

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 1

Q2a: Role of Media - Discussion

The candidate was awarded **8 marks**.

There is a clear line of argument running throughout this response that the main purpose of The Sun newspaper is to make a profit, with no real intention of informing or educating its readership. There are conclusions drawn throughout the response, as well as at the end of the essay. The main points of information relate to how the paper sets itself up as looking out for the public by attacking the PM and the Royals; to how the paper's attitude to homosexuality has shifted from homophobia in the 70s and 80s to celebrating Elton John's wedding; and to how the paper is used as a means of promoting Rupert Murdoch's other media outlets such as Sky and 20th Century Fox. There are also less detailed points of information with reference to immigration and reporting on celebrities. All of these points of information relate to the perspective that the paper is driven mainly by profit, and there is no real counter-argument provided in any detail meaning the response cannot access the top band.

Q2b: Role of Media - Exemplification

The candidate was awarded **8 marks**.

There are several specific and detailed references to headlines from The Sun to exemplify the points being made. The response discusses headlines attacking the PM and the Royal Family, creating fear through headlines about AIDS and immigration; and attacking celebrities such as Amy Winehouse. There are comments on the references made, with discussion of the way in which The Sun uses each example in order to make a profit. The comments relate the content being referenced to the discussion, but there is no insight and therefore the response gains 8 marks.

Candidate 2

Q2a: Role of Media - Discussion

The candidate was awarded **8 marks**.

This response looks closely at specific front pages of The Sun newspaper, and uses evidence from these to construct an argument that The Sun's main purpose is to make a profit, rather than to inform or educate. There are several points of information regarding the ways in which The Sun achieves this purpose, and these points relate to the idea that, while the press should be meeting the needs of consumers to be informed or educated, in The Sun's case these consumer needs are secondary to the drive for profit. Throughout the response a range of evidence is provided to back up the two central points of discussion: that the paper entertains in order to make a profit, rather than informing; and that the paper manipulates its readership in order to make a profit, whilst seeming to educate or inform. There is also a brief discussion of the cynical political bias of the paper's Scottish and English editions but this isn't developed. There is a detailed summary at the end of the response where several points are revisited, building to the final conclusion that the paper is driven by profit rather than to inform or educate.

Q2b: Role of Media - Exemplification

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

There is a range of detailed references to specific front pages and headlines from The Sun. There is detailed discussion of the front page with the headline "1 in 5 British Muslims..." with specific references both to the article and to other features on the front page. A different front page, with the headline "Queen backs Brexit," is also used to exemplify points being made. Both front pages are used to exemplify and develop the points being made about profit. There is also detailed reference to the way The Sun reported on the Hillsborough disaster, and the later apology it published. Some comments are insightful, such as those on the combination of content on the front page of The Sun and how this reflects a drive for profit rather than serious journalism; or the comments on the Hillsborough apology and the possibility that this apology was to improve the perception of the brand, rather than genuine regret. This brings the response into the top mark band. However, as the examples are not treated in a consistently insightful way, the lower mark of 9 is awarded.

Candidate 3

Q2a: Role of Media - Discussion

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

There are several detailed points which relate to the perspectives in the question. There is a sophisticated line of argument which makes several relevant points of discussion, debating the tension between Dove's attempts to meet needs and be an honest brand, and the improvement in their brand image resulting in a profit. There are several instances where the candidate's own opinion is offered in support of critical comment on the real beauty campaign, suggesting that the Real Beauty Sketches advert 'works' and 'Dove got it right', and comparing this to the Choose Beautiful advert which the candidate does not find so successful (although this area of the argument is less convincing). These critical comments contribute to the line of argument in a confident and sophisticated way. The response also explores the idea that Unilever own both Lynx and Dove, and uses this to offer further critical comment on Dove's message, arguing that it suggests that profit is more important than audience needs. Overall, this response provides a sophisticated, informed and critical line of argument and draws the argument together in a succinct conclusion, placing it clearly in the top mark band. Given that not all sections of the argument are equally well-developed, the lower mark of 9 is awarded.

Q2b: Role of Media - Exemplification

The candidate was awarded **9 marks**.

There are several specific and detailed references to the Dove and Lynx adverts, with particular detail in the discussion of Dove adverts. Each example is provided to support and exemplify the points being made. There are comments which clearly link the examples to the argument, for example when the Real Beauty Sketches advert is called 'formulaic and cheesy' but in support of a line of argument that Dove's message is a positive one. Some comments – such as the ones on the Choose Beautiful advert which question the integrity of making us choose and suggest that the world is not as 'black and white' as this – are insightful. This brings the response into the top mark band. However, as the examples are not treated in a consistently insightful way, the lower mark of 9 is awarded.

Candidate 4

Q2a: Role of Media - Discussion

The candidate was awarded **6 marks**.

This response discusses the task in relation to a range of adverts. Throughout the response there is one consistent point of discussion about whether the main role of these adverts is to meet the needs of audiences or to achieve the purposes of the institution making the advert, with a recognition that the purpose of advertising is almost always profit. Each advert is discussed separately, and in each discussion a point of information is made regarding how that advert makes a profit. There is a short conclusion at the end of the response, stating that ultimately most adverts are made with the purpose of making a profit, with a brief discussion of the possible exception in the case of the charity ad.

Q2b: Role of Media - Exemplification

The candidate was awarded **7 marks**.

There are specific references to examples from each of the ads being discussed and some of these references are detailed. The references are used to back up points being made to show how the ads have been created with the purpose of making a profit. In some of the examples, there is comment on the examples relating them to the discussion (Sick Kids and Dove), but in other cases there is a more general discussion of the ad without clear comment on how the evidence exemplifies the points being made (Barbie and Jaguar). The discussion of Sick Kids provides some detailed evidence, but the comment is slightly confused, particularly with regard to profit. The comment on the Dove ad, and how this relates to the parent company of Unilever and its ownership of Lynx, is the most developed. This comment clearly relates the content to the discussion and raises the response to a 7.

Candidate 5

Q2a: Role of Media - Discussion

The candidate was awarded **5 marks**.

There are two points of information relating to the question. There is a point made about how newspapers need to make a profit through a variety of methods (migrating online, publishing fake news, creating a moral panic, etc.) There is another point made about how newspapers also have to meet audience needs, looking at how tabloids target the middle classes. There is a point of discussion which offers the argument that the main role of newspapers is to make a profit, with brief concluding statements throughout the response. This discussion is not particularly detailed so a mark of 5 is awarded.

Q2b: Role of Media - Exemplification

The candidate was awarded **4 marks**.

There are references to two different newspaper front pages, which exemplify the points made in 2a. There is a description of the 'Lawless Britain' article and its accompanying image and list of negative factors about Britain. This example is clearly described, but not explored in detail. It supports the idea made in 2a that newspapers' main purpose is to generate profit. There is also a description of the 'Draw a red line...' article, referring to its colour scheme, layout and the fact that it is an opinionated piece of writing. It is also discussed in relation to the rest of the front page (Aldi voucher, England flag etc). This example is used to support the point made in 2a that newspapers must meet audience needs. These examples do not go into detail, and there are no comments on any of the references.