

Scholarship

2009 Assessment Report

Media Studies

COMMENTARY

The provision of three quotations/statements for each section allowed candidates more choice than in previous years, and generally inspired more diversity and tailoring of responses to specific interests or strengths.

Many of the highest achieving candidates responded to the specific nature of these quotations. For example, there were many Excellence responses to Question 1C. In general, candidates who chose the more generalised quotations (e.g. Questions 1A and 2A, which were amongst the most popular) did not do so well.

Questions 1A, 2A and to a lesser extent 2B, 2C and 3A all required candidates to muse on conformity and innovation in media. This resulted in some candidates presenting rather simplistic and repetitive claims about how innovative or lacking in innovation media is/was. It was particularly noticeable that candidates who answered 1A and 2A often wrote two very similar essays, thus demonstrating a limited knowledge or analytical ability.

Although providing details is an important part of clarifying ideas and subject knowledge, excessive length or detail was of no benefit for those candidates who did not show relevance to the statement/quotation and argument overall. Successful candidates provided a balance of subject knowledge, critical thinking, integration, analysis and synthesis when developing an argument.

Option 1A

Most candidates considered *new media* in a broad way, defining it as the recent broadening reach of all media in general. Very few defined *new media* (or any other terms) explicitly. In addition, *unprecedented* was usually ignored, with candidates arguing that the explosion encouraged conformity, but not more than ever before. Many candidates made big claims (for example *society is conformist*) with little concrete support. Some essays relied on generalisations without specific knowledge.

Option 1B

This quotation encouraged an oppositional approach, and many candidates argued that censorship was important to restrict excess, which is not the same as creativity. A few supported the quote, with sometimes unconvincing examples from films that carried very high ratings. The best responses pointed out how censorship, whilst restrictive at times, also serves a public good, and actually encourages creativity as makers had to work out how to tell their stories in a creative way within set restrictions. Responses that looked at early film history (Hayes code etc) were less well written than responses that included more recent examples. Some candidates did not show sound understanding of early film history, or demonstrated only a limited knowledge of and sensitivity to historical contexts in which films were produced.

Option 1C

Most responses to this option were of a very high calibre. The specific nature of the quotation enabled a number of candidates to provide a detailed, thoughtful and analytical essay.

Option 2A

Most candidates used this quotation to discuss the music industry, and some made very successful arguments. However, not many convincingly argued the idea that the industry is *dead* or finished.

The best candidates presented a more nuanced argument, i.e. the industry is struggling and changing but still very much alive, working to find new business models to *make money out of music*. Many expressed the idea that the *brave new world of music* is all going to be about self-promotion and Myspace or Facebook, but none supported this effectively with convincing evidence.

Option 2B

This quotation attracted comparatively few responses. In most cases candidates took a negative viewpoint, but did not generally exploit the *cultural imperialism* that the quote implies, again showing a lack of historical and political understanding. Many presented a rather weak critique of New Zealand content and production limitations contrasted to the supposedly high production values evident in overseas products. Very few took the opportunity to argue about the media from a political perspective.

Option 2C

This quotation attracted some simplistic and intense attacks on the newspaper as an antiquated and soon-to-be-extinct anachronism. Many candidates took great delight in listing the virtues of the internet (immediacy, cheapness, ease of use) contrasted to the sins of the newspaper (made of paper, many words, expensive), but few showed any complexity in their response and counter arguments were rare; e.g. aging populations (who have grown up with and still like newspapers), local news (hopeless online), the screen problem, and the growth in many newspaper circulations. The old idea that any new technology is a *better one* still has much currency, but was not critiqued by candidates.

Option 3A

For this option many candidates reproduced arguments from the level 3 Genre examination. Responses lacked imagination, complexity and analysis. The contrast between the two sets of key words was generally well understood (the old versus the new), and the best essays linked this well to the appropriate social context/s – driving the change or lack of change. There were many examples given of innovation, but very few of renewal. Few took the opportunity to discuss how old forms have been remade or tweaked for new contexts.

Option 3B

Despite the brackets, almost all candidates answered on film texts. There was a wide range of *greater truths* considered. Most candidates argued that the texts they were analysing were dealing with *big* themes or ideas, but only some did this successfully.

Option 3C

There were many well argued and eloquent essays prepared on films in response to this quotation. Most candidates expressed passion for their chosen films, and used evidence in an effective way to support their arguments. The best responses were prepared on films where there is clear societal agreement on the *greatness* of the overall product. Candidates, on the other hand, who argued that films like *Transformers* or the *Saw* series are amongst the *best* in this way did not do so convincingly.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- developed a clear argument that addressed the quotation
- included well considered, thoughtful analysis with some insights

- used evidence from a range of sources to support their argument in an effective way
- showed a convincing understanding of the aspects considered
- wrote in an engaging, articulate way
- considered issues from different perspectives or positions
- used media theory in a knowledgeable and appropriate way.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- developed a clear argument that addressed the quotation
- included well considered analysis
- used evidence from a range of sources
- demonstrated sound understanding of the aspects considered
- used media theory where appropriate.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance commonly:

- repeated arguments from other media standards with only limited attempts to address the quote
- did not show any analytical ability
- considered only one or limited perspectives
- used inappropriate or insufficient evidence
- referred to media theory without a clear statement of its relevance
- developed simplistic arguments
- failed to define or show understanding of the language or intent of the quote.