

Media and technology.

What you need to know:

- Different types and accessibility of the media.
 - Debate about the effects of the media on children.
 - How does the media is controlled, including advertising standards, categorization of films, censorship and the TV watershed.
 - Believers of two different religious traditions concerning media and technology.
 - Nature, purpose and range of religious broadcasting on terrestrial and satellite TV.
-

The media:

The term 'media' (or mass media) refers to the way information is communicated to the general public. This may be in the written form, newspapers and magazines or transmitted via the radio. Some religions believe that the media is responsible for our decline in moral standards. BUT do not forget, the media is used to benefit religions as well.

The press:

- 14 million newspapers are sold in the UK alone.
- Newspapers fall into two categories:

Tabloid (The Sun etc).

Broadsheet (The Guardian).

The influence of this form of the media is amazing. People's opinions and attitudes can be swayed by media campaigns. All papers repeat the same information and by doing so, influence their readers. The private lives of many famous people are exposed by press coverage. Try to list 10 people who have had this happen to them. I have started you off with the first one!

1. David and Victoria Beckham.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

TV and radio:

- Most people watch 3 hours per day.
- The young watch up to 25 hours per week.
- 99% of homes have a TV.
- By 2010 most TV's will be digital.
- Terrestrial TV includes BBC1 and 2, ITV and Channels 4 and 5.
- There are many more programmes offered by cable and satellite stations.
- There is a network of national and local radio stations that are also available.

The Watershed:

Any programme on terrestrial TV shown before 9pm, is supposed be suitable for all ages. After the 9pm watershed, programmes may show scenes of:

- a. Sex.
- b. Violence.
- c. Strong language.

Broadcasters recognise that some images or the use of words may cause great offence. Many religious people are concerned that these programmes go beyond decency and promote negative values to society.

So what are the religious views on TV?

Religion:	View:
Christianity.	The media has challenged traditional Christian values by inappropriate role models. Traditional values have been undermined. Some programmes show vicars as pathetic and ineffectual.

Islam.	Muslims look to the media to uphold Muslim laws. They are concerned about the values promoted and influences on what Muslims, who live in a non - Muslim society.
--------	---

Blasphemy:

In the UK, Christianity is protected by the law on blasphemy. Blasphemy means showing contempt / disregard for God. An example of this is using the term 'Jesus Christ' as a swear word. The act of abusing God's name breaks the commandment 'Do not use my name for evil purposes' (Exodus 20:7). This law is rarely used, but can be invoked when necessary.

The blasphemy law does not protect other religions. Some people believe it should either include all religions or should be abolished. There have been occasions where books and film have offended people's religious beliefs. An example of this is when Salman Rushdie wrote the book *The Satanic verses* in 1989. Muslims regard anything that speaks in a derogatory manner about Allah or Muhammad* as blasphemous.

(REMEMBER TO LOOK AT YOUR NOTES ON THIS ISSUE AS IT MAY WELL HELP FOR THE EXAM).

Music:

Development in technology has had an enormous effect on the music market. Religion has used this to their advantage. Recordings have been made of worship and religious songs by many of the different religious traditions.

Cinema:

The British Board of films classification (BBFC) is responsible for film, video and DVD classification in the UK. Don't forget that the classifications go from U to 18R. The latter is for people over 18 and these types of films tend to be available for sale in sex shops. Classification relates to the suitability of viewing by people of different ages.

Internet:

Recent development in communication provides access to more than 400 million sites. The world wide web is accessed via a computer and a telephone line. Everyone has been encouraged to view the net as a library of information. It is ideal to have as it is a way of accessing information as well as contacting people via e- mail.

Although this is a major help to people, religions have three major concern about how the internet can be used:

1. Pornography.

- There is no control over what is posted on the net
- Information is easily accessible.
- Only images of children are protected by the 'Protection of Children Act' 1978.
- This has not stopped people looking at indecent images on the net.

2. Inaccurate / unsuitable material:

- No law monitors what is posted on the net.
- Destructive information can be found.
- An example of this is how to make bombs and the KKK advertising their ideas on the net.

3. Chat rooms:

- People 'talk' to strangers on the net.
- Information that is passed may not be true.
- Any information that is passed in these chat rooms can be used by anyone for any purpose.
- Paedophiles use these sites to 'groom' youngsters and may well arrange to meet up with them.

Religion:	Views on the internet:
Christianity.	Use the net to promote their religion. Sermons can be obtained on the net for those who cannot attend Church. Educational sites have been set up to promote organisations such as Christian aid and the Salvation Army.
Islam.	Used to promote Islam. Find sites on the Qur'an and the Hadith. Gives world news from an Islamic point of view.

Censorship:

This is a type of control over the media to ensure what is published is accurate. Mary Whitehouse set up the 'National views and listeners Association' in 1964. She did so in response to the effects that the media were having on people's morals and behaviour.

Controlling the press:

The Press adopts a system of self - regulation. This means that it sets its own standards that its members must observe as well as dealing with complaints. The British National Union of Journalists (NUJ) adopted a code of conduct in 1994. The Press Complaints Commission is an independent body that deals with complaints from the public about newspapers and magazines.

The Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC):

This group deals with complaints from individuals. For example, people may claim that a TV or radio programme has treated them unfairly or invaded their private life. The commission considers complaints about:

- Taste.
- Decency.
- Violence.
- Sexual conduct.

Religion and the media and technology:

Religious publications, films, and TV programmes are widely used to spread the message of their faith. Satellite transmission means that radio and TV can be broadcast across the world.

Religious broadcasting is controlled by the Broadcasting Act 1990. This requires the BBC and the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and the Radio Authority to act in a responsible manner.

Programmes are required to reflect the worship, thought and actions of the mainstream religions within the UK. This means that most UK programmes will be Christian, but they may also be aimed at other religious groups.

Religion:	Use of the media:
Christianity.	<p>Millions of people watch <i>Songs of Praise</i> each week. Many who cannot attend church find this useful. Concern over how religious leaders are portrayed in programmes. In USA televangelism is very popular.</p>
Islam.	<p>Muslims appreciate that good can come from media support. Terrestrial TV support events like the Hajj. Radio has made it possible for local Muslim stations to provide programmes in other languages as well as English. Radio Ummah also broadcasts worldwide via the internet.</p>

Useful information:

Make sure that you include religious arguments and **views from the two religions** mentioned in your **evaluative answers**. Give arguments **for and against** the statement and include reasons for your own opinion.