# Scholarship, 2007

# Media Studies

# Assessment Report

**Media Studies, Scholarship, 2007**
**93303**


**Commentary**

Candidates were better at addressing the statements and quotes, and at building complex arguments with supporting evidence. The best responses referred to a wide range of texts in support of their argument, with the descriptive detail carefully provided to support the analysis.

However, too few candidates attempted to explore and build coherent and cohesive arguments that comprehensively interrogated the breadth of the questions. For example, candidates are encouraged to challenge the statements and quotes in the questions and not simply agree with the question and offer a range of contrasting perspectives. Implicit in candidate responses should be expression of the implications and ramifications of the views or ideas being presented in the question. Candidates who did this successfully were applying high level skills, demonstrating independence of thought, originality, and flexibility in their argument.

Candidate answers generally suggest that there is still considerable scope for development of these analytical skills. For example, a number of candidates were successful in considering the question / quote from several perspectives; in Question One, a significant minority did argue the positive and negative impact of the media; in Question Two, a very small number did contrast audience dissatisfaction with other (more convincing) drivers of innovation (no-one questioned whether innovation is necessary or desirable); in Question Three, very few considered any other challenges, such as the broader need to be socially responsible.

Candidates should avoid padding their essays with excessive detail that does not necessarily improve the quality of the answer. Less effective scripts tended to focus on descriptive detail in an attempt to appear knowledgeable with the detail often irrelevant to the argument. Instead, candidates need to provide careful choice of evidence and focus their efforts on building a convincing analytical argument that lies at the heart of Scholarship.

Question One encouraged candidates to explore the complexity of the relationship between media and society as both reflective and influential. However, many candidates found it difficult to clearly distinguish between reflection and influence, and tended to get confused between the two. Too often, candidates commented in their essays that media both reflects and influences without having presented a case or evidence that it does so; they used the language of the question as a self-evident truth that did not need to be contested or interrogated, or supported. For the first time, a significant minority of essays even used question one quotes from the 2005 and 2006 exam in their essays (Jim Morrison, Malcolm X) as a way of introducing media power. These essays tended to be the ones that went on to argue in a formulaic way, with whole schools at times presenting the same argument, evidence and paragraph structure. It was clear that these candidates had used the 2005 and / or 2006 papers as practice, and then re-presented their essay in the 2007 paper.

Many candidates made generic claims in Question Two about how audience dissatisfaction lead to change, without clear support and detailed knowledge of the

impact of ratings, surveys, critical writings etc on media developments. Many candidates talked well about developments but then marred their argument with claims about how this development had clearly come from audience dissatisfaction (no evidence presented) in an attempt to "address the question". In most cases, other explanations as to why the development occurred would have been more accurate and convincing.

Question 3 gave appropriate scope, given the quote's use of "technology and / or society". However, for many candidates, the question encouraged a pedestrian account of how an industry has been shaped, with many looking at this over time. The best responses were reflecting on how their chosen industry was coping with social and technological shifts in an attempt to remain relevant / profitable.

**The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:**

- an ability to take a position, and argue how that position addressed the quote and question, with significant, well-chosen supporting evidence and logical conclusions
- insightful analysis relevant to the question / quote, showing originality of thought at times
- wide knowledge of the subject relevant to the quote / question, with carefully chosen evidence
- an understanding of the complexity of the subject and attempts to communicate this. Some candidates presented a balanced argument, and analysed various positions. A small number of effective essays took issue with the quote in order to construct a response
- an ability to integrate a wide range of texts and contexts in their examination of the topic / issue.

**Candidates who did NOT achieve Scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and in addition they:**

- delivered what appeared to be a prepared argument; this was evidenced by striking similarities between essays from some schools (same argument, evidence and even paragraph structure in some cases). Many of these essays were not well linked to the quote at the head of the question
- often made generalizations that were not supported by subsequent argument or evidence (eg "technology is improving all the time", or "the audience were bored by the current crop of soaps, so wanted something new", or "up until the 1960s, society was extremely conservative")
- lacked an overall shape to their argument, often jumping from one aspect to another without clear linking
- failed to provide convincing evidence, particularly convincing textual evidence, to support their assertions or analysis
- tended to describe, or explain, without attempting to build an analytical argument.