

Assessment Report

New Zealand Scholarship Media Studies 2019

Standard 93303

Part A: Commentary

The 2019 examination offered a good range of statements and quotations, which provided suitable scope for candidates to respond to. Where candidates chose to debate the topic, they were well served with a wide range of texts, evidence, and analysis.

Some candidates lacked the proficient understanding of a media industry (Question Two) and practical production experience (Question Three) required to achieve Scholarship. Candidates who responded to the examination with only film or genre readings struggled to demonstrate detailed and convincing subject knowledge, especially in Question Two. Those candidates who wrote on genre for Question Two were generally only successful if they focused clearly on the interaction between genre and society. This was also the case in Question Three, where some candidates responded to the specific statements/quotations using their experience from contexts other than media productions – particularly theatre, art, and photography portfolios.

Candidates who achieved were not awarded Scholarship generally discussed a limited range of texts and evidence, often cherry-picking these to argue their point of view.

Question One:

Many candidates chose moving image texts for this question, with a few covering video games, print, and radio texts. A few candidates considered texts that are not commonly categorised as media texts (e.g. plays & novels) and did not reach Scholarship level as a result.

All four statements were chosen, with Statement 3 being the most popular.

Statement 1 encouraged students to explore the impact of media texts on society. There were some thoughtful responses, particularly in reference to documentary and film noir genres. However, candidates struggled to define a sociological event and often provided vague generalisations about genre, using landmark or significant films to stand for a sociological event. Such responses failed to show the critical thinking and convincing knowledge necessary to be awarded Scholarship. In addition, most candidates did not consider the second part of Truffaut's statement concerning quality beyond a few brief assessments.

For the number of genre-based essays written for this section it was surprising that Statement 2 was not more widely chosen by candidates. Nevertheless, those candidates who chose this often struggled to address the idea of "... *only as good as ...*" or convincingly discuss how texts challenged or changed a genre, with very few exploring the stated link between those challenges to the overall 'quality' of the genre.

Statement 3 was by far the most popular choice. However, many candidates did not adequately unpack 'humanity'. Humanity was interpreted in a diverse way, using a wide range of texts and genres.

There were many good responses to Statement 4, although candidates feared better when they used a wide range of texts and evidence. Those candidates who limited their discussion to a narrow range of texts failed to develop a convincing argument.

Question Two:

It was clear that a lot of candidates are not using a media industry for this section of the examination. The lack of study of media industries over the cohort raises concerns that candidates are missing out on a fully encompassing Media Studies

programme.

Candidates wrote on all four quotations with the second and fourth quotations being the most popular. Although the first quotation was the least popular it did, however, generate some of the most successful discussions on recent changes in journalism. Many candidates wrote about how developments in social media had an impact on political processes and understanding of the news media. Bob Irvine's quotation was a popular choice, but like the first quotation, candidates often took a narrow focus describing a variety of social media products and the dangers of such platforms, i.e. hate speech, etc. The best candidates developed convincing comparisons with 'old media', explaining the way they might be considered 'guardians'. Many candidates chose to use a film genre as the basis for their responses to the last quotation. However, these candidates often struggled to convincingly address the quotation. In particular, candidates could describe the way a genre evolved in response to a range of factors but could not explain how early films in the specific genre represented a 'traditional model', or how the genre was 'collapsing'.

Question Three:

Candidates continued to provide a range of good responses to this production question. All four statements and quotations were selected by candidates, with Alfonso Cuarón's quotation being the most popular. The best responses by candidates were often reflective of the successes and challenges faced during a media production and how choices made had an impact on the outcomes of the product. Successful candidates clearly linked specific aspects of their production experience to the question and relevant exemplary production processes from other film-makers/media producers they had studied or were familiar with. Some candidates either focused too heavily on professional film-makers/media producers with only cursory coverage of their own media production, or covered their own production in great detail with only limited consideration of professional practices by other media producers in a particular medium. Some candidates explored their involvement in productions that were outside the scope of media studies, e.g. school plays.

For Statement 1, the best candidates were able to explore the delicate balance between individual inspiration and the necessity, challenges, and rewards of working as part of a team. Some candidates challenged the statement with thoughtful responses, insisting of the benefits of solitary writer / producer / director productions with only limited reference to the 'collective effort'.

Many candidates struggled with Alfonso Cuarón's quotation, failing to provide a clear and consistent account of the importance of narrative to a media production. Successful candidates clearly understood that narrative is created through a range of mechanisms, not just story structure.

Plato's quotation was not well answered compared to the other statements and quotations in this section. Too many candidates wrote excessively descriptive accounts of their production experience with only limited analysis, evaluation, or reflection. Most candidates commonly interpreted the quotation as being about production process (i.e. pre-production planning as the beginning of a film) rather than about the media text itself (i.e. the first part of the text is the most important). Too few candidates wrote about the beginning of their media product itself. Either approach was valid, and both could have been explored in one essay.

Statement 4 was generally well done, with candidates exploring a range of compromises that they made as part of the production process in a thoughtful and analytical way.

Candidates who achieved Scholarship and Outstanding Scholarship in this section managed not only to juxtapose their productions with contemporary and/or historical productions but to demonstrate comprehensive learnings from their experiences and articulate their experiences through thoughtful reflection.

Part B: Report on performance standard

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with **Outstanding Performance** commonly:

- developed a clear, convincing argument that addressed the quotation or statement
- included well-considered, thoughtful analysis with considerable insight and/or originality
- had a strong understanding of historical context and could make connections between the past and current trends/events/developments
- 'unpacked' the quotation/statement and argued from a range of positions
- demonstrated considerable understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument
- applied their considerable subject knowledge into a convincing argument
- used media theory in a knowledgeable and appropriate way
- stated personal opinions and questioned both historical and contemporary decisions and trends appropriately
- analysed in depth their production experience with convincing reference to other texts.

Candidates who were awarded **Scholarship** commonly:

- included well-considered analysis with some insight
- responded effectively to the quotation/statement and developed an argument using their subject knowledge
- used evidence from a range of sources in support of their argument
- demonstrated some understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument
- demonstrated an understanding of historical context in relation to the quotation/statement and how it fitted within the context of the question, i.e. they went beyond giving an historical summary by offering thoughtful reasons for specific developments
- showed broad and/or deep subject knowledge through their argument
- used media theory where appropriate
- analysed their production experience with some reference to other texts.

Candidates who were **not** awarded Scholarship commonly:

- did not address the quotation/statement in a convincing way
- developed simplistic arguments
- applied pre-learned answers to questions that were not reflective of the question raised
- made sweeping claims without clear supporting evidence
- used inappropriate or insufficient evidence
- spoke from one narrow point of view
- described their production experience with limited analysis or reflection.

[Subject page](#)

Previous years' reports

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