

Guernsey Grammar School & Sixth Form Centre,
Footes Lane,
St Andrews,
Guernsey,
GY6 8TD

Dear future A Level media student,

If you decide you want to take media for A Level, you will learn a variety of skills from creative skills such as the technical conventions of a magazine cover to transferable skills that can apply to life in general, no matter what industry you enter.

Due to the use of several different types of hardware and software, you will learn many technical skills when taking Media as a part of your A Level course. Some of these include how to use a camera, how to use Adobe Indesign & How to use Adobe Photoshop.

When I started year 12 I had very little experience with software such as photoshop. I also had no direction when it came to creating my magazine and editing the images that would eventually be included in it; however once I was willing to try out new ideas, I started to learn how to use different tools to their greatest effect on photoshop. Some of these tools included the lasso tools, gradients, neural filters & drop shadow. In particular, the neural filters added some much needed flair to my pictures as they allowed me to partially cover up some of my mistakes I made when taking the pictures that made the pictures turn out blurry, or low quality, as well as making the pictures look bright and colourful whilst also giving them quite a fun, retro but laid back look which appeals to the fun loving gen X demographic that occupies a fair portion of the jazz community without completely ignoring the younger listeners of jazz music.

Due to the style of course Media Studies is, you end up learning many creative production skills that will aid you a lot in the future if you decide to go into those kinds of industries. Some of these skills include the usage and balancing of fonts & colours, the connotations of certain colours & Mise-en-scene (costumes, make-up, lighting and actions in the picture) and how that can relate to your target audience, composition of shots and the composition of the page and many more for example a low angle shot of your star connotes them having more fame, skills or talent than the reader or other artists in that respective genre.

When I started my magazine, I had very little knowledge of what colours would work well together and how to balance them. Once I started receiving criticism, as well as doing my own research on what colours would match well together I started to not only improve on my own skills, however I also started to understand what would work with jazz as a genre. Once I did, I decided on colder colours such as blues & purples for my backgrounds with warmer colours like orange and yellow for my highlighted text and other aspects of the foreground as these colours are commonly associated with being mellow, grounded and relaxed which also reflect the connotations of jazz.

Media Studies is also capable of teaching you lessons that don't just apply to the subject itself, but rather several other industries or life in general. Some of these include time management (due to the course work based assessment criteria), analytical skills (when analysing different aspects of products: eg magazine covers) and researching a demographic (To appeal to our target audience).

One important transferable skill that I learnt during my time studying Media at A Level is the skill of asking for & accepting criticism. This is helpful as it got me to think about my work in a different way, so I'm constantly thinking about what can improve and what others prefer in my work. This skill can apply to any piece of work that I do, not just something Media related. One example of this taking place was me accepting the criticisms of my font that I enjoyed and then switching it up in order to improve my work as a whole.

In conclusion, I believe that media is a great A Level to take because it teaches you many lessons that can be applied throughout life, as well as throughout the media industry.

Best wishes, Andrew