

# TRANSITION TO SIXTH FORM TASK

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## TRANSITION TASK - MEDIA STUDIES

KEY PRE-KNOWLEDGE TOPICS

KEY TERMS TO LEARN

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

PLACES TO VISIT

NECESSARY READING



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



## A Level Media Studies - Summer Transition Task

This year, you will be studying a range of different media platforms, considering their purpose, how they are created and what ideologies they demonstrate.

As part of your study, you must understand the language of the media – how media texts communicate their meanings to the audience. When we consider language, we automatically think of words, however in Media Studies we analyse visual language alongside this.

### Your Tasks

Read the Media Language section of the Media Bible (found on the Media Website – [lhsmedia.wixsite.com/mediastudies](https://lhsmedia.wixsite.com/mediastudies))

Find a media text from each of the platforms below:

Newspapers (Front Page) / Advertising / Music Video / Radio / Video Games / Film Marketing

Analyse each text considering the following:

**What is the Purpose of the text?** Why does it exist? Who is likely to consume this type of media?

**Genre Conventions:** What genre is the text? What are the common ingredients of this particular type of text? Can you see them all included here? How do they help to communicate the purpose and meaning of the text?

### Visual & Technical Codes:

What can you see?

- Characters & what they are wearing/makeup
- Setting & Props
- Lighting
- Graphics & Colours
- Editing
  - Is it a fast or slow? What is the effect of this? Why have they placed certain things next to each other?
- Sound – How does it create a particular mood?
  - Diegetic
    - Dialogue
  - Non Diegetic
    - Music
    - Voice Over
- Cinematography – What does it tell us?
  - Shot types
  - Camera Angles
  - Camera Movement

**Narrative:** How is the story/message of the text shown to you? Is it in chronological order? Why? Is it open ended or closed? Why?

### Ideologies:

What is the message behind the text? What do they want you to think about the issue at hand? Is it a positive or negative? Why?

## A Level Media Studies – *Formation*, Beyoncé (2016)



**What is the purpose of the text?** The text is a music video and its main purpose is to entertain audiences. It is also a marketing tool to promote Beyoncé's *Lemonade* album. It can also be argued to be promoting Beyoncé's messages and ideologies in relation to the treatment of African Americans and racism and slavery within American History as it is set against the backdrop of the flooding in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. It is likely to be consumed by fans of Beyoncé, who are predominantly female, aged 17 – 25.

**Genre Conventions:** Beyoncé falls under the R&B/Urban/Pop genres, making her a hybrid artist. One of the key conventions of Beyoncé's genre in music videos is the presence of Beyoncé herself. She is often shown lip syncing directly to camera, inviting the audience in to engage with the video. The video also includes choreography which is somewhat provocative and she is surrounded by other females; this is highly conventional of Beyoncé. A range of costumes is also conventional of music videos in the genre, again, often sexualising the star through revealing her thighs or cleavage. These conventions, whilst common in music videos, are juxtaposed with other visual codes that provide a deeper message of racial tension and inequality, and therefore communicate these messages to an audience that might not necessarily understand or consume them outside the realm of entertainment.

### **Visual Codes:**

The use of costume is interesting. Colonial dresses which seem to reference slavery contrast heavily with stereotypical 'pop' signifiers such as tight fitting/revealing costume in the dance sections. She is also seen in funeral attire (as seen in the image above), reflecting on the death of those who lost their lives in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement.

There are also images relating to Hurricane Katrina, particularly the image of Beyoncé on top of the police car which is submerged in water, reflecting the lack of support from government and authorities for those who were victims of the event.

The use of found footage from news about police brutality is juxtaposed with images of the little boy dancing in front of a line of riot police, suggesting that black people in America are targeted by the police because of their culture.

**Technical Codes:** The video follows conventional technical codes of the genre; MTV style editing, close ups on the star, long shots to demonstrate the choreography and body language. The sound in parts is unconventional as we hear a non diegetic voice over which somewhat narrates the video, “What happened at the New Orleans?” and “I came to Slay, bitch”. These anchor the images and messages within the video.

**Narrative:** As this is a music video, it doesn’t follow a traditional narrative structure, making it non-linear. The messages of the video are told to us via the imagery already discussed, rather than through a narration or fictional story format.

**Ideologies:** There are clear ideologies about race and ethnicity here alongside wider contextual issues about events that have affected the black communities in America. But these are somewhat skewed with the ideologies about gender, in that Beyoncé is effectively objectifying herself, possibly condoning this objectification. She places herself within a position of power throughout the video but then perpetuates her sexuality, thus removing the power she fights for. She is also furthering racial lines by depicting a sense of ‘otherness’ and the divide between black and white people. She could also be said to adopting feminism and political issues as a way to sell her music rather than a committed belief she has, after all, one of the purposes of the text is to promote, therefore Beyoncé could be gaining financially from the political and cultural agenda.