



YEAR 12 Summer 1

'An ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all'

Medium Term Planning - Topic: Video Games

In addition to developing the skills and knowledge listed below, we aim to give all students access to a wide range of high-quality media texts in order to develop their inference and communication skills, as well as their cultural capital and empathy to allow them to be fulfilled in their future lives and employment and contribute positively to society.

In addition to working further on objectives from Year 12, pupils will be taught, following National Curriculum guidelines, the following this term:

- skills of enquiry, critical thinking, decision-making and analysis
- acquisition knowledge and understanding of a range of important media issues
- development of an appreciation and critical understanding of the media and their role both historically and currently in society, culture and politics
- an understanding and application of specialist subject-specific terminology to analyse and compare media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed in order to make informed arguments, reach substantiated judgements and draw conclusions about media issues
- an appreciation how theoretical understanding supports practice and practice supports theoretical understanding
- development of practical skills by providing opportunities for creative media production

Cross Curricular Links

SMSC: Individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance are represented by the choice of texts within the unit and taught explicitly in some of the topics covered.

PSHE/British Values:

Literacy: Key Vocabulary distributed to students. Vocabulary includes: representation, mise en scene, audience, industry, advert, receiver.

Numeracy: n/a

Skills Builder:

Becoming future ready

Personal Skills: communication, problem-solving, imagination.

Careers/Employability: exposure to advertising and music industry.

QFT/SEND Provision

Throughout this topic, quality first teaching will provide differentiation:

By product:

By resource:

By Intervention: by providing different levels of supervision and support

By Progressive Questioning: exploring pupils' understanding through interactive dialogue.

By Grouping: according to prior attainment, gender, social preference, preferred learning style.


By Task: Pupils should be involved in the identification of targets which are meaningful to them and in the selection of an appropriate task from the given range.

By Offering Optional Activities: In class or as homework, to extend learning.

This QFT/SEND provision will be explicit within the lesson-by-lesson schemes of work.

To be able to:

- Understand key media terminology.
- Understand media language and representation.

Learning Outcomes (Knowledge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand audience and industry. • Develop practical and creative skills. <p>Key Vocabulary:</p>  <p>Subject specific vocabulary GCSE Mec</p>
Assessment	<p>Refer to assessment maps for formative and summative assessment opportunities.</p>
	<p>Attainment and Progress – Refer to assessment results / data review documentation.</p>

Year 12



Video games

These are in-depth CSPs and need to be studied with reference to all four elements of the theoretical framework and all relevant contexts.

Horizon Forbidden West (2022) – the game and PS5 edition game cover

- This game should be studied as an example of a contemporary action-adventure game in terms of the relevant issues of representation and its use of media language. It is not a requirement that students play the game. Gameplay, which may be accessed online.

Media language

- A semiotic analysis of the visual style inevitably engages with the study of genre and narrative with the mise-en-scene of the game – apparent in the gameplay and the cover artwork – referencing fantasy and action adventure as well as the conventions of different types of game play.
- Mise-en-scene analysis.

Narrative

- Building on the semiotic analysis, consider the way the gameplay works through narrative codes to construct narratives of adventure and enigma for the character.
- Analyse the way the video game's artwork conforms to particular styles of fantasy and hyperrealism and how this might link to narrative and audience.
- Analyse the way narrative techniques such as binary oppositions and conflict are used to create meaning and to position the audience.
- Consider the ways in which the video game allows participation in and development of narrative.
- Narratology including Todorov.

Genre

The genre conventions of different types of games can be identified, such as:

- Third-person, action-role playing, open-world, single-player game.
- Action adventure, post-apocalyptic conventions which reference Hollywood cinema.
- The study of genre conventions will also overlap with issues of audience – such as mode of address and target audience.
- Genre theory, including Neale.

Media Representations

The game provides a range of representational issues to consider, including gender, race, the role of machines, place.

- By setting the game in a futuristic, post-apocalyptic world, the game designers have imagined a new society which explores a range of social and cultural meanings – some of which have been controversial Theories of representation, including Hall.
- Feminist theories, including bell hooks and Van Zoonen.
- Theories of gender performativity, including Butler.
- Theories around ethnicity and postcolonial theory, including Gilroy.

Media Industries

Horizon Forbidden West is published by Guerrilla Games.

The structure of Guerrilla Games and its parent company as an example of contemporary media practice in maintaining control of production, distribution and circulation.

Guerrilla Games is the result of a merger of three earlier companies (starting in 1993) which reflects gaming's origins in small independent companies in contrast to its current status as a global, billion-dollar industry.

- How the industry structure creates control of the range of platforms a game is available on.
- Regulation of games through PEGI.
- Cultural industries, including Hesmondhalgh.
- Regulation.

Media Audiences

Discussion of audience in the game industry interconnects with the other areas of the frameworks to consider the relationship between audience and representation, construction of target audiences, as well as the experience of gameplay and fan cultures.

- Psychographics and demographics of the target audience for *Horizon Forbidden West*.
- Use of a female protagonist to target a female audience.
- Debates around active and passive audiences in relation to gameplay.
- Controversies around the playing of video games – moral panics.
- Cultivation theory, including Gerbner.
- Reception theory, including Hall.
- Fandom, including Jenkins.
- 'End of audience' theories, including Shirky.

Cultural context

Horizon Forbidden West is a sequel to *Horizon Zero Dawn*, developing a popular franchise. The sequel has been seen as an attempt to compete with the *Breath of the Wild* series developed by Nintendo. A study of cultural context would consider the debate around the role of women in gaming – both in terms of industry and character representation – as well as considering the increased diversity in gaming. It is still the case that while gaming can be considered a mainstream part of the industry, there are still concerns about the effects of gaming on its target audience.

The Sims Freeplay – the game, its facebook page and Twitter feed

This game should be studied using the four areas of the framework. It raises some specific issues. For example:

Media language

- How are the codes and conventions of a video game used in the product? How are these conventions used to influence meaning?
- Have developing technologies affected the media language? Some familiarity with the development of the *Sims* franchise (2000 – present) will be necessary.
- The way media language incorporates viewpoints and ideologies. As a life simulation game *Sims FreePlay* includes many normative codes and values.
- The application of a semiotic approach will aid the analysis of the way in which the website creates a narrative about the world it is constructing.
- The genre conventions of video games, particularly the sub-genre of life simulation or sandbox games, can be identified and discussed in relation to other CSP video games.
- How is the game's narrative driven? What is the motivation for continuing engagement with the product and for the purchase of 'premium' content?

- Narrative in the context of online material can refer to the way in which the images and the selection of stories construct a narrative about the world – one which is likely to be ideological.
- *Sims FreePlay* provides a useful case study for the discussion of Baudrillard's concepts including simulation, simulacra, implosion and hyperreality.

Representations

- Representation of particular social groups.
- Who is constructing the representation and to what purpose? (Stuart Hall).
- What are the values, attitudes and beliefs embodied in the representations found in *The Sims FreePlay*?
- Analysis of the construction and function of stereotypes.
- Representation of the real world and claims about realism.
- Audience response to representation and issues around identity (Gauntlett).

Industry

- The use of diverse digital platforms.
- How are video games rated and regulated in the UK? (Livingstone and Lunt).
- A study of the Sims franchise will also engage with the effect cultural producers have on media industries.

Media Audiences

- The role of fans and fandom in video gaming (Jenkins).
- How *The Sims FreePlay* is marketed to a predominantly youth audience.
- The interaction between audience, product and digital platform and the opportunities for audience involvement.
- Differing interpretations by different groups – those belonging to and outside the primary audience.

Social and cultural contexts

A discussion of the social and cultural contexts of *The Sims FreePlay* will focus on the rapid growth and development of the video game industry and the debates about representation and effects.

Possible teaching and learning activities

- Workshops to allow students to work on NEA production skills.
- Equipment needed: cameras and computer equipment.