

GCSE Media Studies 2007

*Date of exam: Tuesday, 12th June 2007
(PM – 1.15 start)*

Revision booklet

*Science Fiction film (Section A)
CD Covers (Section B)*

Name:

Teacher:



*Section A:
Science Fiction Film*



*Section B:
CD Covers*

All the answers in your GCSE exam will be written into an answer booklet.

The resource material for science fiction film will be a clip of a Sci-Fi film. You will be shown the clip THREE times. You will have to answer 3 questions on the text as well as carry out a creative task.

The resource material for CD covers will be on separate sheets for ease of reference. You will again have to answer 3 questions about the text as well as carry out a practical task.

It is advised that you answer all the text related questions first and then start on the creative tasks.

All your answers must be implicitly and explicitly rooted in the key concepts.

REMEMBER:

Take a pen, pencil, rubber, ruler and A SET OF COLOURED PENCILS/PENS into the exam

Section A

Science Fiction Film

You must revise thoroughly everything you have studied in class – this means everything on moving image as well as science fiction. Before going into the exam, you will have to have a clear idea of science fiction as a genre, its conventions and the visual codes that is commonly uses.

Answer the questions below – they will help you recap the codes and conventions of Science Fiction Film.

Genre films contain conventions which enable us to categorise them. Visual signs - known as iconography - are essential identifiers that audiences decode and interpret. We also have expectations of the typical storyline, key scenes and narrative conventions associated with films in a particular genre.

1. Identify the iconography of a science fiction movie.

2. **a** Outline the familiar narrative structure of a mainstream science fiction film, including the various 'stages' of the story development.

b What often causes the disruption to the initial equilibrium?

c Are all conflicts resolved?

d What key scenes do we expect to see?

In addition to recurring imagery, narrative structures and key sequences, genre films also contain recurring themes. Science fiction films often feature (list example scenes of these from films you have seen):

- *Action which involves space and/or time travel*
- *Storylines motivated by scientific research and progress*
- *Conflicts from scientific research and space/time travel*
- *Explorations of the nature of humanity, comparing humans to androids and/or unknown species. A theme of 'difference' is always highlighted.*

1. *How are aliens and androids perceived in ET, The Terminator, Men In Black and Star Wars?*

2. *Are they always villains?*

ANALYSE THE THEMES LISTED ABOVE IN TWO FILMS OF YOUR CHOICE.

CHOOSE SEQUENCES WHICH HIGHLIGHT THESE THEMES.

Genre and narrative theory (2.3/2.4)
Character function (2.5/2.6)

- *Use the Monsters and Aliens grid to explore as many Sci-fi films as you can. Think about how aliens are represented and why that is.*
- *Complete the activities on the 'Hero and Villain' sheet.*
- *Try and think about gender roles in Sci-Fi films – who usually plays the hero? Why? How is likely to be the victim? Why? Are there films where the gender roles are reversed? Why?*
- *Answer the questions on the 'Women: The Sex Object, The Companion...' sheet. Do these questions for as many of films as you can.*

4.3
4.4
4.11

Science fiction films tend to have a broad appeal. They tend to attract huge audience, both male and female from a wide ranging age band.

Look at the top 10 Box Office Hits and answer the questions attached.

Read the two sheets on Constructing Science Fiction Narratives for Mass Audiences. Complete the table for at least 3 films.

5.5
5.6

As part of your exam it is likely that you will be shown a clip, trailer or title sequence from a Sci-Fi film. You will then be asked a series of questions that show you are able to deconstruct it using the Key Concepts (Media Language, Representation, Audience and Institution).

Answering the question below is a good starting point:

1. What science fiction conventions are clearly apparent?

2. What expectations are generated about the storyline?

3. How do we receive this information?

4. What symbolic and audio codes differentiate the goodies and baddies?

The ‘Reading a Trailer or Title Sequence’ sheet provides a detailed crib sheet on how to break a film clip down.

Try and apply it to 4 or 5 short Sci-Fi film clips as revision for the exam.

Your answers will often be presented in mini-essay form. The ‘Identifying Genre: Essay Notes’ sheets has got some great sentence starters – try and remember some of them to use in your exam.

6.12
3.2

As well as deconstructing a Sci-Fi film, you will also be asked to carry out a creative activity. That could be either a STORYBOARD or a FILM TREATMENT.

A film treatment is a piece of prose, typically the step between scene cards and the first draft of a screenplay for a motion picture. It is generally longer and more detailed than an outline (or one page synopsis) and shorter and less detailed than a step outline but it may include details of directorial style that an outline omits. They read like a short story.

Look at the 'Writing Your Own Film Treatment' sheet. It gives lots of information and ideas about how to write a film treatment.

As revision and preparation for your exam, have a go at writing a few film treatments. If you are struggling for ideas the 'Typical Sci-Fi Plots' has a number of recognised, conventional plots to nudge you on your way.

NB: If you are looking to achieve a B/A/A* you HAVE TO take institution into account. You must show understanding of how Sci-Fi films are linked to particular institutions - you have to make reference to institution in your task and in your evaluation.

Sci-Fi films often reflect social issues so try and incorporate them in your own ideas (see sheet for ideas and examples)

6.3
6.4
6.8

If you are asked to create a Storyboard you can draw on the same plot lines.

The storyboard sheet attached has all the descriptors you should include.

The style of question on the exam paper is usually very straight forward and this is also true for the pattern of questions you are likely to be asked.

Below are a few exam practice questions that you can work through. Each set is designed to look like Section A of the exam.

The questions on the higher paper will be different to those on the foundation paper – so look at the questions for the tier you have been entered for.

Set of Questions 1

Higher Tier

(You should be able to answer these questions for any clip from any Sci-Fi film)

After viewing the Sci-Fi film, use your notes to answer the following questions.

- 1. Explain how the storyline in the extract appeals to the audience*
- 2. You have been asked to create a new Sci-Fi film. Complete the task below to develop your ideas*
 - Suggest a title for your film*
 - Outline a story for the film*
 - Choose a setting*
 - Explain why you have chosen this setting*
 - Suggest three ways in which the film could be advertised.*
- 3. Choose one character from the extract. How are they represented?*
- 4. Give two reasons why Sci-Fi is popular with film companies. Explain each of your reasons.*

Set of questions 2

1. *Explain how the genre is established from the extract.*
2. *Create a title sequence for a new Sci-Fi film. You will need to complete all the task below*
 - *Give your film a title*
 - *Create a hero and villain to appear in the title sequence*
 - *Produce an 8-10 shot storyboard*
 - *Explain your choices and decisions*
3. *Explain why you think Sci-Fi films are popular with audiences.*
4. *How are the representations of the alien and hero typical of the genre? Explain your reasons in detail.*

Foundation Question

Set of questions 1

- 1. List 3 camera shots from the extract. Briefly explain why they were used.*
- 2. Identify 2 different types of sound used in the extract. Briefly explain why they were used.*
- 3. Explain how the storyline in the extract appeals to the audience*
- 4. You have been asked to create a new Sci-Fi film. Complete the task below to develop your ideas*
 - Suggest a title for your film*
 - Outline a story for the film*
 - Choose a setting*
 - Explain why you have chosen this setting*
 - Suggest three ways in which the film could be advertised.*

Set of questions 2

- 1. This film extract is made to create a feeling of excitement and suspense. Show how it does this, by choosing and explaining **two** examples from the following: the use of the camera and soundtrack.*
- 2. How is the genre established in the extract?*
- 3. Who is the target audience for the extract? Explain why you came to this conclusion.*
- 4. Create a title sequence for a new Sci-Fi film. You will need to complete all the task below*
 - Give your film a title*
 - Create a hero and villain to appear in the title sequence*
 - Produce an 8-10 shot storyboard*
 - Explain your choices and decisions*

Section B

CD Covers

You MUST revise everything you have done in class thoroughly - everything you need to secure the highest grade possible is in those notes and activities.

Music Genre (and sub genre)

List (on the next page) the main music genres you think exist in the music market at the moment. Now identify as many of the sub-genres of each as you can.

Ensure you can answer all the following questions about at least half of the genres:

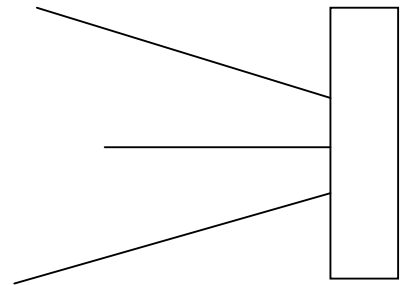
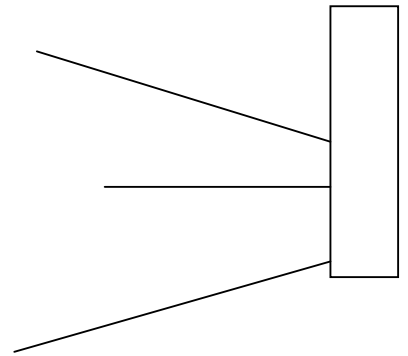
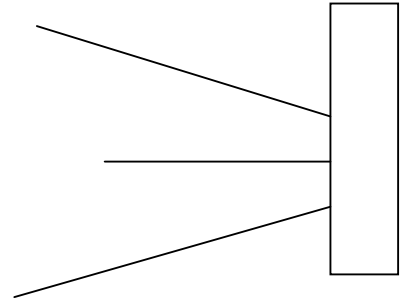
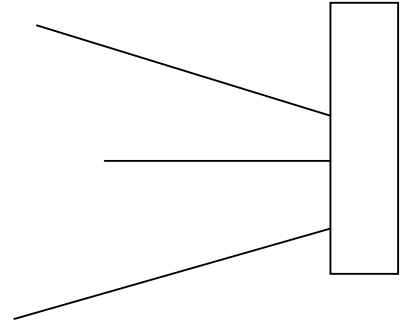
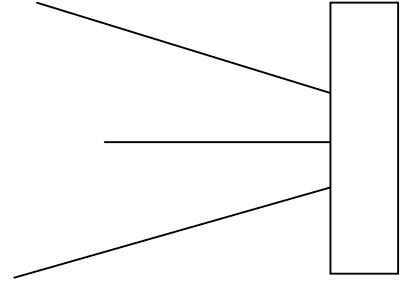
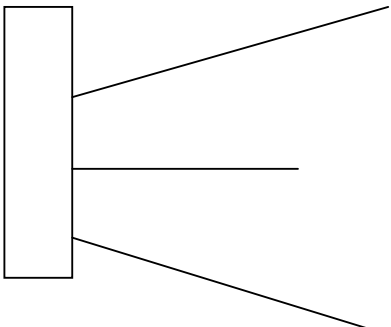
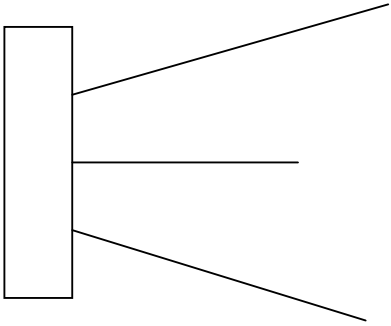
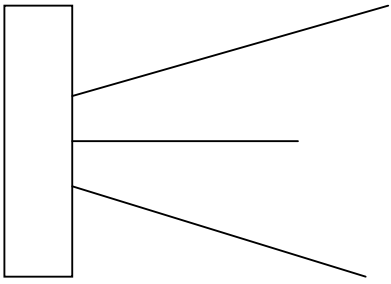
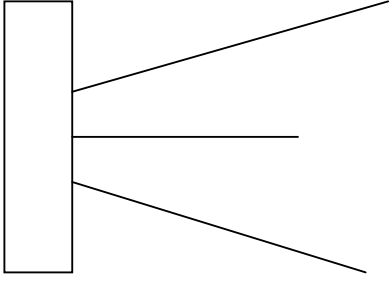
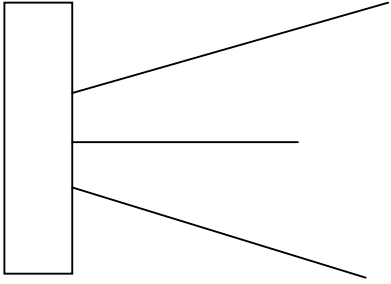
What artists/bands currently exist within that genre?

What is the audience for each genre? How do producers of each genre ensure they correctly target that group?

What are the dominant colours, images and symbols within that genre?

What do artists within that genre tend to look like? How are the men and women in the genre represented? How do they: dress? speak? conduct themselves? What is their background (of what are we lead to believe their background is)? What type of name do they tend to have?

What institutions produce/ release music from that genre? Are they a big conglomerate or an independent? Why is this significant?

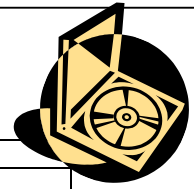


*Using the Key Concepts, deconstruct the Oasis CD cover.
What image are the band aiming to convey about themselves and their music?
What is the 'message' of the cover?*



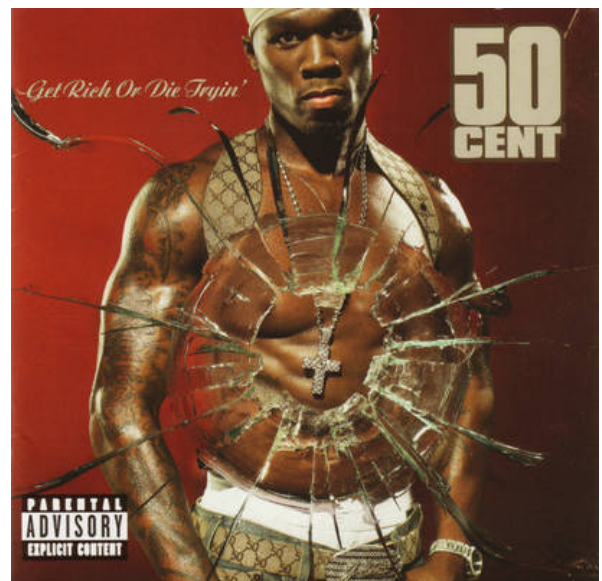
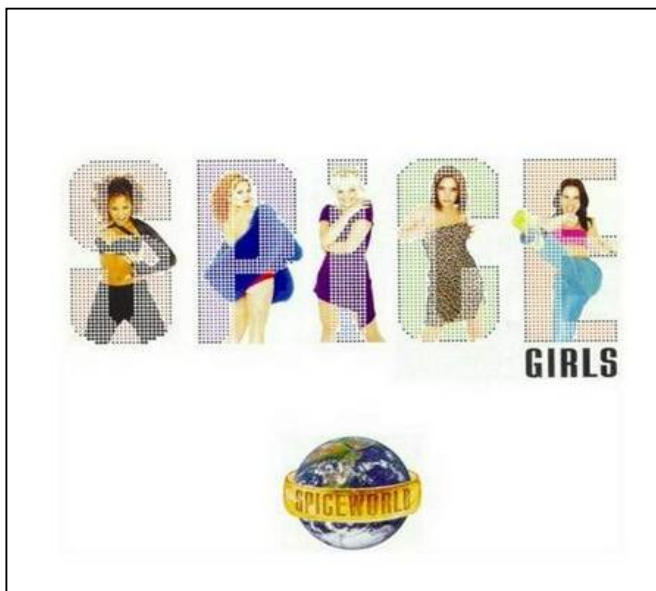
Is it a successful cover? Why?

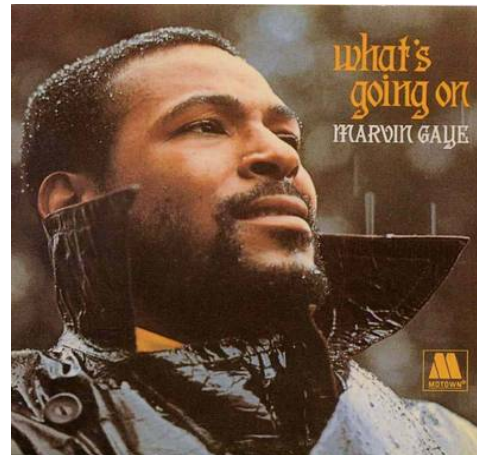
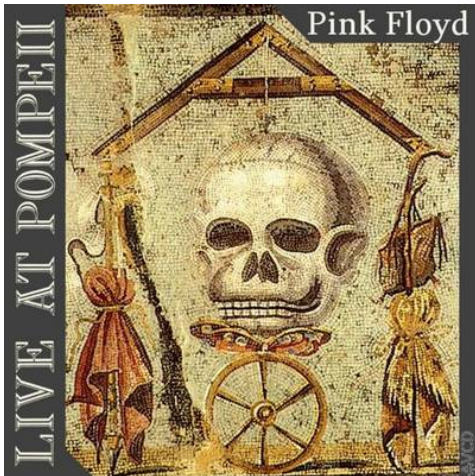
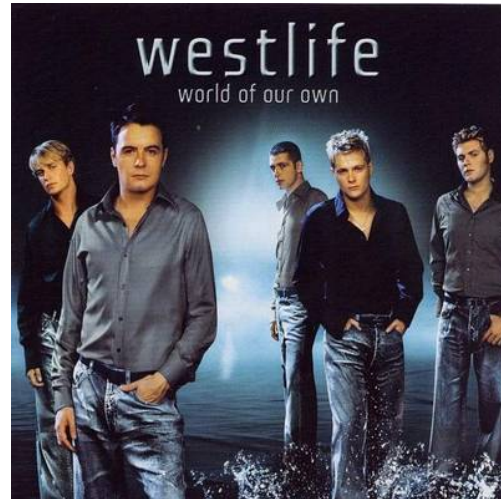
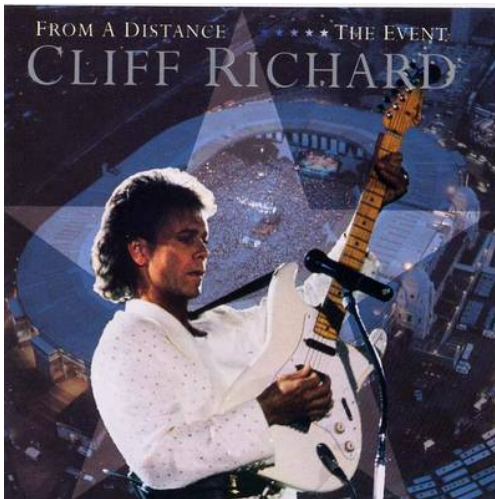
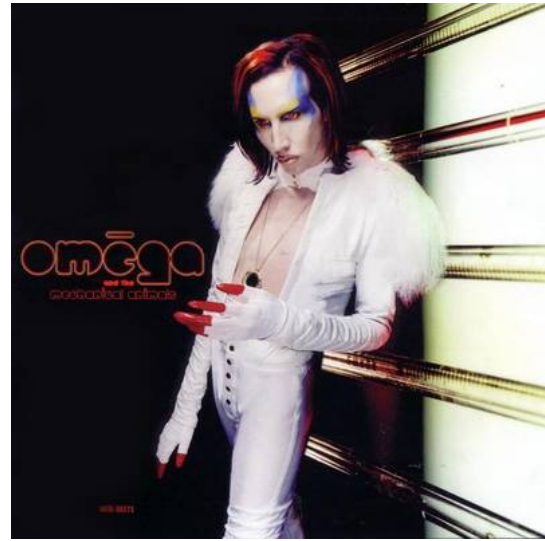
Now look at the CD covers below. Again, using the key concepts, try to deconstruct the covers. Think carefully about the covers as a vehicle for promoting a particular image of the artist/band and their music. Keep asking yourself if the covers are successful and why. If it helps, use the deconstruction grid.



Deconstruction Grid

Feature	Comments
Dress	
Expressions	
Posture	
Framing	
Any other surrounding images	
Colour	
Written words, signs and type face	





A useful crib sheet for analysing CD covers:

Firstly make notes on:

- *Iconography*
- *Band representation*
- *Composition and layout*
- *Use of text*
- *Institutional information*

Once you have made brief notes on all the denotations, move onto the connotations of each of the above. Keep asking WHY?

If you incorporate comments on all of the above, talking about their effect (rather than just describing them) you will have addressed all the key concepts – so there will be no reason why the examiner cannot give you a good mark.

Do remember though – keep asking WHY? If you can ask why at the end of your sentence and have an answer, there may well be more that you can write.

It is better to make 6 or 7 good points that address all the key concepts and show that you can analyse a media text with confidence than to make 20 empty, descriptive points that will only show you can pick things out.

When looking at CD covers always think of them as media products. They are there to serve a function in something much larger, and that is making money from the artist/band.

What therefore, are the functions of a CD cover:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

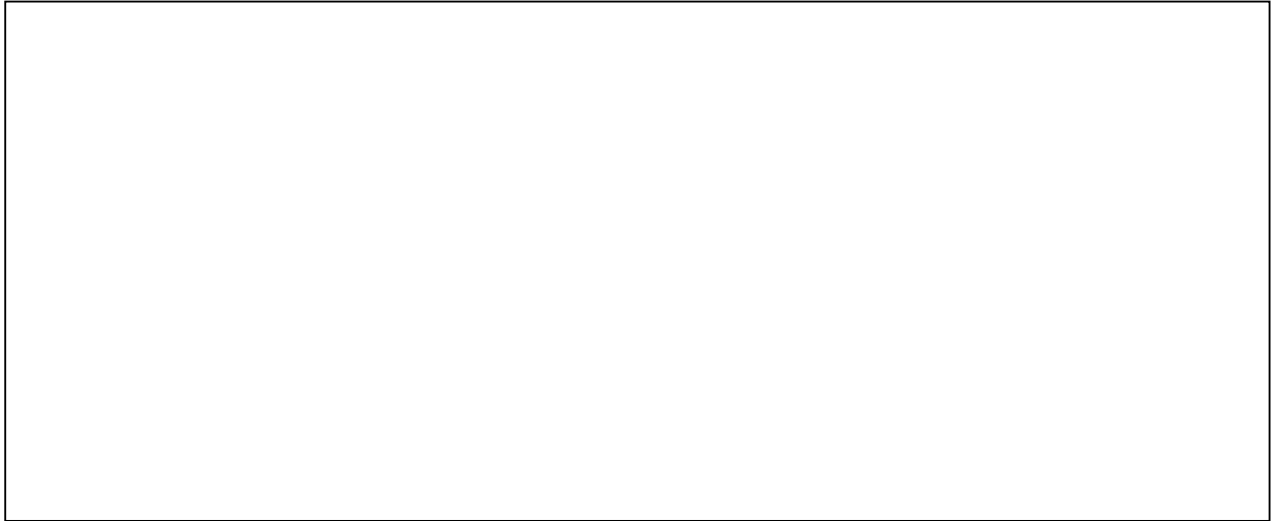
How does a CD cover fit into the marketing of an artist/band or simply a new album?



As a media product in their own right, CD covers, as with any other media product, have their own set of recognised conventions:

What are they?

Front



Back



It is crucial that you know and remember these - you will have to demonstrate a secure knowledge of them in your exam.

Repeat this design practice as many times as you want so, again, you have a few ideas before you go into the exam.

Creating the CD cover

A large empty rectangular box divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is the largest, the middle section is a thin horizontal strip, and the bottom section is the largest. This box is intended for students to draw or describe their CD cover design.

Album/Single name:

Conventions used and

Images used and their

Colours used and their

Compositions and reasons why:

Representation of Band/Artist:

Choice of institution and reasons why?

Who is the target audience? How are they going to be appealed to?

Remember the following when you design your own CD cover:

Iconography/ image consistent with the band representation and music genre

Consistency of the front and back (and spine if you have to design one)

That all necessary text is on the cover

- ⇒ Band name*
- ⇒ Single/album name*
- ⇒ Track listings on the back*
- ⇒ Production company name*
- ⇒ Distributor name*
- ⇒ Producer*

Colour is consistent with the band, the track and the genre

Composition is consistent with the band the track and the genre

The style of question on the exam paper is usually very straight forward and this is also true for the pattern of questions you are likely to be asked.

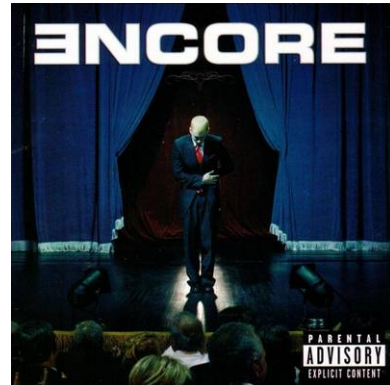
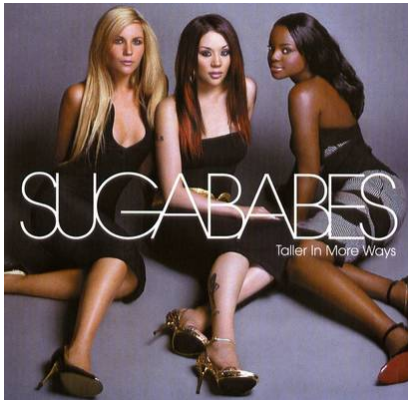
Below are a few exam practice questions that you can work through. Each set is designed to look like Section B of the exam.

The questions on the higher paper will be different to those on the foundation paper – so look at the questions for the tier you have been entered for.

Higher Questions

Set of Questions 1

(You should be able to answer these about any CD cover. Remember, in the exam it could literally be anything (and you will have probably have the front and back of the cover))



5. *Choose a band member from one of the CD covers. What does the cover suggest about their role as a member of the band?*
6. *Create a new CD cover for a Rock band of an Hip Hop artist.*

Task 1: Suggest a title for the band and the album

*Task 2: Create an image for your band or artist and it incorporate it into your
Cover design.*

Task 3: Create a CD cover

Task 4: Explain your ideas [this is basically an evaluation – you must leave time to complete this task as it carries a significant number of marks]

7. *Choose one of the CD covers. In what ways is it typical of a CD cover?*
8. *Suggest two reasons why a CD cover is important in establishing and promoting an artist or band. Briefly explain your reasons.*

Set of questions 2

- 5. Look at the main images on both covers. Account for the similarities and differences between them.*
- 6. Create a new CD cover for a Rock new solo artist from a genre of your choice*

Task 1: Suggest a name for the artist and the album

Task 2: Create an image for your artist based on the genre

Task 3: Create a CD cover

Task 4: Explain your ideas [this is basically an evaluation – you must leave time to complete this task as it carries a significant number of marks]

- 7. Look closely at one of the band member/artist on one of the CD covers. How does the construction of their image help establish the genre and target audience?*
- 8. Identify two functions of a CD cover and explain how they fit into a wider marketing strategy.*

Foundation questions:

Set of questions 1

5. List two similarities between the two covers. Briefly explain these similarities.
6. List two differences between the covers. Briefly explain these differences.
7. Choose a band member from one of the covers. What does the cover suggest about their role in the band?
8. Create a new CD cover for a Rock band of an Hip Hop artist.

Task 1: Suggest a title for the band and the album

*Task 2: Create an image for your band or artist and it incorporate it into
Your cover design*

Task 3: Create a CD cover

Task 4: Explain your ideas [this is basically an evaluation – you must leave time to complete this task as it carries a significant number of marks]

Set of questions 2

5. Look at the main image on one of the CD covers. Briefly explain why it has been included.
6. Identify two conventions of a CD cover used on both the covers. Briefly explain why they have been used.
7. Choose a characters one of the CD covers. How does their image help to establish the genre of music and the target audience?
8. Create a new CD cover for a Rock new solo artist from a genre of your choice

Task 1: Suggest a name for the artist and the album

Task 2: Create an image for your artist based on the genre

Task 3: Create a CD cover

Task 4: Explain your ideas [this is basically an evaluation – you must leave time to complete this task as it carries a significant number of marks]