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3

91490



914900



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
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## Level 3 Media Studies, 2016

### 91490 Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry

2.00 p.m. Tuesday 29 November 2016  
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of an aspect of a media industry.	Demonstrate perceptive understanding of an aspect of a media industry.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**You should write an essay on ONE of the nine statements in this booklet.**

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

High  
Merit

TOTAL

6

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## INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media industry** that you have studied.

Write an essay discussing the **operation of an aspect of your chosen media industry**, by responding to ONE of the statements below. You should aim to evaluate the impact of your chosen aspect on the industry and/or society, and you may agree and/or disagree with your chosen statement.

Use page 3 to write your chosen media industry, aspect of the media industry, statement number, and to plan your essay.

Begin your essay on page 4.

## STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. Social media is a powerful force on media industries.
2. Media industries struggle to keep up with technological change.
3. Media industries change in response to society.
4. Media producers must find new ways to make money.
5. Media industries are interested only in the mainstream.
6. Governments control media industries.
7. Consumers demand unlimited access to media industries.
8. Media industries are a vital taonga\* for Māori.

*\* Taonga refers to a valuable resource or treasure.*

9. Piracy is the biggest threat to media producers.

Media industry: Independent film

Aspect of the media industry: Commercial considerations Technology

Statement number: 3

#### PLANNING

Description of this **aspect** of your chosen media industry: Commercial considerations have to be taken into account by the industry in order to function and gain access to the public.

How and/or why this aspect **operates** in your chosen media industry:

Profit & ~~low~~ production cost, distribution, profit — vital function

The **impact** of the aspect for your chosen media industry:

The **wider significance** of the impact for your chosen media industry and/or society:

The suggested maximum length for your essay is 1 000 words (7–8 pages). The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Draw conclusions about the **wider significance** of the impact for your chosen media industry and/or society by including **relevant, specific supporting detail** from media text(s) and/or evidence from other sources.

Begin your essay here:

Media industries change in response to society. The independent film industry has to adapt to the way that society functions, as it must ~~consider~~ take into account commercial considerations for the creation and distribution of independent films. The industry is defined as being outside the funding and control of the Big Six major ~~media~~ studios: Columbia, 20th Century Fox, Paramount, Universal. Typically independent films have a low budget under \$20 million, although often under \$1 million. The industry has evolved ~~organically~~ organically with society, the central aspect of its development being technology. Independent film began with the emergence of cheap technology in the early 90's, changed through society's thirst for their characteristic outer-centred and unique cinematic perspective which ~~the~~ major studios ~~have~~ capitalized on, and have recently developed through digital and social media technology which have significant, relevant implications for the future of the industry."

The independent film industry began in the early 90's in response to the introduction of cheap

film technology within society. Cheap 16mm film, and cameras and VCR created new ground for rising amateur filmmakers to cast their own unique vision in efficient and creative ways in co-ordination with minimal funding offered to them by the richer of society. By maxing credit cards, Kevin Smith made *Clerks* for \$27,000 and distributed the film through the efficient medium of VCR, where anyone could watch, as well as finding accepting cinemas to showcase. The film *El Mariachi* was made for \$7,000 through a bizarre and ingenious method, the director selling his organs. The visions of the directors were unique, practically anyone could make a film for low cost; the ingenious direction and editing of the films were run by their quality and originality in this thriving environment created by cheap technology, allowing up-and-coming directors to rise in an honest, artistic and ~~some~~ society. //

Major studios capitalized on the emerging independent film industry, recognizing the unique visions which society craved. The industry changed due to the funding of the studios and the emergence of ~~sub~~ independent sub-branches, seen with the creation of ~~Miramax Foxlight~~ Fox Searchlight, and Disney buying Miramax. *Pulp Fiction* was made for \$8.7 million and reached \$100 million at the box

office. Major studios changed the quality of the independent film industry, providing high-end cameras, set and editing equipment, major actors such as John Travolta & Uma Thurman. This was a very positive impact on the industry, as the rising quality could be balanced with the unique vision of the director, ~~with~~ the combination positively resonating with the audience who in turn venture to see ~~the~~ interesting films and generate profit, keeping a reciprocal relationship between audience, director, and studios. However, this relationship risked compromising the unique and controversial visions; studios control the final production of the film, omitting any material that seems controversial or overtly offensive, because the studios and media conglomerates' primary concern is profit. Independent directors thus had to adapt to a slightly more PC tone, casting out personal opinions and commentary which ~~seem~~ challenges American traditions. Media conglomerates are fundamentally business models with the function of serving entertainment to the masses - unique and auteur-centred film visions of the independent industry must not involve an abundance of social and political commentary for the risk of not being profitable enough, as well as keeping society under control with a relative sense of being tame. //



~~Media~~ Hollywood's troubling times during the Recession of 2008 changed the independent film industry entirely. The economic downfall of society made ~~into~~ the industry victim to being cut off by major studios which had supported them. Due to ~~the~~ society's economic hardship, the worst seen since the Great Depression, multiple studios sold off their independent sectors in order to produce and recycle models which were trustworthy and profitable. Disney sold Miramax in 2010. Fox Searchlight dissolved. Well established filmmakers such as Spielberg, Lucas and Tarantino found it extremely difficult to work under the major studios' savage capitalist business model. Action and drama films were favoured by the studios, their entire funding ~~was~~ poured into the production of films with high-cost action scenes, popular A-star actors and solid, yet predictable, style of plot and narrative. The Avengers was made for \$400 million with positive revenue. The implications were detrimental and negative, as there was no room for independent visions or risky film-makers. Rather, predictable and recyclable films kept audiences occupied, amazed by the high ~~cost of~~ quality action CGI ~~effects~~ which effectively distracted them from their own woes created by ~~the~~ economic disparity. The

lack of political and social commentary kept the audiences tame and unquestioning, with the negative effect of essentially dumbing them down with distractions to real-world problems, in favour of escapist fantasy. The independent film ~~and~~ industry could not function in this hostile environment designed by media conglomerates to appeal to the mass audience, signalling their popular demise and the need to find new technological venues.

Digital technology has ~~had~~ changed the independent film industry. The internet and independent <sup>digital</sup> funding sources such as Netflix and Kickstarter ~~to create~~ has allowed the independent film industry to have a new venue to function. Zach Braff used Kickstarter, a funding campaign run by fan donations, to create his film WISH I Was Here for \$3.5 million. The new avenue creates a direct relationship between society and independent filmmakers, as directors speak to their audience through the website and builds a loyal, connected fanbase, generating an honest system where fans ~~can~~ fund and support the independent entrepreneurs of the industry to succeed. Though this is positive, there are creative risks as audience



participation may compromise artistic quality. The Kickstarter-funded film *Pacific Rim* was created with the involvement of the audience's opinions and ideas for plot, decreasing the quality of the film. There is also a risk with the campaign being celebrity-driven, with Bratt's and Veronica Mars' campaign being some of the most popular, restricting the organic emergence of new talent. Although, this digital platform is in its initial stages, and can be rejuvenated by the revival of art patrons who fund honest filmmakers, which could potentially create a Renaissance in independent film. ~~At~~ Currently major studios are failing, their general profit decreasing from 10% to 6% within the last four years. George Lucas predicts that attending the cinema will cost \$50 per ticket in the next few decades, being a luxury experience. ~~That~~ Digital technology has ~~a~~ negative implications for cinematic experience, with many shutting down to the high cost of running projectors. The cinematic experience which is so vital and ~~very~~ special to our experience may fade out, a rather great tragedy when considering the independent filmmakers who started out ~~with~~ this way. //

Netflix is another <sup>digital</sup> venue for the independent film industry. Kevin Spacey advocates the move for the industry towards television, ~~then~~ "let people binge", because of the success of House of Cards, a series funded by Netflix and released all at once,

proving enormously successful. Television could be the new platform for the independent film industry, as the democratized, on-demand platform will give viewers a freedom which can be beneficial for the industry to grasp on with interesting production.

Digital technology has changed the independent film industry, and society's demands will continue to through television and other digital platforms.

The independent film industry ~~has~~ changed in response to society. ~~Due~~ Technology and ~~the~~ commercial considerations make the industry adapt, both to society's demands and to the freedoms which new technologies allow.

**Extra space if required.**  
**Write the statement number if applicable.**

ASSESSOR'S  
USE ONLY

STATEMENT  
NUMBER

Extra space if required.  
Write the statement number if applicable.

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High Merit exemplar for Media Studies 91490 2016			Total score	6
Q	Grade score	Annotation		
3	M6	<p>The candidate provides an in-depth analysis of the way the independent film industry has changed in response to society (Statement 3). The opening paragraph (page 4) sets the agenda for the discussion. Pages 5–6 provide a clear overview of the media industry, and the issues and obstacles faced, using relevant, specific supporting details from a range of independent films, and other sources. The candidate provides a detailed analysis of the impact of the changes to the independent film industry (pages 6–7), and further discussion on the effect of digital technology on the industry (pages 9–10).</p> <p>To achieve a higher grade, the candidate needed to evaluate the impact of changing technology on the independent film industry, by drawing valid conclusions about the wider significance of these changes on the industry and / or society, with specific supporting detail.</p>		