

Different types  
of comics and  
their target  
audience.







**Comic books. They're not just for kids, you know.**

Despite the success of the Spider-Man movie, and the slew of comics-based movies coming soon to a multiplex near you, comic books themselves remain marginalised. They're still largely considered the domain of kids.

Much of this reputation is due to the effects of the Comics Code, a set of reactionary guidelines introduced in 1954, after a US Senate investigation into the effects of comics on youngsters. It essentially restricted the medium to childish themes. America's primary publishers, including DC and Marvel, kowtowed for decades.



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It wasn't until the mid-80s that the US industry (which dominates the international English language scene) broke free. In 1986, the twin giants of modern comics appeared. *Watchmen* by writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons, and *Batman: The Dark Night Returns* by artist/writer Frank Miller. These DC titles introduced dark satire, media savvy and grim urban visions, and represented a fundamental shift in the medium.

After its mid-80s success, DC launched Vertigo, an imprint that nurtured the talent of a new breed of comics creators, including Grant Morrison (*The Invisibles*) and Garth Ennis (*Preacher*). Today, innovative comics creators find employment across the spectrum of publishers, with Morrison writing mainstream X-Men titles for Marvel. His *New X-Men* is riding high in the bestseller lists, while Pete Milligan's *X-Statix*, co-created with artist Mike Allred, provides a fascinating satire of the very franchise-oriented culture that spawned it.

Frank Miller continues to create excellent comics like *Sin City*, a vice-drenched series of noir tales that function as a resounding riposte to the legacy of the Comics Code. Moore, who in the 90s created the Jack the Ripper investigation *From Hell* (the film version starred Johnny Depp), is also still writing superb titles. Among them *The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, which unites characters from Victorian fantastical literature. Look out for the film version next year, starring Sean Connery.



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Writer Brian Michael Bendis' Powers offers another twist on how real society would cope with the presence of superbeings. Bendis also writes commercial titles like the bestselling Ultimate Spider-Man, or titles for Marvel's "mature readers" line Marvel Max, like Alias, the tale of a superhero turned PI. Another distinctive US title is Hellboy, also heading for the big screen, by artist/writer Mike Mignola. Hellboy is also an investigator, but of the paranormal.

The diversity of comics currently available is remarkable. Certainly many comics still pander to the pubescent male, but beyond these are the titles that cater for all tastes - even those of intelligent adults. DE 05 September 02

#### useful links

[www.marvel.com](http://www.marvel.com)

[www.dccomics.com](http://www.dccomics.com)

[www.wildstorm.com](http://www.wildstorm.com)

[www.warrenellis.com](http://www.warrenellis.com)

[www.imagecomics.com](http://www.imagecomics.com)

[www.darkhorse.com](http://www.darkhorse.com)

[www.hellboy.com](http://www.hellboy.com)

[hellboymovie.kosertech.com](http://hellboymovie.kosertech.com)

[www.titancomics.com](http://www.titancomics.com)

The structure of the exam and style of questions are very similar each year. Below are the questions from the 2006 exam (Higher and Foundation).

Go through questions and think about key concepts being questioned.

Convert the exam paper into one for comic books. You will need to pick the two extracts to ask the questions about (only do the tier you have been entered for).

Foundation Paper  
SECTION B

*Study the film poster texts on the separate sheet carefully. One is the poster for the thriller, Lucky Number Seven.*

*The other is for the Chinese martial arts film, House of Flying Daggers.*

1. List **two** similarities between the posters. Briefly explain these similarities. [10]
2. List **two** differences between the posters. Briefly explain these differences. [10]
3. Choose a character from **one** of the film posters. What does the poster suggest about the role of the character in the film? [10]
4. Create a film poster for **either** a new science fiction **or** a comedy film.

Task 1. Suggest a title for your film.

Task 2. Suggest **two** stars to play the leading roles. Give reasons for your choice.

Task 3. Create a poster to advertise your film.

Task 4. Explain your ideas. [20]

Higher Paper  
SECTION B

*Study the film poster texts on the separate sheet carefully. One is the poster for the thriller, Lucky Number S7evin.*

*The other is for the Chinese martial arts film, House of Flying Daggers.*

1. Choose a character from **one** of the film posters. What does the poster suggest about the role of the character in the film? [10]

2. Create a film poster for **either** a new science fiction **or** a comedy film.

Task 1. Suggest a title for your film.

Task 2. Suggest **two** stars to play the leading roles. Give reasons for your choice.

Task 3. Create a poster to advertise your film.

Task 4. Explain your ideas. [20]

3. Choose **one** of the film posters. In what ways is it typical of film posters? [10]

4. Suggest **two** reasons why film posters are an effective way of promoting a film. Briefly explain your reasons. [10]

The marks schemes are also very similar each year.

Look at the mark schemes below and make a list of the key things the examiner is looking for in each answer.

Now convert the mark scheme for the questions you have just written (again only do the tier you have been entered for).

### **Foundation Paper Mark Scheme**

**List two similarities between the posters. Briefly explain these similarities.**

2 marks for each similarity.

from:

- Size.
- In colour.
- Title of film.
- Main image.
- Characters in threes.
- Settings.
- Release dates.
- Endorsements.
- Credits.
- Websites.

Other similarities to be credited and discussed at conference.

2 marks for a basic explanation.

2 marks for detailed explanations.

2 further marks for emerging media language in explanations.

**10 marks**

**List two differences between the posters. Briefly explain these differences.**

Differences to include:

- Colour - HoFD lighter in colour and tone  
LNoSlevin dark colour and tone
- Genre HoFD Martial arts genre  
Lucky No Slevin Thriller genre
- 2 Male characters one female/three male characters
- settings HOFD Forests, Asia, Eastern  
LNo Slevin USA, Cities
- Typographic style/fonts
- To name a few: others to be added at conference.

2 marks for each difference identified up to 4.

2 marks for basic explanation of differences.

2 marks for detailed explanations.

2 marks for emerging media language in explanation of differences.

**Choose a character from one of the film posters. What does the poster suggest about the role of the character in the film?**



e.g. House of Flying Daggers:

- central female character, princess, asian
- two male characters, martial arts, fighters asian

Lucky Number Slevin

- young, old
- black/white
- young male foreground, black older male middle ground, side on middle aged male background in action pose with guns

Level 1 Ungraded on this tier Mark of 1-2

Candidates struggle to identify a character in any meaningful way influenced by their media studies. Simple descriptions of characters in evidence from age or dress code.

Level 2 Grades G-F Mark of 3-4

Candidates offer descriptions of chosen character from the film posters with some basic sense of their role in the film. e.g. House of flying daggers Asian, man or woman, attractive girl, fighting men. Lucky number Slevin - Three men, one young, one old, one middle aged, possibly giving name of star.

Level 3 Grades E-D Marks of 5-7

Candidates offer detailed descriptions of the character from the film posters identifying and discussing the key features from basic codes and conventions, mostly dress, title of film, setting, looks. Some sense of inference to representations, of age, gender or nation or ethnicity.

Level 4 Grade C Mark of 8-10

Candidates offer detailed descriptions with emerging media language in discussions of symbolic codes of dress, body language, gesture, setting, links to title, narrative and genre. Good sense of representations with emerging media language any reference to stereotyping linked to genre of Asian fighters in HoFD or gunmen, cops, gangsters in LNS.

Any reference to character functions in film Propp must get 10.

**10 marks**

**Create a film poster for either a new science fiction or comedy film.**

Level 1 Ungraded on this tier Mark of 1-3

Candidates will fail to complete all the tasks and offer only rudimentary designs which are poorly presented and lack a detailed understanding of the codes and conventions of film posters.

Level 2 Grades G-F Marks of 4-8

Candidates complete most of the tasks but demonstrate only rudimentary knowledge of film poster design and layout. Designs will be organised and presented in a reasonable manner identifying only key features such as title of film and main image. Explanations will be simple and lacking detail.

Level 3 Grades E-D Marks 9-15

Candidates will generally complete all the tasks with satisfactory designs appropriate to the genre. There will be a basic sense of a narrative for the film emerging from the design and some sense of promotion through stars and wider media endorsements.

Level 4 Grade C Marks of 16-20

Candidates will generally complete all the tasks with well presented designs and layouts supported with emerging media language on annotations or explanations. There will be a clear

sense of the codes and conventions of film poster design, the scifi or comedy genre and the use of posters in wider film promotion. 20 marks

### **Higher Paper Mark Scheme**

**Choose a character from one of the film posters. What does the poster suggest about the role of the character in the film?**

Ungraded on this tier. Mark of 1-3

Candidates offer only simple descriptions of chosen character from the film posters.

HoFD - Man, woman, Asian, male fighters, female princess.

LnoSlevin - Three men, one young, one old, one middle aged.

Level 1 Grades E-D Marks of 4-5

Candidates offer detailed descriptions of the character from the film posters identifying and discussing the key features from basic codes and conventions, mostly dress, title of film setting, looks. Some sense of inference to representations, of age, gender or nation or ethnicity.

Level 2 Grade C Mark of 6

Candidates offer detailed descriptions with emerging media language in discussions of symbolic codes of dress, body language, gesture, setting, links to title, narrative and genre. Good sense of representations with emerging media language any reference to stereotyping linked to genre of Asian fighters in HoFD or American male gunmen, cops, gangsters in LnoS.

Level 3 Grade B Mark of 7

Candidates offer detailed description combined with confident use of media language and a sound understanding of the codes and conventions of film posters, narrative and genre linked to character functions e.g. Propp and some reference to representational issues. Asians and ethnicity in HoFD, gender roles female princess or heroine. Male characters in Lucky Number Slevin, protagonist, antagonist, young character passive, old character - donor, character with guns villain, cop or antagonist, villain.

Level 4 Grade A-A\* Mark of 8-10

Candidates offer sophisticated responses with media language used fluently to discuss how the codes and conventions of the characters in film poster chosen attract an audience with clear reference to representation issues and genre. Clear sense of genre and character emerging

HoFD - Martial arts genre and character functions. Lucky number Slevin - Thriller and character functions. Hard cops or villains, guns and violence, unlucky youth (wrong time, wrong place, wrong number). 10 marks

**Q.6 A series of tasks.**

**Create a film poster for either a new science fiction or comedy film.**

Ungraded on this tier. Mark of 0-7

Candidates will fail to complete all the tasks and offer only rudimentary designs which are poorly presented and lack a detailed understanding of the codes and conventions of film posters.

Level 1 Grades E-D Marks of 8-11

Candidates will generally complete all the tasks with satisfactory designs appropriate to the genre. There will be a basic sense of a narrative for the film emerging from the design and some sense of promotion through stars and wider media endorsements.

**Level 2 Grade C Marks of 12-13**

Candidates will generally complete all the tasks and well presented designs and layouts supported with emerging media language on annotations or explanations.

There will be a clear sense of the codes and conventions of film poster design and the use of posters in wider film promotion and how characters and stars are used.

**Level 3 Grade B Marks of 14-15**

Candidates will demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions of film poster design. This will be supported by confident use of media language on the annotation and explanations. There will be a real sense of the genre and of its wider promotion techniques and appealing to an audience through characters, stars and narratives.

**Level 4 Grade A-A\* Marks of 16-20**

Candidates at this level offer imaginative and innovative designs demonstrating a thorough understanding of the genre and of the codes and conventions of film poster layout and design linked to the genre. There will be explicit evidence of sophisticated media language used to annotate their designs and in their explanations. There will be a clear knowledge and understanding of how their poster aims to attract an audience through characters, narratives and stars.

**20 marks**

**Q.7 Choose one of the film posters. In what ways is it typical of film posters?**

Typicality to include key codes and conventions of film posters:

Title

Typography

Image of stars

Characters in threes

Layout

Images from film

Release dates

Credit billing

settings

websites

endorsements.

Any other typicality raised by candidates to be credited.

**Ungraded on this level Marks of 1-3**

Only basic reasons offered for typicality from obvious choices of colour, titles, character.

**Level 1 Grade E-D Mark of 4-5**

Detailed explanations of typicality from a range of codes and conventions.

**Level 2 Grade C Mark of 6**

Detailed explanations of chosen typicality with a range of appropriate codes and conventions addressed using appropriate media language.

**Level 3 Grade B Mark of 7**

Very detailed explanations of typicality with confident use of media language in discussions of codes and conventions features of film posters.

Level 4 Grade A-A\* Mark of 8-10

Sophisticated explanations offered of typicality with high level of media language and terminology in evidence to support complex answers. **10 marks**

**Suggest two reasons why film posters are an effective way of promoting a film.**

**Briefly explain your reasons.**

2 marks each reason.

From:

- wide range of print outlets and poster sites: print media, in cinema display ad sites, locations;
- conventions of posters: colourful attractive size and variety, capture key features of film and genre.

1 mark for explanations. Mark of 5 or 2 marks for detailed explanations and confident media language. Mark of 6.

1-2 marks for detailed explanation and media language. Mark of 7-8.

1-2 further marks for sophisticated answers. Mark of 9-10.

**10 marks**



Now you are familiar with the questioning style and the mark scheme, convert last year's exam to one comic books - you will obviously have to think about the extracts too.

Answer your own questions and mark them according to your knowledge of what the examiner wants.

Your teacher will give you the real mark scheme - were you on the right lines? Of not set yourself target for the exam.

Foundation Paper  
SECTION B

*Study carefully the CD covers on the separate sheet. One is the cover for the Katie Melua CD, Piece by Piece. The other is for the CD by Richard Ashcroft, Keys to the World.*

1. Identify **two** similarities between the two CD covers. Briefly explain these similarities. [10]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Choose **one** of the CD covers. Briefly explain the differences between the front and the back cover.  
[10]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Choose **one** of the CD covers. Briefly explain the image it creates for the performer. [10]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Create a CD cover for a new performer or band by completing the following tasks:  
  
Task 1. Name the performer or band.  
  
Task 2. Choose a title for your new CD.  
  
Task 3. Design the front and back cover for your new CD.  
  
Task 4. Explain how your cover will appeal to music audiences. [20]

Higher Paper

SECTION B

*Study carefully the CD covers printed on the separate sheet. One is the cover for the Katie Melua CD, Piece by Piece. The other is for the CD by Richard Ashcroft, Keys to the World.*

5. Choose **one** of the CD covers. Briefly explain the image it creates for the performer. [10]
6. Create a CD cover for a new performer or band by completing the following tasks:
- Task 1. Name the performer or band.
  - Task 2. Choose a title for your new CD.
  - Task 3. Design the front and back cover for your new CD.
  - Task 4. Explain how your cover will appeal to music audiences. [20]
7. Explain why you think CD covers are important to popular music fans. [10]
8. Give **two** reasons why CD covers are generally linked to websites. Briefly explain **each** reason.  
[10]

Below is a mock paper for comic books. Spend an hour and 15 minutes answering all the questions.

The mark scheme is below - self mark your own work and set yourself targets for the exam.



**extracts**



## MOCK PAPERS

### HIGHER TIER

You should study carefully the two media texts you have been given. They are an extract from a Batman comic strip and a complete Minnie the Minx comic strip story.

1. Choose one of the comic strips. How is gender represented? (10 marks)
  
2. Choose one of the comic strips and write about the ways in which it appeals to its target audience of both boys and girls. (10 marks)
  
3. You have been employed to create a new hero to appeal to girls aged 10-12. Complete the tasks below on the attached sheet to develop your ideas:
  - Create a name for your hero.
  
  - Using the box on the attached sheet draw a sketch of your hero, and on the lines beneath explain the key features of your hero's representation.
  
  - Describe a typical narrative in which your hero might feature.(20 marks)
  
4. Describe the ways in which a new comic could be marketed to promote interest in its first issue. (10 marks)

## FOUNDATION TIER

You should study carefully the two media texts you have been given. They are an extract from a Batman comic strip and a complete Minnie the Minx comic strip story.

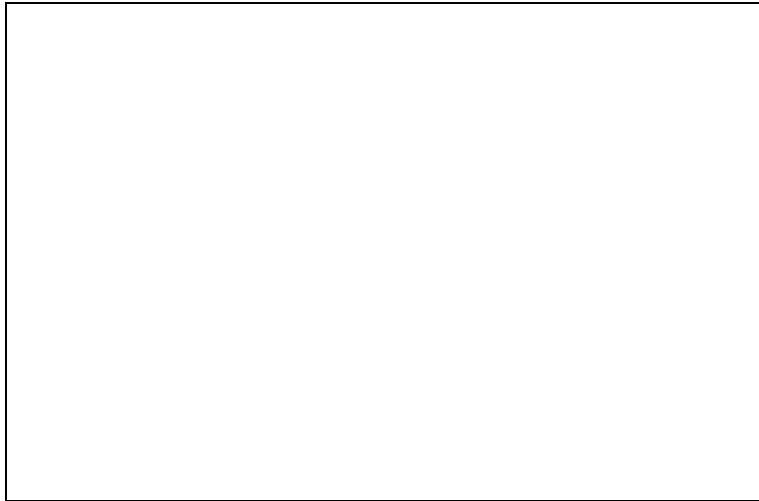
1. Identify two similarities between the two comic strips. Briefly describe the similarities. (10 marks)
  
2. Identify and briefly describe five ways in which the extracts are typical of comic strips.  
(10 marks)
  
3. You have been employed to create a new hero to appeal to girls aged 10-12. Complete the tasks below on the attached sheet to develop your ideas:
  - Create a name for your hero.
  
  - Using the box on the attached sheet draw a sketch of your hero, and on the lines beneath explain five key features of your hero.
  
  - Describe a typical story in which your hero might feature.

(20 marks)

4. Choose one of the comic strips. How are females represented in the strip?  
(10 marks)

# 1. TASK THREE WORKSHEET

CHARACTER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



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TYPICAL NARRATIVE:

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## FOUNDATION TIER MARK SCHEME

Add up the total mark and give a mark out of 5 for Quality of Written work as outlined below.

Grade boundaries

40+ = C

30+ = D

20+ = E

10+ = F

5+ = G

0+ = U

**Identify two similarities between the two comic strips. Briefly describe the similarities.**

2 marks for each similarity identified, eg; hero, stereotypical characters, unbelievable situations/storylines, action/drama, exaggerated expressions, neologisms, word bubbles, etc.

2 marks for EACH basic description of similarities, eg; both have heroes that readers can identify with, Batman is stereotypical 'super-hero'/Minnie is stereotypical 'anti-hero'

Award up to 2 further marks for detailed descriptions which may include audience gratification

**Identify and briefly describe five ways in which the extracts are typical of comic strips.**

Candidates may choose to write about:

- super-hero (Batman)
- anti-hero (Minnie)
- anti-hero behaving in typical 'naughty' fashion
- Batman behaving in typical superhero fashion
- Stereotypes featured (anti-hero/hero/adult/woman in Batman strip)
- Narrative structure

Candidates may also write about the technical codes and conventions - neologisms, onomatopoeia, etc.

Examiners must be open to the explanations/descriptions offered of each feature which may centre around:

- Codes and conventions
- Audience expectations and appeal

Level 1      Marks 0-3    Ungraded on this tier

Candidates will not offer five features or only very simple descriptions of features.

Level 2      Marks 4-5    Grades G/F

Candidates will offer basic descriptions for three to five features, mainly based on denotation from comic strip extract.

Level 3      Marks 6-7    Grades D/E

Candidates will offer detailed descriptions of the features and begin to explain typicality based on codes and conventions and audience appeal.

Level 4      Marks 8-10    Grade C

Candidates will identify and describe five appropriate features in some detail using media language such as stereotype, narrative, audience appeal, anti-hero, super-hero, etc.

**You have been employed to create a new hero to appeal to girls aged 10-12. Complete the tasks below on the attached sheet to develop your ideas:**

Level 1 Marks 0-3    Ungraded on this tier

Candidates will fail to complete all tasks. They may struggle with the explanation of their key features and may merely replicate an existing comic character.

Level 2      Marks 4-9    Grades G-F

Candidates offer appropriate suggestions for a name, setting and story. They may fail to complete all the tasks, particularly the explanation of the key features of their hero. Story suggestion may be very basic.



Level 3      Marks 10-15   Grades E-D

Candidates offer appropriate ideas for the new character with detailed suggestions for setting/story. Their explanation of key features will be identify appropriate areas of representation, eg, clothes/hair/expression/props.

Level 4      Marks 16-20   Grade C

Candidates will offer appropriate ideas for the new character with detailed explanations of setting and story. Emerging media language will be evident based around narrative structure and character types such as equilibrium/resolution/heroes/villains/helpers/stereotype. Highest marks should be awarded to those candidates who attempt to create a hero/setting/story to counter stereotypes.

1. Choose one of the comic strips. How are females represented in the strip?

Level 1   Marks 0-3   Ungraded on this tier

Candidates identify a female character and describe in very basic terms.

Level 2      Marks 4-5   Grade F/G

Candidates may identify a female character and offer a simple description of their role.

Level 3      Marks 6-7   Grades D/E

Candidates offer detailed descriptions of a female and write about their role in the story. For the Minnie strip they may centre their explanations around her being a typical 'tomboy' rather than a typical 'girl'. For the Batman strip they may write about the woman being a victim and being helpless.

Level 4      Marks 8-10   Grade C

Candidates will offer detailed descriptions of character with emerging media language based on stereotypes and character types eg: victim/anti-hero. Highest marks should be awarded to those candidates who also imply positive or negative representations.

## HIGHER TIER MARK SCHEME

Add up the total mark and give a mark out of 5 for Quality of Written work as outlined below.

Grade boundaries

45+ = A\*

40+ = A

35+ = B

30+ = C

25+ = D

20+ = E

Below 20 is ungraded on this tier

**1. Choose one of the comic strips. How is gender represented?**

Marks 0-3 Ungraded on this tier

Candidates will offer basic description of characters.

Level 1        Marks 4-5 Grades E/D

Candidates will offer detailed descriptions of characters, possibly based on simple comments about role in narrative or idea of strong/weak.

Level 2        Marks 6 Grade C

Candidates will offer detailed explanations of gender representation with *emerging media language* such as stereotype/hero/heroine. Explanations may centre around role in narrative.

Level 3        Marks 7 Grade B

Detailed explanation of both genders in comic strip chosen plus *confident use of media language* relating to stereotypical/counter-stereotypical representations.

Level 4        Marks 8-10 Grade

A-A\* Sophisticated answers, discussing stereotypical/counter-stereotypical representations plus role in narrative and audience expectation/gratification. Positive/negative representations will be addressed.

**Choose one of the comic strips and write about the ways in which it appeals to its target audience of both boys and girls.**

Marks 0-3 Ungraded on this tier

Candidates offer a basic description of the comic strip, possibly mentioning audience enjoyment of story.

Level 1 Marks 4-5 Grade E/D

Candidates offer basic suggestions for audience enjoyment, possibly centring around audience enjoyment or identification.

Level 2 Marks 6 Grade C

Candidates offer detailed explanation for audience appeal with *emerging media language* centring around identification/entertainment.

Level 3 Marks 7 Grade B

Detailed explanation of comic strip narrative with *confident use of media language* based on identification/entertainment/social interaction.

Level 4 Marks 8-10 Grade A-A\*

Detailed explanation of comic strip with sophisticated use of media language based on uses and gratifications with explanation given for appeal to both sexes. Highest marks should be awarded for discussion of identification/educational issues for younger audiences.

**2. You have been employed to create a new hero to appeal to girls aged 10-12.**

**Complete the tasks below on the attached sheet to develop your ideas:**

- Create a name for your hero.
- Using the box on the attached sheet draw a sketch of your hero, and on the lines beneath explain the key features of your hero's representation.
- Describe the main setting for your hero.
- Describe a typical narrative in which your hero might feature.

Marks 0-7 Ungraded on this tier.

Candidates may offer simple suggestions for a new character's name/setting/narrative and draw a simple, generic hero. They may fail to complete all tasks, particularly the explanation of their character's key features.

Level 1 Marks 8-11 Grades E/D

Candidates will offer appropriate ideas for name/setting/narrative, possibly basing the whole task on an adaptation of an existing comic character. They may miss out part of the task and their explanation of key features may be basic.

Level 2 Marks 12-13 Grade C

Candidates will offer appropriate ideas for name/setting/narrative. All of the tasks will be completed. Emerging media language will be evident around narrative structure and representation such as resolution/anti-hero/super-hero/villain.

Level 3 Marks 14-15 Grade B

Candidates will offer imaginative ideas for a character supported by confident media language in their explanation of representation and narrative structure. A real sense of narrative structure should be evident through equilibrium/disruption/resolution plus character functions. A real sense of representation should also be evident through settings and character, stereotypes or alternatives of gender, social class, ethnicity.

Level 4 Marks 16-20 Grades A-A\*

A sense of sophistication or innovation in the task will be clearly evident. Effective use of media language will be used to support a new character idea that attempts to counter negative female stereotypes. There will be a clear sense of audience gratification present in the narrative which will display a sophisticated understanding of narrative structure and character function.

**3. Describe the ways in which a new comic could be marketed to promote interest in its first issue.**

Marks 0-3 Ungraded on this tier.

Candidates will offer simple ideas with no explanation.

Level 1 Marks 4-5 Grades E/D

Candidates will offer at least three appropriate ideas. May offer basic explanation of ideas.

Level 2 Marks 6 Grade C

Candidate will offer at least three appropriate ideas will be offered across various media forms (TV/internet/free gift).

Level 3        Marks 7    Grade B

Candidates will offer imaginative and appropriate ideas across various media forms - internet/TV/free gift/website/price promotion

Level 4        Marks 8-10    Grade A-A\*

Candidates will offer imaginative ideas across various appropriate media forms and will offer explanation of why ideas will be effective/appropriate to audience. A real sense of a marketing campaign will be apparent at the top end of the mark scheme.