



TV CSP - His Dark Materials

Why we are studying this?

This is an **in-depth** Close Study Project of a teen fantasy TV Drama. It is an engaging example of the BBC's current programming strategy. It is also an interesting representation of the evolution of fantasy/sci-fi TV drama since Doctor Who began.





The TV Drama CSPs, **Doctor Who** and **His Dark Materials** are **In-Depth Close Study Products** meaning they cover all Key Concepts and could appear in any area of the exams. Paper 2, Section A will ALWAYS include a video extract from one of the TV Dramas. Questions could be about any area of the CSPs and will feature deep, synoptic questions, and require holistic understanding.

Topics:

- **Media Language**
- **Representation**
- **Audience**
- **Industry**

Possible Exam Papers:

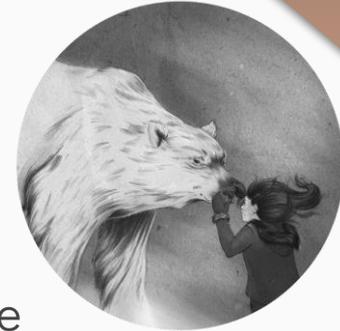
- **All sections of all Exam Papers**
Paper 2: Section A - Always TV Drama

Product Context



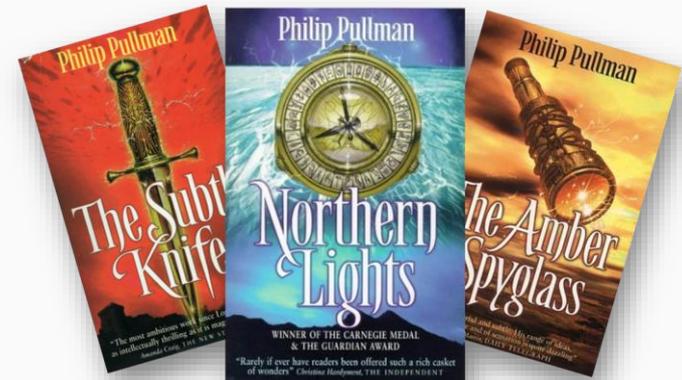
The Books

His Dark Materials is based on a series of children's fantasy novels of the same name written by **Philip Pullman** from 1995 to 2000 - Northern Lights (The Golden Compass), The Subtle Knife and The Amber Spyglass.



The books follow the adventures of a young girl, Lyra, on an epic fantasy story that weaves together fantasy universes with our own 'real' world. The books have a large fanbase, and have been adapted with varying degrees of success multiple times for film, theatre and now TV.

The books have had various spin-offs and in 2017 Pullman released the first of a new trilogy, The Book of Dust, following Lyra as a young adult.



The Story and Themes

CONTEXT 

His Dark Materials follows Lyra Belacqua in a fantasy version of Oxford, England, which is ruled by an **oppressive religious dictatorship** (theocracy). In this world humans are accompanied by a spirit animal that embodies the ‘inner-self’ of the human.



The story follows Lyra as she uncovers an epic battle forming between the religious order - The Magisterium - and those against them. In the second book Lyra meets with Will Parry, a boy from our ‘real’ Oxford as both travel between universes.

The books are about **free will**, and how religious institutions have led to ignorance. Pullman also presents puberty as an important transition for young people that religion often fights against.



Philip Pullman

Pullman is a prolific British writer who lives in Oxford, largely writing children's fiction. He is a self proclaimed **Humanist** and **agnostic** (undecided on the existence of a God) but has strong opinions on the dangers of religion.

He has received criticism and attacks from Christian groups for the anti-religious messages in his books - particularly His Dark Materials.



"the most dangerous author in Britain"

In 2002, the *Catholic Herald* published an article by Sarah Johnson that compared Pullman to a "playground bully" whose work "attacks a religious minority"



"I'm not in the business of offending people. I find the books upholding certain values that I think are important, such as life is immensely valuable and this world is an extraordinarily beautiful place. We should do what we can to increase the amount of wisdom in the world."

"I'm trying to undermine the basis of Christian belief."

"if there is a God, and he is as the Christians describe him, then he deserves to be put down and rebelled against."

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1456451/Williams-backs-Pullman.html>

Daemons

Daemons are the **animal spirits** that live alongside each character in Lyra's world. The daemons speak to their human, often acting as an expression of their inner-thoughts and conscience.

Daemons are the opposite sex of their human, and can change form while children, but then settle into a fixed form as humans go through puberty and become adults. They are a helpful metaphor to represent the personality of the humans.



Daemons

In the books and the series, the Daemons act as a powerful metaphor for their humans.

Discover your own daemon [here!](#)

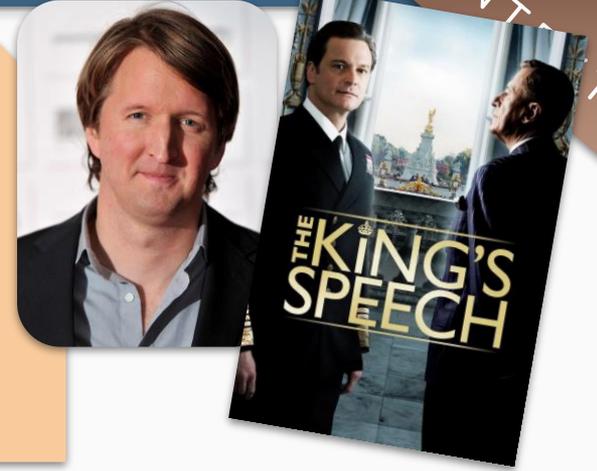
What do these Daemons suggest about their human counterparts?



Tom Hooper and Jack Thorne

CONTENTS

Tom Hooper is the lead director an award-winning filmmaker responsible for *The King's Speech*, *Les Miserables* and more recently, *Cats*. He has a distinct visual style of desaturated colours and striking frames that he brought to *His Dark Materials*. His contribution give the world a more 'real' feeling than previous adaptations , and it is distinctly more adult.



Jack Thorne is an award-winning British writer, who has worked on successful teen dramas, *Skins* and *Glue*, and wrote the Harry Potter theatre production, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. He was responsible for writing the majority of *His Dark Materials* and has spoken about the challenge of condensing the epic scope of the books into a modern TV drama.

The Golden Compass

CONTEXT 

The last big adaptation of His Dark Materials was the 2007 film, *The Golden Compass* - an adaptation of the first His Dark Materials book (originally titled Northern Lights). This was following the enormous success of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* film adaptations, and New Line Cinema was hoping for another successful franchise.

The film received criticism before release from Christian groups in the US for the books' anti-religious message, while the film tried to remove controversial elements from the story.

"Compass" under fire over religious content

The film was a critical and commercial failure, and the studio chose not to continue the franchise to completion. Fans have been waiting for a worthy adaptation for decades, and the TV series promised that.



THE GOLDEN COMPASS

PG-13 2007. Kids & family/Adventure, 1h 58m

 **42%**

TOMATOMETER
198 Reviews

 **51%**

AUDIENCE SCORE
250,000+ Ratings



You have **fifteen minutes...**

1. Complete all **Product Context** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!





Section A:

Media Language

and Representation

Watch the Episode

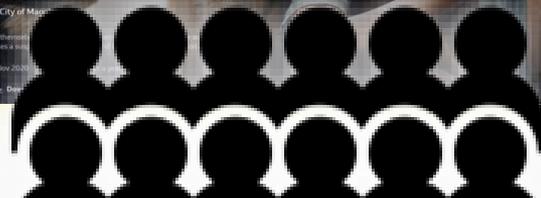


In Exam Paper 2, Section A you will be shown a 3 minute extract clip from either *Doctor Who, An Unearthly Child* or *His Dark Materials, The City of Magpies*. You will then be asked questions about the extract and the series in general.

Therefore it's important to be familiar with the episode and prepared with analysis of the key scenes and concepts.

You can watch the episode on iPlayer [here](#).

As you watch, complete the **While Watching** tasks in your Student Workbook.



Genre



Genre Family Fortunes!

GENRE

Genre convention - the typical elements that define a genre e.g. character types, costumes etc.

Get yourself into a 'family' of about 4 people. You will be given a popular film and TV genre.

- In your family discuss what are the most common conventions of that genre - characters, settings, props
- Write down the 5 things you think are most commonly seen in that genre
- The teacher will reveal the most popular answers, each with a number of points attached (1-10)
- Add your points together - the team with the most wins!

**FAMILY
FORTUNES**

FAMILY FORTUNES

What are the most common conventions of science fiction?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

FAMILY FORTUNES

What are the most common conventions of action?

1

2

3

4

5

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10

FAMILY FORTUNES

What are the most common conventions of a thriller?

1

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FAMILY FORTUNES

What are the most common conventions of horror?

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10

FAMILY FORTUNES

What are the most common conventions of fantasy?

1

2

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9

10

Genre - Fantasy

His Dark Materials is ultimately a **fantasy (with elements of Sci-fi too, making it a hybrid genre)** series, and aimed at families like *Doctor Who*. Following the success of gritty fantasy TV dramas such as *Game of Thrones* and *The Witcher*, *His Dark Materials* mixes the conventions of fantasy with more realist elements to give the series a more adult and serious tone.

Click the link, and compare how the original film adaptation treats the fantasy world compared with Tom Hooper's style.

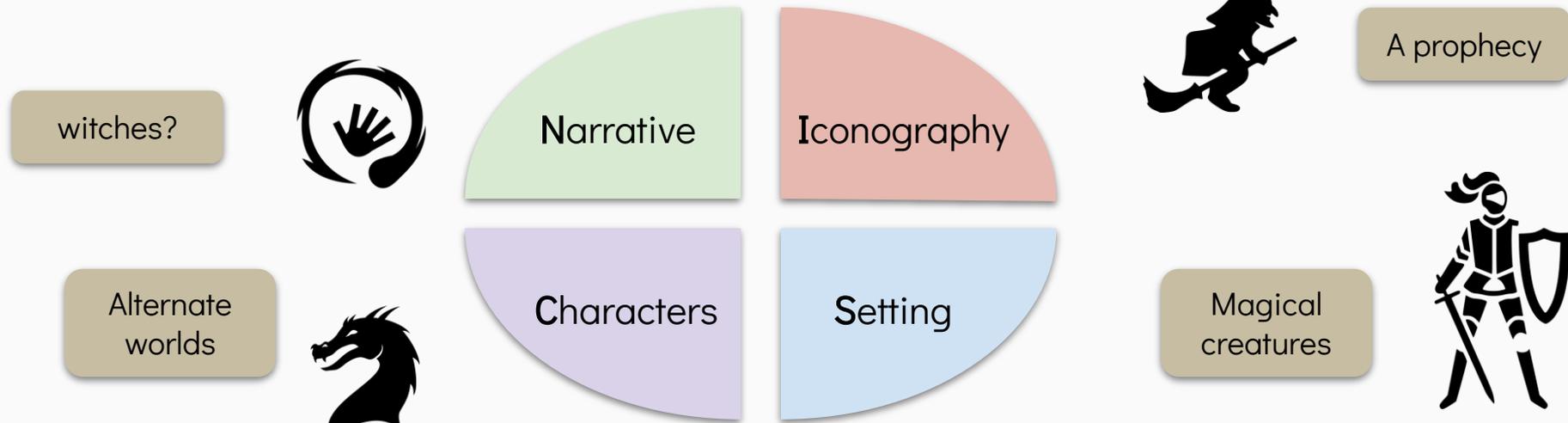
How is the fantasy genre presented differently?



Genre is used to often draw in audiences who are already familiar with, or fans of, that genre. Fantasy, sci-fi and superheroes are considered safe genres for their mainstream appeal and large young audiences.

Seven minutes, in your workbook:

Using the NICS categories, what conventions of fantasy are visible in the episode of His Dark Materials? Fill the gaps in your workbook.



Genre Hybrid

GENRE

How does *His Dark Materials* borrow from other genres to create a genre hybrid? Think about how each genre might attract a different audience.



Children's/Teen drama: a drama subgenre focusing on the relationships of children and teenagers, often including friendships, romance and family conflict.

Steampunk: a subgenre of science fiction that incorporates retro-futuristic technology and aesthetics inspired by 19th-century industrial steam-powered machinery e.g. airships.



Horror: A genre that seeks to elicit fear or disgust in its audience for entertainment purposes. Many conventions involve death, monsters and use dark abandoned settings.



Ensure you have completed all **Genre** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Media Language



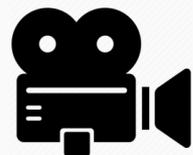
Analysing media language

You may receive a question asking you to **analyse the meanings communicated by the media language** in the extract. You can break it down into these codes:



Mise-en-scène

Camera



Editing and Effects

Sound



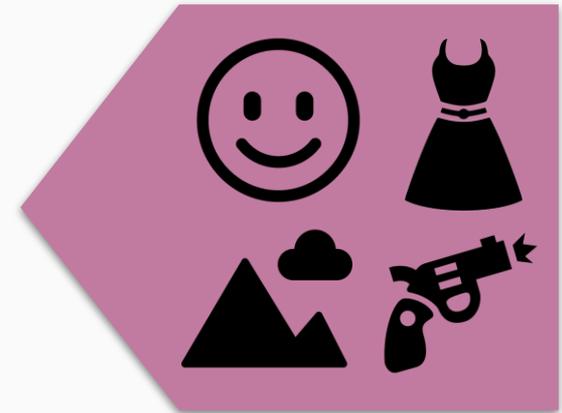
Mise en scène - a term used to describe the setting of a scene in a play or a film. It refers to everything placed in front of the camera—including people

Mise-en-scene

Mise en scène - a term used to describe the setting of a scene in a play or a film. It refers to everything placed in front of the camera—including people

Mise-en-scene is typically the easiest part of film and TV to analyse as it means everything we can see - the visual codes. Still, it's important to look at a large range of mise-en-scene including these areas that we'll look at in the following slides:

- Body language
- Facial expression
- Hair and Makeup
- Clothing
- Props
- Setting
- Colour
- Lighting



Mise-en-Scene - Characters



We can tell a lot about characters from the actors and the way they are presented. Let's



Body Language
What does the posture of Ms Coulter and the

...selves in a unique way.
positions of Ms Coulter



Facial Expressions - A character's emotions are conveyed through their facial expressions.
characters change through



How do the characters use their body language to change their personality - are

...can be used to change personality - are

Clothing - take note of the expensive blood red dress. What does it say about the Magisterium?



...can



Mise-en-scene - Props



“Show, don’t tell” is common advice for writers. Many of the props are special and important objects designed to tell us something important about a character. You have a minute; connect the prop to the connotation:



A gesture of kindness, sharing

Connection to the natural world, delicate yet powerful

Nostalgia, Ms Coulter’s motivation

An important and complex item, sophisticated and mysterious

Mise-en-scene - Setting



His Dark Materials combines real world, recognisable settings with fantasy environments. Look at the different settings.

What do they tell you about the places, and the people who occupy them?



Mise-en-scene - Colour and Lighting



The colour scheme of the show is similar in tone to other Tom Hooper products - **desaturated** blues and brown - to give a gritty, serious and mature tone.



Use your knowledge of colour associations to identify what these colour schemes might tell us:



LIGHTING

High-key lighting - diffuse lighting from multiple angles, few shadows, soft lines

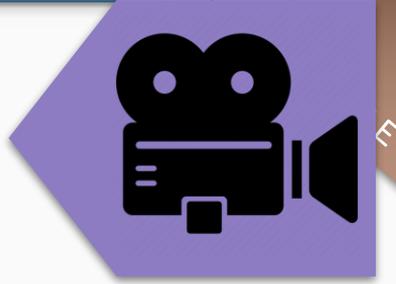
Low-key lighting - lighting from few angles, dark shadows, hard lines

Natural lighting - lighting from the sun and natural surroundings, sense of realism and nature

You have a minute; discuss when *His Dark Materials* uses these lighting techniques? Why?



Camera



The positioning, angle and movement of the camera is also designed to change how we interpret a shot.

Using the terminology below, what would you infer from the shot types?

Closeup - Fits the head and shoulders of the subject, to focus on emotion



Medium/mid Shot - Fits the body from the waist up, to show arms and some action

Long Shot - Fits the whole body of the subject, to show their relationship to environment and action



Establishing Shot - Introduces the location of the scene, often in extreme long shot

Camera continued

High Angle - Looking down at the subject, often to suggest weakness



Low Angle - Looking up at the subject, often to suggest power



Dutch Angle - A tilted angle often to create discomfort



Over-the-shoulder shot - Usually in a dialogue, with a **shot-reverse-shot** of each speaker



Two shot - A shot featuring two characters, often to show their relationship



Framing - The positioning of the subjects within the frame

Pan - Movement turning left or right



Tilt - Movement looking up or down



Crane/drone - A flying camera movement to often give a Godlike view



Track/Steadicam/Dolly - These movement types smooth move around the environment



Sound and Music



Different types of sound have different roles in TV drama.

Can you identify where the sound was used in the episode?

Diegetic Sound - Sound from within the world of the drama e.g. dialogue, weather, sound effects

Non-diegetic Sound - Sound from outside of the world of the drama e.g. music, voiceovers

Dialogue - conversation between two or more people

Voiceover - a narration from outside of the action of a scene, sometimes a character's inner voice.



Sound effects - added sounds, usually to add realism e.g. footsteps, weather etc.

Soundtrack - the musical accompaniment to a movie



Diegetic music - music within the world - characters can hear it

Theme music - The music associated with the brand, easily recognisable



Editing and Effects



Post-production refers to the processes after filming such as editing and visual effects. An effect heavy show like His Dark Materials will go through a long post-production period. Consider which of these techniques were used to create HDM.

Cut - changing from one shot to another



Blue/Green Screen - using colour keying to replace a blue or green background with an artificial one



Cross Cut - cutting between two scenes back and forth, often simultaneous



Colour Grading - adjusting the colours and filters of a shot



Shot-reverse-shot - cutting between two characters during a dialogue



Computer Generated Images (CGI) - visual effects created digitally



Cut on action - cutting at the moment of action to create the feeling of continuity



Titles/ Credits - text superimposed to provide information



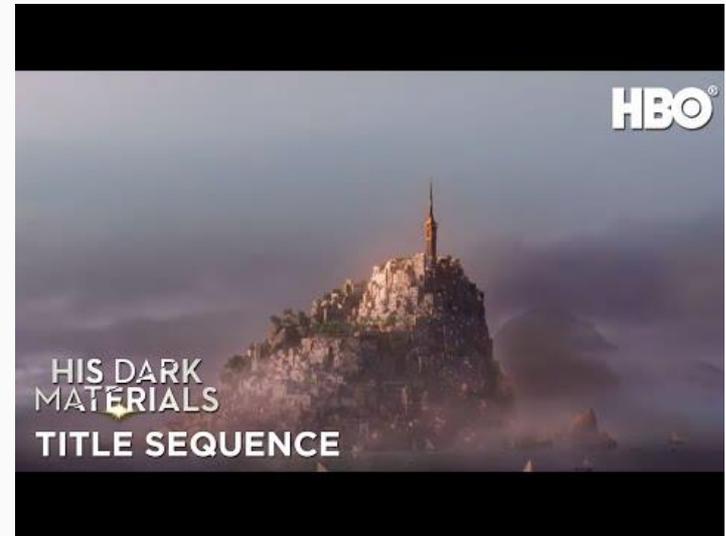
Analysing the Title Sequence

Rewatch the title sequence. Title sequences are often densely constructed representations of the main themes and tone of the TV drama.

In groups share the different aspects of media language between you, and see what meanings you can interpret:

The dark and desaturated **colour scheme** suggests that the tone of the show will be very serious and deal with heavy ideas.

The two young main characters can be seen moving through different locations giving us a sense of the age of the protagonists and that they will be on an adventure.



Analysing the Title Sequence - Examples



Mise-en-scene

The first image is of two balls of light colliding and exploding. *This could refer to* the two worlds of the protagonists meeting, or the 'big bang' or creation of the universe. *This relates to* one of the main themes of creation and understanding existential questions.



Sound

The **theme music** is highly memorable, with a **musical motif** designed to be remembered. It sounds epic and foreboding *connoting* a dangerous yet impressive story. It also features some choral elements, which relate to the themes of religion in the series.



Camera

Almost the entire title sequence is one **continuous shot** made up of **CGI**, pulling out from one scene to the next until it reveals what appears to be hundreds of worlds separated by 'string', and finally pulling out to reveal the title.

This both refers to the multi-dimensional universe of the series, but also connotes that the protagonists are somehow trapped in this confusing and mystical world.



Editing

The final **title** is split in half at a diagonal mirroring the split between the worlds, but also the split between good and evil. The bold metallic sans-serif font gives a harsher more modern brand too the series, and could reflect the harsh world the characters live in.



Ensure you have completed all **Media Language** tasks using the slides.

*You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!
You have fifteen minutes!
Anything you haven't finished needs to be completed for homework!*



Narrative Theory



Propp's Characters

Propp's character types are traditional story **archetypes**, which mainstream media often borrows from. TV dramas however, often build intrigue by having complex characters whose motivations and purpose change over time.

Within this episode who (or what) best fits the roles?

Character Archetype	Character Role
Hero	The hero is on a quest or journey
Villain	The villain tries to stop the hero
Princess	The princess is a prize for the hero, and often the reason for the quest
Donor	The donor gives the hero something to help them on their quest
Princess' Father/ Dispatcher	The princess' father or dispatcher, sends the hero on their quest
Helper	The helper supports the hero on their quest
False Hero	The false hero attempts to claim the place of the hero but is shown to be false

Todorov's Narrative



Individual episodes of a TV drama will have some narrative arc, hopefully resolving some **disruptions** while creating new ones. In contrast to a contained film or novel however, TV drama is more focused on creating extended narrative arcs that may run for series at a time. Can you think of any good examples?

How can we apply Todorov to this episode?



Barthes' Codes

Roland Barthes conceptualised 5 codes (a kind of rule) common to narratives. In particular we can focus on the **enigma code** (or **Hermeneutic**) and the **action code** (Proairetic).

Enigma Code - refer to any mystery or unanswered element of the narrative that makes us want to continue to find out.

- What is the prophecy about, and will it be fulfilled?



Action Code - refers to a sequence of actions which might require resolution.

- Ms Coulter catches a witch who she intends to torture (this creates tension we want resolved)

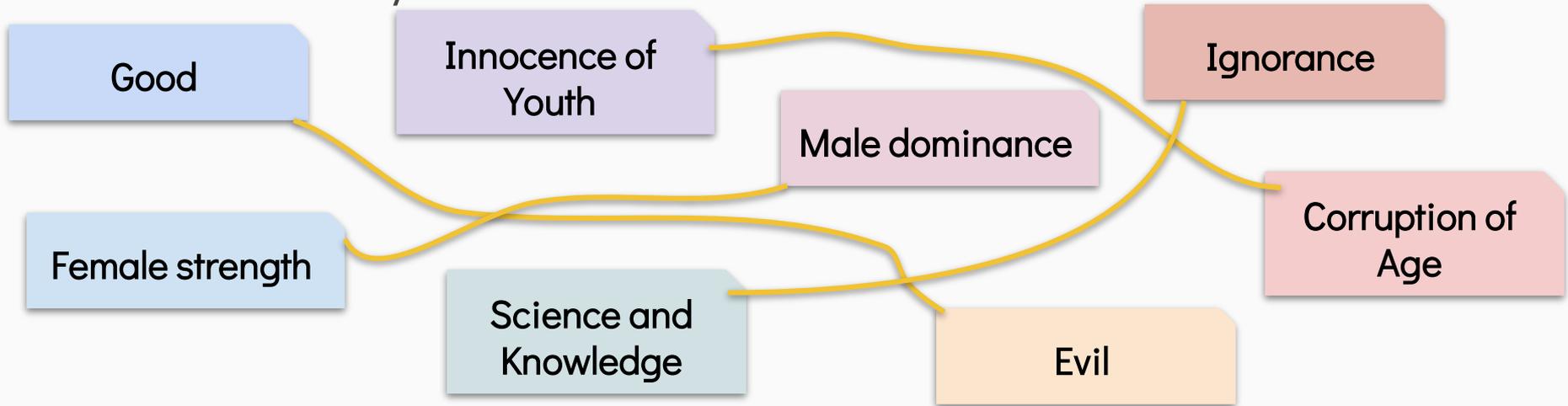


Binary Opposition

Claude Levi-Strauss identified that narratives are often built around **binary opposites** - 2 opposing ideas that propel the story.

Most common is the binary of **Good Vs Evil**, which helps structure a hero's journey.

You have one minute; match the binary oppositions that feature heavily in *His Dark Materials*. Can you think of others?

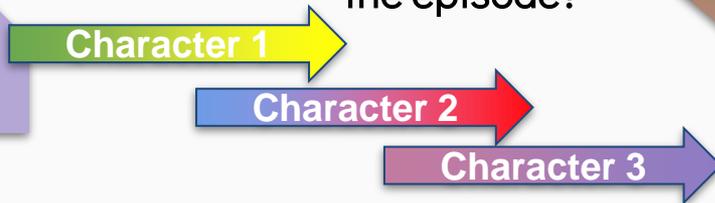


Other Narrative Features



Multi-stranded narratives - These are typical of TV shows that often have a range of characters with their own overlapping stories.

What strands are present in the episode?



Is *His Dark Materials'* narrative linear? Why have they made this choice?

Linear/ Non-linear narrative structure - linear narratives move forward in chronological order, from start to finish.



Cliffhanger - A cliffhanger ends an episode of television teasing a dramatic plot point to encourage the audience to return next week.

What do you think of HDM's cliffhanger? Do you want to find out what happens next?



Complete all **Narrative Theory** tasks using the slides. We will revisit these!

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Analysing a Clip

In the exam you will be shown a 3 minute clip from the episode twice (*or from Doctor Who, An Unearthly Child*).

Read the instructions. Read the questions before the video.

You will have two minutes to read through the questions in Section A. The extract will then be shown twice.

First viewing: watch the extract and make notes. You will then have five minutes to add to your notes.

Second viewing: watch the extract and make further notes.

You can make notes during the video **BUT** don't miss it!

You might want to wait for the 5 minute break to add details.

Use the second viewing to look for specifics.

Only take notes for questions about the 'extract'

1.1 Explain how **camerawork, sound and editing** make meanings in **the extract** from His Dark Materials, The City of Magpies. **[8 marks]**

Identify what each question wants you to look for: mise-en-scene, camera etc.?

1.2 In **the extract**, how effectively do the following create meaning:

- non-verbal communication
- props
- lighting?

Check the marks. You should spend roughly 1 minute for each mark.

E.g 8 marks = 8 minutes

[12 marks]



Now you will attempt a sample of Section A, watching an extract and making notes, before answering the questions.

You will be watching the first 3 minutes of the episode until 3:15, the start of the title sequence.

[Link here](#)

Prepare yourself to take notes, and then read through the questions so you are SURE what you are looking for.

Section A – Television
Answer all questions in the spaces provided.
You will have two minutes to read through the questions in **Section A**.
The extract will then be shown twice.

First viewing: watch the extract and make notes.
You will then have five minutes to add to your notes.

Second viewing: watch the extract and make further notes.
There is space for you to write notes on page 3 of this answer book.
These notes will not be marked.

You may start writing your answers on the exam paper as soon as the second viewing has finished.

0 1 The extract from *The City of Magpies* includes examples of both diegetic and non-diegetic sound.

0 1 . 1 Briefly define diegetic sound. [1 mark]

0 1 . 2 Give one example of diegetic sound in the extract. [1 mark]

0 1 . 3 Explain how camerawork, sound and editing make meaning in the extract. [2 marks]

Representation



Writing About Representation

If you are asked a question about representation, it will probably focus on a certain social group or theme of the product.

One method of analysis is to consider whether a product is using stereotypes. Does the product **conform to stereotypes (follow them)**, or **subvert stereotypes (challenge them)**? In modern products it is often a mixture, so show the complexity in your writing:

His Dark Materials presents a complex representation of femininity. Ms Coulter's appearance **conforms to stereotypes** of female beauty - long styled hair, elegant dresses, poise. However, her behaviour shows that is a performance forced by the patriarchal society. Her aggression and manipulation of the Magisterium **subverts stereotypes**, showing her to be as powerful as the men.

Similarly, Lyra **subverts stereotypes**, by having no interest in her appearance and being highly physical and tough...

The BBC and Representation



REPRESENTATION

The BBC is a Public Service Broadcaster (PSB). This means they have a public role that they must provide. Part of the BBC's role is to represent the full diversity of the UK, therefore many of its programmes are progressive in giving opportunities for underrepresented or minority communities.

The writer, Jack Thorne, in particular is a supporter of greater representation of disabled people in television and has pushed for more actors with disabilities to feature in *His Dark Materials*.

We'll look at how the programme represents a number of diverse groups. We have studied the BBC previously!



- To **reflect, represent** and serve the **diverse communities** of all **of the United Kingdom's nations**, regions and, in doing so support the creative community across the United Kingdom.
- To **reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values** to the world.

Representation of Ethnicity



Throughout the series, a number of roles have been ‘colourblind cast’ to provide opportunities for actors who may not have met the description of characters in the books.

For example, main character Will Parry and villain, Lord Boreal were cast with mixed-race and black actors despite not being so in the book. In addition the ‘cowboy’-styled Lee Scoresby is played by Latin-American star, Lin-Manuel Miranda.

For many this is seen as a positive move in increasing representation, but others criticise this practice as ignoring the genuine politics of race - the show doesn’t address any racism in its world.

What do you think?



Representation of Age



YA Fiction and Teen Dramas feature young protagonists to reflect their audience. The main conflict through the series is a fight against the Magisterium who wish to remove 'sin' from young people, and essentially stop them from growing up.



YOUNG

The two lead characters are portrayed as strong and independent, with resilience far beyond the adults in their lives. They are heroic.

Other children are presented as victims and vulnerable, exploited or neglected by adults.



OLD

In contrast the adults are represented as flawed, and sometimes evil.

Lee Scoresby takes on a parental role to Lyra, as an example of how her parents **should** have been.

Representation of Gender

REPRESENTATION



Lyra lives in a fantasy world with some similarities to early 20th Century England. The series both **conforms to** and **subverts** gender stereotypes:

MASCULINITY



Lyra's world is strongly **patriarchal** (dominated by men).

Men in the series frequently uphold the oppressive society, enacting cruelty and violence.

Both Lyra and Will have been abandoned by their fathers who are pursuing their own goals.

Will is a sensitive and caring representation of masculinity.



FEMININITY



Ms Coulter has also somewhat been corrupted by this culture, and acts as a villain in the series who has to exploit her femininity to get what she wants.

In contrast Lyra is bold, rough and rejects feminine expectations. In addition the all female group of witches are seen as a powerful but benevolent, connected to nature and more in touch with the world.



Representations of Religion

The controversy surrounding the series' representation of religion is due to the exclusively negative way in which it is presented.



RELIGION



The Magisterium is presented as **fascistic** and violent in their actions and through design choices.

The religion teaches repression and self-control in the vein of the Catholic church.



WITCHES



In contrast the witches are opposed to this understanding of the world.

The witches are presented as strong and honorable, with a profound connection to nature.

How do these representations relate to gender?

Do they conform to or subvert stereotypes?



Ensure you have completed all of the **Representation** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!





Section B:
Audience
and Industry

Audience



Target Audience



Despite often being classified as children's fiction, Philip Pullman has stated that he doesn't want his books classified as such, and the books have fans of all ages. The TV series is designed to appeal to a large mainstream family audience, that can appeal to both older fans and new young audiences (The *Stranger Things* demographic).

Demographics

Gender: All?

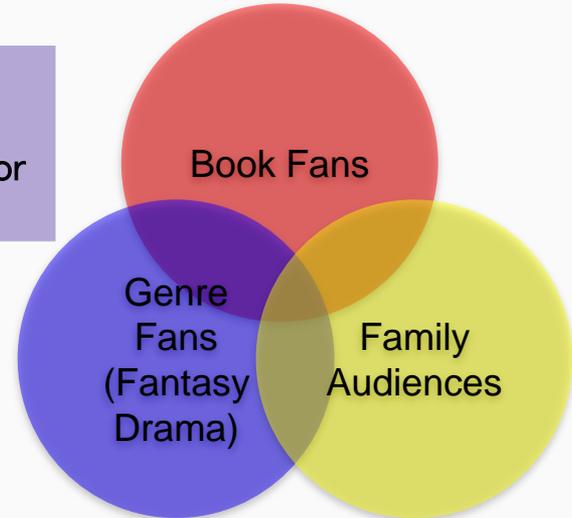
Ethnicity: All?

Age: 10-60?

Region: England? South?

Social Class: Middle A, B, C1?

Do you agree with these audience demographics?
What evidence is there for or against?



HDM Marketing Team's Target Audiences

Uses and Gratification

Blumler and Katz's Uses and Gratifications theory suggests that audiences CHOOSE the media they consume because it satisfies a need.

Which of the examples best match each category?



Surveillance/ Information



Social



Diversion/ Entertainment



Personal Identity

Lyra is a strong and unique female character and a powerful role model to young female readers.

The TV series is an adventure story with danger, mysteries and incredible effects.

While the story is entirely fictional, it can educate on elements of religious history, as well as some inspiration from classic literature.

The BBC created a personality test app to discover and share your own daemon on social media.

Reception Theory

Stuart Hall's **Reception Theory** suggests that audiences will have different **readings** of a media text based on the cultural background they bring to it. The response to *His Dark Materials* has been mixed, with social media responses finding lots of different things to criticise and celebrate.



Why would an audience member have these different reactions?

Dominant/Preferred Reading	Negotiated Reading	Oppositional Reading
Audience receives the intended messages from the creator	Audience receives a mixed message, rejecting some aspects	Audience wholly rejects the message of the product, or fails to receive it
<i>Love it! Look forward to every episode! The quality of the special effects are awesome and the script is well done.</i>	<i>For every exceptional scene, another is either too familiar or too meh.</i>	<i>Slow and cold. It tries to be deep and mysterious. But falls flat. It has no heart to it and is mostly emotionless.</i>



Ensure you have completed all **Audience** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Ownership & Funding



The BBC

The BBC is the **national broadcaster** for the UK. It is the oldest and largest broadcaster in the world.

The BBC has a **royal charter** - a set of rules it must follow to maintain its status as a **public service broadcaster** that receives public funds.



The Public Purposes of the BBC are as follows.

1. To **provide impartial news and information** to help people understand and engage with the world around them
2. To **support learning for people of all ages**
3. To **show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services**
4. To **reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all of the United Kingdom's nations and regions** and, in doing so, support the creative economy across the United Kingdom
5. To **reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world**

The License Fee

FUNDING 

The **Television License Fee** is the primary method of funding for the BBC and is a form of tax. It currently costs **£159 a year** (about £13 a month).

You **must** pay the TV License Fee if:

£159 P/YEAR



- You **have a TV in your household** and access live TV (e.g. BBC1, BBC2 ITV, Channel 4)
- You **use BBC iPlayer** (Users are asked if they have paid their license fee on trust)

What impact do you think the evolution of streaming services has had on the BBC?

Can you see any ways it might be difficult to make sure people are paying their license fee?

Budget

His Dark Materials is the most expensive BBC drama series ever produced, coming in at around \$50-60 million, around \$8 million per episode.



Doctor Who
Approx.
\$1.3 million



**HIS DARK
MATERIALS**

Approx.
\$8 million

Game of
Thrones
(Final Season)
Approx.
\$15 million



HBO Collaboration

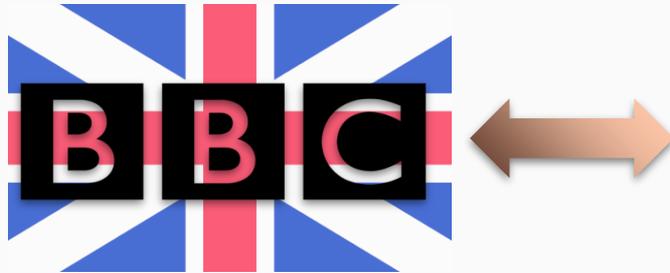
HBO

OWNERSHIP

His Dark Materials is a **co-production** with American television network HBO. In recent years the BBC has had a number of **co-pros** with HBO such as *I May Destroy You* and *Years and Years*.

HBO have a reputation for producing some of the highest quality TV drama in the world, such as *The Wire*, *The Sopranos*, *Game of Thrones* and *Succession*.

By collaborating, both companies get a new TV show for their services and the shared expertise. They also share the cost, lowering the risk for each company.



Other Companies

FUNDING 

The majority of TV programmes are NOT developed by the channels themselves, but by **production companies**, who are paid by the channels.

From 2023
Bad Wolf will
be producing
Doctor Who!



His Dark Materials is made by **Bad Wolf**, a British production company who worked on other HBO shows, *The Night Of* and *Industry*, as well as the Sky One fantasy series *A Discovery of Witches*.

It is also made by **New Line Cinema**, a subsidiary of Warner Media and sister company of HBO. New Line were also responsible for the 2007 film, and able to bring their experience of it to the television series.





A third production company is the American publishing, education and media company **Scholastic** who have produced a number of adaptations of children's books. They publish *Harry Potter* in the US!

BBC Integration

FUNDING 

Within the UK, the BBC has the integration within its huge network to advertise and promote *His Dark Materials*.

TV



ONLINE



RADIO



BBC WORLDWIDE



HBO Integration



Internationally, HBO is owned by media conglomerate, Warner Media also owned by AT&T. These conglomerates have enormous global integration, giving them the power to distribute *His Dark Materials* far beyond what the BBC could.

This diagram is just a fraction of the companies within the conglomerate.





Ensure you have completed all of the **Ownership and Funding** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Marketing



Star Power

One of the most effective ways to appeal to an audience is with recognisable stars. *His Dark Materials* has a large and diverse cast who might be familiar to different audiences.

Which stars do you recognise already?

Dafne Keen

Famous for her role in Marvel film, *Logan*.



Ruth Wilson

Award-winning actress from adult dramas *Luther* and *The Affair*.



James McAvoy

World famous Scottish actor, known for independent dramas and blockbusters like the X-Men series and *Split*.



Lin-Manuel Miranda

Award-winning creator of *Hamilton* and *In the Heights*, and from children's films *Moana*.



Andrew Scott

Award-winning actor famous for adult drama and comedy, *Fleabag*, *Sherlock*, *Spectre* (Bond).



Marketing *His Dark Materials*



As the BBC's most expensive TV drama, they invested a huge amount of money and attention on marketing *His Dark Materials*. Watch the deep discussion of the Marketing Team here, or read through the following slides.



Marketing to Audiences

His Dark Materials' Marketing Team identified that the programme had a number of key target audiences. To appeal to so many audiences requires **360 degree marketing** - reaching your audience from all angles.

Fans of the books - passionate fans of the series who care about the characters and messages 

Casual fans - people who watch TV that's popular, but without devotion 

Fantasy Genre Audiences - fans of quality fantasy drama 

Family Audiences - children and parents 

As you look at the different marketing methods think about which audience it is appealing to.

TV Marketing



MARKETING 



The BBC marketed *His Dark Materials* with adverts on its BBC TV channels, creating a 'hero trailer' designed to show off the stars, genre and cinematic special effects.



Blue Peter segment behind the scenes.

'Takeover' content was created where a BBC ident and the Masterchef credits were 'interrupted' by the subtle knife cutting a portal in the screen to reveal an advert.

Adverts were put during family programmes to appeal to the target audience.



Additional adverts and content were created for young audiences on CBBC focusing on the magic of the show.

Radio Marketing

MARKETING 



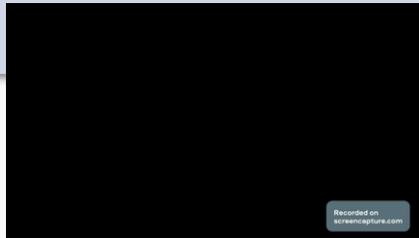
Radio allowed the BBC to reach difficult to access audiences such as Black and Asian audiences of 1Xtra and Asian Network.

BBC Radio covers all age groups from young (Radio 1) to older (Radio 4).



Interviews with the stars on Radio 1.

Radio adverts used recognisable star voices to encourage listeners to watch the programme.



Adverts on BBC Radio were designed to be clear and explicit about the series narrative of travelling between worlds.

Print and Real World Marketing

MARKETING

Features and interviews with the stars, diverse cast



HDM paid for digital adverts in big shopping centres over the country for 2 weeks around the release date.



SFX magazine feature about the CGI



Radio Times front covers

Empire and genre magazine features



A 3D art installation was produced in Oxford (the main location of the series) of a portal to another world.



Online and Social Media Marketing



MARKETING



Digital displays that dominate websites and take over screen space.



Find which daemon you are website



iPlayer features encouraging catchup of season 1

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account



Links with other social media accounts - Philip Pullman, BBC iPlayer

Twitter Threadventure to find out which daemon you are



Behind the scenes content



Snapchat AR filter - opens to another world

A detailed website with fun explanation of characters and plot



'Ask Me Anything' with stars and crew

Special Events

Fan Screening at BFI Southbank with guest star appearances



BBC Bitesize Live Lessons with stars and creators



International Comic Con Q&A



Virtual Live Launch with Q&A

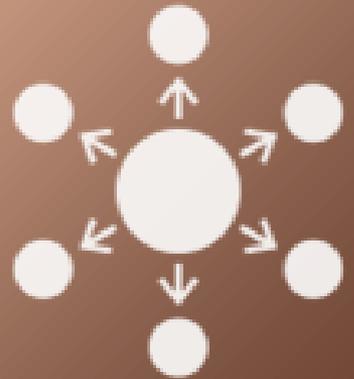


Ensure you have completed all of the **Marketing** tasks using the slides.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Distribution & Exhibition



Traditional Scheduling

HDM was scheduled to achieve the maximum possible audience on the BBC:

- *His Dark Materials* was broadcast **weekly on BBC1 at 8pm on Sundays**.
- This is **primetime** family scheduling, when the whole family will be most likely to be at home (a school night!) and watching TV together.
- Pre-9pm television is also **before the watershed** meaning that the content will be appropriate for children. This sends a positive message to parents.
- The **premiere episode was November 8th 2020**, and the **finale on December 20th** around the Christmas holidays to ensure large viewing figures. TV channels often time special episodes with holidays to increase viewership (Doctor Who, Eastenders etc.)



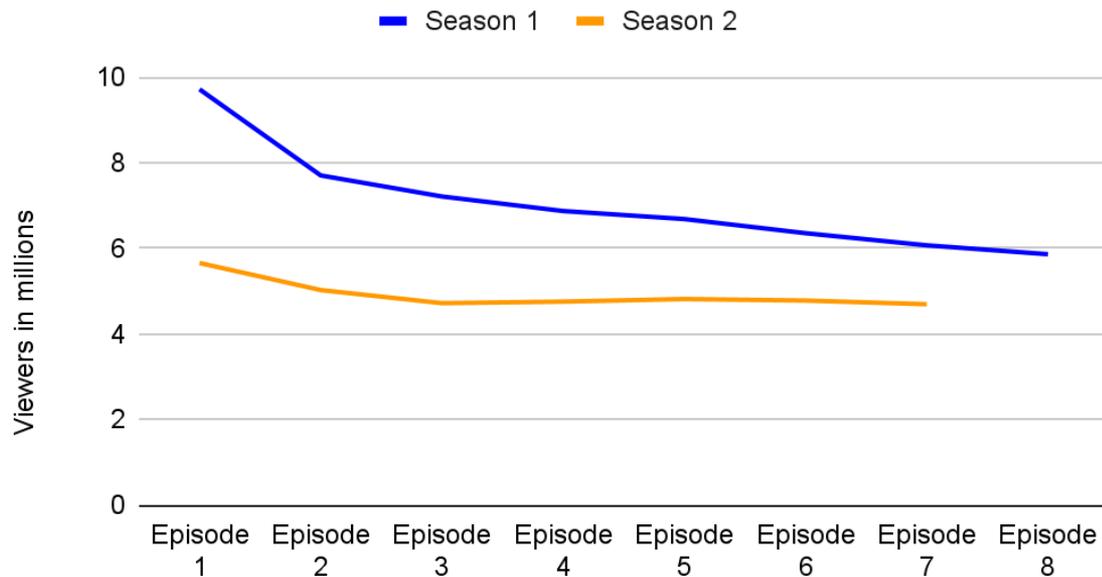
Viewing Figures

Season 1 of *His Dark Materials* premiered with around 10 million viewers, and by Season 2 was averaging 4.5-5 million viewers per episode.

While this shows a drop in viewers, the consistency in Season 2 suggests *His Dark Materials* has found a strong audience of a similar size to other family drama, *Doctor Who*.



Points scored



International Distribution

HBO screened *His Dark Materials* on Monday nights at 9pm, a far less important schedule. This may be because HBO have far more successful American shows, and *His Dark Materials* is primarily a British franchise.

Warner Media and HBO also will have distributed the programme globally, either to their own HBO channels, or sold to local channels.

In contrast to the UK, HBO's viewing figures are far lower, **averaging around 250,000 viewers weekly**. It should be noted that HBO in America is also a **subscription service**.

Game of Thrones
Finale
13.61 million



Streaming and Home Distribution

DISTRIBUTION



With the advent of streaming services, all TV can now be watched as and when the audience wants to. In the UK, *His Dark Materials* can be streamed on **BBC iPlayer** and was heavily marketed on the front page of the app/service.

Internationally HDM will be found on Warner Media and HBO's new streaming service, **HBO Max**.



This new way of watching TV, including 'binging' a series has been seen as one of the causes for TV and film becoming more blurred. The cast, creators and quality of *His Dark Materials* is the level of many films, and it is the type of story that previously would have been turned into a film (The Golden Compass).

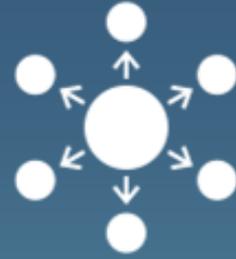


It is also possible to buy the **DVD or Blu-Ray discs** of *His Dark Materials* from the BBC and Warner Bros. Home Distribution companies.



Complete the **Distribution** tasks using the slides and your learning.

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



Regulation





TV in the UK is regulated by Ofcom, whose duties include:

- Ensuring a wide range of TV and radio services of high quality and wide appeal.
- Maintaining plurality in the provision of broadcasting (offering a diverse range of perspectives).
- Applying adequate protection for audiences against offensive or harmful material.
- Holding the BBC to its charter purposes (see Ownership).

Recently, a religious TV channel was fined **£25,000** for repeating false claims about the COVID vaccine

When somebody is offended by, or unhappy with the quality of TV, they can complain to Ofcom who will investigate the issue. Ofcom can then decide if there has been a breach, and if it warrants removing content, a public notice, or a financial penalty.

The Watershed

As *His Dark Materials* is shown before the 9pm watershed, it should be appropriate for children.

“Unsuitable material can include everything from sexual content to violence, graphic or distressing imagery and swearing. For example, the most offensive language must not be broadcast before the watershed on TV or, on radio, when children are particularly likely to be listening. Frequent use of offensive language must be avoided before the watershed, and must always be justified by its context.” - **Ofcom**

There have been no significant complaints about *His Dark Materials* to Ofcom, suggesting it is wholly compliant.



Regulation Online and At Home

Film and video is regulated by the **BBFC** who give age ratings for all releases. The UK rating for *His Dark Materials* is a 12, meaning only someone of at least 12 years old can buy it.

This is likely due to moderate violence, as well as some frightening moments that might scare younger children.

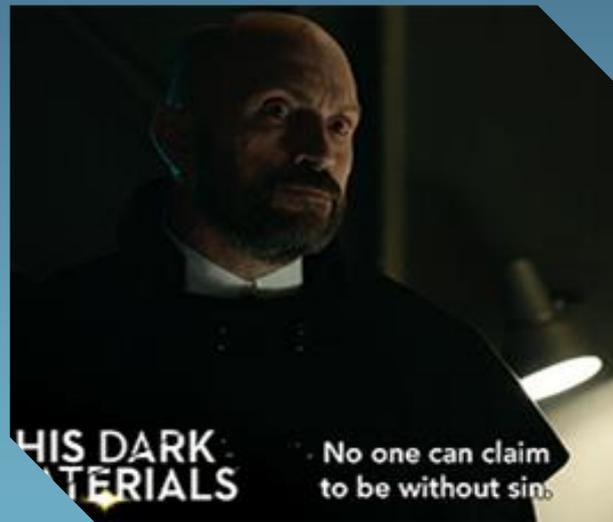
Online videos do not need to be regulated (it is too difficult) however services can offer guidance or accept BBFC ratings, like Netflix.





Complete the **Regulation** tasks. We've looked at this several times in the course so you should be able to answer these questions!

You may need to do additional research online to answer some questions!



End of Unit



Find more lessons and resources at our [Inter Alia TES Store](#)
If you have any feedback or requests you can reach us at
interalialanguage@gmail.com

