Introduction:

As you look around you this summer, be aware of how many forms of media you experience. From music videos on your phone, to adverts on television, to blockbuster movies, to posters at the bus stop, to social media, you are surrounded by media messages for most of your waking hours. Can you make sense of them all? How do you know what they are trying to communicate — both on an obvious and a less obvious level? How do you know how much you have been influenced (consciously or subconsciously) by these media messages? Does the media control you?

Media Studies will help you answer these questions, as well as developing an important set of skills that will help you navigate the rest of your education and then, your working life. You will learn to analyse and evaluate texts, learn new theories and how to apply them, use new technology to construct your own products, and develop strong independent research skills.

Success in this subject comes from a combination of creativity, effort and understanding. It is a unique fusion of practical and theoretical learning, which, although it can be hard work and very time consuming, is always rewarding. It's also a lot of fun!

General Preparation

Media Studies information is not always to be found in textbooks. You need to take the principles that you learn in class and apply them to the media that you find around you. With that in mind, try to keep up to date as much media as you can!

Television: try to watch a variety of programmes, not just those you usually watch. Try documentaries, news programmes and dramas as well as soaps, reality TV shows and music channels.

Adverts: don’t just ignore them! See if you can work out who an advert is aimed at or what generic codes and conventions are being used. How do adverts try to sell?
Films: watch the latest blockbuster films, but don't forget the smaller budget, independent films! Stay up to date with what type (genre) of film is popular this summer – who are they aimed at?

News: try to get into the habit of keeping up with the news, local and worldwide. How do different newspapers report the same story? Read newspapers, watch news broadcasts and check different websites.

Magazines: What conventions can you identify on the cover of a magazine? Are there any kinds of magazines that challenge these trends?

Webpages: How are web pages used? What makes a good web page? What makes it easy to use? Is it to do with how it anticipates what the user wants?

Radio: Listen to local and national radio stations. You should have listened to Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4 so that you can say what each one does and who the target audience is.

Music Videos: What conventions can you identify in a music video? Are there certain conventions for certain genres of music? Who is in the video? Does it help you to understand the lyrics or make you see the song in a new way? Is it used to promote the artist?

Video Games: What do you play? What is most popular? What are some of the issues which surround video games?

Blogs: Whose blogs do you follow? Do you have your own blog?

Vlogs: What is a vlog? What makes a good vlog? What is an influencer? What are the most popular types of vlogs? How do you find out about them?

You should arrive in September with knowledge of a variety of media texts. We will then build on this to consider: who made them (institution)? How were they constructed? Why and for whom (audience)? What rules were followed when making them (genre and conventions)?
Your Day

Keep a log of a ‘typical’ day, where you encounter moving images. These can be in the form of television programmes, advertisements, video games, computer graphics, music video you tube, Tik Tok, trailers, film etc. We can attempt to categorise these texts as fulfilling the following purposes.

1. To entertain (e.g. a film)
2. To persuade (e.g. an advertisement)
3. To inform (e.g. a documentary or educational programme)
4. To instruct (e.g. a fitness video or cookery show)

Keep the following log.

You will be comparing your findings with a classmate to highlight differences and similarities so you must not forget to bring this with you to your first Media lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Time and Place</th>
<th>Purpose and Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: The News</td>
<td>ITV 10pm</td>
<td><em>I think this text is intended to inform the audience of what is happening in the world and to let them know how this will affect them.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Summer Activities**

The purpose of this work is to prepare you for some of the areas that you will cover in the course and get you thinking about the media in general. It is designed to be as relevant and useful as possible, looking at the conventions of different media products, theories, looking at the fact sheets for the products you will study, and some of the theories that you will need to know and evaluate.

**Activity One**

The key concepts of media theory that you will cover throughout the course will underpin your understanding of media institutions and their products. If you studied GCSE Media Studies you will have met these terms but it is vital that you revisit these concepts in preparation for A Level study. If you are new to the subject, this will provide you with the opportunity to develop an understanding of the key concepts.

**To do this you will complete an online course.**

Click on the following link and create a Seneca account

https://app.senecalearning.com/dashboard/join-class/dlg2z1ui0z

Complete the assigned course and complete the end of unit quizzes. I will be able to track your progress

**Activity Two**

Write a short paragraph to explain what is meant by each of the following terms in a media context, giving examples where appropriate.

- Representation
- Audience
- Genre
- Narrative
- Ideology
- Industry

For example:

**Representation:** the process by which events are re-presented in the media. All representations are constructed; they are never the real events because they have undergone a mediation process of selection, organisation and focus. The media re-presents events, ideas, people and issues to manipulate the audience and convey the media producer’s point of view.

**Useful websites:**

https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/media-studies/as-and-a-level/media-studies-7572/specification-at-a-glance

Exam board website; search for GCE A/AS Media Studies for subject specific information and course specification.)

https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/subjects/ztngyk7 (really good; GCSE level but much of the information is applicable to A level study)

http://www.theguardian.com/uk/media
Activity Three

The Media Show is a weekly programme which is broadcast on Radio 4 on Wednesdays at 4:30pm. It is a valuable source of information about many areas of the media such as equal pay, The Levison Enquiry and Rupert Murdoch.

Listen to any two episodes of The Media Show. You can simply Google The Media Show and look at all the episodes or follow the links below.

Make notes on the key points for each one – a list of bullet points is fine.

Panic and the truth – Are journalists reporting Coronavirus responsibly
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000g44v

The Media’s criminal obsession
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000bnbz

Notes:

If you have any questions email: cclewer@blue-coat.org

Enjoy and good luck!