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91248



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 2 Media Studies 2023

### 91248 Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience

Credits: Three

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.	Demonstrate critical understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.

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 four 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 2–10 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

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

High Merit

TOTAL 06

## Page 1

### INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media product** and its **audience**.

Write an essay discussing the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of the statements below, in relation to your chosen media product and its audience.

### STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. There is always a two-way relationship between a media product and its audience.
2. Design elements are informed by a media producer's understanding of their audience.
3. Marketing is the most essential ingredient for the success of a media product.
4. A media product should appeal to an audience's emotions.

Media product: Barbie

Audience: Women

Select your statement: 2. Design elements are informed by a media producer's understanding of their audience. ▾

### PLANNING

**B** *I* U | ▾ | ▾ |

#### 1- Design

gerwigs understanding of how the audience wanted to feel a sense of nostalgia when watching this film influenced her to include old costumes such as the iconic barbie swim suit, other costumes older audiences were familiar with, gerwig needed to include aspects that made her love barbie when she was a little girl, aware of this audience, maintaining the kindness throwing people back to the past when they played with barbies, sweet spot age gap was 25-35, also knowing younger audiences were more likely to be interested in watching barbie having to include more modern aspects such as design of the dream house, aspects that were in barbie life and the dream house familiar costumes and sets such as astronaut and camping and popping dog

feminism- gerwig was aware that although barbie is very loved that she also made young girls feel bad about themselves, through the design of the feminism in the film they made sure it had a strong and modern approach to feminism. bringing in a character like gloria who was relatable to the sweet spot age gap as she was a mother who struggled to be a woman and is constantly criticized as claims "it is literally impossible to be a woman", link of playing with thin dolls to body image issues show how big of an issue it was, gerwig knew that people going into this movie expected to see a change in barbie's original stereotypical outlook and wanted to see a change.



## ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750–800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and support your discussion with **evidence** from media text(s) and / or other sources, which may include your own production experience.

**B** *I* U |   |  

After the release of 'Barbie' under Mattel Films on the 20th of July 2023 it became a worldwide phenomenon, attracting attention from a massively wide range of audiences. 'Barbie' has made history making 1.442 billion in box office sales, passing incredibly successful films such as 'Avengers End Game' and 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2'. The reasoning behind 'Barbies' booming success was the movies appeal to such a wide audience although slightly restricted through the PG 13 rating. 'Barbie' appealed to audiences through different aspects of design, such as Aesthetic/Nostalgia and Feminism. 'Barbies' production team and Director Greta Gerwig developed a thorough understanding of who Barbies audience was going to be and it just so happened it was everyone? Barbies famous motto was "If you love Barbie, or if you Hate Barbie, this movies for you". Although the Movie was meant to be catered towards everyone it becomes clear that this movie was made for a more female orientated audience.

Gerwig and 'Barbies' Production team had a very clear sense of who'd enjoy this film most which is what lead it to its success. There are many details which are throwbacks to the original dolls such as costuming. Due to this those who most enjoyed the film where older then what we may expected, although it did still appeal to younger audiences. Media commentator for Show Bizz 411 Rodger Friedman claims "The sweet spot age gap for who most enjoyed the movie where women 25-35". The producers knew this film would be a hit among females in general as the dolls are usually given to girls, but what attracted this age gap of women 25-35? It was the sense of nostalgia they experienced when watching. This was created throughout the design of the different aspects of the film. The film opens with Stereotypical 'Barbie' in her iconic black and white striped bathing suit, since 'Barbie' the doll was first released in 1959 but became popular around the 2000s these women instantly recognised this costume. Gerwig expressed that she dint want to "forget what what made me love barbie when I was a little girl" therefor she dressed the cast in many iconic costumes. Such as the roller blading costume, Barbies iconic pink dress and more. Women around Gerwigs age recognised these costumes and instalty felt a sense of nostalgia and longing to go back to the days when they played with Barbie Dolls.

Although this film hit it off with a older age group it still maintained very appealing to younger audiences as a survey done by Statista.Com showed that "younger consumers where more likely to be interested in seeing Barbie on the big screen". Even though those who most enjoyed Barbie where older, this film still has many design aspects directed towards their younger audiences. Gerwig made it clear it was very important to "maintain the kidness of the film". Barbies production team did this effectively though the costume design and props. Throughout the film we see Barbie dressed in some of her newer costumes. Younger audiences would of recognised these from 'Barbie Life In the Dream House' a series that became popular among children not too long ago. Familiar costumes and props in the film that are also in the series is Barbies astronought costume, the pooping dog, her camper-van costume along with Barbies camper van which has a whole episode dedicated to it in the series. The Set design in this film was also very appealing to younger audiences as "Gerwig and Oscar nominated production designer, Sarah Greenwood decided to run with a Mid Century Modern aesthetic for Barbies Dream House." Barbies dream house was an extremely bright shade of Pink which actually caused a shortage in pink paint for a while. For Greta finding the "right shade of pink was vital" as it attracted younger viewers since it felt childless, the design of the dream house was extremely similar to some of the more modern/recent design that the younger audiences would of recognised.

Although "Barbie" is a loved toy she doesn't come without her flaws. An artical by NPR claims that "Studies link playing with ultra-thin dolls to negative body image". Going into the film the audience was very aware of this issue and where hoping it would be solved or at least brought up. Gerwig claimed she was aware of how Barbie wasn't a "role model and more something that "makes women feel bad about them self". Since Gerwig was so aware of this issue vulture.com claiming she was "the real feminist icon of the film" she made sure to address this. A bit later on in the film we are introduced to Gloria. Barbies production team perfectly designed this character to resignate with the sweet spot age gap as she is a mother who works in a men dominated building, who goes through the everyday struggles of being a women. Gloria delivers a speech to stereotypical Barbie about how "it is literally impossible to be a women". In this speech Gloria mentions how you cant be too skinny but you cant be too fat. Through the design



of this character we see a more modern and feminist approach to 'Barbie'. Barbie Producers also gave the audience what they wanted throughout the more extended representation in the film with multiple plus sized, disable, and POC, Barbies along with those who don't 'fit into the beauty standard. If the Producers dint understand the audiences want for more representation and a strong feminist message in the Barbie World and didn't incorporate this through aspects of design, Barbie would be deemed a very different movie.

Without the different use of design to portray the nostalgic and feminist messages in the film audiences wouldn't of created such a strong relationship. These aspects really allowed 'Barbie' to become alive and to resonate with audiences. If the Barbie Production team want as aware of what the audience wanted 'Barbie' wouldn't be the success that it is today. Although some may have hated it and disagreed that it did anything for the feminist audience, Barbies motto didn't disappoint because everyone still watched it.

1023 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED



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## Merit

**Subject:** Media Studies

**Standard:** 91248

**Total score:** 06

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (2)	M6	<p>The candidate provided a concise, yet in-depth explanation of the relationship between Barbie and its target audience, maintaining a tight focus on statement 2: "Design elements are informed by a media producer's understanding of their audience." A range of evidence is provided from both the film and from secondary sources, such as articles and quotes from the film's director, to demonstrate a strong understanding of the relationship and the external issues, such as feminism and nostalgia, that had an impact on it.</p> <p>There was some discussion of a wider implication in the final body paragraph, where the issue of body image is touched upon, but it was not developed into the insightful conclusion required to gain an Excellence grade. Other wider implications and the use of media theory could also have been incorporated to help gain an Excellence grade.</p>