

Assessment Report

On this page

[Level 3 Media Studies 2021](#) ▾

Level 3 Media Studies 2021

Standards [91490](#) [91493](#)

Part A: Commentary

Candidates who selected a suitable statement and then interrogated it by positioning their argument in relation to the statement were the most successful.

Candidates attempting to fit heavily rote-learned essay content into their response to the statement were often prevented from demonstrating perceptive insight into the issue and the aspect of genre and industry.

Many candidates are attempting to rote learn essays and then write their responses with only a brief acknowledgement of the statement in the introduction and conclusion. This prevented candidates from achieving higher grades, as they were not engaging with the statement.

Some candidates spent considerable time at the start of their essay outlining the history of the genre and industry, offering little insight into the focus of the essay. In both standards, it is not necessary to provide a historical overview of the genre or industry, and rather explore the aspect in detail.



Candidates who consistently responded to the statement and used it as a sounding board to demonstrate their understanding of the issues and considerations for their chosen topic performed well.

Candidates who performed strongly were able to apply what they had studied to the statements rather than write a prepared essay in which they inserted the words from the statement.

Part B: Report on standards

91490: Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry

Examinations

The examination included four statements from which candidates were required to select one to use in their response.

The statements provided scope to answer on a range of media industries and encouraged candidates to consider the implications of the aspect of the media industry for the industry as a whole and wider society.

Observations

Rote-learning essay content meant candidates were not able to demonstrate perceptive insight into the issue and aspect.

Successful responses showed evidence of judicious selection of material and points rather than offering a history of the industry or trying to cover everything known about the industry.

Candidates who looked at the complexities of the statement, challenged the statement, and/or the industry's current situation tended to be able to offer more analysis and evaluation.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- made some attempt to address the statement (often in the introduction/used words of the statement at the end of each paragraph as opposed to discussing throughout the essay)

- focused on the history of the industry, particularly at the beginning of the essay, but still managed to discuss an aspect
- discussed how and/or why an aspect of the industry operated
- focused on many points without analysing the impact of them (often including more points than necessary)
- focused on the aspect without looking at it within the context of the industry as a whole
- included evidence to support their ideas.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not attempt to address the statement (or chose the wrong statement)
- gave a history of the industry without addressing the aspect
- gave little evidence in support of their discussion
- wrote a pre-prepared essay (that might have been suitable for last year's questions)
- did not show a clear understanding of the key terms in the statement
- gave a broad and generalised overview of the industry, without focusing their discussion on a particular aspect and its relevance to the industry.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- built on their explanations to explore the impact of the aspect and how and why it is significant/important/forcing change
- made more attempt to address the statement throughout the essay
- addressed the wider industry
- integrated relevant case studies as appropriate that supported their discussion
- used recent case studies rather than just relying on historical issues.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- produced a well-developed argument that addressed the statement throughout the essay

- challenged the statement or looked at the complexities within the statement as it applies to the industry
 - weaved evidence and the use of the theory throughout the essay seamlessly.
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91493: Demonstrate understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society

Examinations

The examination included four statements from which candidates were required to select one to use in their response.

The statements covered scope to answer on a range of genre and encouraged candidates to consider the implications of the aspect of the media, genre, and wider society.

Observations

As mentioned in the 2020 Assessment Report, candidates used unsuitable genres or interpreted themes and ideas in texts as genre, e.g. 'gay' films and 'racism' films are not a genre and might be better framed as coming-of-age films with gay protagonists or as part of the drama genre.

Candidates using rote-learned content and then trying to fit it around their selected statement restricted them from achieving at a higher level, as they were unable to demonstrate perceptive or insightful thinking.

Some texts used seemed outdated or could be updated to better reflect the intent of the standard. This was particularly evident in social issue documentaries such as *Super Size Me*, *Kony*, and *Bowling for Columbinewhere* the impact of these films was hard to link to our society 20 years later. Many candidates approached this standard on a text-by-text basis, which meant they related each text to the society in which it was created. These responses needed to be reframed to reflect the genre rather than the impact of individual film.

Candidates covering texts with a wide timeframe, e.g. comparing *Nosferatu*, *Psycho*, and *Get Out* commented on very different societies and issues. Selecting a narrower timeframe would have allowed more opportunities to interrogate the issues in that society and how they are manifested in genre.

Candidates would do well not to structure their discussion with a text per paragraph. This is a genre standard not a compare and contrast standard. The structure should progress through concepts of the relationship with which the genre interacts. A good rule of thumb is that most genre conventions have a societal counterpart. Structuring around that idea can make for a more appropriate, genre-specific discussion at Level 3.

Candidates that have a good grasp of media theory, and especially genre specific theory, tended to be able to demonstrate the analysis and evaluation required for higher level grades. A good grounding in what makes a genre unique and identifiable, rather than knowing two texts from a genre very well, led to more solid responses. The more specific the genre, the better candidates often did, e.g. instead of just 'documentary' or even 'social issue documentary', candidates who looked at health documentaries, documentaries around 9/11, or gun violence could discuss in depth the connection between genre and society. The same could be said with horror – monster horror, supernatural horror, slasher, etc allowed candidates greater scope to analyse.

Candidates who used a broad genre did not show how their evidence was an example of a trend in the genre and spent a lot of time just analysing text rather than providing depth in their analysis. Genres that focused on a specific time and place also tended to do better than genres where a 60–80-year period was analysed.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- provided some detail of the genre and the society
- structured their response on a text-by-text basis
- used primary evidence from sufficient media texts
- demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the connection between genre and society, focusing on genre analysis rather than text analysis
- used well-chosen evidence to support an argument
- provided an argument only apparent in the introduction and conclusion.

Candidates whose work was assessed as **Not Achieved** commonly:

- provided limited evidence of the genre and focused on mainly one text, or more than one text, using only titles and minimal detail

- showed a limited understanding of the discussed or chosen society, focusing on broad ideas of 'people' or 'audiences' or 'society', with little specificity
- ignored the concept of genre and focused on text analysis, not making clear links with societal influences/influences on society
- did not refer to the statement
- provided either no evidence or evidence that lacked detail.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Merit** commonly:

- moved beyond a text-per-paragraph structure to consider the genre rather than one text speaking for an entire decade, period, society, or perspective
- attempted to discuss how the genre, not just texts, echoed undercurrents, and zeitgeist
- used secondary evidence to support the discussion
- applied a media theory to the discussion which sometimes worked
- wove the discussion between the genre texts so their understanding was not isolated in paragraphs but more coherent
- brought disparate ideas, texts, time periods, and/or societies together, usually in an additional paragraph before the conclusion
- analysed the relationship between genre and society, including considering the wider impacts of the genre/society, weaving in the statement throughout response.

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement with Excellence** commonly:

- established the relationship between the genre and the society early on and used this as a thesis for the discussion
- focused well on the conventions or aspects of the genre rather than just the texts, placing their argument into a specific time and place rather than offering a sweeping history of cinema
- applied all texts cited to the society rather than being more piecemeal within the discussion
- understood the nuances of the genre and the society, exploring the relationship and zeitgeist well

- used secondary evidence well and took an 'outside looking in' perspective on the discussion, applying media theory well throughout their response
- referenced previous discussed examples of the genre throughout so the analysis and examination of ideas was better
- showed their knowledge of genre and society and generally addressed the chosen statement with confidence, applying their knowledge and understanding in a reflective and focused way (this was usually evident throughout the essay, where the approach was one of evaluating the statement).

[Media Studies subject page](#)

Previous years' reports

[2020 \(PDF, 181KB\)](#)

[2019 \(PDF, 302KB\)](#)

[2018 \(PDF, 113KB\)](#)

[2017 \(PDF, 48KB\)](#)

[2016 \(PDF, 215KB\)](#)