

Example Candidate Responses

Paper 2

Cambridge International AS & A Level Media Studies 9607

For examination from 2018

Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Media Studies (9607), and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the subject's curriculum and assessment objectives.

In this booklet candidate responses are derived from scripts of candidates from June 2017 to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with clear explanation of where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by examiner comments on how the answer could have been improved. In this way, it is possible for you to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and what they could do to improve their answers. At the end of the booklet, there is a list of common mistakes candidates made in their answers for each question.

This document provides illustrative examples of candidate work with examiner commentary. These help teachers to assess the standard required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme. Therefore, in some circumstances, such as where exact answers are required, there will not be much comment.

The questions and mark schemes used here are available to download from the School Support Hub. These files are:

June 2017 Question Paper 21

June 2017 Paper 21 Mark Scheme

Past exam resources and other teacher support materials are available on the School Support Hub www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low-level response for each question. The candidate answers are set in a table. In the left-hand column are the candidate answers, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>Answers are by real candidates in exam conditions. These show you the types of answers for each level.</p> <p>Discuss and analyse the answers with your learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p>	<p>1 Notes by candidates: Commonly, these notes appear to be rather random observations, which may not be that helpful to their writing of the actual response. Candidates need to be prepared for the</p> <p>Examiner comments are alongside the answers. These explain where and why marks were awarded. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams so you can help your learners to refine their exam technique.</p>

How the candidate could have improved the answer

The candidate could have balanced up their response especially to note its comic tone and to consider how it reflects the range of textual analysis from the exam.

This section explains how the candidate could have improved each answer. This helps you to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams and helps your learners to refine their exam technique.

Common mistakes candidates made in this question

Candidates commonly described what happens in the scene and the technical codes of camerawork, editing, sound and music.

Often candidates were not awarded marks because they misread or misinterpret the questions.

Lists the common mistakes candidates made in answering each question. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes and give them the best chance of achieving the available marks.

Question 1

Example Candidate Response – high

CAMERA	EDITING
- Crane movement at the beginning	- Fading in to into another setting →
- to Change of focus in first setting	- MS of characters during conversation superimposition → Helps establish the setting the main character is living in
- High angle and slight tilt as he comes down the stairs	- Pace is slow ⇒ reflects on mundane atmosphere ⇒ long shots takes
- Zoom in onto the washing machine	
- Shot reverse shot during wife - husband talk	
- Zoom in on main character	
- Close ups further on into conversations	
SOUND	MISE-EN-SCÈNE
- Clattering of the washing machine simultaneously with wife's speech	- low lighting, tones of grey and blue of the setting
- Chattering of people in the office and phone rings simultaneously with the main character's speech	- slight light highlights on the face
- Washing machine emphasises the silence	- Characters have dull colored clothing ⇒ blend into the setting
- Wife's speech is dominated by washing machine during main character's thinking period	- Dark furniture is highlighted
- Non-diegetic sound ⇒ dialogue and background noises	
- Diegetic sound ⇒ to background soundtrack music → slow tempo	

Examiner comments

- Notes by candidates: Commonly, these notes appear to be rather random observations, which may not be that helpful to their writing of the actual response. Candidates need to be prepared for the exam so that they can make a good use of their note making time. A good strategy is to have a set of features to look for in any sequence from each of the technical areas.
- For camera, candidates might prepare to look for examples of camera movement, angle, framing, etc. This candidate picks out a range of such examples.
- For editing, a candidate might approach the note making looking out for examples of the 180 degree rule, short/reverse shot, etc.
- There are some good notes here on sound which is particularly interesting in this sequence: music, speech, sound effects, etc.
- Good range of mise-en-scène observed in the note making.
- These notes illustrate that the candidate is observant and is picking out elements of significance.
- Notes are not marked but comments are included here to help teachers to consider the purpose of notes for candidates and help them to prepare better.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

CAMERA (additional notes)

- Medium shot of characters has they further get into the conversation
- ~~Long shot~~ Extreme long shots of the setting
- Low angle onto character as the clients leave

~~This segment from series 1 and episode 1 from Fargo illustrates the mundane realism of the main character's surroundings and consequently his role in it's structure.~~

~~The insert commences with a ~~long~~ long shot of a laundry room that quickly ~~to~~ quickly ~~the~~ changes~~

~~The insert commences with a long shot setting of a laundry room which transitions to a dining room and kitchen setting by the help of a crane movement going from the basement to the upper floor.~~

~~The audience is introduced to ~~the main character~~ by ~~the~~ ~~spc~~ two characters. The main character however is poignantly pointed out in the beginning by ~~beginning~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~dining~~ ~~table~~ by ~~begi~~ being alone at the dining table~~

8 The candidate starts the response and then restarts. In preparing for the exam, it is worth considering how to make an economic effective start so that candidates don't have to worry too much about this.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

This segment of the first episode of Fargo illustrates the mundane realism of the main character's surroundings and consequently his role in its structure. ⁹

The audience is introduced with a gloomy and dull setting of a laundry room with low lighting for a brief second. ~~at the~~ This long shot transitions

The audience is introduced with a gloomy and dull setting of a laundry room with the focus being ¹⁰ on the ~~is clattering~~ washing machine. Despite being a setting with low light the audience's attention is drawn to the appearance of the machine by a subtle highlight, ¹¹ and its ~~is~~ shaky and erratic movements and the clattering noise it produces.

This long shot slowly transitions to a medium long shot of a dining room table where the audience ¹² is introduced to two characters. The loud noise of the machine plays a camouflaged but ever-present role in the first scene to emphasise the ~~is~~ bleak and sterile ~~set~~ environment with its monotonous sound pattern. ~~There the machine is~~ washing machine is a form of a ~~non diegetic~~ sound.

The mise-en-scene of the first scene depicts yet again a dull atmosphere expressed by the dark wooden furniture and non-vibrant clothing of the ¹³ actors. Like in the laundry room shot, ~~the~~ it consists of low lighting however, 'highlights' are placed on the characters' faces and the dining room table to ~~at~~ emphasize their appearance. The notion that both the scenery and wardrobe match in tone

⁹ This is a good introduction which sums up the sequence. The phrase 'mundane realism' is particularly effective.

¹⁰ Good description.

¹¹ Good points on lighting and sound.

¹² Good points on editing.

¹³ Very good range of examples of mise-en-scene, well explained.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

of color suggests that there is no innovation or particular happenings in this surrounding and that everything goes on an on-going routine. 14

~~The audience is introduced~~
The main character is ~~poignantly~~ illustrated at the beginning. 15

The main character is made clear to the audience by the fact that in the beginning ~~at the start of~~ the dining room scene is alone at the table with his wife's voice is the background and showing only segments of her body. ~~Her~~ ^{his wife's} introduction into the shot is depicted by the sharp sound of her plate being placed firmly against the table. However, this slight trigger ~~is the~~ Despite this abrupt movement through the insert the pace ~~of~~ is slow with predominantly long takes taking a large part of the ~~construction~~ ^{gloominess} of the sequence. 16

The appearance of the characters in the first scene go from a ~~long~~ medium long shot to a medium shot as they commence their conversation. ~~The~~ In terms of camera movement the conversation was supplemented by a shot-reverse shot to engage the audience into the characters conversation. Frequent close ups towards the end of the conversation indicate a further intimacy the audience has with the character to ~~analyse~~ ^{it} get a further ~~in~~ deeper insight into its emotions expressed by its facial expressions. 17

14 This brings home the point from the opening paragraph, making the first page very effective.

15 The candidate is attempting to integrate the four technical elements and to extract meaning as she progresses.

16 Again this paragraph is a very good mixture of each of the technical codes.

17 More good use of accurate terminology and as the paragraph progresses, a good articulate of meaning and discussion of how the audience is drawn in.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

As the scene progresses the audience comes to realize the character's misplacement into his society. This can be seen by his disregard for his wife's conversation on frequent occasion. The notion that when the main character leaves the table and the focus is placed on his surroundings seem to dwindle around him. In camera work terms the focus is placed on him with a subtle ~~light~~ highlight on his face. In regards to sound his wife's speech is simultaneously with the noise of the washing machine in the basement. However, over time her speech seems to be muffled by the washing machine and appear insignificant. It could be said that the main character ~~life is so mundane and insignificant that his attention is quickly altered~~. It could be said thus that his wife's speech is a direct comparison to the washing machine being both dull and mundane but still has an impact on him in some shape or form subconsciously. In addition, the impact of the diegetic sound of ~~the audience later~~ the machine can be seen by its noise being amplified during a brief pause in their conversation and thus emphasizes the bleak silence.

The character's ~~has the~~ silent meeting with the machine machine illustrates his reflection ~~up~~ on the comparison with their appearance. The high angle shot upon the machine with the point of view from the behalf of the main characters intrigues the audience to the main character's thoughts.

18 This key moment in the sequence is well explained and the meaning of it articulated well.

19 This key moment could be pushed further.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

The following extreme long shots of his scenery with tones of blue and grey insinuate a rigid and cold atmosphere. Furthermore, these colors are placed in the office scene to additionally illustrate the character's camouflage into his surrounding. The ~~fast~~ superimposition of the establishing shots helps to thus establish the character's setting and steadily introduce the new scene with the link being the colors of the image remaining. 20

In the office scene, much like the dining room scene, the main character's speech is slightly covered up by the background noise in the office. Therefore, it could be said that his importance both at home and at work is insignificant because nobody pays attention to him. The dull and emotionless expressions of the clients and the non-vivid wardrobe of all the characters yet again emphasizes the mundaneness of the surrounding. 21

The only form of ~~non~~ diegetic non-diegetic sound is the soundtrack in the background that aids to emphasize the appearance of the ~~set~~ outdoor settings. Its slow tempo and lack of up-beatness ^{emphasizes} a gloomy and mundane appearance of the shots. 22

All in all, all factors of sound, camera ~~an~~ mise-en-scene and editing aided to 23

create a mundane atmosphere. The recurrence of the washing machine can be seen as a symbol an attraction to the audience and a symbol to the main character's monotonous and on-going routine much like the structure of a washing machine. The ever-lasting circular motions the machine produces. 24

20 This is a good paragraph on the wider establishing function of this scene.

21 Draws some parallels with the opening scene, but no discussion of the interaction with the couple, which is very important to the overall tone of the extract.

22 Good mention of music.

23 This paragraph is a good conclusion.

24 Overall, this is a very strong response, but the absence of discussion of the conversation with the couple in the office, which offers rich opportunity for further parallels and to note the comic tone of much of the extract too. Discussion of this would take it well into Level 5.

**Total mark awarded =
39 out of 50**

How the candidate could have improved the answer

The candidate could have balanced up their response more by saying more about the scene in the office, especially to note its comic tone and to consider the parallels with the first scene in the house. The mark reflects the range of textual analysis from the extract, which places it at the top of Level 4.