2024 VCE Media external assessment report

General comments

Students generally performed well in the 2024 VCE Media examination, with the majority attempting all of the questions.

It is important that students have a strong understanding of what command terms involve, as these terms dictate the type of response expected and the level of depth required. The [VCAA Glossary of Command Terms](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce-assessment/Pages/GlossaryofCommandTerms.aspx) categorises these terms to indicate the depth and complexity of responses expected from students in examination questions. Misinterpreting a command term can lead to answers that do not fully address the requirements of the question.

In the 2024 examination, students were required to respond to questions featuring the following command terms: identify, outline, describe, discuss and analyse. In the examination questions, each of these terms required a different level of thought and understanding, as outlined below.

* Identify: recognise and name a specific fact, feature or example. Students are not required to provide extensive detail or explanation in their response.
* Outline: provide an overview of a point of view or text. Students are required to provide more detail than in questions that ask them to ‘identify’.
* Describe: provide the characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, opinion, situation, event, process, effect, argument, text or narrative in an accurate way. In their response, students are required to go beyond listing and provide a clear explanation.
* Discuss: present a clear, considered and balanced argument or prose that identifies issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of, or points for and against, one or more arguments, concepts, factors, hypotheses, narratives and/or opinions. Students are asked to weigh up the evidence before reaching a conclusion.
* Analyse: identify the key components and the significance of relationships between them. Students are required to draw out and relate implications and determine the logic and reasonableness of the information.

Students should familiarise themselves with the VCAA Glossary of Command Terms and understand what each term requires.

When addressing questions in the examination, students should ensure that their responses are supported by relevant, detailed, specific and precise examples or evidence rather than relying on general or vague references. This applies when discussing the following areas:

* codes and conventions
* representations
* a particular moment, frame or sequence in a media narrative
* audiences
* contexts, factors and constraints
* ethical and legal issues
* evidence, arguments and ideas to explain the influence of media and the agency of audiences.

Students are also advised to read every question carefully to ensure they understand all requirements. This should begin in the reading time, with students taking particular note of what each question is asking.

Students should also be using media language consistently, precisely and appropriately. They should familiarise themselves with the study specifications in the [VCE Media Study Design From 2024](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Media/Pages/Index.aspx). Lack of familiarity was evident in responses to questions about conventions, where quite a number of students were unaware of the difference between form, genre and narrative conventions.

Conventions are defined in the study design as:

* conventions of media forms and products – the rules and common practices for constructing and organising media forms and products
* genre conventions – the rules that define genres, which are subject to debate and change, revealing cultural assumptions about the significance of media products, the type of audiences who consume media products and the practices of the media industries
* narrative conventions – common narrative structures, such as character, character arcs and three-act structures.

Further information about audience reception, engagement, consumption and reading, codes and conventions, genre and style is provided in the [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Media/Pages/Planning.aspx#faqs) on the VCAA study webpage.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding, resulting in a total of more or less than 100 per cent.

Section A

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 10 | 23 | 35 | 31 | 1.9 |

In Question 1, students were asked to describe one way in which the construction of the media narrative is appropriate to its media form.

In addressing this question, students needed to explicitly link narrative construction choices to the codes, conventions and expectations of the selected media form by using specific examples and incorporating accurate media terminology.

Responses could have included how form-specific conventions were utilised in the narrative's construction. For example, for the media form of film, students could have discussed how distribution can influence construction: depending on whether it was shot on film for cinema release or as digital video for streaming services. Additionally, responses could have discussed how genre and narrative conventions or codes appropriate to its form were employed in the narrative’s construction.

High-scoring responses provided specific examples of how the media narrative was applicable to its media form and used appropriate media terminology. For instance, strong responses discussing film as the chosen media form detailed how audience engagement with film could/would be appropriate to its construction, as they would expect established film conventions to be used, such as the development of characters, character arcs or three-act structures.

Mid-scoring responses may have described the connection between the media narrative and its form but lacked specific examples or appropriate use of media language. For example, they may have mentioned the use of shallow depth of field without expanding on how it was specifically employed in the narrative’s construction.

Lower-scoring responses identified one aspect of the narrative construction, such as camera angles or character development, but lacked depth, specific examples or appropriate media language.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Media narrative: Barbie

The use of the Hollywood three-act structure to progress the narrative of Barbie 2023 is appropriate to its form of film. The audience can visually see the development of the plot and the development of the characters such as Barbie and Ken throughout acts one, two and three, providing the commonly used narrative structure. This is appropriate in the case of Barbie 2023 as it is a film.

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 3 | 4 | 15 | 19 | 26 | 21 | 11 | 3.7 |

For Question 2, students were required to discuss how two media codes were used to develop a narrative convention.

In the first instance, students needed to correctly identify a convention. A number of students mistakenly identified codes rather than conventions. Another common mistake was to identify genre as a narrative convention. Refer to the definitions of conventions on page 2 of this report, and the [FAQs](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Media/Pages/Planning.aspx#faqs) on the VCAA study webpage.

The examples of narrative conventions identified in the study specifications in the VCE Media study design are not an exhaustive list, so responses that correctly identified ways in which meaning is constructed, or how media products are organised, were considered appropriate. Additional examples of narrative conventions accepted as responses included characterisation (specifically opening, development and/or resolution), cause and effect, setting, point of view, structuring of time and multiple storylines.

In the second part of the question, responses needed to address how two codes were employed to develop the identified narrative convention. Responses should have also referenced a particular moment, frame or sequence of a media narrative rather than broadly discussing the use of media codes and how they were used to develop the narrative convention in general terms.

Responses could have discussed how two codes worked together to develop the narrative convention, or how each code worked individually, provided that both were connected to the convention and the same moment, frame or sequence.

Higher-scoring responses provided detailed discussion of how two media codes were used to develop a specific narrative convention within a precise moment, frame or sequence. These responses provided well-chosen examples that clearly demonstrated the relationship of the codes to the narrative convention and employed specialised media language accurately and consistently.

Mid-scoring responses described two media codes and their connection to the narrative convention but lacked specificity. While media language was used appropriately in these responses, it was applied generally and inconsistently.

Lower-scoring responses outlined or identified one or more media codes but did not identify a connection to the narrative convention. Examples were vague and the use of media language was limited. These responses also did not focus on a specific moment, frame or sequence in the narrative.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Narrative convention: character establishment

Mise en scene and camera are used in conjunction with each other during the ‘Promising Young Woman’s’ scene with Cassie and Ryan in the café to establish Cassie's character as an angel-like figure. The props used in this scene are minimal and it takes place in front of a white backdrop with only a blue circle behind Cassie's head. The use of an eye level mid shot places Cassie in the centre of this frame with a circle creating a halo around her head. Thus, with the use of both mise en scene through the blue circle on the wall and the camera position and framing Cassie appears to have a halo around her head. This develops the narrative convention of character establishment as it establishes and reinforces Cassie’s intentions of seeing justice for her late best friend Nina. The halo and angel imagery establish Cassie’s character’s good intentions throughout the film both preceding and following this moment with the halo in the café.

Question 3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 3 | 6 | 19 | 32 | 27 | 13 | 3.1 |

Question 3 required students to discuss a context in which an audience consumed a media narrative and how this context impacted audience reading (understanding, interpreting and/or making sense of the narrative).

‘Consumption’ refers to the way in which a narrative is viewed or ‘taken in’ by the audience and ‘reading’ is about understanding, interpreting or making sense of a narrative.

Audience reading as defined in the study design as follows:

* ‘Audience reception: This refers to both the physical way audiences consume media products and the context of the time and place in which they receive it.
* Audience engagement: This refers to how audiences are affected emotionally and cognitively by a media product and how these ways of engaging combine to form complex meanings and experiences.
* Audience response: This refers to the way a media product may influence audiences to act or change their behaviour.

‘Context’ refers to the societal context in which media products are produced, consumed and read.

In this question, students were required to discuss the context in which the media narrative was consumed and read, not the context of its production.

Further information on context and audience reception, engagement, consumption and reading is provided in the [FAQs](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Media/Pages/Planning.aspx#faqs) on the VCAA study webpage.

Responses did not need to refer to media codes and conventions and could discuss one or more contexts. Responses also needed to describe the influence of a context, including on the audience’s understanding or interpretation of the narrative.

When students wrote about older narratives, they discussed how the original target audience may have read or understood the narrative through the lens of the context at that time and place, or how a more contemporary audience may read and understand the narrative within their different context.

The majority of students discussed the context in which the narrative was consumed in relation to the means of consumption (for example, whether it was viewed in a cinema, at home on a streaming service or on the small screen of a smartphone) or what was happening at the time of consumption, in relation to social, cultural, economic, institutional, political and/or historical factors.

High-scoring responses exhibited a thorough understanding of how a specific context in which an audience consumed a media narrative influenced their reading of the narrative. These responses used specific and relevant examples of how contexts impacted audience reading. They used specialised media language to discuss the relationship between context and audience reading. They also focused on social, cultural, economic, institutional, political and/or historical factors rather than just the physical environment in which the narrative was consumed.

Mid-scoring responses addressed the question appropriately but did not exhibit depth or specificity in their discussion. While examples were relevant, they were broad, and the use of media language was appropriate rather than precise. These responses broadly described the influence of a context on the audience’s reading of the narrative.

Lower-scoring responses identified a context in which the narrative was consumed but only provided basic discussion of its influence on audience reading. Examples were often vague, and there was minimal use of specialised media language, and these responses did not connect the context to audience reading.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

The social context in which American audiences consumed Lulu Wang's ‘The Farewell’ (2019) may have influenced their reading of the film by positioning them to see the Chinese notion of saving face as immoral. The Chinese tradition of saving face, the decision to lie to loved ones to shield them from emotional burden is explored in the film through Billi’s family and their decision to hide her grandmother’s (Nai Nai) cancer diagnosis from her. In the hospital waiting scene, Wang utilises the symbolic code of mise en scene to position Billi's family members as spread apart, as Billi tells them how what they are doing to Nai Nai is illegal in the US. The family disagrees, however American audiences who come from a similar social context to Billi are inclined to agree with her views. Coming from a Western social context and lack of exposure to Eastern family values regarding lying, may influence Western audiences to read and interpret the idea of saving face as immoral and unlawful.

Question 4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 5 | 8 | 15 | 28 | 21 | 16 | 6 | 3.3 |

Question 4 required students to analyse how a media creator employed conventions to construct the media narrative to engage a specific audience.

Responses needed to identify and analyse how multiple conventions were used to construct the narrative to engage a specific audience. They also needed to include specific examples from the media narrative and draw links between conventions, audience engagement and the intended audience.

Media conventions and audience engagement are defined in the study specifications in the study design.

Audience engagement refers to how audiences are affected emotionally and cognitively by a media product, and how these ways of engaging combine to form complex meanings and experiences.

Responses to Question 4:

* should have included more than one convention, and a specific audience needed to be articulated
* could have included both narrative and/or genre conventions
* could have identified the media creator by name, but this was not a requirement
* could analyse, for example, how the creator employed a three-act structure and character arc to engage a specific audience for a feature film that they directed. Such responses could explain how Act One sets up an introduction to the main protagonist, to establish audience engagement on an emotional level and pique their interest as the protagonist undergoes a transformative character arc. They could discuss how the majority of the story then unfolds in Act Two, with the director promoting greater audience involvement, through the protagonist’s journey and development of their character as they face obstacles that they work to overcome. These responses could then discuss how the creator develops the protagonist further in Act Three, as they face the final challenge of the narrative, thus engaging the audience, as they are so highly invested and have a sense of closure with the protagonist’s success and character evolution.

High-scoring responses provided an analysis of how the media creator employed multiple conventions to construct the media narrative and engage a specific audience. These responses clearly identified a specific audience and used precise examples to demonstrate how these conventions were applied to engage this audience. Specialised media language, relevant to the chosen conventions, was used to support the analysis.

Mid-scoring responses discussed how conventions were used to engage an audience but did not demonstrate depth in the examples provided. While an audience was identified, connections between conventions and audience engagement were explained in general terms rather than analysed in detail. These responses used media language that was appropriate but not specialised.

Lower-scoring responses broadly identified one or more conventions and identified a general rather than specific audience. The examples included were limited. These responses often focused on a single convention. The use of media language was minimal and the connection to audience engagement was implied or vague.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Todd Phillips utilised conventions to construct the narrative of Joker to engage the specific audience of DC fans. He uses the convention of establishment of character with Arthur Fleck in the Murray Franklin scene. Throughout the film, the audience follows Arthur’s descent into madness, but his full transformation into the well-known DC character of the Joker is established when he asks Franklin if he could ‘introduce me as the Joker’ showing that he is no longer Arthur anymore. Phillips also used the convention of cause and effect to engage the DC fan audience. At the end of the film, the audience is shown the Wayne family walking down a dark alleyway and followed by a joker rioter. This cause of Thomas Wayne not caring about the poor, and the effect of him and his wife dying brings a full circle moment to DC viewers, as it shows Batman's back story, which will engage DC fans as it will follow the DC universe lore, and they are shown the exact scene depicted from the comics in the movie.

Question 5a.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 2 | 3 | 9 | 22 | 27 | 24 | 12 | 3.9 |

In Question 5a students were asked to outline parts of a narrative rather than provide a description of an entire narrative. The question also required students to provide a clear connection between two moments, frames or sequences appropriate to the theme and genre of the narrative, based on the intention and audience extract. This meant that the intention, audience, themes and genre needed to be clearly and specifically referenced.

Responses were not required to explicitly describe the way in which a narrative employed conventions of the science fiction genre. Therefore, as the extract referred to a young adult / science fiction narrative, appropriate descriptions might reference advanced technology, futuristic settings, space travel, scientific exploration, supernatural or fantastical elements, social commentary, a school setting, teenage issues, a focus on relationships and growing up, teen protagonists, navigating the world, discovering identity and/or pursuing dreams.

With the extract’s stated themes of identity, friendship and the pursuit of dreams, narratives could have included: characters who discover their place in different friendship groups; characters finding balance between a social life and studying or working hard; and character overcoming obstacles to reach a goal.

It was not expected that students would describe the use of codes in this part of the question; however, they may have referenced these to describe moments in the narrative.

High-scoring responses documented a clearly structured narrative and described at least two well-defined and specific moments, frames or sequences, drawing explicit connections to the intention and audience extract provided. The descriptions of the moments were cohesive, detailed and appropriate, demonstrating a strong link to one or more of the stated themes.

Mid-scoring responses outlined a narrative, including two moments, frames or sequences, but often lacked detail in their descriptions. These responses addressed the themes and genre and the connections to the intention and audience extract but were less developed. The description of the narrative structure of outlined moments was general or less cohesive.

Lower-scoring responses provided a very general description of the narrative rather than specific moments, frames or sequences, with limited coherence or connection to the themes, genre or intended audience.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

My narrative, a science fiction genre video/film titled ‘Sci-Fi High’ will include a three act structure with the beginning introducing the characters who are brothers, ‘Finn and Tom’ in a comedic montage of them getting ready for school in the morning on their spaceship, and then attending their respective classes on space exploration. Additionally, this portion of the film will be shot in a studio to resemble a spacecraft, to immerse a young 12 to 16 year old audience in the intended world. The second act will introduce the consequence to the story, it will be simple as to cater for the 12 to 16 year old audience; during a spaceship flying test, the brothers will lose control of their ship and land on an unfamiliar planet, filled with rocks and no life, here the boys will discover aspects of themselves previously unknown and experience character developments, such as Finn the older brother who learns not to be so hard on his younger brother Tom. The film's setting/location will be near Patagonia in Chile to immerse the audience into the intended setting. The final act will see brothers using friendship and teamwork to find the necessary materials to fix the spaceship and head home to be reunited with their families, a light-hearted ending catered to a youthful 12 to 16 year old audience. The brothers will use real life science skills to fix this spaceship as to an insight a ‘love for science’.

Question 5b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 4 | 10 | 34 | 37 | 16 | 2.5 |

Question 5b. required students to identify a specific media code or convention and then describe how it could be applied to the proposed narrative in Question 5a. Responses could describe how the choice of setting in line with the code/convention – in this case, a futuristic space station setting – will appeal to the target audience of teenagers. For example, the use of a futuristic space station could be connected to teenagers’ interest in escapism and adventure.

Students were required to reference the chosen media form from the proposed production in part a.

Responses needed to provide an explanation of why the code or convention would appeal to the teenage target audience. Some students discussed the science fiction audience, but this was not the audience identified in the extract.

High-scoring responses clearly identified a relevant media code or convention and described its specific application in the proposed production narrative from part a in a well-articulated manner. These responses provided detailed explanations of how the code or convention would appeal to the target audience of teenagers, demonstrating an insightful understanding of this audience’s interests and engagement.

Mid-scoring responses identified a media code or convention and in general terms described its use in the proposed narrative and how it would appeal to teenagers. While these responses made relevant connections, they often lacked depth in addressing the appeal to the target audience.

Lower-scoring responses identified a media code or convention but provided minimal description of its application. These responses provided some connection to the target audience but often lacked detail or specificity in explaining how the code or convention would engage teenage audiences, and some did not include any connection to part a.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

The proposed plan for this mise en scene is as follows: The code of mise en scene will be imperative to the production of my film ‘Sci-Fi High’ and introduction of popular culture of 12 to 16 year old boys, such as vinyl records featuring popular rapper Travis Scott will feature in Finn, the older brothers room during the opening sequence, a nod to the real life pop culture of 12 to 16 year old Australian boys. More crucially, the set will be meticulously designed to replicate a typical space station, with reference to Star Wars and Star Trek to immerse a 12 to 16 year old audience in the intended world, with purchases of metallic and sci-fi fake computers necessary in pre-production. Furthermore, the space station crashed on the planet will be crafted from old car parts to save cost, and painted metallic to immerse a 12 to 16 year old audience with visually captivating crash landed space station. Space suits created from foam and leather, painted white shall also be acquired for this sequence, as to sell the reality of the scene to the intended youthful audience. Indeed, familiar mise en scene with references to pop culture, Star Wars and Star Trek, and real life space-suit inspired suits shall appeal to the target audience of youths, who will immediately recognise my film as one of the sci-fi genre and as one which would interest their particular demographic.

Question 6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Average |
| % | 3 | 15 | 41 | 42 | 2.2 |

For Question 6 students were asked to describe one way in which the relationship between media and audiences is changing (that is, developing, evolving, shifting, adapting and dynamic). The changing nature of the relationship should be included in the response.

The relationship may be considered in terms of the shift from the more ‘passive’ audience in the traditional broadcast era to the more ‘active’ audience in the contemporary digital landscape (evidenced, for example, by increased audience interactivity, greater connectivity, audience as producers of content, audience activism on social media and audience-created content on platforms such as YouTube or TikTok).

High-scoring responses described a specific way in which the relationship between the media and audiences is changing, using a precise example. They demonstrated both understanding of the evolving nature of the relationship and the capacity to apply specific examples, highlighting how contemporary media allows for greater audience participation, interactivity and influence. These responses demonstrated an appropriate use of media language.

Mid-scoring responses outlined how the relationship between the media and audiences is changing but only provided general examples. They also only made general use of media language.

Lower-scoring responses identified an aspect of the relationship between media and audiences but lacked detail and understanding of the changing nature of the relationship and made limited use of media language.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

Due to Web 2.0 and the rise of social media, audiences are now becoming increasingly prosumers, both consuming and producing content, through user-generated content, therefore changing the relationship between the media and audiences, audiences now having more power. For example in May of 2024 an AI generated image ‘All eyes on Rafa’ was circulated on Instagram by audiences, shared 47,000,000 times, aiming to raise awareness for the crisis in Gaza, this content thus having a profound impact due to audiences using it to gain more power in the contemporary media landscape supported by the uses and gratification theory which suggests audiences use the media for a range of needs.

Question 7

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Average |
| % | 3 | 9 | 31 | 36 | 21 | 2.6 |

In Question 7, students were asked to discuss a way in which media has been used by governments. This could be within an Australian or international context, and could be for the purposes of informing, influencing, raising awareness and/or persuading. The question required limited use of media language.

Examples of media use by governments include:

* media use to influence voting intentions in elections
* pro-social advertising material or public service announcements (related to, for example, anti-gambling, domestic violence awareness, TAC and workplace safety)
* media use by candidates or governments to share endorsements / coordinated campaigns with celebrities
* use of broadcast media, press conferences, websites and social media platforms.

Responses needed to discuss one precise way in which governments, or individuals/parties seeking government, use the media, and support this with relevant, detailed examples or evidence.

It was important that students not confuse media regulation with government use of the media. A case in point would be the Australian Classification Board, which enforces regulation rather than uses the media. A correct example of the government use of media would be a public service announcement such as the Transport Accident Commission road safety campaigns, where the government uses the media to raise awareness and change driver behaviour to reduce road deaths.

Responses could focus on political campaigns by parties or individuals that are not yet in government (such as the use of data harvesting and social media platforms to target potential voters in the 2016 US presidential campaign). Although such responses discussed parties not technically in government at the time, if a clear connection was made to the use of media in relation to government or political processes, they were acceptable.

High-scoring responses discussed a precise way in which governments, or individuals and parties seeking government, have used the media, using detailed and relevant examples. These responses referred to political campaigns, public service announcements or government communication strategies such as press conferences, social media campaigns or targeted advertising. These responses used specialised media language.

Mid-scoring responses described a way in which the media has been used but did not provide detailed examples. The examples provided were appropriate, but the responses did not explore the connection to government usage with enough depth. Media language was appropriately used.

Lower-scoring responses identified a basic way in which governments use the media but included limited examples and evidence. These responses lacked detail and showed limited use of media language.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

Governments have used the media in order to communicate with their population and spread awareness of issues. The way in which they have done this has shifted since Web 2.0, now using social media and advanced technologies to influence audiences. One example of this is in the 2024 ‘Stop Flirting with Death’ road safety campaign by the South Australian Government, circulating this humorous ad which simultaneously spreads awareness about road safety on social media, with the government aiming to effectively communicate with its population of younger Gen Z audiences who are active on social media.

Question 8a.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | Average |
| % | 10 | 31 | 59 | 1.5 |

Question 8a asked students to outline the regulation of the media in Australia. This could include:

* government regulation (including ACMA, the Classification Board, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and media ownership laws)
* non-government/industry regulatory bodies (including the Australian Press Council, the Journalist Code of Ethics, Free TV Australia, Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice, streaming services classifying content in line with government regulations and providing warnings/information of their products and production of local content guidelines).

The regulation should not merely be identified; responses needed to explain the regulation.

Responses that included a non-Australian context were not awarded any marks.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

Ad Standards Australia is a regulation body which have the power to permanently remove or take down advertisements which don't abide by Australian standards. This is achieved through enabling audiences to submit complaints about individual advertisements which are reviewed by a board of people.

Question 8b.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Average |
| % | 4 | 8 | 21 | 33 | 25 | 9 | 3.0 |

In Question 8b. students were required to discuss an ethical or legal issue related to the example of media regulation outlined in part a and to provide relevant evidence or examples, such as laws, case studies or regulatory bodies.

Responses to this question demonstrated varying levels of understanding of what constitutes legal and ethical issues connected to media regulation.

Examples of what could be raised as legal and ethical issues in the response included, but were not limited to:

* protection of vulnerable audiences from harmful products
* increasing use of AI technologies and the ability to regulate this
* misinformation/disinformation/misrepresentation
* content piracy and copyright issues
* data harvesting
* distribution of personal information
* maintaining cultural identity through production quotas
* issues of media ownership
* cross-national regulation issues in a globalised media landscape.

High-scoring responses clearly identified a legal or ethical issue and directly related it to Question 8a. using detailed discussion and highly relevant and detailed evidence. These responses demonstrated a strong understanding of media regulation, incorporated specialised media language and referenced relevant regulatory bodies or frameworks in Australia.

Mid-scoring responses described a general issue but lacked detail in the examples or evidence provided. These responses described the issue without providing sufficient links to the media regulation example outlined in Question 8a. There was general use of media language. Specific authorities or laws were not always referenced.

Lower-scoring responses demonstrated uncertainty about what constitutes a legal or ethical issue. These responses did not provide a clear connection to the example in Question 8a. and provided only limited descriptions of an ethical/legal issue and limited use of media language.

The following is an extract from a high-scoring response:

However, this regulation of advertisements can result in detrimental and damaging ethical issues due to the design and efficiency of the regulations. Australians can submit complaints to Ad Standards Australia, however due to the subjective nature of breaches, industry guidelines and the amounts of complaints received, the process for removing advertisements can be extremely lengthy, exposing vulnerable audiences to offensive or damaging content, prior to the advertisement being removed. For example, Sports Bet’s recent gambling advertisement depicted a man driving a golf club while browsing his phone, promoting unsafe driving. This may encourage copycat behaviour by audiences, putting individuals in physical danger before the advertisement could be removed.

Question 9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Average |
| % | 8 | 6 | 14 | 26 | 24 | 16 | 6 | 3.3 |

Question 9 required students to analyse how globalised media institutions have specifically impacted the distribution of media products, using examples of commercial and/or user-generated content.

‘Globalised media institutions’ can be interpreted widely and could include platforms, such as Spotify, YouTube, Google, Netflix, Facebook and Instagram, that cross national borders. This is in contrast to local media institutions such as a newspaper linked to a particular locale with very limited global circulation.

Responses could consider how such platforms have impacted the nature, timeliness or ease of distribution (in terms of investment of resources, cost and effort).

Responses could discuss how:

* the accessibility of platforms such as YouTube and TikTok allows creators (individuals or companies) to reach diverse audiences without the need for traditional broadcast processes
* users can create short-form products, empowering individuals to become creators with minimal resources
* streaming services such as Netflix and Spotify use algorithms to personalise user preferences, allowing for products to be distributed to specific audiences
* globalised media institutions play a vital role in the viral spread of content, enhancing the success of media products
* globalised media institutions contribute to the distribution of misinformation and disinformation
* real-time streaming impacts live events, gaming sessions etc. and the distribution of media products on commercial platforms and personalised social media accounts
* such platforms democratise distribution and enable content to cross borders with unprecedented speed and scale.

High-scoring responses provided a precise and insightful analysis of the changing nature of media distribution in a globalised context, drawing well-articulated and causative links between the impact of globalised media institutions and the distribution process. They showed a clear understanding of commercial and/or user-generated content and used appropriate or specialised media language.

Mid-scoring responses identified relevant links between globalised media institutions and distribution but lacked depth in the analysis and/or used general examples. These responses identified globalised institutions but did not sufficiently explore how they impact the distribution of content.

Lower-scoring responses demonstrated a limited understanding of globalised media institutions and/or the concept of distribution. These responses sometimes focused on media production, consumption and/or reception rather than distribution. The examples used were vague, and there was limited or no use of media language.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

Globalised media institutions such as YouTube give users such as Mr. Beast the ability to distribute user generated content such as the media product of entertainment videos. Mr. Beast uploads challenge videos to his 60 million subscribers November 2024. YouTube gives Mr. Beast the ability to do this as the platform allows users to distribute their own media products for audiences’ entertainment that people like Mr. Beast can monetise and make a career out of. Moreover, YouTube allows for media products such as films to be brought from the application and watched there. This means commercial and industry content is now available to stream and buy on YouTube without accessing other streaming products or buying the DVD. For example, films like Uproar 2021, a New Zealand film is not available to stream anywhere in Australia, but YouTube makes it available on their platform for any user who buys it. YouTube has impacted on the distribution of media products by allowing users to generate their own content and allowing commercial content such as films to be viewed if purchased anywhere at any time.

Section B

Question 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Average |
| % | 2 | 0.6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 9.3 |

Question 1 required students to analyse the construction of representations in the media narrative studied and to examine how these representations reflected or challenged the views and values prevalent in the context in which the narrative was produced.

To analyse means to ‘identify components/elements and the significance of the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications; determine logic and reasonableness of information’. Therefore, responses should have included the key components/elements of the construction of representations and discussed how these representations reflected or challenged the views and values prevalent in the context surrounding the production of the narrative.

These representations could be of characters, ideas, events or groups. Views and values refer to beliefs held by individuals or groups within the broader context in which the representations were produced.

It was expected that responses would discuss the construction of more than one representation.

Responses should have also demonstrated the connections between the construction of representations and the social, cultural, political, economic or historical contexts in which they were produced. When discussing one or more of the listed contexts, responses needed to establish clear and causal connections between the context and the narrative. These connections also needed to be integrated into the analysis of representations, rather than being treated as a separate part of the response.

Referring to the use of codes and conventions to explain the construction of representations is advised as it allows for the use of precise media language.

Examples that could be included are:

* how Get Out is a product of the social and cultural context of the US in the 2010s, evident through its representation of characters and ideas
* how BlacKkKlansman is a product of the political context of the US in the 2010s, being released one year after the Unite the Right rally in the midst of the Trump administration, seen through the representation of institutions and characters
* how representations of social groups and issues are constructed in the television narrative such as in Boy Swallows Universe, and how this relates to the social context surrounding its production.

High-scoring responses demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between representations and the chosen context(s). These responses analysed the construction of multiple representations and demonstrated a clear understanding of how codes and conventions were used to shape these representations. They made clear links between the representations and the social, cultural, political, economic or historical context(s) using detailed evidence from the narrative. High-scoring responses highlighted whether the representations reflected or challenged the views and values prevalent within that context. They also used specialised media language to discuss how representations were constructed.

Mid-scoring responses described the construction of one or more representations using appropriate media language, and their relationship to the broader context was discussed using general evidence and examples. Examples of how the views and values of that context shaped the construction of the representations included some evidence. While appropriate media language was used, the links between representations and context(s) lacked depth.

Lower-scoring responses demonstrated limited understanding of how representations are constructed and established minimal connection to the views and values found in the specific context. These responses identified aspects of the narrative but did not analyse the construction of the representations or how they reflected or challenged views and values. References to the connections to context were brief or not supported by evidence. Media language was limited or absent.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

In Arthur Penn’s 1967 crime caper film, ‘Bonnie and Clyde’, the construction of the leading female protagonist, ‘Bonnie’ explicitly challenges the dominant conservative ideologies of the 1960s USA, that marginalised women into the domestic sphere.

Foremost, Bonnie’s construction to follow a criminal lifestyle, and plain active participation in dangerous activities throughout the film explicitly challenged the conservative, ideological meta narratives of the 1960s that subjugated women to passive domesticity specifically seen in her use of weapons such as the ‘Colt M1911 pistol’ and injuries such as gunshot wounds and subsequent bravery, directly opposes the societal modest gender roles placed on women, yet also disturbs the unified female narrative character conventions of the time, that women were a damsel in distress, which needed saving by a leading male character. Indeed, Penn’s construction instead, sees the two opposing gendered criminals die together, side by side, in the final shootout, directly challenging this dominant ideology.

Furthermore, Bonnie’s construction challenges the dominant conservative ideologies of the time that were strictly against female sexual agency. As seen in the first scene, Bonnie is displayed as naked and in a lustful manner towards Clyde, whilst interpretable to be sexual objectification of her by a modern audience, the contextuality of the time is imperative to understand the significance of Bonnie’s unprecedented sexualisation. Indeed, her sexualisation directly challenges the political HAYS Code, which prohibited any themes of sex in a film, and further challenges conservative ideologies at the time that prohibited sexual agency and women to be displayed in front of audiences.

Moreover, the marginalisation of African American characters in Penn’s supposedly raw and realistic film, described as to ‘redefine American cinema’ by historic film critic [Roger] Ebert, implicitly reflects the dominant conservative ideologies of the 1960s USA, that erased radical diversity from a ‘white-washed’ cinema, even if it meant sacrificing realism in an era that's society longed for the reality of the European New Wave. Indeed the representation of African American characters is limited to one scene that is less then 7 minutes long. Whilst this potentially had the impact of explicitly challenging the conservative ideologies at the time, and aligning with the civil rights movement to the 1967 audience, who had never seen such racial diversity in film, it can now be interpreted by modern audience as rather frivolous and tokenistic to include an African American character in an attempt at realistic cinema for less than 7 minutes, in a geographic setting that is populated by so many African American individuals.

Question 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mark | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Average |
| % | 6 | 0.6 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 8.0 |

For Question 2, students were required to analyse contemporary evidence, arguments and ideas to explain both the influence of the media and the agency of audiences.

Responses needed to include the key components/elements of the evidence, arguments and ideas presented and draw out what the evidence, arguments and ideas are saying about the influence of the media and agency of audiences.

Contemporary evidence, arguments and ideas can be interpreted broadly. They should, however, be defined as contemporary in terms of their alignment with the contemporary media landscape and recent ways of thinking about the media and audiences.

Applying a new lens to past communication theories, such as the Agenda Setting Function Theory or Two Step Flow Theory, and relating their relevance and application to a Web 2.0 contemporary media landscape would be considered contemporary evidence. However, if a response focused solely on past evidence or theories such as the Hypodermic Needle Theory and did not relate it to a contemporary media landscape, this would not be considered contemporary.

Acceptable responses include:

* empirical evidence such as formal academic research studies/papers, conducted in a range of formats (such as longitudinal studies, laboratory studies or case studies)
* communication theories or models that have been developed to explain aspects of the nature of communication or the relationship between the media and audiences in a contemporary manner
* more informal evidence, arguments and ideas (such as videos from YouTube channels, opinion pieces or editorials).

Higher-scoring responses drew connections between different evidence, ideas or arguments, synthesising this body of evidence to glean insights into the influence of the media or the agency of audiences. They also considered both the influence of the media and the agency of audiences in a balanced manner. This reflected the question requirement that both the media and the agency of audiences needed to be addressed. Therefore, if a response focused largely on one over the other it was unlikely to score highly in this question.

Responses using specialised media language could include:

* the names of particular studies or methodologies used to study the media, audiences or communication (such as laboratory study, case study or sample size)
* specific media technologies, processes or platforms (such as Web 2.0 platforms, prosumers, metadata, echo chambers or algorithms).

Responses using general media language could include less-specialised terminology relevant to the question (such as audience, influence, agency, communication, evidence, research or social media).

Higher-scoring responses examined, analysed and drew well-articulated connections between specific contemporary evidence, arguments and ideas to explain the influence of the media and the agency of audiences. These responses demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of how the media influences audiences while acknowledging the active role of audiences as prosumers or agents of change. These responses used specialised media language and referred to specific methodologies (such as longitudinal studies or case studies) or contemporary theories applied to modern media environments.

Mid-scoring responses described or discussed rather than analysed contemporary evidence, arguments and/or ideas to explain the influence of the media and the agency of audiences. These responses relied on descriptive approaches rather than drawing well-articulated connections between ideas and employed general media language. These responses also often focused more on one aspect (such as media influence) than the other.

Lower-scoring responses identified or outlined evidence, arguments and/or ideas related to the influence of the media and the agency of audiences. Often these responses relied on outdated theories or presented limited analysis of contemporary contexts. Additionally, they demonstrated minimal use of appropriate media language. These responses also often focused more on one aspect (such as media influence) than the other.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response:

The relationship between media and audience today is complex, symbiotic and dynamic. Two theories that attempt to explain this influence between media and audience are the Agenda Setting Function and the Spreadable Media theory. Agenda Setting Function first created by McCombs and Shaw in 1972 claimed that powerful media gatekeepers used selection and admission to influence audiences to think about an idea. Tik Tok’s algorithm is a contemporary example of where media gatekeepers and institutions can exert influence over audience members. In 2024, Amnesty International published research claiming that Tik Tok’s algorithmic recommendation system is potentially harmful to teenagers with mental health concerns. Amnesty claimed that Tik Tok ‘For You’ feed acts as a catalyst in exacerbating depressive and harmful thoughts. Amnesty interviewed 300 teenagers from Kenya, USA and the Philippines about their Tik Tok usage and mental health. One participant who has bipolar disorder, responded that when he felt low, 80% of the content was about mental health, thus Amnesty claimed that Tik Tok’s algorithm creates a rabbit hole effect that primarily left users to think about mental health through increasing the frequency of these videos, the more users interacted with it. However, as this research relied on quantitative data and Amnesty selected cases in such a way that it suited their claims to be published, it does not prove the total capacity of Tik Tok's influence over their audiences.

The Spreadable Media theory suggests that individuals can act as distributors, that share and spread their ideas. For example, after hearing radio show host Alan Jones make misogynistic comments about the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jenny Hill acted as a distribution hub and spread her videos to mobilise and influence her 100,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter, ‘The Mad F- -cking Witches’ to contact a list of Jones's advertisers. This resulted in 500 advertisers withdrawing their advertising with Jones and 2GB Radio, resulting in a financial loss of 10.6 million. Jones then retired six months later and ‘the witches’ claimed it was due to their campaign. However, Jones claimed it was due to ill health. Thus the influence of audience cannot be definitively proven despite compelling evidence for both arguments, due to its dynamic nature it is difficult to explain and prove the influence and thus the relationship between the media and the audiences.