A Level Sociology (9699)
Unit Nine: Mass Media

Recommended Prior Knowledge
Background knowledge of the main global media organisations and structures would be helpful. Awareness of the different types of newspaper and the contrasts between commercial and state ownership of the media also has particular relevance for this unit.

Context
Many of the themes in this unit amplify the discussion of socialisation and identity in unit one. This unit also builds on knowledge of the influences of social class, gender and ethnicity examined in unit three. The social construction of crime and deviance, a theme in unit seven, may be illustrated by reference to the reporting of crime in the media.

Outline
The unit examines the sources of power within the organisation and processes of the mass media. It considers how the media represent different issues and social groups, and what affect these representations have on individuals and societies.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
9.1	Ownership and Control of the Mass Media • Identify trends in the organisation and control of the mass media. • Assess different perspectives on the relationship between the ownership and control of the mass media. • Discuss the role of the mass media in the political process.	Begin by distinguishing between different types of media and outline the main trends in the organisation and control of newspapers and television/radio in the modern industrial societies. Link the discussion to globalisation and the emergence of global media corporations. Assess where power lies within the media and develop this through a review of the pluralist and Marxist theories. Consider the role of the mass media within the political process (both in relation to democracies and authoritarian regimes). Discuss state censorship and also the extent to which the media are able to influence the outcome of elections in modern industrial societies today. **Class activity** Ask members of the class to research and give a presentation on	Barnard, A. et al, pp273-275, examines the ownership and control of the mass media. For a discussion of different perspectives on the relationship between the ownership and control of the mass media, see pp269-273. The role of the mass media in the political process is examined on pp276-279. A good site for the latest news about developments in the media world is:

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		the pattern of ownership and control of the media in their country. Emphasise the importance of looking at the theme of globalisation and the extent to which it is influencing the organisation and content of the media in different parts of the world. Compare findings about the ownership and control of the media in your country with evidence on the same topic from other countries.	www.media.guardian.co.uk For useful resources on the sociology of the media, see: www.aber.ac.uk/media www.mediaknowall.com
9.2	Media Content • Recognise the factors that influence the selection and presentation of media content. • Discuss the representation of different social groups within the mass media. • Assess different perspectives on the relationship between the mass media and ideology.	Consider examples of media content, such as news reports and magazines, and analyse how that content is selected and presented by journalists and editors. Use further examples to discuss the representation of different social groups within the media. Emphasise the role of the media in the construction of gender identities and link to post-modernist contributions to the analysis of the mass media. Conclude by assessing the usefulness of the concept of ideology in understanding the influence of the media in modern industrial societies. **Class activity** Invite the class to plan the media coverage of an important national election. Encourage them to discuss the factors that might influence the selection and presentation of news reports during the campaign. Conclude by considering ways that the media coverage might influence the outcome of the election.	Barnard, A. et al, pp280-283, considers the representation of different social groups within the media. The Classic Collection video, Stanley Cohen on *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, is a helpful source for examining the factors that influence the selection and presentation of media content. The links between popular culture and the mass media are explored at: www.theory.org.uk
9.3	Audience Effect • Identify social patterns in listening, viewing and reading. • Discuss different theories of the effects and uses of the mass media. • Assess the impact of the mass media on different aspects of	Use evidence from relevant surveys to identify social patterns in listening, viewing and reading. Invite the class to consider how, and in what ways, people may be influenced by exposure to the media. Recount the different theories of the effects and uses of the media. Use research evidence to assess the claim that the media may influence violent behaviour. Draw attention to the problems of researching the effects of the media on audiences and links back to related themes from unit two.	Barnard, A. et al, pp267-69, identifies social patterns in listening, viewing and reading. Different theories of the effects and uses of the media are discussed on pp283-287. There is also a useful discussion of the links between the media and violence on pp287-290. This is followed by a section on the problems of researching the effects of the media on audiences, see pp290-291.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
	human behaviour.	**Class activity**	
	• Consider the problems of researching the effects of the mass media on audiences.	Invite the class to research and give a presentation on the influence of opinion polls on election results. Encourage the students to use examples from relevant studies and to refer to different countries. Consider with the class different explanations for the influence that opinion polls may have on the outcome of elections.	