

newspaper offers both a safe space for debate and genuine user-generated content as readers engage in active debate with one another.

Hyperlinks on the website enable readers to follow a story in multiple directions, plus suggestions for related articles appear at the side and the bottom of an article to suggest further reading. The website offers a search facility and an archive of old articles.

Now write a full answer to the Example Question 8 on p.106 in five minutes.

Compare your answer to the following sample answer.

Colour is used to create a house style by means of a limited colour palette – two house colours of royal blue and a wine purple on a white background. This and the use of a dark blue colour for the header connotes serious, sober, objective news. The use of a serif typeface for the headings, the highly ordered layout of the homepage, the fairly limited use of photographs and graphics to minimise visual clutter similarly connotes formality and objectivity.

On the other hand, the use of a bold, sans serif, white on blue mostly lower case font for the masthead connotes a modern and confident paper. This fits the Observer brand and 'progressive' values.

The language use includes both personal (e.g. 'Can I forgive', 'My lifelong affair...') and third person statements (e.g. 'Murray too good for Verdasco in Dubai') but creates an overall objective mode of address.

This answer would gain a Level 3 mark (4–5 marks) because it is a:

- sophisticated analysis of how media language is used in at least two examples from the extract
- highly relevant response to the question, demonstrated by full focus on how media language is used in the extract to create meaning.

It would probably gain full marks because it meets all the marking criteria fully (even though it is not a perfect answer).

Exam tip

This version of the website is no longer available, following the redesign that launched in January 2018, so you will not be expected to be familiar with this design.

Revision activity

Analyse *The Observer* homepage and at least one article and note any changes to the media language described above.

Media language and the Guardian's Twitter feed

Content from the *Observer* newspaper is branded as *Guardian* content on Twitter, so any *Observer* content you would be asked to analyse will come from the *Guardian*'s Twitter feed '@guardian'. Most of the media language on the page is determined by Twitter, but there are some elements chosen by the *Guardian*:

the header before January 2018 used a photograph of corals growing underwater, a photo whose colour palette of blue and white fitted that of the *Guardian* house colours; the header after the redesign in January 2018 consisted of the black on white masthead with a series of colour bars reproducing the colour scheme of the newspaper website the logo next to each tweet – before January 2018, a white lower-case 'g' in a blue circle; after then, an upper-case white on black 'G' the house colour for links – blue

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Exam tip

You do not need to learn or memorise the changes in the *Observer* social media feeds or the website. If you are asked to analyse one of these you will be given an extract to work from.

Now write a full answer to the Example Question 9 on p.106 in 15 minutes.

Compare your answer to the following sample answer.

Many representations in the 'features' section convey the newspaper's actively socially liberal viewpoint. For example, its internationalism is evident in its representation of India, America and the sympathetic representation of the plight of refugees in the features section. The article on possibly forgiving a serious criminal offence values tolerance and understanding rather than a crackdown on crime and criminals.

The influence and embrace of multiculturalism is reflected in the routinely ethnically mixed photographic representations and the anti-stereotypical representation of a black film director.

Similarly, though the sport coverage is still mostly male, there is an attempt at a gender balance through the rest of the content.

Many representations convey the newspaper's (liberal) feminist viewpoint, e.g. the joke about the model's 'fabulous' Instagram figure undermines common gender stereotypes by drawing attention to them and this is combined with an image that does not sexually objectify the woman; the reporting of Julie Cunningham's foregrounding of gender inequality in performance presents her feminist analysis as righteous anger.

The representations in the Interviews section convey a valuing of the arts and science, reflecting the Observer's liberal belief in progress, as well as its well-educated audience.

On the other hand, the male bias in the Sports section does not fit the Observer's liberal feminist values. Only one female sportsperson is mentioned and none is photographed – all the photographs represent traditional masculinity, as does some of the aggressive language. The whole sports section could be from any newspaper.

In terms of audiences, the food and lifestyle section reflects the Observer's affluent middle-class readership and the social context of consumerism rather more than its liberal values by representing dining out at expensive restaurants and choosing wines for family gatherings. This is again reflected in the representation of expensive leisure activities such as shopping in Paris for 'chic'. These could all be from any quality newspaper with a middle-class audience. Such content will attract advertising as it offers an appropriate environment and an audience to sell to advertisers as active and affluent consumers.

In terms of media industries, the content reflects a trend in journalism towards softer news and features that are cheaper to supply due to competition and declining newspaper income, e.g. interviews with people who are seeking publicity and coverage of regular events such as sport.

In conclusion, the representations in the online *Observer* partially reflect their values and partially reflect what a quality newspaper must do to appeal to a middle-class audience, with a range of interests, and the advertisers. However, the absence of obvious 'clickbait' in the extract reflects how the *Observer* is partly protected from economic pressures by its ownership model and can offer serious journalism.

This answer would gain a Level 3 mark (11–15 marks) because:

- it is a sophisticated relevant and accurate analysis of relevant aspects of the extract supported by a range of examples
- it draws together knowledge and understanding from the full course of study – representations, audience, industries and contexts
- a clear judgement and conclusion is reached and is fully supported by the analysis.

It would probably gain full marks because it meets all the marking criteria fully (even though it is not a perfect answer).

Question 10

What this question involves

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This is a 10-mark knowledge and understanding question about the influence of media contexts on print newspapers. This will refer to one of the following options:

- historical newspapers from the 1960s
- contemporary newspapers produced during your course of study
- both historical and contemporary newspapers.

Timing

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This is a short essay question that should take about ten minutes.

What the examiner is looking for

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Examiners are looking for understanding of how media contexts influence newspapers, with examples from the set newspapers you have studied.

For this question you will revise:

- how media contexts influence newspapers
- how the three set historical *Observer* front pages from the 1960s reflect their contexts
- how the two contemporary *Observer* front pages you have studied reflect their contexts.

Exam practice

Question 10

Explain how broadsheet newspapers reflect the historical contexts in which they were produced. Refer to stories from the set *Observer* front pages from the 1960s that you have studied to support your answer.

In your answer you must refer to relevant media contexts.

[10]