

Subject: Media Studies

Level: 3

Standards: 91490, 91493

Part A: Commentary

Candidates are expected to apply what they have learned to a specific statement. Many familiar 'pre-prepared' essays were seen, which upon observation, did not necessarily link to the statements in the 2022 paper. Heavily templated answers disadvantaged candidates and did not allow them to demonstrate their personal understanding and application of knowledge.

Successful candidates engaged with the chosen statement throughout, using the statement as a platform to discuss the industry and evaluate the points raised, rather than just referring to it in the introduction and conclusion.

Ideally, Media Studies candidates should be exposed to several texts or scenarios that are updated regularly during the year to reflect the changing nature of the industry and/or genre.

Part B: Report on standards

91490: Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry

Examination

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 an aspect of the chosen media industry for the industry as a whole and wider society.

Observations

There were a lot of pre-prepared answers, which did not necessarily link to the statements in the 2022 paper. For example, a response with a music industry focus in which a detailed history/development of the music industry from vinyl/CD/Napster/iTunes/Spotify was provided would have been more successful if the candidate had applied their own

knowledge and discussed how an independent creator might disrupt the industry, or how COVID-19 has had an impact, or how technology has changed how we operate.

Some candidates did not address the statement when discussing an historical industry. For example, when discussing Hollywood's Golden Age, candidates selected the global issue statement and whilst including the impact of World War II, would then repeat other points without making any reference to the statement (they could have refuted the statement by saying that it was domestic issues that had a bigger impact).

Some candidates appeared to respond to only one aspect of the statement. For example, they identified the word "change" and used that to discuss the history of the industry but did not address the global issue part of the statement.

Some candidates used the same material from an internal standard. For example, the development of a medium or the representation standard, without then adapting this to meet the criteria of the industry external standard.

Candidates were more successful when they were able to think about how the aspect of the industry they were discussing fitted into the overall operation of the industry.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded to and used key words from the statement in their response, even if just in the introduction and conclusion of the essay
- used evidence or supporting details
- went beyond describing an industry by discussing why the aspect of the industry functioned the way it did or by explaining how it functioned the way it did
- focused on a history of the industry rather than focusing on the aspect
- were vague or broad in their identification and discussion of the industry and/or chosen aspect
- discussed multiple points but did not always link these together or build towards analysing the industry.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not identify an industry and/or an aspect of the industry, focusing on the 'media industry' as a whole or a particular company
- appeared to rely on rote-learned essays that did not engage with the statement at all
- offered a description of an industry rather than an explanation of how/why an aspect of the industry operated, including a history of the industry and all the changes that had happened since the formation of that industry
- included insufficient detail and/or irrelevant examples

- answered beyond the scope of the statement (for example, discussing aspects of the industry or providing historical details which had no relevance to the statement being asked)
- provided an overview of an industry rather than explaining aspects of an industry
- showed insufficient understanding of the industry and how the aspect applied to this
- focused on genre, the development of the industry or representation, rather than industry
- appeared to be writing an opinion piece rather than an essay supported by evidence on the industry.

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

- went beyond explaining the aspect and discussed the impact on the industry
- showed they were thinking about the way in which their chosen aspect contributed to the overall industry
- developed an argument in their introduction which helped underpin their overall discussion
- attempted to address the statement throughout the essay response
- provided relevant evidence/supporting details to support their argument
- developed the analysis of the aspect from the discussion around how/why the aspect functioned in the industry
- included theory as part of their discussion.

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

- provided a strong thesis in response to the chosen statement throughout the essay, leading to an integrated argument that addressed the chosen statement
 - used the statement to frame their response and clearly set up the line of argument their essay was going to take, and returned to the statement throughout the response
 - included a range of points which developed rather than repeated an argument
 - demonstrated critical understanding of an aspect of an industry, how it contributed to the operations of the industry, and the impact of the aspect on the industry, commerce, or society
 - displayed a critical understanding of the complexities of the aspect for industry and/or society
 - used valid examples judiciously to support arguments
 - included theory which complimented and developed the argument.
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91493: Demonstrate understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society

Examination

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 genre and encouraged candidates to consider the implications of the aspect of the media, genre, and wider society.

Observations

Candidates produced stronger responses if they were familiar with both a large range of texts from the genre and critical texts about the genre. These candidates were able to engage in more critical discussions about the genre than those who demonstrated limited exposure to the genre, i.e. they focused much of their response on two or three texts from the genre rather than using texts to prove arguments about the genre.

Generally, candidates responded to well to the statements, which provided a great jumping off point to analyse genre. Statement two regarding universal human experience was the most challenging. Many candidates wrote about very specific societal phenomena (for example: racism, trans/homophobia, and feminism) as if they were universal, which limited the depth and legitimacy of their arguments.

The relationship between a media genre and society is essential to the standard and is often missed by candidates, who merely use the audience and the fact that the audience consumed the text as the relationship. Audiences are fine for this standard and study, but the relationship is more than just consumption. At this level, the discussion should lend itself more to zeitgeist and collective mood rather than just enjoyment and engagement. As a genre study, candidates should base their discussion around groups of texts and their shared conventions, tropes, or characteristics rather than a collection of single texts and how their plots individually speak to the society.

Candidates should be encouraged to apply their understanding rather than recall a class-wide essay plan. This was especially prevalent in the Zombie genre where candidates' responses all followed the same format/structure (blank slate/hyper individualism/survival fantasy), and all used the exact same examples to illustrate these points. Some texts seem dated in a modern context and candidates are encouraged to explore current and relevant texts where possible. An example of this is in documentary where KONY 2012 was significant at that time but is less relevant in 2022.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- focused on films' relationships to society rather than genres' relationship to society
- responded minimally to the chosen statement – often in just the introduction and conclusion

- discussed at least two media texts in sufficient detail
- provided some explanation of the connection between their chosen genre and a specific society
- structured their essays with a film/text per body paragraph – often starting those paragraphs with the text title – preventing an integrated response, limiting the depth of discussion and consideration of the genre
- attempted the higher-level discussion in a brief conclusion but did not elaborate and support their answer with relevant evidence
- chose disparate texts within a broad genre that struggled to demonstrate effective connections, with each text representing only one aspect of the relationship between the genre and the society
- showed evidence that they had watched and understood the selected texts.

Candidates who were awarded **Not Achieved** commonly:

- did not engage with statement at all, repeating rote-learned answers instead
- did not understand what was required of the statement and/or misunderstood the meaning of key words in the statement such as “perspectives” or “context”
- used limited evidence (either not enough texts, or minimal discussion of the texts mentioned)
- relied on plot details to drive their essay and neglected to discuss societal connections/influences
- used minimal evidence throughout the essay which could manifest in different ways:
 - plot summaries
 - mentioning titles but not detail from the texts
 - giving tacit descriptions of scenes without character detail
- did not clearly explain the relationship between the society and the genre.

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

- engaged with the statement throughout, had a broad understanding of genre and society, and utilised this understanding to confidently respond to the chosen statement
- consistently referred to the statement, using it as a springboard to delve deeply into analysis
- used detailed evidence to support their argument
- used primary evidence confidently with supporting secondary detail either about the genre or the society to show the relationship between genre and society
- established the genre as the primary concern of the response, rather than just individual texts that reflect aspects of society
- focused on a clear concept, convention, or other aspect of the genre that had a sociological counterpart as the framework for the discussion, allowing them to discuss texts/examples alongside one another rather than text by text

- incorporated key words from their chosen statement throughout the essay, often attempting to develop an argument in support of or challenging the statement.

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

- demonstrated a critical understanding of the genre and its relationship to society; evidenced by a discussion of the complexities of the relationship
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- wrote fluidly, cohesively, and with a line of argument
- responded to the statement by threading it throughout the essay
- referenced a wide range of texts and secondary sources to support their arguments
- when discussing media theories – moved beyond a simplistic understanding, to explain how they work and/or are relevant for the candidate's chosen genre
- made original and perceptive points about the impacts of their genre/society
- moved back and forth between evidence, texts, and points fluidly throughout the essay
- understood the significance of the genre for the society in that time and place and explored a chain of influences between the genre and the society which spoke to the relationship
- considered the legacy of the studied genre on subsequent texts or media
- incorporated key words from their chosen statement throughout the essay, developing a strong argument in support of or challenging the statement.