

Scholarship

2014 Assessment Report

Media Studies

COMMENTARY

The range of quotes/statements enabled students to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking skills in their responses. The quote format is useful as a starter from which the student develops their argument.

Question 1A was not generally well done. Many candidates argued simplistically that more access meant more creativity. 'Creative content' was not well defined. Almost all candidates denied the quote, and often lost the opportunity for a more nuanced argument about creativity.

Question 1B was not attempted by many. However, those candidates who did answer this question did well, with arguments about privacy, bullying and copyright predominating.

Question 1C was well done, but very few candidates defined what 'mainstream' meant. Most looked at NZ film, focussing on representation issues. Many saw both positives and negatives in films by/about Maori. However, simplistic arguments about representation in films like *The Piano*, *Ngati* and *Warriors* continue to dominate.

In question 1D most candidates agreed with the quote, with the dangers well covered in general. Social Media was popular, but there were significant shortcomings in the use of specific examples or case studies. Most candidates generalised with only limited specific evidence presented.

Candidates who selected Question 1E wrote about film or television and addressed the quote well, the majority agreeing and analysing how representation is constructed and how texts manipulate.

Question 2A attracted simplistic responses, often concerning print media.

In Question 2B many candidates argued quite unconvincingly that news is easier and so much more convenient online. Few argued about quality, or that accessing any media is time-consuming, and that one of mainstream media's function (actually very useful) is to filter news for importance and relevance, and that the net is no better at this than print, and arguably much worse. The brave new world of easily consumed quality media that the net provides is a predictable argument that good critical teaching should be debunking.

Question 2C was attempted by few candidates.

In Question 2D many candidates celebrated their own culture's narcissistic self-obsessed, righteous demand for media fulfilment without any critical understanding of how damaging such self-obsession can be on community and society.

A number of candidates used Question 2E as an opportunity to bemoan the failings of big-budget films and compared them to their favourite independent films.

Candidates responding to Question 3A generally agreed with the quotation and contrasted films they found captivating from an ideas perspective with those that had simplistic stories. Good stories were generally equated with complex ideas or themes (questionable), and weak stories with cliché.

Few candidates attempted Question 3B. Very few had anything more than a superficial knowledge of early film, and this limited their ability to construct a convincing argument.

Question 3C was a popular option. However there was not always a good understanding of what novelty (the 'new') or familiarity (the 'known') referred to in this context. Careful definition of these terms would have been useful in the essay introduction. Some approached this in a simplistic way – e.g., early war films were all pro-war (familiar), later films anti-war (novelty). This ignores the many modern war films that have pro-war aspects (celebration of heroism, violence, restoration of order etc.) and that some of the earliest films made had decidedly anti-war themes.

A more productive approach would have been to consider common features (depiction of violence, heroism etc) and novel features (role of women/civilians, type of enemy, technology, resistance to authority, stylistic realism etc.).

In Question 3D it was important that candidates could show change if they were agreeing with the quotation. This required evidence, attitudes, roles, statistics, trends etc. A few candidates, but not enough, defined 'redecorate' for this context. Most provided weak generalisations about how documentary (most commonly) had a big impact on the world without being able to convincingly support their claims. It would have been more honest to argue that many directors want to change the world, analyse this intent as evident from the text, and then point out that measuring impact in any meaningful way is very difficult.

Most candidates responding to Question 3E denied the quotation, however, many had only limited knowledge of films directed by women.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- developed a clear, convincing argument that addressed the quote/statement
- challenged the quote if necessary, giving convincing reasons why their approach was appropriate
- included well considered, thoughtful analysis with considerable insight and/or originality
- used evidence from a range of sources to support their argument in an effective way
- demonstrated considerable understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument
- demonstrated a convincing and extensive understanding of the aspects considered
- wrote in an engaging, articulate way using academic language where appropriate
- considered issues from various perspectives or positions
- used media theory in a knowledgeable and appropriate way.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- developed a clear argument that addressed the quote/statement
- challenged the quote/statement if necessary, giving valid reasons why their approach was appropriate
- included well considered analysis with some insight
- demonstrated some understanding of ambiguity and subtlety in their argument
- used evidence from a range of sources in support of their argument
- demonstrated sound understanding of the aspects considered
- wrote in a clear way using academic language where appropriate
- used media theory where appropriate.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- lacked analytical ability
- considered only one or limited perspectives
- used inappropriate or insufficient evidence
- made sweeping claims without clear supporting evidence
- referred to media theory without a clear understanding of its relevance
- developed simplistic arguments
- failed to define or understand the language or intent of the quote/statement
- failed to justify an alternative approach if they challenged the quote/statement
- did not attempt or complete both essays
- used arguments prepared for other standards or previous years' scholarship papers that were not well suited to the quote.