

MD Language Through the Media

Video assessment guidance

The Language Through the Media (MD) paper is one of the two components of paper B3, the other one being Translation into the language. The translation component (usually referred to as B3) makes up 60% of the mark for paper B3, while the MD component counts for 40%.

The MD paper offers you the opportunity to engage with authentic audiovisual and textual material in the language, and to explore a number of cultural topics or themes (history, society, art, politics), while building up your language skills in both the spoken and written modes. In this guidance document, the term ‘theme’ is used to refer to each of the four main course topic areas, while the term ‘topic’ refers to the specific topic of your assessed video.

Paper MD is assessed by means of a short video (5-7 minutes) that you need to submit during a time window (to be confirmed by the Faculty) over the Thursday and Friday of week 4 of the Easter term.

This guide aims to give you all the information you need in order to plan, produce, and submit your video. Do not hesitate to get in touch with your teacher, or with the MD coordinator in your language, if you have any queries that are not answered in this guide.

Preparing for your assessment: teaching and getting feedback

For languages other than French, the MD paper is taught in fortnightly Faculty classes during Michaelmas and Lent (no classes in Easter) combined with 8 annual supervisions. You may also be offered the opportunity to attend lectures relating to the themes being studied. In French, teaching is in 10-12 annual supervisions combined with 8 Faculty lectures.

Content for the MD paper, in all languages, is organised around four main themes. In your classes, supervisions and lectures (no Faculty classes in French) you will be discussing those four themes, as well as working on developing your language, presentation, and video production skills.

Attending all your classes and/or lectures and supervisions, and completing the set homework, is the best way to ensure that you are adequately prepared for the final assessment. The videos you will be asked to submit during the year as coursework assignments for your classes and/or supervisions offer an excellent opportunity to practise for the final assessment. In addition, any written work you are asked to produce will help you hone your language and argumentation skills. Be sure to take up every opportunity you are offered to participate actively in class/supervision discussions and to hand in work for feedback.

While your classes and/or lectures and supervisions will provide you with essential input, they cannot possibly cover all aspects students may wish to address in their video projects. You will therefore be expected to carry out a degree of independent research, with the guidance of your teacher/supervisor.

Choosing your topic

Details may vary depending on which language you are studying, but typically you will be choosing the topic of your video in weeks 7-8 of the Lent term. Remember that your chosen topic *must* be related to one of the four themes you have studied during the year.

We want you to have the opportunity to work on a topic that interests you or that you are passionate about. Provided your topic relates to one of the four themes studied in the MD paper, you are free to choose. If you are unsure, your class teacher or supervisor will be able to advise on topic suitability.

Whichever topic you choose, it is essential that your content goes beyond a merely descriptive, wikipedia-style survey. The examiners will want to see an element of analysis, and evidence that you have thought through your topic and have your personal take on it.

Remember that this video project must be your own independent work. While your teacher/supervisor will be able to advise on your choice of topic, they will not be able to read any drafts or offer feedback on any practice videos. Because of this, the specific topic you choose for your assessed video project must not be the same as any of the topics you have worked on for other course assignments or practice videos.

Before submitting your video, you will be required to sign a declaration confirming that 1) the video and its content is your own work, and that 2) the topic of your video is different from that of any of the assignments you have produced during the year as course work, and that you are not including any material that has previously been submitted for feedback.

Checklist: key points

What your project must include:

- A 5-7 minute video produced by you on a topic related to one of the four course themes. *No submissions over 7 minutes long will be accepted.*
- A minimum of 500 words uttered by you in the language of your MD paper. Your voice needs to be clearly audible.
- Together with your video, you are required to submit a 150-word summary of the content. This summary will not be assessed.
- An element of analysis and your own line of argumentation (not just an enumeration of facts, a descriptive survey, or unsubstantiated opinion).
- Some degree of independent research.
- Language that is appropriate in register and as accurate and precise as possible. You may make use of dictionaries, grammars or other resources to help you produce your script.
- You may use presentation software if you wish (e.g. Powerpoint, Prezi, Google Slides), but this is not compulsory. You may choose to present your content in other ways. Either option is equally valid.

- If relevant to your topic, you can include relevant evidence and examples. These could take the form of visuals, graphs, references to other works, etc.
- You will have to show your face at least once for identification purposes. You can record yourself for a few seconds at the start of your video; please do not use a still picture. It is your choice whether your face is on camera or not for the remaining time.

Things to avoid:

- You can of course draw on material you have studied, but do not simply recycle material without adding your own take on it.
- Do not plagiarise content from other sources. Any evidence of plagiarism will be taken as serious academic misconduct and is likely to lead to severe penalties.
- You can memorise or read out your content as you record if you so wish, but try to avoid using a monotonous tone of voice. Engage your audience by using your voice and intonation expressively.
- Do not use machine translators to produce your text. We expect it to be your own work. It is completely fine to use dictionaries or other reference resources.
- Please watch the video produced by the University's Information Services (on your MD Moodle site) for advice on common mistakes to avoid when recording video.

Once again, remember that your video must be your own independent work. Your supervisor will not be able to offer feedback on any drafts or practice videos for your final project.

Content and language are equally weighted in the assessment of your project.

How to present your content

Once you have selected your topic and carried out your research, you can start to plan the content of your video and how you wish to present it. This involves identifying your key points, and coming up with a clear line of argument and a coherent structure. It also involves thinking about the mode of presentation (e.g. how you are going to modulate your voice, whether you are going to use any visual aids, etc.).

Here are some suggestions for possible formats, in no particular order:

- Present a topic of your choice, linked to one of the themes studied in class. Carry out some research and present your perspective, findings and conclusions.
- Present and analyse one or several cultural artefact(s): cartoon(s), poem(s), song(s), painting(s), building(s), sculpture(s). Explain their significance from the point of view of the topic explored.
- Review a book or film: describe briefly what the book/film is about, discuss what is interesting about it, its strengths and weaknesses, what it tells us about the theme explored.

- Introduce and explore a cultural figure (intellectual, artist, political activist): provide biographical elements, present their work, discuss their significance from the point of view of the theme explored.
- Describe and analyse the representation in the media of a question/problem/event linked to one of the themes of the course. You may also compare representation in different kinds of media (internet, radio, TV) or in different regions/cultures.
- Personal narrative (first-person point of view) relevant to one of the themes: write a narrative about a meaningful life experience/encounter, making connections between the event and your own understanding of the topic.
- Explore the ‘biography’, or ‘changed perception over time’ of a place, an expression, a writer, an artist, a politician, a work of art, an historic event, etc., linked to one of the course themes. Explain how it/they used to be perceived and how its/their perception has now changed and why; discuss how this relates to the theme.

We would like to allow and encourage a variety of approaches. You can talk into the camera, use interviews with (an)other speaker(s), use slides, visual and sound effects, etc. The clip can be filmed in one take or be the result of a carefully edited montage. Different formats may suit different approaches. Examiners will assess to what extent the format you have chosen allows you to demonstrate your intellectual, critical engagement with your topic.

Recording your video

A short video produced by the University Information Services offering guidance on how to record video using a mobile phone is available on the MD Moodle sites of each language. This includes helpful tips on do's and don'ts. Be sure to watch it.

Remember that we are not expecting a professional recording standard. We expect you to focus on your content and delivery rather than on technical aspects. The MD marking criteria reflect this.

There are many mobile video editing apps available to download from Google Play or the Apple Store. Many of them have a free version that offers more than enough features for what you need for your MD video project. Be aware that some of the free apps will watermark your video with their brand name. This is not a problem in terms of this assessment (it won't affect your mark), but if you do not want a watermark, just make sure that the app you choose won't do this.

Here below we suggest a few user-friendly free mobile video editing apps. These are only suggestions – you are free to use whichever editing tool you prefer. We are pointing you to some user guides and tutorials that you may find useful, and each app has its own inbuilt help feature. If you are looking for anything more specific, just browse online for a tutorial:

For iPhone (iOS):

iMovie – this is the obvious choice if you have an iPhone; [user guide](#).

For Android and iOS:

VN Video Editor ([tutorial](#))
VLLO ([tutorial](#))
Splice ([tutorial](#))
YouCut ([tutorial 2020](#), [update 2022](#))

If you prefer to do your recording and/or editing on a desktop computer, you may consider the following:

MacOS:

iMovie ([user guide](#))

Windows 10/11:

Video Editor ([user guide](#))

Windows 10/11 and MacOS:

OpenShot Video Editor ([user guide](#))

ShotCut ([tutorial](#))

If you plan to be sitting in one place while you record your video, one effective and technically very simple option is to use the in-built recording feature in Zoom. You will need to open a meeting, with just yourself (unless you have an interview section with someone else present). If you wish, you can use the Share Screen feature to show a presentation (this can be a powerpoint presentation, a word document, or anything that's on your screen). When you want to start recording, just select "Record Meeting". When you finish recording Zoom will create and save a file with a video of the meeting on to your desktop. If you then wish to edit this video file, you can use one of the platforms mentioned above to do this.

Submitting your video

Your video should be submitted in a standard file format. We recommend mp4.

Before submitting your video, you will be required to sign a declaration confirming that 1) the video and its content is your own work, and that 2) the topic of your video is different from that of any of the assignments you have produced during the year as course work, and that you are not including any material that has previously been submitted for feedback.

Video submissions will be collected via a Microsoft Form, which will be organised by the Faculty's undergraduate administration team. Comprehensive information will be provided closer to the submission date, and questions will be accepted by the generic mdexams@mml.cam.ac.uk e-mail address. Please note that this e-mail address will not be regularly checked until the Easter term.

Marking criteria: what examiners will be looking for

Content and language are equally weighted in the assessment of your project. You can find the marking criteria for this paper at the end of this document, and on the Faculty website.

Here below you will find some of the key questions the examiners will be asking when assessing your work, based on our marking criteria.

Use of Language (50%)

Feature	Assessment questions
Pronunciation and intonation	Are rules of pronunciation observed? Is intonation appropriate? Do pronunciation and intonation aid/hinder communication of ideas?
Grammatical accuracy	Is there a good level of grammatical accuracy? Are there any basic or systematic errors? Do errors occur in more complex structures only?
Range, register, and idiom	Is there a good range of vocabulary and grammatical structures? Is vocabulary used with precision? Is the register appropriate to the topic and to the format of the presentation? Is language idiomatic?
Fluency	Is there a good degree of fluency? Does lack of fluency interfere with communication?

Content (50%)

Feature	Assessment questions
Quality of ideas and analysis	Is the topic connected to one of the four course topics? Has the topic been explained/introduced well? Is there evidence of analysis/critical engagement?
Coherence and structure	Is the content coherent? Is the presentation well structured? Is there a clear line of argument? Is the main idea or thesis well backed up by supporting arguments?
(c) Research, evidence and examples	Is there evidence of some independent research? Are the examples/supporting data/visual aids, if any, relevant?
(d) Delivery	Is the delivery effective? Is voice modulation and, if applicable, body language, used effectively to aid conveyance of ideas?

Marking Criteria

Content and use of language each carry 50% of the marks for this paper.

The MD paper represents 40% of the language paper B3. The remaining 60% corresponds to the 'Translation into the language' paper.

Mark	Class	Content	Use of Language
80-85	I* Dist.	An excellent video project, in which all the qualities deemed to constitute first-class work are present to a very high degree. Impressive quality of ideas. High degree of analytical engagement with the topic. Highly coherent structure. Examples and evidence used are relevant and intellectually rich, showing very sound knowledge of the topic and a good degree of independent research. Highly effective delivery.	Excellent pronunciation and intonation. Excellent grammatical accuracy across a wide range of complex structures. Impressive command of syntax. Excellent degree of fluency throughout. Impressive range of vocabulary and idiom. Exceptional grasp of the range of registers appropriate to the topic.
70-79	I	High quality and relevance of ideas, showing very good understanding of the topic. Very good level of analytical engagement. Arguments are very well developed and supported by evidence and examples where relevant. Very coherent and well-structured. Evidence of a significant degree of independent research. Very effective delivery.	Very good pronunciation. A high level of grammatical accuracy, with no basic errors; there may be a few errors in more complex areas that do not impair communication. Very good range of syntactic structures and vocabulary, and idiom very competently used. Very good degree of fluency. Very good use of the appropriate register.
60-69	II.1	Good quality and relevance of ideas, showing a sound understanding of the topic. Good level of analytical engagement. Presentation is clear, coherent and easy to follow. Arguments are well developed and supported by evidence and examples where relevant. Coherent and well structured. Evidence of a degree of independent research. Effective delivery.	Good pronunciation. Good level of accuracy, with no recurrent basic grammatical errors; there may be some errors in more complex structures that do not impair communication. Good range of syntactic structures and vocabulary, and idiom competently used. Good degree of fluency. Good use of appropriate register, though there may be the occasional slip.
50-59	II.2	Fair quality and relevance of ideas, showing fair to adequate understanding of the topic. Some degree of analytical engagement, though there may be an over-reliance on general/vague statements or on description over analysis. Presentation is for the	Faulty pronunciation that may at times interfere with communication. Fair level of grammatical accuracy; a number of basic errors occur. Fair command of syntax and vocabulary; some inaccurate syntactic structures, especially in more complex constructions, and limited lexical

		most part clear and easy to follow, though may not be fully coherent. Arguments may lack development or be insufficiently supported by evidence or examples. Structure may not be wholly clear or effective. Little or no evidence of independent research. Fair delivery.	range. Fair degree of fluency. Limited sense for idiom and limited ability to work with appropriate registers.
40-49	III	Poor quality and relevance of ideas, showing poor understanding of the topic. Little evidence of analytical engagement; over-reliance on general or vague statements or on description over analysis. Presentation can be followed, but could be clearer and more coherent. Arguments are incomplete, lack development, and/or are not supported by evidence or examples. Poor sense of structure. No evidence of independent research. Fair to poor delivery.	Poor to very poor pronunciation. At times listener may have to work hard to follow and may not follow all that is said. A poor to just acceptable deployment of basic grammar; frequent errors disrupt communication. Limited syntactic and lexical range. Basic command of vocabulary and idiom. Lacking in fluency. Limited awareness of register.
15-39	F	Very poor quality and relevance of ideas, showing very poor understanding of the topic. No evidence of analytical engagement; purely descriptive/general statements. Presentation is not always easy to follow. Very poor argumentation, unsupported by evidence and examples. Very poor sense of structure. No evidence of independent research. Very poor delivery.	Very poor pronunciation is an obstacle to communication; listener has considerable difficulty following what is said. Major shortcomings in basic elements of grammar; errors are obtrusive and impair communication. Very limited syntactic range; struggles to form sentences. Very poor fluency. Very basic command of vocabulary and idiom. Very poor to no awareness of different registers.

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