2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Media Studies
Level:	Level 2
Achievement standard(s):	91248, 91251

General commentary

Candidates who were able to select evidence and provide analysis to support their argument in relation to the statements were the most successful in both standards, and demonstrated the higher understanding required for Excellence.

Candidates that used pre-planned writing structures and did not demonstrate an ability to respond selectively to their chosen statement, were less successful.

Understanding of the specific nature of the target audience is important across both standards. Candidates who referred to "society" or "the audience" of a media product or genre, without further specificity, tended to deliver generalised responses.

Awareness and inclusion of evidence from media theory and secondary texts, such as critical articles, are encouraged. This provides pathways to a more thorough and deeper understanding of the content for both standards. However, candidates must demonstrate both an understanding of the theory they are citing, and an ability to weave it into their essays to make a relevant point.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91248: Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience

Assessment

The examination required candidates to select one of four statements and write an essay discussing the extent to which they agreed or disagreed, in relation to a chosen media product and its audience.

Commentary

The exam functioned well with a relatively even spread of responses across all four of the statements. Those candidates who had difficulty with the concept of the relationship between an audience and a media product being an interactive one were unable to demonstrate a convincing understanding in response to statement 1: "There is always a two-way relationship between a media product and its audience".

Stranger Things continued to be a popular choice of media product for this standard. Candidates also chose current 2023 products such as the Barbie movie, or Netflix's TV show,

Wednesday. These new products tended to generate essays that demonstrated candidate engagement with the standard.

Understanding of a media product's audience: what their characteristics are; how they are measured / targeted; and how they respond to and interact with the media product, are central components of this standard. Candidates who focused heavily on details of the media product itself, without providing a full discussion of how the media product developed a relationship with a specific audience were less successful.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- maintained sufficient question focus, marrying the material they had studied to their chosen statement
- demonstrated a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship between the media product and a specific, defined target audience that was relevant to the chosen statement
- included detail that was irrelevant or only tenuously linked to the chosen statement, or interpreted the statement in a broad fashion
- provided specific evidence from the media product.

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

- explained how and / or why a relationship between a media product and its audience operated in a lucid manner
- provided thorough, accurate evidence, such as demographic / psychographic information and / or media audience theory, to establish the nature of the relationship between audience and media product
- maintained good question focus throughout the essay, using the key words of the question to frame up their response
- attempted to discuss the consequences of the relationship, at times implicitly, but did not provide the nuanced evidence required for Excellence, and / or the consequences were tacked on and not related to the chosen statement.

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

- discussed the consequences of the relationship between the media product and its audience, such as the economic, cultural, or political consequences that arose organically out of the discussion of the media product and the audience (these consequences / implications often showed an awareness of current media trends)
- provided thorough, convincing evidence to support the discussion of wider consequences that was paired with well-argued analysis to establish the link between the relationship between a media product, its audience, and a consequence (this evidence was often varied, including theory, statistics, academic and other articles, as well as judiciously chosen evidence from the media product and the creators of the product, with the perspective on the consequence often demonstrating perceptive, original critical thinking)
- used their chosen statement to develop an argument that clearly responded to the statement
- showed a more nuanced awareness of the complexity of the relationship between a media product and its audience, as opposed to using generalised or more simplistic cause and effect statements when discussing the wider consequences.

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

- provided rote-learned responses that lacked sufficient awareness of the specific focus of the chosen statement
- did not provide specific enough supporting evidence from the media product or other relevant sources
- demonstrated a basic understanding, but did not develop it sufficiently, often writing much less than the suggested maximum
- focused mainly on describing the media product itself, such as plot details of a TV show or film, without sufficient focus on the relationship of the product with a specific audience
- did not sufficiently respond to the chosen statement, often due to choosing a statement that did not marry up well with the material they had learned.

Achievement standard 91251: Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre

Assessment

The examination required candidates to select one of four statements and write an essay discussing the extent to which they agreed or disagreed, in relation to an aspect of a chosen media genre.

Commentary

All four statements provided opportunities to achieve at all grade levels. Candidates found statement 3: "A media genre must appeal to audience tastes to remain profitable" difficult to respond to effectively without exploring evidence of profit such as box office returns. Statement 4: "A media genre is successful when it satisfies audience expectations" was most effectively addressed when candidates described the genre audience expectations with nuance, instead of generalising about society or social issues at the time of the text's release. Statement 2: "Media producers must be creative when recycling genre tropes" worked best when candidates could specifically describe a trope that had been recycled, rather than the evolution of a trope through a series of texts.

There were a high proportion of candidates who used a prescriptive writing frame, rather than bringing key information to use as supporting evidence. This was evident in planning which was reproduced by many candidates across schools. This suggests that a writing frame has been developed from a previous year's Excellence script.

Candidates who claimed a media text as a foundational text face the danger of approaching genre through a series of films / television episodes decade by decade, e.g. Alien is the first supernatural horror, or Psycho is the first horror / psychological thriller / thriller / slasher.

Candidates should be aware about not making assumptions about audience expectations, e.g. that the audience wanted texts to reflect social issues of the time, without providing any logical or theoretical explanation. This demonstrates a simplistic understanding of the specific genre audience as consisting of anyone who might view the text.

Candidates should be able to show understanding of developing media trends such as how the audience's changing consumption of texts within their chosen genre impacts audience interaction with the genre itself.

Genres that worked well included psychological thriller, horror, and superhero films where candidates were able to take an original line, attacking their chosen statement with a broad understanding of the genre, rather than a limited understanding using a prescriptive writing frame.

Genres that did not work as well included horror and science fiction films where candidates wrote about the representation of women in a series of films, focusing on the changing role of women in society and how this is reflected in a series of films. The discussion tended to relate to narrow, simplistic, and at times, offensive descriptions of women's role in society, rather than how the genre itself functions. The comedy genre was often responded to in an overly-generalised manner, with plot heavy descriptions of texts, such as Grown Ups and Mall Cop, not engaging with the concept of genre enough.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- identified a genre and described their chosen aspect in [some] detail
- started with the genre and used a range of media texts within the genre to support their discussion
- responded to their chosen statement in their introduction / conclusion, as well as body paragraphs
- described changes in the genre without explaining how or why these changes occurred
- attempted an explanation without providing any primary or secondary evidence
- showed a limited understanding of distribution / consumption in the particular media industry, e.g. suggesting the industry becomes saturated with a particular genre of film (a more precise description, focused on audiences and / or producers, would enable a more articulate discussion)
- named media theories or quoted theorists without fully unpacking the meaning or relating it effectively to their argument.

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

- described a change in the genre and provided evidence of how or why the change occurred, often from a secondary source
- organised their argument in response to the statement, rather than a series of texts
- named media theories or quoted theorists without fully unpacking the meaning, or relating it effectively to the chosen statement and argument they were making
- attempted to examine the implications, but instead made descriptive generalised statements lacking supporting evidence.

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

- applied media theories confidently, unpacking and revisiting them through the course of their essay
- used media theory with precise vocabulary confidently to link to the chosen statement and genre
- chose their secondary evidence carefully, i.e. it applied directly to their chosen statement
- showed up-to-date knowledge of the genre and leveraged this to examine implications or draw conclusions.

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

- wrote about a series of films or TV shows, providing a plot summary or a close reading of each, but not relating it back to the genre itself
- made some generalised assertions that lacked context or perspective on the audience of the time and provided no link back to how this was relevant to / for the genre itself
- produced a rote-learned essay that did not respond to the chosen statement
- provided insufficient description of the aspect and no specific evidence to support
- close read some media texts in terms of themes or connection to society, without relating them to their chosen statement
- addressed the statement superficially or not at all.