2024 NCEA Assessment Report

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

General commentary

In both standards, candidates were required to engage with one of the provided statements. Candidates who consistently engaged with their chosen statement, using it as a framework for analysing the industry or genre in depth rather than addressing parts of the statement or confining it to introductory and concluding remarks, performed strongly. Candidates who relied on pre-prepared essays that were insufficiently tailored to the specific statements provided, limited their ability to show personal and critical understanding.

Considering the scope of the standards at this level – covering industry, genre, and society – candidates would benefit from exposure to diverse, current texts, sources, and media concepts that reflect the evolving nature of media industries and genres. Such engagement would allow them to develop a nuanced understanding of media genres and industries.

Strong responses utilised detailed primary evidence to establish key points, supported by secondary evidence to deepen analysis and strengthen arguments. This approach clearly distinguished well-prepared candidates from those who struggled to engage effectively with the standards.

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 five 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

Candidates were most 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. The examination revealed that a number of candidates relied on rote-learned essays, often fitting pre-prepared content to statements irrespective of their relevance. Many candidates appeared to focus on a single part of the statement, limiting their ability to engage fully with the options provided.

The most commonly studied industry was the music industry, with discussions often centred on digitisation. However, a considerable number of responses included historical overviews or repurposed essays from previous years, which hindered relevance and depth. Some candidates frequently misunderstood the concept of an industry, instead analysing individual businesses, such

as TVNZ instead of the television industry, Fortnite instead of the gaming industry. Those who linked specific businesses to broader industry trends and practices as case studies were generally more successful.

Future-focused questions were better addressed by candidates who analysed implications and industry evolution. For example, strong responses on the New Zealand news industry highlighted significant events such as the collapse of Newshub and TVNZ cuts. Conversely, candidates who delved excessively into historical developments often struggled to pivot their discussions to future implications.

A recurring issue was the selection of statements. Some candidates chose statements misaligned with their prepared material, such as addressing digitisation under a statement about people and profit. Similarly, responses on AI often lacked depth, with candidates offering opinions rather than demonstrating understanding.

Pre-prepared essays and rigidly scaffolded approaches limited flexibility, reducing candidates' ability to engage with statements fully. Emphasis should also be placed on understanding specific requirements and avoiding reliance on outdated material or narrow interpretations of industry concepts.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- responded to and used the key words from the statement in their response, though this may have only been in their introduction and conclusion
- included significant focus on the history of the industry, rather than focusing on a particular aspect of the industry
- attempted in either generalised or superficial ways to mention the impacts of the aspect on the industry, though may not have supported the explanation with sufficient evidence
- 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.

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

- explained how the aspect had an impact on the 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 from both primary and secondary sources to support their argument.

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

- 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 by subverting and interrogating it, showing an understanding of the nuances within the aspect
- used valid examples judiciously (both primary and secondary) to support their argument
- incorporated appropriate 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
- engaged superficially with the statement, or did not show an understanding of the statement
- based their discussion around a single entity, company, or operation without reference to a media industry, often only describing the history of the industry
- wrote opinion-based essays without evidence to support claims – this was frequently evident for the first statement, "Artificial intelligence (AI) should not replace traditional media practices", and the fifth statement, "Being inclusive should be authentic in media industries"
- provided an overview of an industry, rather than explaining aspects of an industry.

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

Assessment

The examination required candidates to select one of five 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

Candidates who clearly defined their genre and situated it within a specific society, including time and place, achieved better outcomes. Successful examples included film noir, post-9/11 Zombies, and 1980s-90s slasher films. Applying analytical lenses, such as gender or ethics, enabled stronger connections between genres and societies, as seen with *Femme Fatale* in film noir, *The Final Girls* in slasher films, and heteronormativity in family sitcoms.

Strong responses utilised multiple media texts, integrating them across body paragraphs to articulate how they collectively represented the genre's connection to society. Candidates who incorporated theoretical or critical media texts demonstrated greater critical engagement and adaptability to the examination statements.

The fourth statement, "Genre primarily entertains", posed challenges for candidates who lacked specificity in addressing entertainment's role in connecting genres to societies. Conversely, the second statement, "Genre acts as a time capsule", worked well with genres like noir but often led to limited film-focused discussions. The third statement, "Genre profits from society's fears", was effectively addressed by candidates who examined social concerns beyond financial motives, particularly in genres like zombie, noir, and slasher films.

The strongest responses placed the relationship between genre and society at the core of their discussions. These responses drew from a range of texts, highlighting shared conventions, and their societal relevance. Candidates with a robust understanding of society – its time, place, and scale – produced confident and well-rounded responses. Overall, the quality of submissions reflected evidence of strong teaching and learning, with genres like dystopia, science fiction, and superhero films showcasing high engagement with the standard.

Further teaching and learning on emerging, non-traditional, or social-leaning genres (queer or feminist) is needed to better support candidates to meet the standard. The consideration of genre conventions with sociological counterparts might assist in differentiating genres from movements.

Grade awarding

Candidates who were awarded **Achievement** commonly:

- established the genre and a society at the start of the response and in the conclusion
- focused on the relationship of individual media texts to a specific society/time period, rather than the genre's relationship to society
- engaged generally with the statement – commonly through the introduction and conclusion
- established a media text to lead each body paragraph – often leading with the title of the text and moving to outline evidence from the text that connected to the society
- offered two media texts, using sufficient detail, as evidence to support or address the identified relationship/connection to society
- presented and used evidence that went beyond plot and made it clear they had viewed and understood their chosen media texts
- offered some explanation of the relationship between the genre and society, but generally focused on the connection between the text and a time period, rather than a wider/deeper consideration of the genre
- offered a conclusion that involved some integrated statement regarding the connection between genre and society but did not give sufficient detail or evidence to support it
- engaged generally with the individual texts and their individual impact on society, rather than the genre.

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

- addressed the chosen statement throughout the response by using it in topic sentences, or as key words throughout the essay, to help establish and frame analysis of the relationship being discussed
- attempted to establish an argument that supported or challenged the statement
- displayed a secure understanding of both the genre and the society, and used this to address the impact of the connection on the genre/society
- provided detailed primary evidence – and often secondary source detail – to support the impact of the relationship between the genre and the society
- maintained the genre as the central focus of the response, rather than addressing individual texts and how they reflect aspects of society
- utilised a framework in the response that focused on a central concept, convention, or aspect of the genre that had a sociological counterpart
- discussed 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, demonstrating a critical understanding of the complex and often symbiotic relationship between their chosen media genre and society
- established the relationship as central to the response, using the statement to address the significance of the genre for the society (often both time and place)
- presented a cohesive and articulate argument that referenced an array of media texts and secondary source evidence that supported their position
- articulated often the cause-and-effect dynamic operating between the genre and the society
- offered an original viewpoint or critically engaged discussion about the impact of the relationship on the genre/society, supported by evidence within and beyond the media texts
- controlled their discussion by using a range of evidence from primary and secondary texts to support their argument
- appreciated the historic or influential position of their selected genre (often in a specific time period) and could often address wider impacts on subsequent texts or media unfolding from it.

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

- attempted to address the statement but supplied minimal or indirect evidence to support their response (this was either general discussion of one text, no specific society, or no identified connection)
- made a brief response that did not engage with the statement
- focused on retelling plot, action, or themes of one or two media texts from a genre, but did not make connections to a society
- discussed one media text in some detail but did not offer, or only name dropped, others
- discussed a genre and society in general terms that were either non-specific or unsupported by specific textual evidence
- gave a broad and generalised overview of the genre, without offering discussion of the society to establish a connection/relationship in the response
- tried to use disparate texts that did not form a genre.