an ‘in’ on media **theory** and wider contexts.

2 Work out a title

A good essay needs a good title and questions are best. “The development of the film *Batman Begins*” is a poor start, whereas “*Batman Begins* – how did Hollywood rescue a dead film franchise?” provides a theme to write around. A good title points out what is interesting about your topic, but is still wide enough to allow you to cover concepts and contexts.

3 Collect materials

As well as collecting the media texts themselves you should collect as much background research as possible. *There is more on this process later in this booklet.*

4 Decide how you will cover concepts and contexts

Your essay **MUST** show that you understand the key concepts and have a clear awareness of wider contexts and their relevance to your chosen text(s), if you want to get a good mark. It should *focus* on a selection of them.

5 Make a plan

It can help to use post-it notes with key themes and ideas written on to create a structure. You could also write the key concepts and wider contexts on post-its, and make sure they’re all covered.

6 Present your essay pitch, then your 500-word plan

Outline your essay idea to your class and tutor in a short audio-visual presentation. Take feedback from the classmates and teacher, and fold it into your outline. Accept further feedback from your teacher and finalise your main approach.

7 Write your first draft

8 Re-draft

Once you’ve written the first draft, put it aside for a couple of days. Then get it out and read it again, circling all of the spelling, typing and grammatical mistakes you have made. How many sentences go on for a page-and-a-half? Tidy up the draft so that what you present to your teacher represents your “best shot” at that point.

9 Hand in a completed draft *together with a bibliography containing details of all the sources you have used* – the media texts you have studied and any background reading you have done.

10 Lather, rinse, repeat

That is – take away the feedback you’ve received, follow the advice you’ve been given, and write your second, final draft.

Conducting Independent research

Guidance on research methods (or How do I do this properly?)

It would be a *good idea* to...

- Look at reviews of the literature on the text, topic or issue.
- Formulate a question, problem, hypothesis or area of debate around the text, topic or issue.
- Investigate or research the question you have chosen. This should involve some textual or content analysis. Look out for other similar questions posed in other texts.
- Conduct a comparative analysis (e.g. with a generic or historical text) which clarifies or illuminates your contemporary text.
- Investigate an issue (e.g. censorship; the value of the Internet; the influence of ratings) through the analysis of a contemporary text.
- Investigate political, social, economic or historical influences upon a text. Institutional influences or audience issues might also be researched.

It is *not* appropriate to...

- Use research techniques such as: questionnaires, surveys and interviews
- Present information in the form of charts, graphs or computer analyses.

Using books: Rigorous Reading

Books have a crucial advantage over both newspaper articles and the Internet. *Why?*

Newspapers are written by journalists who don't have to be completely accurate – they can always correct mistakes with an apology in a later edition. They are also not required to cite their sources, which means second- and third-hand (unreliable) information can be presented as first-hand and factual.

Websites can be written by anybody. Fans can write them. Idiots can write them. Heck – they'll even let Mr Allison write them. Many are institutionally mediated, while others grow uncontrollably. They should always be treated with care.

Books and academic journals cost significant amounts of money to publish, and apologising for mistakes afterwards can be costly. Journal articles are peer-reviewed and books are edited. They are generally a more reliable source of information and ideas than the Internet or Press.
Most writers worthy of publication have been published in print.

Book research at Sandringham

Sandringham's library has a reasonably extensive range of books on the media, and many more covering social, historical, economic and political contexts. The library staff will be only too happy to search elsewhere in the county, or the country, for books that you want to read (although this may take a few weeks.)

Browse the shelves. You'll find media materials mainly in two areas: theoretical items and textbooks are near Sociology, while books on cinema have their own section. However, think laterally: graphic design also has its own section, as does photography.

If you want to study books that you can't find in the library, then a good way to start is by searching on a book retailer's website, like Amazon. Enter relevant search terms and read the 'blurbs'. Take down the details of a few that look promising (including the ISBN number) and then talk nicely to Miss Southgate!

Using the books

The Index (in the back of the book) can be a good place to start. This will usually refer to concepts, media texts, producers, institutions etc., and will take you straight to relevant content.

However, if you just go searching for very specific material, you won't appreciate its context and you may miss useful research. So use the contents pages to take you to the write chapter, and speed-read/skim a section at a time, looking out for useful ideas. Make a note of these for closer study and review later.

Using the Internet: Successful Surfing

The Internet is vastly bigger than any library, and finding what you need can be a hit-and-miss affair. This section will help you to improve your success with search engines. It is adapted from "The Spider's Apprentice", an online guide to web surfing which you can find at www.monash.com/spidap.html.

Using a Web Directory

Many search engines, including Google, have built large subject catalogues to help you search. Think of a Web directory as a subject catalogue – something like the subject catalogue in the library. It attempt to organize the Web by dividing it into topics and subtopics. Some examples include: Arts, Science, Health, Business, News, and Entertainment. If you're looking for information on the Web that fits neatly into an obvious subject or category, go first to a web directory.



For example: imagine you'd like to research violence on television, and the debates that surround it. You could start with a Web directory like the Google Directory (www.google.co.uk/dirhp?hl=en) Directories are organised like trees with branches: under each topics is a list of subtopics, and under each of those is another list, and another, and so on, moving from the more general to the more specific.

In this case, if you follow the trail along the tree it will take you from *Arts > Television > Media Issues > Media Violence* to a list of 39 articles or web pages, including one which argues that violent media is good for children.

If you are clear about the topic of your query, start with a Web directory rather than a search engine. Directories probably won't give you anywhere near as many references as a search engine will, but they are more likely to be on topic.

Using a Search Engine

A Web search engine is more like the index at the back of the world's biggest book than a card index: it enables you to seek out specific words and phrases. With the search engine's help, you can locate individual appearances of such words in documents all over the Web. This can be a blessing, but can also curse you with far more hits than you can read.

This is where things start to get complicated. Try typing *representation* into a search engine and seeing where it gets you – far too many places!

Search engines also dislike common words. Try typing in the phrase *To be or not to be* and it will rule out some or all of the words as too common. One of the tricks to limiting searches is by giving the engine a phrase to search for, by putting the search terms inside quotation marks: *“to be or not to be”*.

Even as this document is compiled, search engines are getting cleverer. Some assume you wish to prioritise the first words in your search list; others will guess that you mean to search for a phrase without using quotes. However, if you understand how search engines organize information and run queries, you can maximize your chances of getting hits on URLs that matter

Ten tips for Successful Searching

❶ You are smarter than a computer

So use your intelligence!

❷ Search engines are fast but dumb

A search engine doesn't understand – it just pretends to: it doesn't know what your keywords mean or why they're important to you. It doesn't know the difference between cancer the crab and cancer the disease... and it doesn't care.

❸ Know where to look first

If you're looking for specific information, try a web directory first. You can also experiment by typing likely web addresses straight into the browser.

❹ Fine-tune your keywords

Avoid broad search terms. If you want to look at pictures of the latest Ferrari, “car” won't help. Neither will “fast car”, much. Be as precise as you can!

5 Use phrases, if possible

Put a collection of likely adjacent words inside inverted commas to force a search engine to look for the sequence. For example: *Naomi Klein No Logo* is fairly likely to get you where you want to go, but “*Naomi Klein*” AND “*No Logo*” is guaranteed!

6 Use Advanced search options

Read the help files and take advantage of the available search refining options – many offer “advanced search” with a wider range of possibilities.

7 Use Boolean search terms

Most search engines have rendered the Boolean term AND redundant: if you put in several words, they’ll search for them all. However, you can use the term NOT to exclude words that are likely to come up that you don’t want to see.

For Example: If you want to find out about the production of the recent film version of *War of the Worlds*, try entering “*War of the Worlds*” AND “*Spielberg*” AND “*Cruise*.” If you want to find out about the original novel, query on “*War of the Worlds*” AND “*novel*” AND “*Wells*” AND NOT “*Spielberg*” .

8 Use Wikipedia and IMDB, but with caution

Both Wikipedia and the Internet Movie Database are user-edited – that is, ordinary people like you and I write the entries. IMDB has a good reputation for historical data, so that’s pretty reliable, but take quotes, user assertions and ‘future project info’ with a pinch of salt.

Wikipedia offers a guide to student researchers on how to use its database confidently. Make sure you read it before using Wiki content in your essay, and try to always have a secondary, independent source. However, Wikipedia can be great for sparking useful ideas and leading you down new avenues of authoritative research.

9 Your turn!

Write your own Internet research tips here.

10 And here!

Evaluating your research

Just because you read it somewhere, doesn't mean it's true, or relevant. You need to use research carefully. Here are some questions you should ask about any research sources you choose to read, be they printed or pixelated.

The following guide is adapted from the book *Medicine and the Internet* by Bruce McKenzie (Oxford University Press, 2002), but much of the guidance is just as applicable to printed research sources. See www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780198510635.

The Seven Sins of flawed research

❶ What is the source of the information?

Who has written what you're reading? In a book or newspaper this should be fairly obvious. On a web page, you may need to trace the URL back to its root (whatever comes *before* the .com or .co.uk etc.) to work that out. Look for a brief biography of the author, or something to show that the publication or website has a reputable organisation or expert behind it. If you have never heard of the author or organisation, use the internet to search again for more information about them.

❷ Why was it written?

Now ask: why have they written this? Is there authorial or institutional bias at work? Is the language impartial and objective, or emotionally charged and persuasive? The internet is an excellent medium for reaching a large number of people cheaply and quickly, so it is a good idea to ask what motivation the author had for placing these ideas in the public arena. Is there evidence of a strong political or ideological bias? Or are the arguments balanced and well founded? Is the website simply an advertising or marketing tool for a product or organisation? Or is it an attempt to persuade or subvert? Be aware that the internet is used to disseminate biased or even subversive material and show your awareness of this if you use such material.

❸ How old is the information?

The media world changes every day, and some sources of information date quickly. Check when the book, article or web-page was last published or updated. Be aware too that authors and researchers do not always publish their most recent work online, so you may find more current information in scholarly journals and books.

❹ Who is the intended audience?

A text clearly written for the general public may not carry the same level of detail or breadth of coverage as one intended for a subject expert or student like yourself. It may be useful as a primary source but less so as an example of in depth analysis.

❺ Is the web-content well presented?

A website that is well designed and appropriately presented is more likely to contain reliable content. A site with poor design, difficult navigation and broken links is not going to be a reliable resource.

6 Is the content accurate?

If you have doubts about the accuracy of the information given, try to check it against other resources. If the information is presented as fact, check whether the author points you towards other websites or printed documents which back this up. Be aware that websites referencing other websites as sources can be dangerous – this is how Internet rumours start!

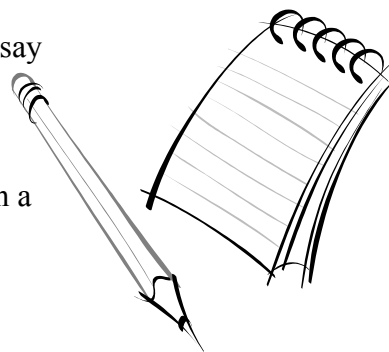
7 Finally, is the text well written?

Is the author communicating clearly? Good research will rarely be badly written. If you are satisfied that the source is a good one, go ahead and use it in your work. If you have doubts, seek further advice before presenting it as an authoritative text on which to base your arguments.

Logging and evidencing your research

When doing research, you will make a large number of notes. You will be required to provide **references** and a **bibliography** for your essay. Here are some tips on how to manage this process.

- 1 It might be useful to get a set of cards – postcard or A5 size. Write your purpose for collecting material clearly on one of the cards – this will keep you focused. Keep the card in front of you as you search for relevant material.
- 2 When you find relevant information, write it on one side of the card. On the other write:
 - The name of the book/source from which you have got your information, and the pages in the book where the information can be found.
 - The name of the author and publisher
 - The date the work was published
- 3 Keep your index cards somewhere safe, and start to organise them into categories as your collection grows. Expect to gather more research than you end up using in your final project – that is both normal and appropriate.
- 4 If you decide to photocopy pages from a book or journal (to keep and read later) make sure you also photocopy the bibliography for that chapter, and the book's details.
- 5 Selected extracts may be copied directly into your essay as “quotations” – in fact this is good practice. You may also adapt and paraphrase other ideas that you have read into your essay. However, in BOTH CASES it is VITAL that you include a footnote¹ with a detailed reference.



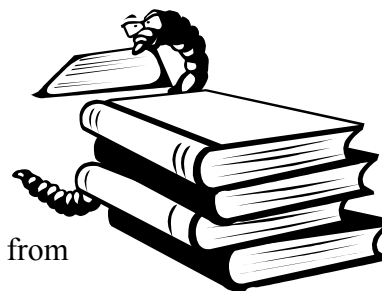
¹ This is what a footnote looks like. Microsoft Word can create these for you automatically, and re-numbers them for you as you draft and re-draft your essay.

**If you forget to credit the source of your ideas – if you present other people’s writing or ideas as your own – that is PLAGIARISM.
If your teacher catches you plagiarising at any point during the course, you will have to write your Med 5 essay under supervised conditions, which will inevitably restrict your work and damage your grade.**

IF YOUR TEACHER CATCHES YOU PLAGIARISING IN YOUR FINAL DRAFT, THE EXAM BOARD WILL USUALLY REFUSE YOU PERMISSION TO SIT THE A LEVEL AT ALL.

Writing a Bibliography

At the end of an essay (or other writing drawn from a selection of sources), you need to write a Bibliography. This is a comprehensive listing of books, journals, newspapers, website etc. that you have quoted from or referred to in writing the piece.



Citing a book

Author's Surname, Author's first name: Name of Book, Publisher, Year of publication.

For example, here is an extract from Mr Allison's Med 5 bibliography:

Booker, Will: Batman Unmasked – Analysing a Cultural Icon, Continuum, 2001.²

Cotta Vaz, Mark: The Art of Batman Begins, Titan Books, 2005.

Klock, Geoff: How to Read Superhero Comics and Why, Continuum, 2002.

Secondary Sources

Salisbury, Mark: Burton on Burton, Faber and Faber, 2000.³

Citing a website

Author's Surname, Author's first name: Name of Article or page, Name of website, Date retrieved (when you read it), Precise URL (address).

For example:

Ebert, Roger, Batman Begins, RogerEbert.com*, retrieved on April 4 from
<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050613/REVIEWS/50525003/1023>

* Note – this is actually what the site is called, just as Mr Allison's site is called Allisonmedia.net. But the BBC's website (for example) is called BBC Online.

Citing a newspaper

Author's Surname, Author's first name: Name of Article, Name of Newspaper, Date of publication

² The first time you reference another writer in your essay, the footnote looks like this:

Booker, Will: Batman Unmasked, p 24.

When you quote from the same book again later in your writing, you can abbreviate this to:

Booker, p 93.

³ A secondary source is a book/writer referenced in **another** book you have read. For example:

Salisbury, Mark: Burton on Burton, quoted in Hughes, David: Comic Book Movies, p. 36.

Citing a magazine

Author's Surname, Author's first name: Name of Article, Name of publication (Name of publisher), Date of publication

For example, here is an extract from Mr Allison's Med 5 bibliography:

Smith, Adam: The Original American Psycho, Empire (Emap), July 2005.

Citing a film

Name of film, Name of director, Name of studio, Year of production.

For example:

Batman: The Movie, Leslie H Martinson (dir.), 20th Century Fox, 1966.

Final tips

1. The aim of the Independent Study is to look at a media text or texts in detail with reference to the Key Concepts and relevant contexts - to see the ways in which it is introduced and placed with an audience, and exploited for that audience.
2. What you should make sure is that you pick something you can manage. For example, if you wanted to look at soap operas, then you should study one soap opera over a short period of time - say four or five episodes. A minimum of one week's output of a soap opera would be the least that could be studied, on the other hand, you would be wasting your time doing anything more than a fortnight's output.
3. Similarly, if you were looking at the coverage of a particular news story then three or four day's examination should be enough. Alternatively, you might want to look at the coverage of a particular story on a number of separate occasions, during a period of one month.
4. Choose a topic that genuinely interests you – it will make the work much more enjoyable. However, *don't* study texts that you *love*. You have to be able to show critical detachment – see the bigger picture.
Students who write about their favourite film/movie star/TV series/magazine invariably write bad essays.
5. In introductions you need to say what you intend to do in the essay, not write a press release style section about how wonderful the text you are studying is.
6. The structure that you use needs to be clearly based on the text or issue and not just follow the key concepts list in order.
7. Use the subject-specific vocabulary you have learned in class wherever it is appropriate. This will impress the examiner, provided it is used correctly!
8. Research the institutional source of your text(s). What this means in practice is that you will need to find out who owns the company that produces it and what else they own in the media. You can find this kind of thing out in the library or on the Internet.
9. No books in your research means no marks for AO5. So **be bothered about books**, or kiss goodbye to a good grade.
10. For more fab study tips, see www.studygs.net

Appendix: More titles to think about

FILM and BROADCAST FICTION.

1. How are suspense and tension conveyed in the construction of the narrative in (a film of your choice).
2. How important is the title sequence in the introduction of characters and the initiation of the narrative in (a film or broadcast fiction text of your choice).
3. How is the representation of the hero in (film/fiction of your choice) constructed?
4. What is the role and contribution of the (name your movie actor) as the “star” of (name your film or films). Here you can choose a star or icon of your choice and analyse his/her contribution to 3 or so productions of your choice.
5. How does the creative use of the camera create atmosphere in (a film of your choice).
6. What is the importance of the musical score in the construction of a film or broadcast fiction production. You can evaluate individual production or compare artefacts from different genre.
7. Develop a question around the contemporary work of a particular individual; director/musician/scriptwriter/actor/actress.
8. With reference to (a film or films of your choice) can European film be considered a genre? evaluate one particular production and compare it to a typically British film.
9. Construct a question around the representation of a particular category of person (your choice, but for example: the disabled, London gangsters, the police, the clergy, soldiers, female criminals/prisoners).
10. How have developments of film merchandising and marketing affected the popularity of films such as (your choice).

NEWS MANUFACTURE AND PRODUCTION AND THE BRITISH PRESS.

1. How important are the issues of *time* and *place* to broadcasters and journalists in the selection and production of news?
2. How does current affairs topicality influence news agendas of rival news media?
3. How important is the local news broadcast to the future of television news?
4. Are there “tabloid” and “broadsheet” news broadcasters?
5. In the battle for ratings, how do the branding of rival TV news networks influence audience readings and audience loyalty?
6. How is the use of fiction techniques (re-colouring and redesigning of footage, music, editing, etc.) influencing 21st Century News broadcasting?
7. To what extent do (the news media of your choice) contribute to stereotypical representations of (pick your minority group).
8. Choose one group whom you believe to be inadequately represented by the news media. Discuss some examples of how the group is represented. Why is the group represented in these ways.
9. Has good news any part in the agenda of the BBC?
10. The news transitionally has little appeal for the teenage audience. Investigate the reasons for this and provide your own suggestions for the strategies to target a teenage sector.

11. Radio news: compare stations for agenda/audience/context/ideology and delivery.
12. Explore the advent of BBC NEWS 24 and the concept of round the clock news. Look at audience/ideology/production/media language/institutions.
13. Electronic news: issues of time and place / audience / debates about reality construction / representation / audience / accountability.
14. Do we have a free press? Debate the issue using evidence, press regulatory bodies, press ownership, political accountability.
15. How diverse is the British press? Consider how a news story is processed and delivered by a tabloid and a broadsheet newspaper.
16. How has institutional bias affected the representation of a single news event by rival newspapers?
17. Photo-journalism: analyse either the work of a particular photographer, or a named paper, which you can monitor for a period of time to evaluate the quality and contribution of the pictures.
18. Intertextuality of the news. Explore, evaluate and debate the radio/TV and newspaper coverage of ONE news story, over 24 hours.

ADVERTISING

1. How does institution effect the delivery and presentation? Conduct an analysis of adverts considering intertextuality / magazine / TV / radio.
2. To what extent does (the ad campaign of your choice) contribute to stereotypical or alternative representations of (pick your social group).
3. How do public service advertising campaigns such as (your choice) get their message across to their target audience in today's crowded media landscape?
4. How do charity appeals identify and target their audiences?
5. Advert control and censorship. Debate the issues of taste and morality in advertising.
6. Analyse and evaluate a campaign of your choice.
7. Advertising and reality: how do adverts conceptualise the real world?
8. The body image in adverts: engage in the debate over thin is beautiful.
9. The use of music to create atmosphere in adverts.
10. How does political correctness influence the world of advertising?

RADIO

This sector will be looked upon with favour by the examiners.

1. Analysis of the content of a radio product of your choice.
2. What public service broadcasting remit does local radio service?
3. What are the roles and function of presenters in local/national radio.
4. How does BBC Radio 5 Live address its target audience and differentiate itself from its sister stations?
5. Does mainstream radio cater for ethnic / cultural minorities?
6. Is radio advertising effective?
7. Radio is the communication of the future: discuss, exploring the links between radio and the Internet.
8. Debate “Interactive radio gives listeners their say” versus “Censorship of the airwaves – who controls the output?”.