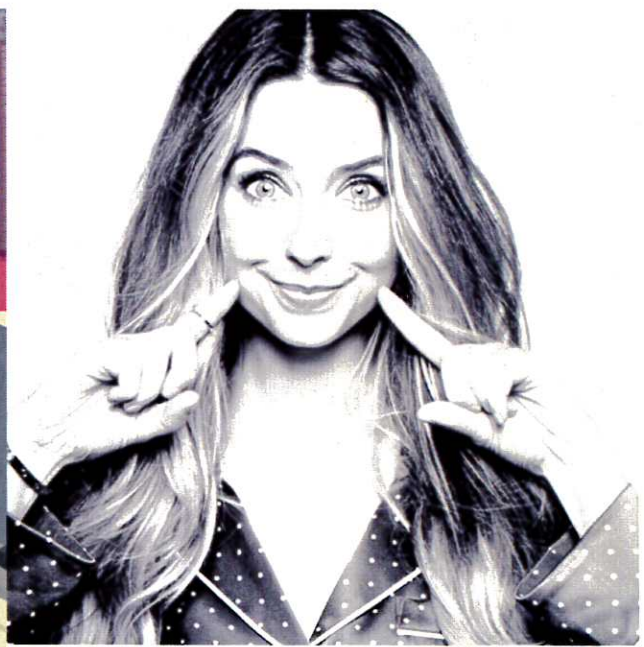
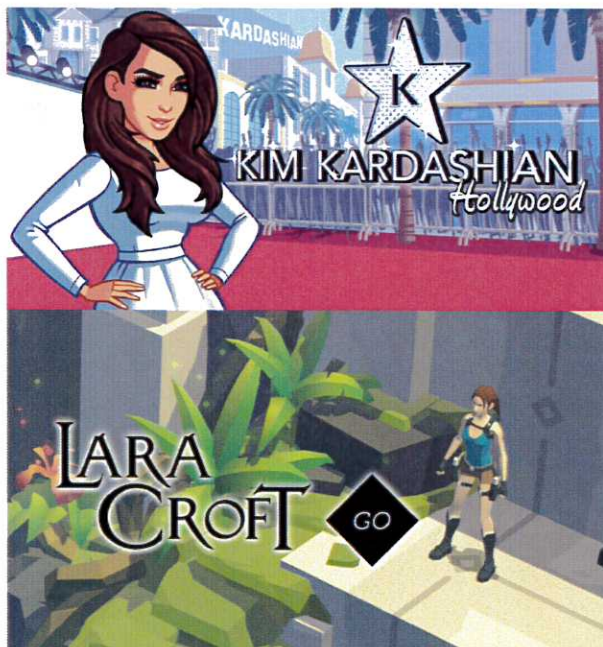


Online, Social and Participatory Media

GCSE MEDIA STUDIES (AQA) Year 11 Revision Pack



*Zoella, Kim Kardashian: Hollywood &
Lara Croft: Go*

Product:

Zoella - online vlogger and blogger Online, Social and Participatory Media.

<https://www.zoella.co.uk> - website

<https://www.youtube.co.uk/user/zoella280390> - Youtube channel

<https://twitter.com/zoella> - Twitter

<https://www.instagram.com/zoella> - Instagram

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to **all four elements** of the Theoretical Framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Zoella is the name of the fashion, beauty and lifestyle vlog created by Zoe Sugg in 2009 and posted on You Tube. The vlog has been hugely successful with audiences as has her social media profile on other online and social participatory forms. She is one of the new generation of online vloggers and the success of **Zoella** has enabled Sugg to branch into a range of other forms of merchandising, increasing the scope of the potential influence she has over her target audience. Zoella represents emerging developments in media technology and the products possess cultural significance. For many students these are products they would not normally engage with.

What do I need to study? Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

- **Media Language** Explore the genre conventions of each online, social and participatory form that Zoella uses. For example, investigate the technical codes used in Zoella's vlogs and the effect they have on the audience. Similarly, a study of her verbal codes is important in a consideration of how she connects with her audience. Use skills of semiotic analysis to deconstruct photographic images on her Facebook page and/or Instagram and consider their function in creating Zoella's brand. A study of the verbal codes used in Twitter posts by Zoella and her followers can be very illuminating in revealing the nature of the relationship Zoella enjoys with her followers. How have these various codes become established as conventions of this media form? What is the narrative structure of a typical Zoella presentation on her YouTube channel?
- **Media Representations** of Zoella herself, people she can be seen with, the products she endorses and settings she inhabits. Zoella invites a study of the extent to which she embodies and reinforces gender stereotyping. Clearly her representation is central to the creation of her brand but some critics argue that she trivialises female gender identity. Through how she represents herself and her world across the online, social and participatory forms she uses, investigate her interests, her concerns, her friendships, values and beliefs. What sort of critical reception has Zoella had? How fair are the criticisms and positive endorsements?
- **Media Audiences** Describe the demographics and psychographics of Zoella's target audience and investigate why she has proven to be so popular with them. What is the

nature of her appeal? What evidence is there for specific audience targeting in her online and social participatory products? Describe the opportunities for audience participation across Zoella's online products and consider the types of pleasure, uses and gratifications that are available for the intended audience of these products. Consider the extent of Zoella's influence on her target audience and the potential to generate oppositional readings.

- **Media Industries** You will need to investigate the development of Zoella as a commercial brand. How does she use her online presence for self-promotion? How has she generated a substantial income through her online, social and participatory forms? Who has she formed collaborations with and what are the benefits for her commercial partners in this move away from more traditional forms of marketing and promotion? What are the implications for traditional media industries of the success of online vloggers such as Zoella?
- **Historical, social and cultural contexts.** Zoella has emerged as an important cultural and commercial influence. Her success illustrates the growing exploitation of technological developments in the media to create a new generation of on-line celebrities. Her online presence also draws upon the effect of participatory audiences and the nature of the link between celebrities and their fans. Does Zoella also promote a certain set of lifestyle values and ideals alongside discussion of make-up and fashion? Clearly this invites comparison to be drawn with Kim Kardashian and Lara Croft as role models and their potential to create powerful messages which contribute to shaping contemporary values and beliefs.

Product:

Kim Kardashian; Hollywood - video game

Product: Kim Kardashian social media – Online, social and participatory

<https://www.kimkardashianwest.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/kimkardashian>

<https://twitter.com/kimkardashian?lang>

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to **all four elements** of the Theoretical Framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

The goal of this video game is to increase your fame and reputation by working your way up to join an A list of celebrity status. The product has cultural significance as it epitomises our society's interest in fame and celebrity. The narrative of the game also reflects our consumerist culture and along with the other online platforms that Kardashian uses, demonstrates how technological developments in the media are being exploited by famous people for commercial gain and to increase their public profile.

What do I need to study? Key Questions and Issues

This product relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

- **Media Language** You will need to investigate narrative ingredients used in the game such as character types, settings and events. What types of characters do we meet, where are they and what are they doing? How does the game play drive the narrative and how does the player impact on the action? How would you describe the visual appeal of the game? Your skills of semiotic analysis will be helpful here. How does the choice of elements in *KKH* represent the world in a way that puts over messages and values?
- **Media Representations** of femininity and masculinity, place, class and age need to be studied and analysed. To what extent has Kardashian been able to control her representation here? What types of stereotypes are featured in the game and how do they appeal to the target audience for the game? Such questions can lead to a study of how the use of representation can encourage audiences to aspire to a particular type of lifestyle or to adopt a particular type of appearance. Are there any types of social groups not represented? Discuss a feminist approach to the representations in the game.
- **Media Audiences** Investigate how the demographics of game players has shifted away from the dominance of male players and describe the target audience for this video game. What types of pleasures does playing the game offer them? Is Uses and Gratification theory helpful in understanding the appeal of this game? Consider the types of influence this product might have on audiences. Critics of gaming often point to their negative influence on audiences and this might be a good place to begin your investigation. Examine the material used to advertise and market the game. What does this tell you about the intended target audience?
- **Media Industries** What effect has the institution responsible for *KKH* had on the product? How does the game and Kim Kardashian's online presence demonstrate convergence? How are video games such as *KKH* regulated and rated? Has *KKH* been commercially successful? What does *KKH* tell us about the ways in which the video game industry is changing and developing?

- **Historical, social and cultural contexts.** The emergence of Kim Kardashian as a cultural phenomenon can be compared with the impact and influence of both Lara Croft and Zoella. All three invite comparisons in terms of their cultural influences on gender identity and power. How do all three reflect the nature of online participatory audiences and the link between celebrities and their followers?

Product:**Video Game: *Lara Croft Go* (2015)**

This is an in-depth CSP and needs to be studied with reference to **all four elements** of the Theoretical Framework (Language, Representation, Industries, Audience) and all relevant contexts.

Selection Criteria

Lara Croft Go forms part of the Tomb Raider video games franchise. Since its first launch in 1996, the franchise has enjoyed phenomenal global success and has cultural and historical significance, both in terms of the function and representation of female characters in gaming and in the development of the gaming industry itself. As a game character, Lara Croft has polarised opinions, some viewing her as a positive female role model whilst others are critical of her appearance. There are strongly contrasting views of the perceived quality of the Tomb Raider games. However, there can be no doubt of the commercial success of the franchise. Lara Croft's success transcends many media forms and platforms including big budget Hollywood films, comic books and novels.

What do I need to study? Key Questions and Issues

This game relates to the theoretical framework by providing a focus for the study of:

- **Media Language**

What are the narrative ingredients of *Lara Croft Go*? You will need to explore features of storytelling and consider the importance of narrative devices such as character, setting, narrative conflicts and their resolution. Notice the division between the traditional heroic figure (Lara Croft) and the opponents she encounters during the course of the game. There are clear elements of the action adventure genre but these are located in the context of a turn based puzzle game. Your analysis could focus on the connotations of various elements including Lara Croft's appearance, the music and game settings. Are there any elements of intertextuality? How would you describe the visual appeal of the game? Your skills of semiotic analysis will be helpful here.

- **Media Representations**

Clearly, the character of Lara Croft herself as the central protagonist in the game should begin a study of representation. To what extent does she conform or subvert the stereotype of the female role and identity? Studying both her appearance and behaviour in the game is important in investigating if she adopts characteristics of masculine gender identity too. What type of audiences does she appeal to? Consider other game elements too and the ways in which good and evil are represented. Discuss the representations of time and place.

- **Media Audiences**

Who was the target audience for this video game and what types of pleasures does playing the game offer them? How do games such as LCG fulfil audience needs and desires? Consider the types of influence this product might have on audiences. Critics of gaming

often point to their negative influence on audiences and this might be a good place to begin your investigation. Examine the material used to advertise and market the game. What does this tell you about the intended target audience? Investigate and comment on reviews of the game.

- **Media Industries**

Investigate the company responsible for developing and publishing the game. The game is part of a franchise. What does this mean? What advantages does a franchise offer to a producer? You will need to investigate the reception of the game in terms of its commercial success. How does the availability of the game across a variety of devices contribute to this? How are video games rated and regulated?

- **Historical, social and cultural contexts.** The emergence of Lara Croft as a commercial brand can be studied and compared with the impact and influence of both Kim Kardashian and Zoella. All three invite comparisons in terms of their cultural influences on female gender identity and power. How do all three reflect the nature of online participatory audiences and the link between celebrities and their followers? In terms of gender representation, do you see Lara Croft as an exception or an example of a wider problem in the video game industry?

Practice Questions

Shorter, Knowledge-based Questions

Briefly Explain what is meant by:

- Vlogging
- Semiotics
- Stereotyping
- Psychographics
- Media convergence

[2 Marks each]

Longer, Analysis Questions [8-12 markers]

- Explain how the messages and values of Kim Kardashian: Hollywood might affect young girls. [8 marks]
- Explain how the representation of Lara Croft is different from the representation of Kim Kardashian in these two products [10 marks]
- Explain how Zoella and Kim Kardashian: Hollywood are designed to appeal to their target audiences. [10 marks]
- Explain how media convergence can be good for a product like Kim Kardashian: Hollywood. [8 marks]

One 20 Mark Question per focus section (Lang/Rep/Aud/Ind)

- Analyse the ways in which visual and narrative codes in all three products (Zoella, Kim Kardashian, Lara Croft) work to construct an image of the star in question. Refer to Media Theory in your answer. [20 marks]
- Explain how different representations of femininity are constructed in all three products (Zoella, Kim Kardashian, Lara Croft). Refer to Media Theory in your answer. [20 marks]
- Explain how all three media products (Zoella, Kim Kardashian, Lara Croft) target their audiences. [20 marks]
- Explain some of the ways in which the three products (Zoella, Kim Kardashian, Lara Croft) use technology and star images in their marketing. [20 marks]