

Principal Examiner's comments

B323 June 2010 (Easy Living Magazine – August 2008)

Question 1

Explain two ways the extract fits the genre of lifestyle magazines.

Explains two features – lifestyle contents and direct address – using textual evidence and some terminology. Not a very long answer, but does enough to show thorough understanding of the conventions, so it reaches level four, and it is good exam technique not to spend too much time on this question.

9/10

Question 2

Give one example of each of the following and explain how it is used in the extract to create effect:

- layout
- typography
- use of language
- use of colour.

All four bullet points are analysed in detail with supporting textual evidence and precise use of terminology. Thorough understanding of connotative effect is established early in the answer with a sophisticated (though not highly detailed) discussion of how the layout combines a 'classic design' with a 'chic modern look'. Mid level four.

18/20

Question 3

Discuss the ways in which women and/or femininity are represented in the extract.

A focused discussion of the representation of femininity with detailed textual exemplification and a thorough understanding of a range of issues in the representation of femininity. The technique of labeling representations as 'positive' or 'negative' does not always work effectively, especially for weaker candidates, but this candidate has used this to maintain distance from the representations and produced a nuanced analysis. Mid level four.

18/20

Question 4a

Discuss in detail how and why one comedy programme was scheduled on one or more channels

This answer is limited by its failure to describe accurately the scheduling of the comedy – it is very vague about the day of transmission. This would limit the answer to level one, but it does show some understanding of how a programme reflects its institutional context so on the 'best fit' principle reaches high level two.

7/15

Question 4b

Compare the audience pleasures offered by two comedy programmes.

High level three. Sound knowledge and understanding of audience pleasures ('canned laughter' is a weak choice of pleasure, but the answer is stronger on Benidorm), very little textual exemplification, but a thorough (just!) understanding of the differences between the programmes.

11/15

Total: 63/80

1) The magazine 'Easy Living' is an example of a women's lifestyle magazine because of the content. The term 'lifestyle' defines everything that fits into everyday life and a pure example of this in this extract is the contents page. There are several teasers on the page alongside images, including the words, "Real Life", "Fashion", "Emotional Intelligence" and "Beauty." Therefore, by covering the main light hearted priorities in a women's life it proves that this is a lifestyle magazine. Another way that we know this extract is lifestyle is through the use of text, specifically the teasers on the front cover. An example of this is where it says, "What your friends really think of you." Through the use of direct address, it pin points what events happen in a woman's day-to-day life. Furthermore, this proves that the magazine 'Easy Living' is an example of lifestyle.

(9 marks)

2) Layout is used to create effect throughout the extract, and an example of how it is used is the front cover. The front cover of Easy Living has a symmetrical design giving it a chic, classic and organised look. This creates effect because it uses the correct layout in order to attract a certain target audience. Using this example, by keeping this magazine as a classic design but also including a chic, modern look will attract women from a middle-class background who lead a traditional lifestyle however they like to be up to date. Therefore, layout is used to create effect in order to attract the correct target audience.

However typography is used in this extract to create effect and this is also shown on the front cover. The masthead used in this extract is written in relaxed, sophisticated sans-serif font which correctly reflects how the magazine is targeted towards this type of woman. By not including a serif font in the making of the masthead it gives the reader the idea that this magazine contains light hearted, modern information throughout the magazine. Furthermore, through the use of the masthead, the audience are given an insight as to what the content of the magazine will be like, therefore creating effect.

On the contrary, language is also used in order to create effect. This is shown on the front cover in which a teaser reads "skin you'll be raring to bare" which includes the use of direct address. By targeting the reader specifically through the use of the word "you" it creates a false relationship with the audience due to synthetic personalisation. This creates effect because the reader feels they are on a par with the magazine, giving them a sense of pride. Therefore, language is used to create effect in this extract to make the reader feel they can connect with the magazine.

However, colour is also used to create effect and this is shown on the contents page. Due to the fact that this issue of the magazine was published in summer 2008, the colour scheme suites it appropriately by using bright, vibrant shades to promote happiness and femininity. By using a vibrant red, blue, purple, yellow, mauve, green and orange it connotes certain things according to the title.

An example of this is red used with the words "Real Life" because red can connote love, death, danger and romance due to its versatile meaning. Therefore, colouring is a very evident use in this magazine to create effect, in order to almost direct the reader into certain moods and thoughts.

(18 marks)

3) In this extract, women are represented negatively and one reason for this is because of the use of language. An example of this is in the editor's letter in which Susie Forbes writes, "How to look good on holiday – a subject we tackle at some length in this issue – is surely one of life's biggest conundrums." By using the "we" it uses direct address to assume that the women who'd read this magazine have nothing more concerning in their lives than fashion. This therefore represents women negatively because it results back to how a classic housewife should act – to just look nice and cook the meals – however this is a contradiction as women have been tackling these remarks for years.

However, women are also represented positively on the front cover. An example of this is the image of Kylie Minogue and the teaser beside which reads, "KYLIE MINOGUE 50 AND fabulouse". This portrays women positively because although Kylie has had a publicly tough life, she is still

shown to be beautiful, pure and happy through the use of the image. By smiling promiscuously, it gives off the impression that even at forty women can still be sexy. Therefore this gives women a sense of pride and rewards as to the 'guts' of certain women.

On the contrary, women are also represented negatively on the front page. A teaser reads, "The marriage crime you don't even know you're committing", and this portrays the impression that firstly a woman's life revolves entirely around marriages and families. Due to this it implies that all women are capable of is marriage and possibly not an actual career. Also, by saying that the audience wouldn't "even know" they're committing the certain crime, it is slightly degrading by implying that they possibly don't have the brains to understand.

Finally, women are also evidently represented positively on the contents page. By including information on a physical activity which is set aside from typical women's sports like yoga and jogging, it reinforces how women are capable of doing the same amount and styles of physical activity as males. Furthermore, the audience will gain a sense of pride in themselves, when the magazine implies that all women are capable of such things.

(18 marks)

4a) A comedy programme that I have studied is Benidorm which is broadcast on ITV1. Benidorm is a docu-soap style comedy which is edgy due to its alternative comedic strategies such as swearing and constant evident innuendos. In consideration of this, ITV1 is the correct station for Benidorm to be broadcast upon because of its reputation for comedies and for being a working class channel. Therefore, as working class citizens would be the target audience for ITV1, this station would give its audience entertainment and/or a sense of familiarity.

Also, Benidorm suits ITV1 because of ITV1's public service broadcaster (PSB). This means that, although there is no license fee included, they do set themselves standards which is primarily to entertain. Therefore, Benidorm's controversial style comedy suits perfectly to ITV.

Benidorm is broadcast at 9pm on weekdays which is usually in between a weekly drama such as Taggart and a hard hitting film of some sort. This implies that Benidorm is broadcast at this time and date because of the money gained from the advertisements in between. Therefore, although ITV primarily aim to entertain, they also consider the agenda of advertising in the scheduling of this specific show.

(7 marks)

4b) The two comedies that I have studied are Benidorm on ITV1 and My Family on BBC1. My Family is a safe, lighthearted classic comedy that has run for over 100 episodes, proving its clear success at audience pleasures. One way in which My Family pleases its audience is through the use of canned laughter. By including this touch, it proves to be a traditional, family orientated show which is pleasing because it easily guides the audience throughout the show.

However Benidorm is a docu-soap style comedy who please their audience in a completely different way. One way in which this is achieved is through the use of swearing and adult humour. As the target audience is obviously adults, this specific audience feel a sense of gratitude towards the show as it is completely directed towards adult. Furthermore the audience feel they have achieved something during watching the show as it isn't directed at anyone but themselves.

On the contrary, both Benidorm and My Family please their audiences in some similar ways. An example of this is that they both give a sense of resolution to their audiences' at the end of each episode. This enables the audience to understand the plot easier and doesn't create unnecessary tension. Therefore both ITV1 and BBC1 have understood what it takes to please their audience, and they've both recognised that by creating a sense of resolution after each episode is beneficial.

(18 marks)

Paper total 63 marks