

2023 NCEA Assessment Report

Subject:	Media Studies
Level:	Level 3
Achievement standard(s):	91490, 91493

General commentary

Candidates engaged with the statements provided, though sometimes addressed only a portion of the statement. Those candidates who disagreed with their chosen statement tended to deliver a pre-prepared response that, even in superficially refuting the chosen statement, did not address the statement in the depth or directness required.

The quality of the evidence overall was variable and showed disparity between candidates. At level 8 of the curriculum, markers expect to see more detailed primary evidence used to support points, and then to bring in secondary evidence to develop the discussion further. There was a distinct gap between those candidates who did this and those who were unprepared to interact with the question fully, using evidence.

Given the breadth and nature of both standards at this level in terms of industry, genre, and society, candidates should be engaged with a dynamic, fresh range of texts; examples; sources; concepts; and media; allowing them to develop a personal understanding of media genres and / or media industries.

Report on individual achievement standard(s)

Achievement standard 91490: Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media industry

Assessment

The examination required candidates to select one of four statements and write an essay discussing the extent to which they agreed, by evaluating the operation, impact, and wider significance of an aspect of a chosen media industry.

Commentary

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.

Candidates who achieved higher grades were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the industry and how it worked. They were able to discuss the aspect of the industry in their chosen statement in depth, using a range of both primary and secondary evidence, to support their points.

Candidates who identified a key word in the statements, such as 'consumer' or 'technology', did not really address the statement as a whole. For example, they would use technology as a starting point to discuss technology across the industry, such as in the global music industry, starting from vinyl to CDs to Napster to iTunes to Spotify. However, they did not move beyond an explanation of the technology changing, when they should have addressed the role technology plays in shaping the industry.

Those candidates who did not choose their statements wisely tended to attempt to wedge prepared material into a statement that contained a key word. However, the statements asked for a perspective or analysis that did not fit the prepared response, e.g. responses were based around innovations in the industry, changes in technology, or ethics within the industry, but the candidates still tried to shoehorn this into an essay about the consumer.

There are still candidates using prepared essays or heavily scaffolded responses that do not allow them to respond to the statements.

Some of the responses seemed more appropriate for other assessment contexts, e.g. the genre external assessment, or the internally assessed representation or development of a medium.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- showed some basic understanding of the industry but tended to focus on a company or operation within the industry, rather than discussing the wider context
- responded to and used the key words from the statement in their response, though this may only appear in the introduction and / or conclusion
- focused on a history of the industry, rather than focusing on a particular aspect of the industry
- 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
- attempted to explain impacts of the aspect on the industry, though may not have supported the explanation with sufficient evidence.

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

- were able to go beyond explaining the aspect to identify and discuss the impact on the industry
- demonstrated clear thinking about the way in which their chosen aspect contributed to the overall industry
- began to develop an argument in their introduction, which helped underpin their overall discussion
- attempted to address the question 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, including theory as part of discussion.

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

- provided a strong thesis in response to the chosen statement that ran through the essay, leading to an integrated argument addressing the chosen statement
- used the statement to frame their response and clearly set up the line of argument their essay was going to take, while returning to the statement throughout the response
- included a range of points which developed, rather than repeating an argument
- demonstrated critical understanding of an aspect of an industry and 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 (both primary and secondary) to support their argument
- included media theory that complemented and developed the argument, often helping to expand their points in detail.

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

- used little to no evidence
- did not attempt to address the statement or only did so very superficially
- did not identify or reference an industry, basing their discussion around a single entity, company, or operation without reference to a media industry; or only discussed the New Zealand media industry
- were restricted by rote-learned discussions that did not connect to the statements provided
- answered beyond the scope of the question, e.g. discussed aspects of the industry, or provided historical details with no relevance to the question 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
- wrote responses more appropriate to a genre, representation, or development essay.

Achievement standard 91493: Demonstrate understanding of a relationship between a media genre and society

Assessment

The examination required candidates to select one of four statements and write an essay discussing the extent to which they agreed, by evaluating the influence, impact, and wider significance of a relationship between a chosen media genre and society.

Commentary

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.

When discussing contemporary films that are set in the past (common for drama, gay rights genre, pandemic thriller), candidates should consider the society that the films were made in, rather than using them as commentary for a current society.

Candidates who chose to engage with the question and wrangle with the extent to which they agreed wrote stronger essays, as they were able to have a central thread / argument that ran through their essay, and drove their primary and secondary evidence selection and / or societal references.

Stronger responses came from those who could offer a range of texts within a genre, especially where they understood the way texts served the genre, or combined to prove how / why the genre was signalling or connecting to society.

Those candidates who offered theoretical or critical media texts within their discussions engaged more critically with their chosen statement.

There were candidates who needed to unpack their chosen statement in more detail, e.g. Statement 1: "Genre can subvert or reinforce societal norms" was challenging for candidates who were non-specific about what those norms were (such as gender, family, hierarchy). This resulted in generalisations and limited the depth and legitimacy of their arguments.

Genre studies that focused on specific societies and specific periods of time and place, with well-chosen texts, worked better than multiple societies or texts from different eras or longer periods of time (as opposed to offering single texts in each point and how their plots individually speak to the society).

The relationship is essential to the standard and was often missed by candidates merely using the audience and the fact that the audience consumed the text as the relationship, regardless of whether the text or society were geographically the same. Particularly, American reality TV and New Zealand teenagers demonstrated little impact or connection.

Candidates were successful when they based their discussion around groups of texts and their shared conventions, tropes, or characteristics, rather than around a collection of single texts and how their plots individually speak to society.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded directly to the chosen statement, but minimally – often in just the introduction and conclusion
- provided some explanation of the connection between their chosen genre and a specific society
- generally focused on the relationship of individual media texts to a society / time period, rather than the genre's relationship to society
- offered two media texts, using sufficient detail, as evidence to support or address the identified relationship / connection
- structured their essays with a film / text per body paragraph – often starting those paragraphs with the text title, with the discussion centred on each individual text's connection to the society – often genre was secondary or omitted from the discussion
- 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, e.g. with psychological thrillers in the same essay – *The Invisible Man* was used as representative of #MeToo, while *Get Out* represented #BlackLivesMatter, yet little correlation was made.

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

- were consistent in discussions linking society and genre and exploring how / why those relationships exist
- referred back to the statement consistently, using it as a springboard to delve deeply into analysis
- incorporated key words from their chosen statement throughout the essay, often attempting to develop an argument in support of or challenging the statement
- utilised the statement in topic sentences, or by using key words of the statement throughout the essay, to help establish and frame analysis of the relationship / connection
- used detailed and relevant evidence to support their argument including secondary sources and / or relevant media theory
- used secondary sources / theorists confidently to show the relationship between genre and society
- positioned the genre as the central focus of the response, rather than addressing individual texts and how they reflect aspects of society
- established a framework for the response – often focusing on a central concept, convention, or aspect of the genre that had a sociological counterpart, allowing for discussion of texts / examples alongside one another, rather than text by text
- focused on a clear concept, convention, or other aspect of the genre that had a sociological counterpart as the framework for the discussion, allowing for discussion of texts / examples alongside one another, rather than text-by-text.

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

- engaged with the statement throughout the response to demonstrate a critical understanding of the complex, and often symbiotic relationship between a media genre and society, allowing for an exploration of the grey area and complexities of the relationship
- presented a fluid, cohesive, and articulate argument that referenced an array of media texts and secondary evidence to establish and support their position using a range of evidence
- appreciated and evidenced the cause and effect dynamic operating between the genre and the society
- offered an original viewpoint or perceptive discussion about the impacts of the relationship on the genre / society and supported this with evidence beyond the media texts to secure the connection discussed
- appreciated the historic or seminal position of the genre and could often address wider impacts on subsequent texts or media
- went beyond a simplistic understanding when discussing media theories to explain how they work and / or are relevant for the chosen genre.

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

- established a media text to lead each body paragraph – often leading with the title of the text and how each text reflected society, rather than a focus on genre and society at a specific point in time
- showed no understanding of what was required of the question and / or misunderstood the meaning of key words in the question, e.g. “subvert” or what a societal “connection” might actually look like
- provided limited evidence (either not enough texts, or minimal discussion of the texts mentioned)
- focused on the retelling of plot, action, or themes of media texts, and did not make connections to a society
- made little or no mention or inclusion of the chosen statement throughout the essay.