

Leap into Media:

Inspirational tasks for
Y11 and Y12



EMC
Publications

An English and Media Centre Student Resource

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Contents

» What This Pack Is and How to Use It	4
» Task 1: Deconstructing a Newspaper Front Page: Ownership and Bias	5
» Task 2: Charting the History of British Music Video	13
» Task 3: <i>Teen Vogue's</i> Cross Platform Strategy	21
» Task 4: Audience Research: A <i>Gogglebox</i> -style Research Experiment	29
» Task 5: Long Form TV Drama: Genre, Character and Narrative	39
» Task 6: Theory: Gender Performativity	47
» Task 7: Theory: Identifying the Features of Postmodernism	53
» Task 8: Magazines: Recreating <i>Men's Health</i> for a Non-binary Audience	59
» Task 9: Charity Advertising: a New Approach	67
» Task 10: Theory: The Impact of Hegemony on the Media you Consume	73
» Task 11: Video Production: Making and Breaking the 180-degree Rule	81

What This Pack Is and How to Use It

Are you thinking about studying Media Studies at A Level, or looking to develop your Media Studies knowledge as you move from Year 12 into Year 13? The activities in this unit will help you, whatever the stage of your learning. For the complete beginner, they will give you a taste of the riches that await you if you choose to study Media at A Level. For those of you already in Year 12, they will add real depth to your knowledge about the subject, while giving you fresh ideas about ways in which to approach it.

All of the materials are based around articles from the English and Media Centre's magazine for A Level students of Media Studies and Film Studies, *MediaMagazine*. The tasks linked to each article use the following format:

1. Read the article.
2. Answer questions about it – this will help you to make sure that you fully understand the content, ideas and concepts associated with a particular aspect of media study.
3. Complete various tasks and activities that use the article as a springboard.

Some of the activities ask you to step back and think about what it means to study media, while others encourage you to try out some different ways of approaching your learning – often these require you to produce a media product of your own, a key element of successful media study.

Some of the activities are short, others might take a longer time to complete. There is no set order to them, so begin simply by picking an article that seems particularly interesting to you. As you work your way through the pack you should start to see what a varied, interesting and intellectually challenging subject Media Studies is!

The articles in this resource all come from *MediaMagazine*, the English and Media Centre's magazine for A Level Media Studies and Film Studies students.



Your school probably already has a *MediaMagazine* web subscription. If so, make sure to ask your teacher for your school's unique username and password, which gives you ongoing access at home to the latest edition, plus all past editions and articles. That way, you can continue to explore the riches of the subject when you have finished this pack.

If your school does not have a subscription, then ask your teacher to take one out by visiting <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/media-magazine/>.

Task 1

Deconstructing a Newspaper Front Page: Ownership and Bias

The article for this task is taken from *MediaMagazine 69*



'March 29th, 2019: The Day Brexit Didn't Happen'

Exploring the article

■ Read **March 29th, 2019: The Day Brexit Didn't Happen** (MM69), by Jonathan Nunns.

■ Answer the following questions, drawing on the article for information and ideas.

1. What are some of the insights that you can get about a particular news event by studying a front page? How does these apply specifically to Brexit?
2. The article talks about 'deconstructing' a front page. What do you understand by deconstructing? Use a dictionary to help you if need be. In what ways does deconstructing a text differ from analysing a text?
3. What are the different regulatory systems that govern broadcast and print news? What are the consequences of the different systems in terms of what newspapers are able to do and their influence? What are your own thoughts about the pros and cons of these different systems?
4. The article mentions four tabloid and mid-range newspapers: *The Sun*, *The Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail*. Based on what the article says, what do you understand to be the key differences and similarities between these publications. You should consider:
 - » Their ownership
 - » Their stance towards Brexit
 - » Their broader political affiliations
 - » Their readership
5. What are the agendas of the two broadsheet newspapers referred to: *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*. Are they different in any significant way to the tabloids and mid-range papers?
6. The article ends with a quotation from Umberto Eco: 'It's not the news that makes the newspaper, but the newspaper that makes the news.' To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? You might consider where you get your own news from, and how reliable, biased or politically motivated it might be.

Selecting two newspapers to study

The BBC publishes all of the UK's leading newspapers' front pages every day at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs/the_papers.

- Visit the web site and select two newspaper front pages that particularly interest you.
- Before you begin to deconstruct the front pages, you are going to research each publication. (Searching your newspaper on Wikipedia should give you a good overview of this information.) You need to make a factfile on each that includes the following:
 - » Is it a tabloid or a broadsheet, or somewhere in between (a mid-range newspaper)? Is the distinction to do with the size of the publication (the tabloid format is smaller than the broadsheet one), or is it to do with a typically tabloid or broadsheet approach to news?
 - » Political leanings – is the paper broadly left or right wing? Do they give support to a particular political party? Do they express strong views about particular issues? Do they campaign for any issues?
 - » Readership – what is the demographic of the newspaper's readership? You might think in terms of age, social class, gender, ethnicity and so on.
 - » Ownership – who and what can you find out about the company or individual who owns this publication? What else do they own? What other interests might they have?

Comparing coverage

- Now look at the front pages of your chosen newspapers on any given day.
 - » What do you notice about the stories they have decided to cover?
 - » How much space is given to different categories of stories e.g. political, UK, global, health, education, entertainment, celebrities etc.? What might this reveal about how the newspapers might be trying to affect public opinion?

Look more closely

- How does the language used in the headlines, standfirsts and captions differ across the front pages (this is especially interesting when the same lead story is covered across more than one paper)? What might this reveal about the attitude of the paper towards the subject being covered?
- Look at the images selected – does the headline or caption anchor the meaning; is the meaning possibly just an interpretation of the image? Has the image been deliberately constructed and if so in what ways and with what aims?
- Write a comparison of the two front pages you have studied or, if you're craving some production work, make a vlog sharing what you have learned from your research.



MARCH 29TH 2019

THE DAY BREXIT DIDN'T HAPPEN

In a world of fast-paced news cycles, events and positions can change before the ink on the page is dry. Jonathan Nunns takes a snapshot of a day's reporting and analyses what the papers made of the day Brexit didn't happen.