2023 Media Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2023 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

Across Assessment Types 1 and 3 for this subject, students can present their responses in oral or multimodal form, where 6 minutes is the equivalent of 1000 words. Students should not speed-up the recordingof their videos excessively in an attempt to condense more content into the maximum time limit.

From 2023, if a video is flagged by markers/moderators as impacted by speed, schools will be requested to provide a transcript and markers/moderators will be advised to mark/moderate based on the evidence in the transcript, only considering evidence up to the maximum word limit (e.g. up to 2000 words for AT3).

If the speed of the recording makes the speech incomprehensible, it affects the accuracy of transcriptions and it also impacts the ability of markers/moderators to find evidence of student achievement against the performance standards.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Folio

Most folios consisted of two media explorations (maximum of 1500 words combined, if written) and one media interaction study (800 words maximum, if written). Generally, students explored three topics, allowing them to fully explore the four key media concepts through knowledge and understanding, research and analysis, and communication, as specified in the subject outline.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated specifically how they had interacted with an area of the media and clearly explained how audiences were influenced by the area of interaction as well as how the audience could influence the area
* provided evidence of understanding in a considered and analytical manner, frequently citing specific current examples from their own research (both primary and secondary) to illustrate key media concepts
* explicitly addressed the specific features with evidence of specific understandings relating to key media concepts and specific codes and conventions
* selected their choice within a topic, allowing deeper exploration of concepts and ideas
* used the media interaction task as an immersive, personal interaction with a media product, form, or concept, which was very different from the media exploration, as it clearly consisted of first-person language and a sense of exploring a personal relationship within the wide range of interactions of the media
* directly addressed how audiences are influenced by the area of interaction, referring to the interfaces of the Apps or hardware used
* discussed how the areas of interaction subtly enticed audiences to continue to use their product/service through giving rewards, such as game credits/tokens or algorithms that choose material that gratifies user needs
* used terminology confidently to show understanding of all four key media concepts, including close analysis of media conventions
* structured responses so as to clearly introduce their topic and present findings using a variety of credible pieces of evidence as support
* concluded in a succinct manner that addressed the overall question
* showed a clear understanding of how sources or material viewed may be subject to bias due to influences from private business and political allegiances.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not examine the area of media influence at all or fully
* struggled to demonstrate learning at higher levels of achievement because of task design issues or misinterpretation of the task, for example focussing extensively on event and character decisions can lead to work resembling a plot summary
* responded to the media interaction study as another media exploration or as a review
* implied how they may have been influenced in the interaction but did not directly address it and struggled to show how audiences could influence the area of study
* were too process-oriented, describing the media in the interaction study, rather than analysing specific aspects of the interaction (e.g. described what a game was like, rather than how it influenced them and others)
* provided a recount with little analysis
* lacked focus, for example starting an interaction on one topic (e.g. Spotify) but then writing about other issues (such as mobile phone use), resulting in a lack of sufficient room to address all specific features of assessment sufficiently
* did not address the question in their conclusion
* displayed little understanding of the concept of bias or did not address it at all despite it being in the assessment criteria for the task.

Assessment Type 2: Production

Most productions focussed on the creation of individual works; however, there were also many good examples of collaborative productions. Generally, this task was addressed in the form of two productions accompanied by two explicit producer’s statements.

The more successful responses commonly:

* took care to ensure that all aspects of production were well finished (e.g. short films that had excellent cinematography, sound, and narrative, rather than just one or two areas that were well finished)
* demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of the product (e.g. producers of TV adverts considered length, conventional content, product placement, font, etc.)
* developed a clear sense of narrative
* displayed strong, polished production techniques appropriate to the genre being used or challenged
* used conventional methods of production when appropriate, only challenging conventions if the medium was well understood, e.g. hand drawn scratchy, fast cut animations were appropriate when expressing personal, distressed emotions, especially when clearly explained in a producers statement, whereas shaky footage for no apparent reason was not
* planned production carefully to avoid issues like distracting lighting in the background
* used the producer’s statement to further display understandings, which allowed the student to elaborate on their role if part of a group production, and to include visual references and screen shots iterating their development
* created products that allowed the student to clearly display their understandings against the performance standards, which was particularly evident where students used, or challenged, the codes and conventions
* addressed the importance of failure, and trial and error in the producer’s statement, rather than just the successes
* clearly showed an understanding of their audience and communicated in a deliberate manner, reflecting this with clearly stated intentions in their statements
* showed a clear understanding of conventions of their media type through the use of excellent framing and mis en scene (in film, photography, and design element)
* embedded audience feedback in the producer’s statement to support the intention and success of the product
* provided concise yet information evaluation of the process and product
* used photographic evidence in the producer’s statement to support their writing.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not take care to record sound in a clear manner or use appropriate lighting techniques within their productions
* did not address specific feature P1, the design and planning of media products for selected audiences, in enough depth
* analysed multiple texts superficially rather one in depth
* lacked a consideration of planning and production techniques, which was particularly evident in video productions that lacked a consideration of sound, framing or narrative
* chose settings that were unconvincing for the production e.g. using a lounge room as the setting for a news report
* did not address, use, or challenge the codes and conventions of media
* failed to clearly discuss their role in a group production within the producer’s statement
* showed little understanding of the design process or conventions when creating print products
* incorporated a significant amount of material that was not the student’s own work, such as copied advertisements
* used the producers statement to explain production challenges rather than explaining what was created and the choices made in the production process
* did not submit a separate, individual producer’s statement for each production.

External Assessment

The broad range of topics covered indicated that most students were researching areas of their own interest. A good number of multimodal presentations were again submitted this year.

Student work should be presented in a clear format for markers to view and read. The use of a reasonable font size, the careful placement of relevant graphics that support the research and a transcript of audio-visual materials are useful in achieving this.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring that the topic and issue being undertaken is current and directly related to the media and there is one major guiding question rather than a series of minor questions
* encouraging references to a variety of theories relating to the key media concepts
* checking that a range of media texts are addressed and that secondary and primary sources are used and cited
* confirming that any surveys that are undertaken have a reasonable sample size with an appropriate variety of respondents
* urging the use of precise media terminology that is specific to the media form being investigated.

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

In 2023 the popular current media issues investigated continued to include the uses of social media and the role of Influencers. Media coverage of the Voice Referendum, the Hollywood writers’ strike, the Barbie movie, cancel culture, and the controversy surrounding AI were also explored. While some investigations examined AI’s effect on the media industry, others referred to its use in other areas such as art in general.

The more successful responses commonly:

* clearly established the currency of the issue of the investigation by referencing this in the introductory paragraphs
* incorporated the media into the wording of the question or the introductory paragraph, which helped address the key media concepts in the response
* were driven by one major guiding question rather than a series of minor questions and addressed their question consistently throughout the response
* researched current and controversial issues, resulting in varied and contemporary primary and secondary sources, which developed deeper understanding. To background the topic some older sources were used
* often referred to various theories applicable to the key media concepts
* analysed relevant qualitative and quantitative evidence to give depth to their research
* examined their topic using key media concepts fluently and consistently throughout the investigation, rather than in isolation
* incorporated a variety of visual elements such as graphs, tables, charts, or images into their text that related directly to the research, ensuring that the formatting did not impinge on text
* provided evidence for all specific features required in this task; especially KU2, KU3, RA1 and RA2.

The less successful responses commonly:

* selected a topic where the issues and focus questions were not addressed as a media investigation
* unnecessarily explained the background of the topic or defined basic media terms
* provided a content analysis of the sources used rather than using them to focus on an issue
* looked more at political or sociological concerns, rather than the impact of media on contemporary society
* provided little evidence to demonstrate an understanding of the key media concepts
* broke the response into subheadings using the key media concepts, often straying from the initial arguments, and limiting the depth of analysis and cohesion of the investigation
* omitted discussion about how the audience influences media representations (KU2), and ‘different point of views, bias, values, or intent across a range of media texts’(RA1)
* focused their response on their own personal views rather than considering a range of opinions
* recounted events, rather than analysing how the media affected or represented these events or how the audience responded to them
* inserted images, tweets, and posts with little or no discussion or analysis
* were heavily scaffolded by teacher direction, limiting individual research
* did not make use of the full word limit for their investigation.