

Media Units 1 & 2

Chapter 10 — Producing media narratives

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Chapter 10 Producing media narratives — 10A Media production processes and specific media forms

Theory

In Unit 1 you learned that the media production process is **applicable to all media forms**. That sentence is true, and it is also the most misread sentence in the study design. Students take it to mean the process is *the same* in every form — that a film, a photo essay, a podcast and a comic are made the same way with different equipment. They are not. The framework is shared; the process built on it is not. Unit 2 Outcome 2 opens with the key knowledge **media production processes and their relationship to specific media forms**, and the plural in *processes* is doing deliberate work. This subtopic is about that plural: the same five stages, reorganised by the form you have chosen, into a different working process with a different shape, a different centre of gravity and a different set of things you cannot take back.

What is constant, in three lines. Every media production, in every form, runs on the five stages — **development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution** — which are **iterative and interrelated** rather than static or linear. Audience engagement, consumption and reception sit at the centre of the process; practitioners work under constraints of **time, budget and skills**; and the whole is underpinned by ongoing **analysis, reflection and evaluation**. Subtopic 4A sets all of this out and this subtopic assumes it. Everything below is about what changes.

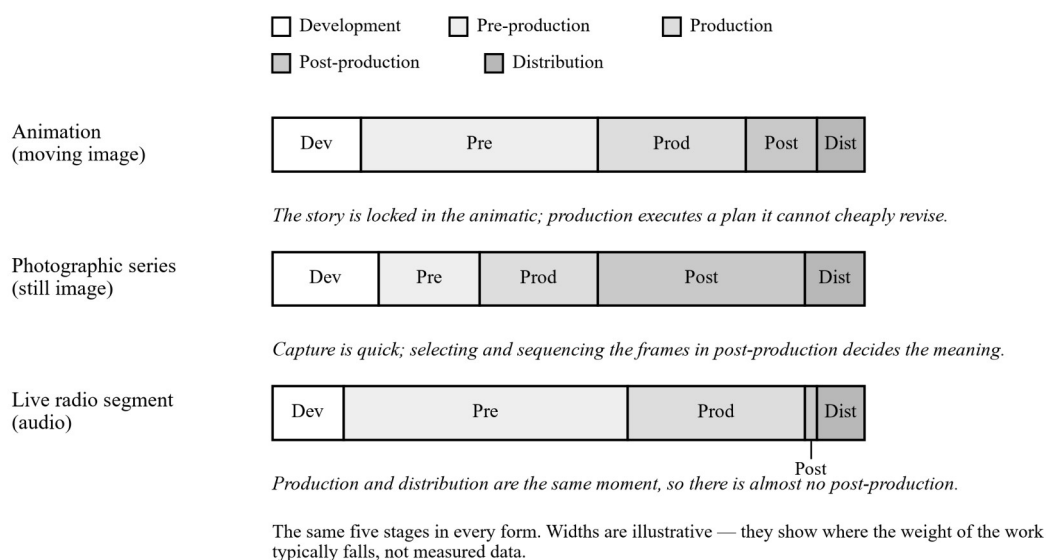
Why the form changes the process at all. The study design defines **media forms** as the “technological means and channels by which the media is created, produced, distributed, consumed and read”. Read that definition slowly, because it is not a description of what a product looks like — it is a list of *processes*. A media form is defined by the way its products are created, produced, distributed, consumed and read. So when you choose a form, you have not simply chosen an appearance: you have chosen a route through the production process, and that route has already decided things for you. Choose animation and you have decided that almost every creative decision must be made before anything is made. Choose observational photography and you have decided the opposite.

This is a different question from the one Unit 1 asked in 5B. There you described how a form’s **characteristics** shape the **representation** an audience receives. Here you describe how those same characteristics shape the **process** the maker has to run. The two connect — the reason a photographic series is decided in post-production is that a still image carries no duration, so meaning has to be built by sequencing — but the assessable claim is about the *making*, not the artefact.

The form profile: five questions to ask of any media form. These five questions will let you describe the production process of a form you have worked in, and, more usefully, one you have not. Ask them in order.

	The question	What it tells you
1	Where does the weight sit? Which stage consumes most of the time and most of the decision-making?	Where you must be strongest, and where a schedule will fail if it is thin
2	What must the plan fix? Which planning instrument does the form use, and what does it lock?	What pre-production has to produce before production can begin at all
3	What does capture mean, and can it be repeated? How costly is it to go back and get more?	Where iteration is cheap and where it is ruinous
4	What does “refined and resolved” mean here? What work does post-production actually do?	Whether the product is finished in post-production or merely tidied there
5	What does the channel demand back? What does the distribution channel require, and which earlier stages does that requirement reach into?	The specifications that must be known in pre-production, not discovered at the end

Notice that none of the five asks about equipment. Two productions can use identical technologies and run completely different processes, and 4D already deals with the technologies themselves. These questions are about the *shape of the work*.



Question 1 — where the weight sits. The five stages are always present, but they are never equal, and the form decides which one carries the load.

In **animation**, the weight is in pre-production. Every frame has to be made rather than found, so an animator cannot shoot extra material and decide later; the sequence is settled in an **animatic** — the storyboard cut together and timed against a scratch soundtrack — and production is the execution of a plan already approved. It is normal for a ninety-second animated piece to take more calendar time to reach a signed-off animatic than to animate, because a shot that is wrong in the animatic costs a morning to fix and a shot that is wrong in production costs a fortnight.

In an **observational photographic series**, the weight is in post-production. Capture may be a single afternoon; the work is in what photographers call the **edit** — a word that in still image means *selection*, not cutting. Four hundred frames become nine, and the nine are put in an order. The series does not exist until that selection is made, so the meaning of the product is decided after the camera is packed away.

In a **live audio segment**, the weight is in pre-production and there is effectively no post-production at all. In a live-to-air community radio segment the run sheet, the timings, the questions and the fallback material are all settled beforehand, because production and distribution are the same moment. Nothing can be fixed afterwards, so everything is fixed before.

Question 2 — what the plan must fix, and the instrument it uses. Every form has developed its own planning instrument, and each instrument exists because the form has something expensive that must be settled early. Learn the instrument *and* what it locks.

Media form	Planning instrument	What it locks before production begins
Moving image (film, television, video, animation)	Storyboard, shot list, animatic, shooting schedule	The shots that must exist, their order and timing, and what has to be captured on which day at which location
Still image (photography)	Shot list, location and light plan, mood or reference board	What is to be photographed, in what light and at what time of day, and at what size the frames must resolve
Audio (radio, podcast)	Script or run sheet, interview question set, recording plan	The order and duration of segments, who speaks and for how long, and where the recording is quiet enough to happen

Media form	Planning instrument	What it locks before production begins
Print (magazine, zine, comic, graphic novel, newspaper, poster)	Flat plan, page grid, copy and image list, panel layout	The page count and what appears on each page or spread, and therefore how much text and image must be made
Digital (online and streaming video and audio, digital publications, video game, blog, website, app)	Wireframe, site or level map, user flow, prototype	The structure the audience can move through — what is reachable from where, and what happens at each choice
Convergent or hybridised (two or more forms joined)	The planning instruments of every contributing form, plus a merge plan	Where and how the parts meet, and the single point at which they must be ready together

A student who arrives at a shoot with a mood board but no shot list has brought the wrong instrument, and a student who builds a twenty-page zine without a flat plan will discover in layout that the story does not fit the paper. The instrument is not paperwork; it is the form's way of preventing a specific and predictable failure.

Question 3 — capture, and the cost of going back. Subtopic 4A established that the process is iterative: practitioners return to earlier stages. What 4A did not say, because it is a Unit 2 question, is that **the price of returning is set by the form**. It is useful to name the moment after which a decision can no longer be changed without redoing work already finished. This workbook calls that the **point of commitment**. It is a shorthand for study purposes, not a study-design term, but the idea behind it is exactly what the study design means when it says the stages are interrelated.

Media form	Where changing your mind is cheap	The point of commitment	Why it is expensive after that
Moving image	The storyboard and the edit	The end of the shoot, once cast, crew, location and light have dispersed	A missing shot means reassembling everything and matching the original conditions
Animation	The animatic	Sign-off on the animatic	Every frame after it is hand-made or rendered against that timing
Still image	The contact sheet and the sequencing	The end of the shoot, or the moment a print is made at final size	Light, weather and the subject's availability rarely repeat
Audio	The rough assembly	The mix, and — for live work — the moment of transmission	Re-recording a voice weeks later rarely matches the room, level or delivery of the original
Print	The flat plan and the layout	Sending the print-ready file to the printer	The press run is a physical object; an error is reprinted, not patched
Digital	The prototype	Nothing is fully committed — a build can be replaced after release	Cheap to change, but an audience has already read the version you replaced

Two conclusions follow, and both are assessable. First, the earlier a form's point of commitment, the more work its pre-production must do — which is why animation and live broadcast, which look nothing alike, have similarly front-loaded processes. Second, “iterative” does not mean “infinitely revisable”. A form with an early point of commitment iterates *hard* before that point — tests, animatics, dummy copies, rehearsals — precisely because it cannot iterate after it.

Question 4 — what post-production actually does. The study design’s definition is constant: the production is **refined and resolved**, considering the intention, audience and planned narrative. What that resolving consists of is not constant at all.

- **Moving image:** assembling and cutting the material, then grading the image and mixing the sound. Post-production is where the order and rhythm of the product are settled — it can build a sequence that was never planned, and it can lose one that was.
- **Still image:** selecting and sequencing. Adjustment of individual frames matters, but the decisive act is choosing nine frames from four hundred and deciding which comes first.
- **Audio:** cutting speech to its strongest form, layering atmosphere and music, and balancing levels for the way the product will be heard. Recorded audio is heavily shaped in post-production; live audio has none.
- **Print:** layout, typesetting and prepress. Here post-production is where the product physically becomes itself, and it is the last chance to catch anything, because the next step is a press.
- **Digital and interactive:** building, testing and fixing. Post-production overlaps with production rather than following it — a build is made, tested with users, and remade, in a loop that may run many times.

Question 5 — what the channel demands back. Distribution is planned in pre-production, and in Unit 2 you should be able to say precisely what the channel *specifies* and which earlier stages that specification reaches into. A **delivery specification** is the set of technical and presentational requirements a distribution channel imposes on a finished product.

Channel	What it specifies	Which earlier stage it reaches into
A commercial printer	Trim size, page count, colour process, file format and the date the file is due	Pre-production — the flat plan is built to a page count the printer has already fixed
Free-to-air television	Programme duration to the second, and a measured loudness target — Australian free-to-air practice works to Free TV Australia’s Operational Practice OP-59, which sets a target programme loudness of –24 LKFS	Post-production — the mix is measured against the target, and production , which must supply enough material to fill an exact duration
A phone-first video platform	Vertical framing, a short duration, and legibility with the sound off	Production — vertical framing must be <i>shot</i> , not cropped out of a wide frame later
A gallery wall	Final print size, mounting and viewing distance	Production — the frames must be captured at a resolution and framing that hold at that size
A podcast feed	File format, episode length and a publishing schedule	Development and pre-production — a weekly release commits the producer to a repeating cycle before a single episode is recorded

One further reach-back is worth naming because students consistently discover it too late: rights. Clearing a piece of music or an archival photograph is governed by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), and it is a **pre-production** task, not a post-production one. A licence that arrives after the edit is locked is a licence for a cut you may have to rebuild. (The ethical, legal and community constraints themselves are the subject of 11B; what matters here is *where in the process* they have to be handled.)

Continuous processes, not just single productions. A second reason the study design says *processes* is that not every media production is a one-off. A weekly podcast, a daily news bulletin, a monthly magazine and a serialised comic all run a **continuous production cycle**: the stages repeat on a fixed schedule, and the stages of one edition overlap with those of the next. While episode four is being distributed, episode five is in post-production and episode six is being planned. Three consequences follow, and they are genuinely different from the single-production case.

1. **The schedule, not the idea, sets the extent.** A weekly show cannot take three weeks to edit, so the form of the product adapts to the cycle rather than the cycle to the product.
2. **Development becomes a format decision rather than a per-episode one.** The research and experimentation that would sit in development happen once, when the format is designed; individual editions inherit it.
3. **Feedback closes the loop within the run.** Audience response to episode two can change episode five. In a one-off production, distribution feedback informs the *next* production; in a continuous one, it informs the same one, mid-flight.

Live production: two stages collapsed into one. A live broadcast, a live-streamed event or a theatre-style performance capture pushes the point of commitment all the way forward. Production and distribution occur simultaneously, so post-production either disappears or moves *before* transmission in the form of rehearsal and pre-recorded inserts. Everything that would normally be fixed in the edit must instead be prevented in the plan, which is why live forms carry the heaviest pre-production of any process and why their planning instruments — run sheets, cue sheets, rehearsal schedules — are timed to the second.

Convergent and hybridised forms: reconciling two processes. The study design’s sixth form family is “the combination or joining of two or more media forms, such as photography and animation, print productions and a digital game, augmented and virtual reality products”. Producing in a convergent form is not one process with extra steps. It is **two or more processes, each with its own weight, its own planning instrument and its own point of commitment, which have to be reconciled.** Three problems appear, every time:

- **Mismatched points of commitment.** If a printed component must go to press in week six but the digital component can be revised until week twelve, then every decision the two share is really locked in week six. The earliest point of commitment in the whole production governs the rest.
- **The merge.** There is a stage — usually late pre-production, sometimes post-production — where the parts must be designed to fit: a printed marker has to be readable by the app that reads it, an animation has to sit inside a photographic frame at a matching scale. Plan the join; do not discover it.
- **Doubled delivery.** Each contributing form brings its own delivery specification, and the product is not distributed until both are met.

The method for this subtopic. Two routines carry almost every 10A question.

1. **The three-link chain.** Name a **characteristic of the form**, then the **consequence for the process**, then the **effect on the product or the audience**. “Animation is made frame by frame” (characteristic) “so the sequence must be locked in an animatic before production begins” (process consequence) “which means the timing an audience experiences was decided months before a single finished frame existed” (effect). A response that stops at link one has described a form; a response that stops at link two has described a workflow. The marks are in the third link.
2. **Hold the stage, vary the form.** When comparing two forms, do not narrate two productions side by side. Pick a stage — pre-production, say — and ask what that *same stage* has to achieve in each form, and why the difference exists. Two accounts of two productions is the most common way to lose marks on a comparison item.

Everything above is about the relationship between a process and a form. Two neighbouring questions belong elsewhere in this chapter and should not be answered here: how a **narrative** is constructed through the stages is 10B’s subject, and who does what at each stage is 10C’s.

Looking ahead: at Units 3 and 4 you will build a full pre-production plan for a product in a nominated form, and the form you nominate will decide what that plan has to contain.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain why the media production process takes a different shape in different media forms, even though the same stages apply to all of them. (4 marks)

“Explain” wants a causal chain, not two lists. The table builds the response a sentence at a time.

Working	Comment
The media production process identifies five discrete stages — development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution — and that framework is applicable to all media forms.	Concede the constant first. The question turns on <i>even though</i> , so the shared framework has to be on the page.
A media form, however, is defined by the study design as technological means and channels by which the media is created, produced, distributed, consumed and read, so choosing a form is already a choice about how the work will be made.	This is the pivot of the whole answer: the SD’s definition of <i>form</i> is itself a definition of process.
The form therefore decides where the weight of the work falls. In animation every frame must be made rather than found, so the sequence is locked in an animatic and pre-production carries the decisions; in an observational photographic series capture may take an afternoon and the meaning is settled by selecting and sequencing frames in post-production.	Two contrasting forms, each with the <i>reason</i> the weight sits where it does. Naming the animatic shows form-specific knowledge.
The form also decides how expensive it is to return to an earlier stage: a printed product is committed once the file goes to press, while a digital product can be rebuilt after release, so the two plan for iteration very differently.	Bring in the second variable — the cost of going back — so the answer is not one idea repeated.
The stages are constant because every production must be conceived, planned, captured, resolved and delivered; the process built on them differs because each form settles different decisions at different points and makes them expensive to undo at different moments.	Close by answering the question as asked: what is shared, what varies, and why.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Describe how the pre-production stage differs between an animation and a printed magazine. (4 marks)

“Describe” asks for an account of features, and this one is a comparison — so hold the stage constant and vary the form rather than telling two stories. This example uses Pelloway Animation and Pardowe Press, two small fictional producers, to keep the comparison concrete.

Working	Comment
In both forms, pre-production plans the concept, audience, intention, narrative and context, documents equipment and materials, and plans how the product will be distributed and consumed.	Establish the common ground in one sentence so the differences have something to be different from.
For Pelloway Animation’s ninety-second animation, pre-production has to settle the timing of every shot, because production makes each frame individually and nothing can be captured “spare”. The instrument is an animatic — the storyboard cut together against a scratch soundtrack — and once it is signed off, the length, order and pace of the finished piece are fixed.	Name the form’s planning instrument and say what it locks. The reason (<i>frames are made, not found</i>) is what earns the mark.
For Pardowe Press’s monthly magazine, pre-production has to settle the extent rather than the timing: a flat plan sets the page count and what occupies each spread, and it is built around a page count and trim size the printer has already fixed by accepting a booking.	The parallel move for the second form: same stage, different thing locked, and an external constraint reaching in.

So the animation's pre-production is dominated by decisions about time and the magazine's by decisions about space, each planning against a different point of commitment — animatic sign-off in one case, the print deadline in the other — and each carrying a different distribution decision: the animation's screen and platform fix the aspect ratio that must be animated, while the magazine's printer fixes the file format and the date the layout must be finished.

Close at the level of principle, then show distribution planning reaching back into each form differently. This is what separates a description from a list.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain how the cost of returning to an earlier stage differs between a production captured on location and a production assembled entirely from material the maker controls. (5 marks)

The study design describes the stages as iterative and interrelated, and Unit 1 teaches practitioners to return to earlier stages when reflection tells them to. What changes between forms is the *price* of that return, and it is set by how repeatable capture is.

A production captured on location — a documentary sequence, an interview, an observational photographic series — depends on conditions the maker does not own. A radio producer can re-record an interview only if the speaker is available again, in a room with the same acoustic, in the same frame of mind; a photographer can re-shoot only if the weather, the light and the subject repeat. In practice they often do not. So the return to production is possible but costly, and the whole process adapts: practitioners over-capture deliberately, recording room tone, safety frames and extra coverage they may never use, because material gathered cheaply on the day is far cheaper than material gathered again later.

A production assembled from controlled material — an animation, a designed poster, a studio-built graphic — has the opposite profile. Nothing has to be re-found, because nothing was found; the practitioner can revise an element at any time. But the cost has moved rather than vanished: each revision is re-made labour, so the expensive commitment is the sign-off that authorises the making. This is why such forms invest in cheap proxies first — animatics, dummy copies, low-resolution comps — and iterate on those instead. *Takeaway*: both forms iterate hard; the location-based form iterates before it loses access, and the constructed form iterates before it starts building.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Explain what a convergent or hybridised media form demands of the production process that neither contributing form would demand on its own. Refer to an exhibition that joins an observational photographic series with animation: large prints hung on a gallery wall, with short animated sequences projected beside them. (6 marks)

Photography joined with animation is the study design's own first example of a convergent or hybridised media form — the combination or joining of two or more media forms. What the join demands is not extra work of the same kind. It is that two processes whose weights sit in **opposite stages** have to be run against each other.

The clash is a matter of sequence. A photographic series settles its meaning last: capture may take an afternoon, and the work is the selection and ordering of a few frames from many, which is post-production work. An animation settles its meaning first: every frame is made rather than found, so the piece is locked in an animatic before production begins. Put the two in one product and the animator needs to know what the animation will sit beside — its scale, its subject, its place in the sequence — at exactly the moment the photographer has not yet decided. Neither form is behaving badly; each is committing when its own form requires it. The demand the convergence makes is that the production find a way for the early-committing form to start before the late-committing one has finished.

The answer is to lock the **interface** early and leave the content in the stage where it belongs. Before a single frame is chosen, the production can fix how many prints there will be, at what size and aspect ratio, at what height, where on the wall a projection may fall and how long a viewer will stand in front of it. Those are shared decisions, and they can be settled in pre-production without knowing which photographs will win. Once they are fixed the animator can work at full speed against a specification while the photographer is still editing — which is the general rule for convergent

production: give the form that commits earliest something to build against, not a finished companion product to wait for.

The join then has to be **rehearsed at full size in the room**. A projection sitting beside a print is a relationship of brightness, scale and sightline, and none of the three can be judged on a monitor: a sequence that reads well on a screen can be washed out by the gallery's own light or pull the eye off the photograph it was meant to support. So the process has to carry a stage neither form has alone — a mock-up in the actual space, under the actual light, early enough that either half can still be altered.

Finally, the constraint triad of time, budget and skills bites twice over. One production is running two schedules and two skill sets at once inside a single budget, so it needs either a practitioner who holds both crafts or a collaborator, and a schedule that deliberately **overlaps** the two processes rather than running one after the other. *Takeaway*: a convergent form does not ask for more work; it asks for reconciliation — fix the interface between the forms early, and let each form settle its own content where its process puts it.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

- Q1.** The study design refers to media production *processes*, in the plural. (a) State what remains constant in the media production process across every media form. (1 mark) (b) State two things that change from one media form to another. (2 marks)
- Q2.** For each planning instrument below, name the media form that most commonly uses it and state one thing it locks before production begins. (4 marks) (i) An animatic. (ii) A flat plan. (iii) A run sheet. (iv) A wireframe.
- Q3.** The weight of the work falls in a different stage in different media forms. (a) Name the stage that carries most of the decision-making in an animation, and give one reason. (2 marks) (b) Name the stage that carries most of the decision-making in an observational photographic series, and give one reason. (2 marks)
- Q4.** Define each of the following as it applies to the media production process. (a) The point of commitment. (1 mark) (b) A delivery specification. (1 mark) (c) A continuous production cycle. (1 mark)
- Q5.** For each distribution channel below, state one earlier stage of the production process it constrains, and how. (4 marks) (a) A commercial printer. (b) A podcast feed. (c) A phone-first video platform. (d) A gallery wall.
- Q6.** Refer to a media narrative production you have worked on this year. (a) Name the media form you worked in. (1 mark) (b) Name one planning document you produced that is specific to that form. (1 mark) (c) State one decision your form required you to settle earlier than you expected. (1 mark) (d) State one requirement your distribution channel placed on the finished product. (1 mark)

Un scaffolded

- Q7.** Outline the difference between the *characteristics* of a media form and the *production process* used to make a product in that form. (2 marks)
- Q8.** Outline why two media productions that use the same technologies can still run entirely different production processes. (2 marks)
- Q9.** Describe how the production stage differs between the still image form and the audio form. (3 marks)
- Q10.** Describe how the media production process for a weekly podcast series differs from the process for a single stand-alone podcast episode. (3 marks)
- Q11.** (*Stimulus.*) Two teams are telling the same story — a family's last night in a house they are leaving — in two different media forms. Their schedules are below.

Stimulus. *Team A* — a twelve-page printed comic. Weeks 1–2: research and script. Weeks 3–5: page breakdowns, panel layouts and the flat plan. Weeks 6–9: drawing and inking the pages. Week 10: layout, lettering and the print-ready file. Week 11: printing and launch.

Team B — a ten-minute audio drama. Week 1: research and script. Week 2: casting and a read-through. Week 3: recording sessions. Weeks 4–9: editing, sound design and the mix. Weeks 10–11: mastering, release and listener feedback.

Explain why the weight of the work falls in different stages for the two teams. (4 marks)

Q12. Explain why post-production carries a different kind of finality in the print form than in digital media forms, and what each form's practitioners do differently as a result. (4 marks)

Q13. Explain how the media production process changes when a product is made live, so that production and distribution occur at the same moment. (4 marks)

Q14. (*Stimulus.*) Read the production log below, kept by a team at Sennaford Interactive.

Stimulus. *Week 4:* Mapped every path a player can take through the story and found two endings that could never be reached. Redrew the map. *Week 6:* Built a rough version with placeholder art and gave it to six players. Four of them missed the second choice entirely. *Week 7:* Rebuilt that scene and tested again with four new players; three found it. *Week 9:* Replaced the placeholder art. *Week 12:* Released. *Week 14:* Player data showed almost nobody reached the third ending, so we released an update that made the path to it clearer.

Explain how the production process for an interactive digital narrative differs from the process for a narrative in a fixed, linear form. (5 marks)

Q15. Explain how the way a media form is consumed determines what a practitioner must test before release. In your response, refer to two media forms. (5 marks)

Q16. Discuss whether a media practitioner experienced in one media form can rely on that experience when producing a narrative in a media form they have not worked in before. (5 marks)

Q17. (*Stimulus.*) Read the brief below.

Stimulus. A community legal service wants the same story — a young person who did not know they could ask for help, and then did — told twice: once as a single printed poster for tram shelters, and once as a ninety-second audio piece for a community radio station. Both are for people aged 16 to 22. The poster will be read in about four seconds by someone waiting; the audio piece will be heard once, without warning, between songs.

Explain what you would do differently at pre-production, production and post-production for each of the two forms. (6 marks)

Q18. (*Stimulus.*) Read the account of a convergent production below.

Stimulus. Tindalow Collective produced *The Quiet Line*, a story told across two joined media forms: a 32-page printed graphic novel, and a short digital game the reader unlocks by scanning a panel on page 19. The team began by testing whether a scanned printed panel could reliably launch the game in low light; it could not, so the panel design was changed before any pages were drawn. The graphic novel's page count and trim size were fixed when the printer was booked in week three. The game's levels were built and playtested from week five, and were still being adjusted in week fourteen. In week eight the printed pages went to press. In week ten playtesting showed that players did not understand the game's opening without a line of text that appears in the printed book — which had already been printed — so the line was rewritten inside the game instead. Both components were launched together at a public library, where readers filled in a feedback card.

Analyse how the media production process for this production was shaped by the specific media forms involved. (8 marks)

Q19. (*Extended response.*) Analyse how the media production process you used to create a narrative this year was shaped by the specific media form you worked in. (10 marks)

Your response should:

- identify the media form, the narrative and the specified audience of your production
- explain where the weight of the work fell, and why that form put it there
- refer to the planning instrument your form required and what it locked
- identify one point at which a decision became expensive or impossible to change, and what you did about it
- refer to one requirement your distribution channel placed on an earlier stage

Media form and production: _____

Answers

Q1. (a) The five stages — development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution — which are iterative and interrelated, with audience, constraints and ongoing analysis, reflection and evaluation central throughout. (b) Any two of: where the weight of the work falls; the planning instrument used and what it locks; how costly it is to return to an earlier stage; what post-production does; what the distribution channel specifies. **Q2.** (i) Animatic — moving image (animation); locks the order, timing and length of the sequence. (ii) Flat plan — print; locks the page count and what appears on each page or spread. (iii) Run sheet — audio (radio or podcast, especially live); locks the order and duration of segments. (iv) Wireframe — digital (website, app or interactive product); locks the structure and navigation, i.e. what the audience can reach from where. **Q3.** (a) **Pre-production** — every frame is made rather than captured, so the sequence must be locked in an animatic before production, which only executes it. (b) **Post-production** — capture may take an afternoon, and the series' meaning is decided by selecting and sequencing a small number of frames from many. **Q4.** (a) The moment in a form's process after which a decision cannot be changed without redoing work already completed. (b) The technical and presentational requirements a distribution channel imposes on the finished product. (c) A process that repeats on a fixed schedule, in which the stages of one edition overlap with those of the next. **Q5.** (a) **Pre-production** — the printer's booking fixes the page count and trim size the flat plan must be built to, and the date the file is due. (b) **Development and pre-production** — a publishing schedule commits the producer to a repeating cycle, so the format must be designed to be repeatable. (c) **Production** — vertical framing and legibility without sound must be captured, not added later. (d) **Production** — the final print size fixes the resolution and framing the frames must be shot at. **Q6.** (a)–(d) Student's own production: form named; a form-specific planning document (animatic, storyboard, flat plan, run sheet, wireframe, shot list); one decision the form forced early; one distribution requirement. **Q7. Outline (2).** A form's **characteristics** are the properties of the product and how an audience receives it; the **production process** is the sequence of work the maker runs to make it. The first shapes the second, but the assessable claim here is about the making. **Q8. Outline (2).** Because the process is set by the media form, not by the equipment: the form decides where the weight of the work falls, what the plan must lock and how costly a return to an earlier stage is. The same camera and editing software can serve an observational documentary and an animation, but one finds its material and the other makes every frame, so the two run different processes on identical technologies. **Q9. Describe (3).** Still image: capture is brief and repeatable within a session, and the practitioner over-captures because selection happens later. Audio: capture is time-based and continuous, so it must be monitored as it happens, and a fault such as clipping or noise cannot be repaired afterwards. Both are governed by conditions the maker may not be able to reproduce. **Q10. Describe (3).** A weekly series runs a continuous cycle in which editions overlap; development becomes a one-off format decision rather than a per-episode one; the schedule fixes the extent of each episode; and audience feedback can change a later episode of the same run rather than only the next production. **Q11. Explain (4).** Team A is front-loaded because the printed comic's pages must be drawn to a flat plan and the print deadline commits the product; Team B is back-loaded because audio's meaning is built in editing, sound design and the mix. Each schedule reflects where the form settles meaning and where its point of commitment sits. **Q12. Explain (4).** Print's post-production ends at a press run producing a physical object that cannot be patched, so practitioners proof, check and sign off before release. Digital products can be rebuilt after release, so practitioners release and revise — but an audience has already read the replaced version. **Q13. Explain (4).** The point of commitment moves to the moment of transmission; post-production disappears or moves *before* production as rehearsal and pre-recorded inserts; pre-production becomes the heaviest stage and is timed to the second; and everything normally fixed in the edit must instead be prevented in the plan. **Q14. Explain (5).** The audience's path is a designed structure, so pre-production produces a map rather than a sequence; production and post-production overlap in a build–test–rebuild loop; testing is with users, not on the product alone; the point of commitment is soft, so the product can be changed after release; and the narrative has to work along every path, not one. **Q15. Explain (5).** Testing must reproduce the conditions of consumption. Two forms worked through, e.g. print — proof at final size, on the actual stock, at reading distance; audio — listen on the device and in the situation the audience will use, at the same level and with the same competing noise. **Q16. Discuss (5).** Transferable: the framework itself, audience thinking, reflection and evaluation, narrative judgement. Not transferable: where the weight sits, the planning instrument, the point of commitment, delivery specifications. Reach a position — the process knowledge transfers, the form's profile must be rebuilt, which is what the development stage is for. **Q17. Explain (6).** Poster — pre-production settles a single image and a four-second reading order; production captures or builds artwork at final size for outdoor viewing; post-production resolves for print and cannot be changed after. Audio — pre-production settles a ninety-second structure that works on one unwarned hearing; production records clean speech; post-production builds the meaning in the edit and mixes for radio and its listening conditions. **Q18. Analyse (8).** Must include: the production named as **convergent or hybridised** — print and digital joined, with different weights,

instruments and points of commitment. The join tested first: the low-light scan failure redesigned the panel before any pages were drawn, a requirement arising in one form and paid for by the other. The **earliest point of commitment governed the whole** — booking in week three, press in week eight, while the game stayed open to week fourteen — so the week-ten problem, whose natural fix lay in the printed book, had to be absorbed by the game, the only half that could still move. Each form kept its own shape (print front-loaded; the game a build-and-playtest loop in which production and post-production overlapped), and distribution was doubled and simultaneous. Full marks need the *relationship* between the forms, not the two components described in turn. **Q19.** See Fully-worked solutions for a full model plus band descriptors and common errors.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) What is constant is the **framework**: the five discrete stages — development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution — which are **iterative and interrelated** rather than static or linear, with audience engagement, consumption and reception central, work carried out under constraints of time, budget and skills, and ongoing analysis, reflection and evaluation underpinning all of it. (b) Any two of: **where the weight of the work falls; which planning instrument** the form uses and what it locks; **how costly it is to return** to an earlier stage; **what post-production actually does; what the distribution channel specifies** and which stage that requirement reaches into. *Marker's note:* part (b) wants differences in the *process*, not differences in equipment — “one uses a camera and one uses a microphone” is a 4D answer, not a 10A one.

Q2. (i) An **animatic** belongs to the **moving image** form, especially animation; it locks the order, timing and length of the sequence before any finished frame is made. (ii) A **flat plan** belongs to the **print** form; it locks the page count and what occupies each page or spread, and therefore how much text and image must be produced. (iii) A **run sheet** belongs to the **audio** form, especially live radio; it locks the order and duration of segments and who speaks when. (iv) A **wireframe** belongs to the **digital** form — a website, app or interactive product; it locks the structure and navigation, meaning what the audience can reach from where. *Common errors:* describing what the document looks like instead of what it *fixes*. The mark is in the locking.

Q3. (a) **Pre-production.** In animation every frame is made rather than found, so there is no “extra material” to select from later; the timing, order and length of the piece are settled in the animatic, and production is the execution of that decision. (b) **Post-production.** Capture in an observational photographic series may take a single afternoon and produce hundreds of frames, but the series does not exist until the practitioner selects a small number of them and puts them in an order — which is where its meaning is made. *Marker's note:* two marks each means the stage **and** the reason; naming the stage alone is half the answer.

Q4. (a) The **point of commitment** is the moment in a form's process after which a decision can no longer be changed without redoing work that has already been completed — animatic sign-off, the end of a shoot, the print file going to press, or transmission in a live production. (b) A **delivery specification** is the set of technical and presentational requirements a distribution channel imposes on a finished product, such as a trim size and file format for a printer, or a duration and loudness target for broadcast. (c) A **continuous production cycle** is a production process that repeats on a fixed schedule — a weekly podcast, a daily bulletin, a monthly magazine — in which the stages of one edition overlap with the stages of the next.

Q5. (a) A **commercial printer** constrains **pre-production**: accepting a booking fixes the trim size, page count, colour process and the date the print-ready file is due, so the flat plan is built inside limits set outside the production. (b) A **podcast feed** constrains **development and pre-production**: a publishing schedule commits the producer to a repeating cycle, so the format has to be designed as something that can be made again next week, not just once. (c) A **phone-first video platform** constrains **production**: vertical framing and legibility with the sound off have to be *shot* that way, because a wide frame cropped to vertical afterwards loses the composition it was built with. (d) A **gallery wall** constrains **production**: the final print size and viewing distance fix the resolution and framing the images must be captured at, and a frame shot too small cannot be enlarged into one that holds. *Common errors:* answering with what the channel wants rather than which **stage** that requirement reaches into. The dot point is about the relationship, so name the stage.

Q6. (a)–(d) *Model response (student production: a four-minute audio narrative):* (a) The media form was **audio** — a short fictional narrative for podcast release. (b) I produced a **run sheet** setting out the order and duration of each scene

and where the atmosphere tracks would run underneath. **(c)** The form made me settle the **length of each scene** before recording, because a scene that runs long in audio cannot be trimmed by the listener the way a reader skims a page. **(d)** The podcast feed required a specific file format and a fixed release date, which set the deadline that the whole schedule was built backwards from. *Marker's note:* part (c) must name something the **form** forced, not something the teacher's deadline forced.

Q7. "Outline" asks for the key distinction, briefly. The **characteristics** of a media form are the properties its products have and the way an audience receives them — what the form can carry, how it is paced, in what order it is read, and where it is consumed. The **production process** is the sequence of work a practitioner runs in order to make such a product: the five stages, arranged as that form requires. The characteristics cause the process — because a still image carries no duration, meaning has to be built by sequencing, which is why the process loads post-production — but the two are different objects, one belonging to the product and one to the making. *Marker's note:* this distinction separates 5B's material from 10A's. A 10A answer that only describes what a form is like has answered the wrong question.

Q8. "Outline" asks for the governing reason, briefly. A media form is defined by the technological means and channels by which the media is created, produced, distributed, consumed and read — that is, by a way of working, not by an inventory of equipment. Two productions can therefore share a camera, a microphone and the same editing software and still run different processes, because what differs is *where the decisions are made*: an observational documentary finds its material on the day and settles its meaning in the edit, while an animation makes every frame and settles its meaning in the animatic before production begins. Weight, planning instrument and point of commitment all differ although the technologies are identical. *Common errors:* listing the technologies each form uses instead of saying what the form does to the process. Media technologies are 4D's subject; 10A is about the shape of the work.

Q9. "Describe" asks for an account of the differences. In the **still image** form, production is the capture of discrete frames: it is comparatively brief, repeatable within the session, and practitioners deliberately over-capture, because which frames matter will not be decided until selection. In the **audio** form, production captures a continuous, time-based recording, so it must be monitored *as it happens* — a level that clips or a room that echoes is baked into the recording and cannot be repaired afterwards — and it depends on a speaker's availability and delivery on the day. Both forms share a constraint: production happens in conditions the practitioner may not be able to reproduce, which is why both plan to capture more than they will use. *Marker's note:* three marks want two forms characterised **and** a point of contact or contrast, not two separate descriptions.

Q10. "Describe" asks for an account of the difference. A single stand-alone episode runs the five stages once: it is developed, planned, recorded, edited and released, and any feedback informs the maker's *next* production. A weekly series runs a **continuous production cycle** in which the stages overlap: while one episode is being distributed, the next is in post-production and a third is being planned. Three things follow. Development becomes a one-off **format** decision rather than a per-episode one, so individual episodes inherit a structure rather than inventing one. The **schedule fixes the extent** — an episode that would take three weeks to edit cannot exist in a weekly cycle, so the product adapts to the cycle. And audience feedback closes the loop **inside** the run, changing episode five rather than the next production. *Common errors:* saying only that a series is "longer" or "more work". The assessable difference is the overlap of stages and what that does to development and scheduling.

Q11. "Explain" asks why the difference exists, not what the schedules say. Both teams run the same five stages, but each form settles the story's meaning at a different point, and each commits at a different moment.

Team A's **printed comic** is a form in which the product is built page by page against a fixed extent. The weeks spent on page breakdowns, panel layouts and a flat plan are pre-production doing the form's essential work: fixing how twelve pages will carry the story before any of them is drawn. Drawing and inking then execute that plan, and post-production — layout, lettering, the print-ready file — is a single week, because by then nothing structural is still open. The form's point of commitment is the press: once the file is sent, the product is a physical object that cannot be altered, so everything must be settled beforehand.

Team B's **audio drama** works the other way. Recording takes a single week because capture in audio is quick relative to what is done with it; six weeks then go into editing, sound design and the mix, because that is where an audio narrative's pace, atmosphere and clarity are actually constructed. The material recorded in week three is raw, and the drama does not exist until it is assembled.

So the weight follows the stage in which each form's meaning is made — the plan in print, the edit in audio — and each schedule is built backwards from a different point of commitment. *Marker's note:* four marks are for the **reasons**, not for restating the two schedules in your own words.

Q12. “*Explain*” asks for *cause and consequence*. In the **print** form, post-production — layout, typesetting and prepress — ends when a print-ready file goes to a press, and the press produces a physical object. An error is not patched; it is reprinted, at cost, or it stands. Finality here is **absolute and dated**: it arrives on a known day, and everything must be resolved before it. In **digital** forms, a product can be rebuilt and re-released after an audience has it, so post-production never fully closes; finality is **soft**.

Practitioners behave differently as a result. Print practitioners build checking into the process as a formal step — proofs, sign-offs, a final read at full size on the actual stock — because there is no second chance, and they schedule that checking before the deadline rather than at it. Digital practitioners release earlier and revise in response to how the product is actually used, treating the first release as a version rather than an end. The digital advantage has a cost worth naming: an audience has already consumed the version that was replaced, and their reading of the narrative was formed by it. *Common errors:* concluding that digital is “better” because it can be fixed. The question asks about a difference in finality and what practitioners do about it, not which form is superior.

Q13. “*Explain*” asks *how and why the process changes*. When production and distribution occur at the same moment, the process reorganises around the fact that nothing can be repaired afterwards.

First, the **point of commitment moves forward to transmission**. Every decision must be final before the segment begins, because there is no stage left in which to change it.

Second, **post-production either disappears or moves before production**. The work that would normally be done in the edit — deciding order, trimming to length, preparing inserts — is done in advance as rehearsal, timed run sheets and pre-recorded material dropped into a live frame.

Third, **pre-production becomes the heaviest stage in the process** and its instruments become far more precise: a run sheet timed to the second, cue sheets, and contingency material prepared for the moment something fails. In a live-to-air radio segment the fallback track exists before the segment starts, because the alternative is silence on air.

Fourth, **reflection and evaluation shift to the next edition**. In a recorded form, reflection during post-production improves the product; in a live form it can only improve the following one, which is part of why live production is usually continuous rather than one-off. *Marker's note:* the strongest answers explain the *relocation* of work — post-production's tasks reappearing inside pre-production — rather than simply asserting that live production has no editing.

Q14. “*Explain*” asks *how the two processes differ, using the evidence in the log*. An interactive digital narrative differs from a fixed linear one at four points, and the log shows each.

Pre-production produces a structure, not a sequence. In week four the team mapped every path a player can take and found two endings that could not be reached. A linear form's plan fixes one order of events; this plan had to account for every order the audience can create, which is why the instrument is a map rather than a storyboard.

Production and post-production overlap in a build–test–rebuild loop. A rough version with placeholder art was built in week six, tested, rebuilt in week seven and tested again, with the finished art added only in week nine. In a fixed linear form, capture is completed and then resolved; here building and resolving alternate, and the placeholder art exists precisely so that structure can be tested before anything expensive is made.

Testing is with an audience, not on the product alone. Four of six players missing the second choice is not a fault visible by inspection — it is only discoverable by watching people use the product, so audience feedback is built into the middle of the process rather than sought at the end of post-production.

The point of commitment is soft. Release in week twelve was not the end: player data in week fourteen showed almost nobody reached the third ending, and an update changed the path. In a fixed form, distribution closes the product; here it produced a further iteration of the same product, not just a lesson for the next one. *Common errors:* retelling the log week by week. The marks are for what each entry demonstrates about the *form's process*.

Q15. “*Explain*” asks how consumption drives testing, in two forms. A media form is defined partly by how its products are consumed and read, and a test is only worth running if it reproduces those conditions. Testing a product in the conditions it was *made* in, rather than the conditions it will be *received* in, is one of the most reliable ways to be surprised by an audience.

In the **print** form, a poster or magazine page is consumed as a physical object at a particular size, at a particular distance, under whatever light the location provides — a tram shelter at dusk, a magazine held at arm’s length. So the test is a **proof at final size on the actual paper stock**, read at the real viewing distance. A layout checked only on a bright screen at 200 per cent will pass while its type is unreadable at four metres, and its colours will shift on uncoated stock.

In the **audio** form, a podcast is consumed through earbuds on a train, in a car, or while the listener is doing something else, usually once and often with competing noise. So the test is a **listen on the device and in the situation the audience will use**, at a realistic level. A mix balanced on studio headphones in a quiet room will have quiet dialogue that vanishes under traffic and a music bed that overwhelms a voice.

In both cases the principle is identical and the practice is form-specific: reproduce the reception conditions, then judge. *Marker’s note:* five marks need the *conditions of consumption* named specifically in each form and the test derived from them — not a general statement that feedback is important.

Q16. “*Discuss*” asks for a developed position with evidence. A great deal transfers, and it is worth saying what. The framework transfers completely: development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution are the same five stages, iterative and interrelated, in any form. So do the habits underneath the process — analysing existing products before starting, identifying a specific audience, testing before committing, seeking feedback, evaluating against intention. So does narrative judgement: a practitioner who knows how to build a story to a turning point does not lose that knowledge by changing form.

What does not transfer is the **profile** of the new form, and the transfer failures are predictable. A practitioner used to a form whose meaning is made in post-production — a documentary editor, a photographer — will under-plan in a form that commits early, arriving at an animation or a print deadline with decisions still open that the form required weeks earlier. The reverse error is just as common: a practitioner used to a tightly planned form may over-specify in a form that depends on what is found on the day, and refuse the material that turned up. Each form also brings a planning instrument the practitioner has never made and a delivery specification they have never met, and neither is guessable from experience elsewhere.

The resolution is in the process itself. **Development** exists for exactly this situation: it is where practitioners research other media products in the form, investigate the equipment, materials and technologies it uses, and run experiments to build skills before anything depends on them. So the answer is not that experience is useless or that it is sufficient. Experience makes a practitioner faster at running a process and better at judging a narrative; it does not tell them where this form’s weight sits or when it commits, and a practitioner who assumes it does will discover the difference at the most expensive possible moment. Profile the form first, then rely on the experience. *Marker’s note:* “discuss” requires a **position**. Answers that list what transfers and what does not, without ruling on the question, sit in the middle band.

Q17. “*Explain*” asks for stage-by-stage differences driven by the brief. *Model response.* The two products carry the same story to the same audience, but the forms differ in how much time the audience gives them and in what they can carry — four silent seconds for the poster, ninety unwarned seconds of sound for the radio piece — and that difference drives every stage.

Pre-production. For the **poster**, planning has to reduce the narrative to a single held moment: an image, a headline and one action, with a reading order built into the layout so that a person waiting for a tram takes it in the intended sequence in four seconds. The plan fixes what is *omitted*, which is almost everything. For the **audio piece**, planning has to build a ninety-second structure that works on a single hearing by a listener who did not choose to listen — so the plan opens with something that earns attention, states the essential information twice in different words, and ends with one action the listener can remember. I would also plan for the reception context in each: outdoor light and distance for the poster, and a listener doing something else for the audio.

Production. The poster is built rather than recorded: artwork or photography is produced at final size, with type and image contrast strong enough to read at a distance and in poor light. The audio piece is recorded: clean speech in a

controlled room, with performances that carry the emotional turn, plus atmosphere recorded separately so the edit has material to work with.

Post-production. The poster is resolved for print — one composition finalised, then a proof checked at final size — and after that it cannot change, so the checking is the last real decision. The audio piece is where most of its meaning is constructed: the edit sets pace and emphasis, sound design places the listener, and the mix is balanced for radio and for the noise the listener is in. *Marker's note:* six marks split across three stages and two forms, so every stage must show a genuine difference. The strongest answers let the brief's own conditions — four seconds, one unwarned hearing — visibly drive the decisions.

Q18. Command term — analyse: break the production into its parts and show how the two forms acted on the process and on each other, with specific evidence from the stimulus.

Model response (8 marks). The *Quiet Line* is a **convergent or hybridised** production: two media forms, print and digital, joined into one product. Its process is not a single process with extra tasks in it. It is two processes with different weights, different instruments and different points of commitment, forced to run against one another — and every notable event in the stimulus comes from that collision.

The join was tested before either form was made. The team's first act was to test whether a scanned printed panel could launch the game in low light. It could not, so the panel design changed before any pages were drawn. This is a development-stage experiment belonging to *neither* form on its own: the requirement came from the digital component and had to be satisfied by the print one. Testing the merge while both parts could still change is the single decision that made the rest of the production possible.

The earliest point of commitment governed the whole production. The printer's booking in week three fixed the page count and trim size; the pages went to press in week eight. From that moment the print half was final, while the game's levels were still being adjusted in week fourteen. The two forms therefore ran on incompatible clocks, and everything the components *shared* was locked by the earlier one. A team planning to the game's flexible timeline would have committed the book without knowing what the game needed from it.

The week-ten problem shows exactly what that costs. Playtesting found that players could not understand the game's opening without a line of text printed in the book — but the book had been printed two weeks earlier. In a single-form digital production this is a routine iteration; here the fix had to be made entirely inside the component that could still move, so the line was rewritten in the game. The form with the later point of commitment absorbed the problem, which is the general rule for convergent productions and the reason the flexible half must retain capacity late.

Each form kept its own weight and instruments. The graphic novel front-loaded its process — page count, layout and drawing, all committed to a print deadline — while the game ran a build-and-playtest loop from week five in which production and post-production overlapped for nine weeks. Neither form adopted the other's shape; the process had to accommodate both at once.

Distribution was doubled and simultaneous. The printed book and the digital build each had their own delivery requirement, and the product did not exist for its audience until both were met, on the same day, in the same place. The library launch and the feedback cards then closed the cycle in the usual way, generating audience response for the next production.

Analysed as a whole, the specific media forms did not merely add work; they set the production's timetable, decided which component would absorb late problems, and made the join — not either form — the site of the hardest planning. *Common errors:* treating this as two separate productions described in turn, or retelling the stimulus in order. The marks are in the **relationship**: the earliest commitment governing the whole, and the late fix landing in the form that could still change.

Q19. Command term — analyse: break your own production into its stages and show how the media form determined the shape of the process, with specific decisions as evidence.

Media form and production: a printed photo-comic — a six-page narrative told in photographs

Model response (10 marks) (student production: a six-page printed photo-comic).

My production was a six-page **print** narrative told in staged photographs with captions — the story of a student who arrives at a new school and spends a day being looked at before anyone speaks to them. Its specified audience was Year 7 students at my school, who would read it as a printed handout in class. The form was chosen for the audience, and it then decided almost everything about how the production had to run.

Where the weight fell, and why the form put it there. The weight fell in **pre-production**, and it fell there because print fixes extent before it fixes anything else. Six printed pages is not a flexible container: it is a fixed number of panels, and the story had to be built to fit them rather than trimmed to fit them later. In a moving-image version of the same story I could have shot broadly and found the length in the edit. Here the length existed before the first photograph.

The planning instrument, and what it locked. The instrument was a **flat plan** with a panel layout drawn on it: six pages, twenty-two panels, each one carrying a specified moment and a caption. Building it locked three things at once — how many photographs had to be taken, what each one had to show, and the order the reader would meet them in. It also exposed a narrative problem while it was still cheap to fix: my first flat plan gave nine panels to the morning and four to the moment that mattered, so I redrew it before shooting anything. That is the return to an earlier stage that the process is meant to produce, and print's process invites it early because the plan is where the form's real decisions live.

Production, and a decision that became expensive. Production was two afternoons of staged photography with four classmates. The point at which a decision became expensive was the end of the second afternoon: my cast were classmates with their own timetables, and reassembling them in the same uniforms, in the same corridor, in the same afternoon light was not something I could do on request. I knew this from the plan, so I deliberately over-captured — three or four framings of every panel, plus two panels I thought I might not need. That decision saved the production. In layout I found that the sequence read as though the main character had been ignored deliberately rather than simply unnoticed, which was not the representation I intended; the fix was a panel showing another student half-turning towards them, and I had it only because I had shot the extra coverage. Had I planned like a digital-form producer, assuming I could go back, the story would have kept a meaning I did not want.

Post-production, and print's finality. Post-production was layout, caption typesetting and prepress. This is where the product physically became itself, and it was also the last point at which anything could change. I printed a proof at final size on the actual paper and read it at a desk the way the audience would — a test I would not have thought of if I had checked it only on a screen — and found the captions in two panels sat too close to the trim edge to read comfortably. Because print commits at the press, that check had to happen *before* the deadline, not on it, so I had scheduled two days for it.

What the distribution channel demanded of an earlier stage. The product was distributed as a printed handout run off on the school's copier in black and white. That requirement reached all the way back into **production**: I had planned around colour in my first flat plan, and once the channel was confirmed I re-planned to build contrast with light and framing instead, and shot accordingly. A colour photograph converted to greyscale afterwards would have lost the separation between the character and the crowd that the whole narrative depends on.

Evaluation. Judged against my intention, the form served the story well: a reader controls their own pace in print, so they can sit on a panel, which suited a narrative about being looked at. Its cost was extent — six pages allowed twenty-two moments and no more, and the day had to be represented by omission. If I produced the same narrative in audio, the weight would move to post-production and the meaning would be made in the edit rather than in the plan, and I would have to make the crowd audible rather than visible.

Band descriptors (out of 10):

- **High (8–10):** the form named and used as the *cause* of the process's shape throughout; weight, planning instrument and point of commitment all identified with specific decisions as evidence; one costly-or-impossible change analysed with what was done about it; a distribution requirement traced back to a named earlier stage; precise media language; a comparison or evaluation that shows the process would differ in another form.
- **Mid (5–7):** the production clearly described and the form named, but the form treated as a setting rather than a cause; the planning instrument mentioned without saying what it locked; the point of commitment asserted rather than shown; distribution named but not traced back.

- **Low (1–4):** a narrative account of what the student did, in order, with stage names attached; no form-specific reasoning; no planning instrument; audience and distribution absent.

Common errors: **describing the production instead of analysing the form’s effect on the process** — the question is not “what did you do”, it is “what did your form make you do”; naming the form once in the opening line and never using it again; describing a planning document without saying what it fixed; claiming a decision was irreversible without saying **why the form made it so**; and omitting distribution, which is where the form’s delivery requirement reaches back into everything earlier.

Chapter 10 Producing media narratives — 10B Constructing narratives through the media production process

Theory

Students arrive at Unit 2 with a workable but wrong picture of how narratives get made: someone writes the story, and the rest of the process films it. Almost nothing about a real production works that way. A narrative is **built across the whole process**, in instalments, by people making decisions at every stage — and it goes on being rebuilt until the last stage stops. The study design says as much in a single sentence: narratives are created through a production process that involves *the conceptualisation and development of ideas through pre-production, production and post-production processes and distribution*. Five stages, one narrative, assembled progressively. This subtopic is about how that assembly actually happens, and about which narrative decisions belong to which stage.

What you are constructing. Chapter 8 defined a **narrative** as the depiction of a chain of events in a cause-and-effect relationship occurring in physical or virtual space over a period of time, and separated **story** (all the events that contribute to the narrative) from **plot** (how the story is structured or told). Those are analytical terms there. Here they are job descriptions. When you construct a narrative you are doing four things at once:

- building a **chain of events** that a stranger can follow;
- making each event visibly **bring about** the next, so the audience reads *because*, not *and then*;
- placing those events in a **space** — a real location or a designed virtual one — and across a **period of time** the audience can feel passing;
- doing all of it for a **specified audience**, who will receive the finished chain in a particular place, on a particular device, in a particular frame of mind.

Nothing on that list is achieved by writing it down. It is achieved by decisions that get made, tested, broken and remade at five different points in the process.

The organising idea: each stage holds a different set of narrative decisions. The reason the process has stages at all is that narrative decisions are not equally reversible. A premise can be thrown out on a Tuesday afternoon at no cost. A missing shot discovered six weeks later costs a second shoot day and may not be recoverable. The process moves from cheap, open decisions to expensive, closing ones — which is why the order matters and why the temptation to skip forwards is so costly.

Stage	The narrative question it answers	What it fixes	Where the answer is recorded
Development	What is the chain of events, who is it for, and in what media form?	The premise, the story, the specified audience, the form	Concept and premise notes, research notes, skills experiments
Pre-production	How will the audience receive that chain?	The plot — selection, order, duration and access — and the narrative conventions	Treatment, script, structure outline, storyboard, shot list or flat plan, schedule, distribution plan
Production	Does the material that carries the chain actually exist?	The recorded events, performances, images and sound the plot depends on	Shot log, recording log, continuity notes
Post-production	Which version of the plot does the audience finally get?	The delivered order, duration and access; the causal joins	Assembly, rough cut, fine cut, edit records
Distribution	Where and how does the narrative meet its audience?	The context of consumption, and the response	Distribution plan, audience feedback notes

Read that table downwards and you can see the narrative narrowing. Development holds every possible narrative. Pre-production commits to one. Production makes it physically possible. Post-production makes it final. Distribution decides what it means to the people who receive it.

Development: deciding what chain of events exists at all. Development is where the narrative is still cheap. The output that matters is a **premise** — one or two sentences naming who the narrative is about, what happens to them, and what the audience is meant to be left with. “A short film about loneliness” is not a premise; it is a topic. “A night-shift cleaner at a regional swimming pool finds a child’s lost drawing and spends her shift trying to work out who left it, and gives up just before the answer arrives” is a premise, because it contains a chain of events with a cause, a turn and an end.

Three other things are settled here, and each of them limits the narrative that can follow.

- **The specified audience.** The study design is direct: narratives *are produced for specific audiences*. An audience is not a demographic label bolted on later — it decides how much the narrative can assume, how long it can hold back information, and how much it must explain.
- **The media form.** Choosing moving image, still image, audio, print or a digital form decides which narrative tools exist. An audio narrative cannot show two things at once; a photographic series cannot control how long the viewer looks. Both facts change what the chain of events can be. (The stage-by-form relationship itself belongs to 10A; here the point is only that the choice constrains the story.)
- **Research and experimentation.** Practitioners study how comparable narratives are structured, and they trial the techniques and technologies before anything depends on them. A team that has never cut a match on action should discover that in development, not in the edit of the narrative it was going to hold together.

Pre-production: the story becomes a plot. This is the stage that does the most narrative work, and it is the one students most often reduce to a shot list. Pre-production takes the story developed above — all the events, in real order — and decides what the audience will actually receive. That is exactly the four plot decisions from 8A, now used to *make* rather than to *analyse*:

The plot decision	The pre-production question	What it looks like on paper
Selection	Which story events appear at all?	Events on the shot list; events referred to in dialogue only; events cut before a camera exists
Order	In what sequence will they arrive?	The scene or segment order in the treatment; a structure outline
Duration	How long is each given?	Estimated running times per scene; panel sizes on a flat plan; segment lengths in an audio rundown
Access	How much will the audience know, and through whom?	Point-of-view decisions; which character is present in each scene; what narration does and does not say

Alongside these sit the **narrative conventions**. Chapter 1 sets them out: the study design names **character**, **character arc** and **three-act structure**, and the accepted list extends to characterisation, setting, point of view, structuring of time, cause and effect, multiple storylines, and resolution and closure. There they were patterns to identify in someone else’s product; in pre-production they become levers you pull deliberately.

Convention	The construction decision it names
Character	Who the chain happens to, and through whom the audience experiences it
Character arc	What is different about that person by the end, and which events do the changing
Three-act structure	Where the set-up closes, where the confrontation turns, and how the chain resolves
Setting	Where the events occur, in physical or virtual space, and

Point of view

what that place tells the audience

Whose knowledge the audience shares, and what it is therefore denied

The routine that makes pre-production reliable is a **chain check**. Read the plan straight through and ask three questions of it. *Does each event bring about the next, or do some merely follow it in time? Does the audience have the information it needs at the moment it needs it, and not before? Is there any event here that changes nothing?* Every fault a chain check finds costs a rewrite; every fault it misses costs a shoot day.

One pre-production decision reaches further than students expect. The **distribution plan** is made here, not after the product is finished, and it feeds straight back into the narrative. A narrative planned for a three-minute slot in a school assembly, a narrative planned as a fifteen-minute podcast episode for a commute, and a narrative planned as a printed photo-essay pinned in a corridor are three different chains of events, because the audience's attention, position and ability to go back differ in each. *Bluey* (Ludo Studio, 2018–) is built in roughly seven-minute episodes: that distribution decision means each episode's chain must start, turn and close inside seven minutes, which shapes every narrative choice above it.

Production: making the chain physically exist. Production is where the narrative stops being a document. Its narrative job is narrow and unforgiving: **capture the material the plot depends on**. You cannot cut to a reaction you did not record, and you cannot imply a cause with a shot that does not exist. Three disciplines protect the chain.

- **Coverage** — deliberately recording the same action more than once, at different sizes, angles or takes, so the edit has options. Coverage is not indecision; it is the production stage buying the post-production stage room to change the order, duration and access later.
- **Continuity** — keeping the physical world consistent across takes and set-ups (position, props, light, wardrobe, time of day) so that a join reads as one continuous event rather than two separate ones. A continuity break does not merely look untidy; it breaks the causal link the join was meant to make.
- **Performance and delivery** — in fiction, what an actor does with a moment decides whether the audience believes the cause; in non-fiction, the question asked off-camera decides what the interview can later be cut to say.

Audio productions carry the same logic with different equipment. A three-part podcast narrative needs room tone, clean starts, and — crucially — the answers that carry each causal link recorded in full, because there is no picture to cover a gap. Print and photographic narratives need frames captured with the sequence in mind: an image that shows the *change* between two states is what makes a photo-essay a chain rather than a set.

Post-production: the plot is finally fixed. Everything before this stage proposes a narrative; this stage delivers one. Working from the assembly through the rough cut to the fine cut, post-production realises the plot decisions in their final form, and it can revise them dramatically without a single new recording. **Order** can be changed by moving a sequence. **Duration** can be changed by trimming a scene to half its planned length. **Access** can be changed by removing the shot that let the audience see what a character could not. **Selection** can be changed by dropping an event entirely, which is why so many productions arrive at a narrative that is not quite the one they planned. Selection is the change that most often has to be paid for elsewhere: an event dropped in the edit can leave a later event without its cause, or leave a line, a sound or a shot referring to something the audience will never see — so the chain check is run again over the revised cut.

Sound and music do particular narrative work here. A sound carried across a cut binds two shots into one causal unit; music entering on an action tells the audience that the action mattered; silence where sound was expected marks a break in the chain. In audio narratives, the same job is done by segment order, pacing and the placement of the presenter's summarising lines, which are where the audience is handed the causal links.

The phrase practitioners use for this stage — that a narrative is “found in the edit” — is half true and worth correcting. Post-production can only assemble what production captured and pre-production planned. What it genuinely finds is the *best available* plot of the story it has been given.

Distribution: the narrative meets its audience, and the loop closes. Distribution places the product in front of the specified audience in a planned context and location, and the context of consumption completes the narrative's

meaning. The same six-minute narrative screened to a Year 11 assembly, posted to a school channel where it plays without sound until tapped, and shown at a community film night to an audience that already knows the town, is read three different ways — and only the first of those is under the makers’ control. Distribution also generates the feedback that loads the *next* production: where the audience laughed, where they looked away, which link they could not follow.

Iteration: narrative faults send you backwards. The stages are not static or linear; they are **iterative** (repeated cycles of doing, reviewing and re-doing) and **interrelated** (a decision in one stage changes what is possible in another). What makes this concrete in a narrative production is that the most common faults are *causal* faults, and each one has a correct stage to return to. Returning to the wrong stage is the usual reason a fault does not get fixed.

The narrative fault, and where it surfaces	Return to	What actually gets fixed
At the assembly, no one can tell why the character leaves — the shot carrying the cause was never recorded	Production	A pick-up shoot for the one shot the chain needs
Test listeners say the middle of episode 2 “goes nowhere” — three segments in a row change nothing	Pre-production	Re-order and re-cut the segment structure so each unit changes the situation
The ending lands before the audience has the information needed to read it	Post-production	Move the revelation later; re-time the approach to it
The premise cannot sustain a chain — there is really only one event	Development	A new premise, or a different angle on the same subject
The narrative works for the class but not for the audience it was built for	Development of the next production	A corrected model of the specified audience

Constrained by context, and designed to it. The study design pairs its creative claim with a hard one: while producing narratives is a creative process, they *are constrained by the contexts in which they are produced, distributed, consumed and read*. Two kinds of constraint bite.

The first is practical — **time, budget and skills**. These do not merely trim a narrative; they determine which narratives are constructible. A production with four weeks, no money and one confident camera operator cannot build a chain that crosses five locations and twelve months. It can build a chain that turns on returning to one place three times, which is a genuinely strong narrative structure and costs nothing. That is the difference between designing **to** a constraint and apologising for it.

The second is contextual. Narratives are *constructed and shaped by cultures, histories and contexts* — the community a story comes from, what that community already knows, what it will recognise, and what it would find careless. A narrative about a town’s flood built for that town cannot open on the flood as spectacle; the audience was there. The same premise built for an audience elsewhere may have to.

There are also ethical, legal and community constraints that will reshape a plan — a commercial music track cannot simply be used, because recorded music and songs are protected by copyright under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) and permission is required — but those constraints are the subject of 11B, and are noted here only because they are among the reasons a narrative changes between plan and screen.

The method for 10B. Two routines will carry most questions in this subtopic.

1. **Name the stage, the decision and the narrative effect.** Never write “they planned it well” or “the editing made it better”. Write *which stage, which decision, and what it did to the chain of events the audience receives*. A decision without a narrative consequence is not an answer.
2. **Trace the fault to its stage.** When something is wrong with a narrative, ask where the decision that caused it was made. A confusing chain is almost never an editing problem; it is usually a pre-production problem discovered in the edit, and answering that way is what separates a mid response from a high one.

Looking ahead: 10A sets out how these processes differ across specific media forms and 10C the roles and responsibilities people take within each stage; Chapter 11 takes up technical skills, the ethical, legal and community constraints touched on above, and the evaluation of what you built. This subtopic is the spine all three attach to.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain how the pre-production stage converts a developed story into the plot an audience will receive. Refer to the production described below. (4 marks)

A Year 11 team at Barleyfoot Secondary College is making a four-minute moving-image narrative.

Development produced this story, in the order the events occur: (1) a student's bus route is cancelled; (2) she starts walking the 6 km to school; (3) she is late three times and is put on detention; (4) she stops telling anyone why; (5) a teacher drives past her on the highway and works it out.

“Explain” wants a how-and-why chain, not a description of the documents. The table builds the response one sentence at a time.

Working	Comment
Development left the team with a story — all five events, in the order they occur — and a specified audience of Year 7–12 students at a whole-school assembly screening.	Start by naming what pre-production is handed. The audience is part of the input, not a decoration.
Pre-production's first job is selection : at four minutes the team cannot present all five events in full, so events 1 and 3 are carried in dialogue and on a detention slip, and only events 2, 4 and 5 are shot.	Name the plot decision, then show it operating on this story. Specific events, not “they cut some bits”.
Order is then set in the treatment: the narrative opens on the walk (event 2), so the audience meets the consequence before the cause and is given the cancelled route only afterwards.	The second plot decision. State where the plot starts and what that does to the audience's knowledge.
Access is fixed by a point-of-view decision recorded in the storyboard — the audience stays with the student and never sees the staffroom, so it learns what the teacher works out at the moment she does.	Access is a <i>narrative convention</i> decision (point of view) written into a pre-production document. Show the link.
Written down as a shot list and schedule, these decisions have converted a chain of real-order events into a four-minute plot: the story is unchanged, but what the audience receives, and when, has been settled before a camera is touched.	Close on the distinction. Same story, a plot chosen from many, fixed on paper.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Explain how production-stage decisions capture the cause-and-effect links that a narrative depends on. Refer to the production described below. (5 marks)

Fernbrake Audio is producing a three-part audio narrative about a country swimming pool that closes over one summer. Part 2 must establish that the closure of the pool caused the town's junior squad to disband.

“Explain” wants the chain: a decision made at the production stage, then what it makes possible or impossible for the narrative later. The table builds the response one move at a time.

Working	Comment
Production is the stage at which the material the plot depends on is recorded, so the causal link in part 2 has to	State the stage's narrative job before any technique.

exist as **captured audio** before it can be assembled.

The producer records the squad coach in a full-length interview and deliberately asks the causal question in more than one form, so at least one usable answer states the link as a link rather than as two facts.

Coverage is recorded around the interview: the pool gate being chained, the empty change rooms, the last training session, and room tone from the pool deck — material that can carry the link even if the spoken answer is unusable.

Because there is no picture, the producer records a **clean start and finish** on every take and logs each recording against the event it carries, so the assembly can find the two pieces the link needs.

The result is that the causal link is not left to the edit to invent — it is captured twice over, once in testimony and once in sound, so the plot in post-production can choose how to build it rather than whether it can be built at all.

A production-stage decision (how the question is asked) determines whether the chain can later be built.

Name coverage and say what it buys: options for post-production, and a second route to the same causal join.

Form-specific discipline. The logging is what makes the material findable in post-production.

Finish on the narrative consequence: production decides what post-production is *able* to do.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain how the distribution context planned for a narrative shapes the way that narrative is constructed. (4 marks)

Distribution is planned during pre-production, and because it is, it reaches backwards into every narrative decision above it. Kittlemere Press commissions a photographic narrative about a closing foundry to be **printed at A2 and pinned along a corridor of a community centre**, where viewers pass it on the way somewhere else. That single distribution decision changes the chain of events that can be built. Because viewers control their own pace and may only see part of the sequence, the narrative cannot depend on a revelation held to the end — so the makers construct a chain in which the outcome is visible in the first frame and each subsequent image supplies a cause, letting a viewer who joins halfway still read a causal link. Because the images are large and physically separated, the gaps between frames are wide, so the plot **selects** only events that change something visible and omits the rest, trusting the viewer to bridge. And because the audience is the foundry's own community, the narrative does not explain what the building was — an audience elsewhere would have needed a frame that this one would find condescending. The distribution plan has therefore determined selection, structure and how much the narrative explains, all before a photograph is taken. *Takeaway*: a distribution decision made in pre-production is a narrative decision, because it fixes how much of the chain the audience will actually receive.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Analyse how iteration across the stages of the media production process repaired a fault in a narrative. (6 marks)

Bracketpine Films produced a nine-minute narrative in which a young mechanic in the fictional town of Undermill takes over her father's workshop after his stroke, and the fault appeared where narrative faults usually appear: at the **assembly edit**. Watching the material in order, the editor found that the audience had no way of knowing that the workshop was being sold — the event that gives every later scene its urgency. The information existed in the script as a line of dialogue, but the take in which it was audible had been abandoned on the shoot day for a performance reason. The chain had a missing link.

The first decision was diagnostic rather than technical: **which stage owned the fault?** It was tempting to treat it as an editing problem and solve it with a caption, but the fault was that a **story event had never been captured**, which makes it a production problem surfaced in post-production. The team therefore returned to **production** for a half-day pick-up, recording two shots that carried the sale without dialogue — a listed sale sign at the roadside and the mechanic folding a letter into a toolbox drawer.

Returning to production then forced a second, smaller iteration in **pre-production**: the pick-up shots only work if the audience meets them before the scenes that depend on them, so the structure outline was revised and the sequence order changed. That change in **order** in turn altered **access** — the audience now knows about the sale before the mechanic's brother does, which converts a confusing middle section into a sustained tension, because viewers watch a conversation knowing something one participant does not.

The repaired narrative is therefore not the planned one. It is stronger, and it is stronger because the process was treated as iterative and interrelated rather than as a sequence of completed stages: a fault found at stage four was traced to stage three, fixed with a return to stage three, and then required a revision back at stage two. *Takeaway*: diagnosing which stage owns a narrative fault is the whole skill — the wrong return leaves the chain broken and only disguises it.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Define each of the following terms as they are used in narrative production. (3 marks) (a) premise; (b) coverage; (c) chain check.

Q2. A narrative is constructed progressively across the five stages of the media production process. (4 marks) (a) Name the five stages in order. (b) Match each narrative output below to the stage that produces it: (i) a fine cut in which the final order of scenes is set; (ii) a one-sentence premise and an identified audience; (iii) a logged set of recordings and the continuity notes taken with them; (iv) a treatment setting out scene order and estimated running times.

Q3. The story of a six-minute narrative, in the order the events occur, is: (1) a family's shop loses its lease; (2) the daughter takes a second job; (3) the family holds a closing-down sale; (4) the daughter misses her final exam; (5) the shop closes. The finished product opens with the closing-down sale, then shows the second job, then the closure; the lease loss is heard only in a phone call, and the missed exam is never shown. (4 marks) (a) Write out the story order, using the event numbers. (b) Write out the plot order of the events that are shown, using the event numbers. (c) Name the two plot decisions the makers have used on events 1 and 4, and state which stage of the process settled them.

Q4. The same premise — a volunteer fire brigade trains a new recruit over one summer — is developed for two specified audiences: (A) the brigade's own members, screened at their end-of-season dinner; and (B) Year 8 students at a school assembly. (5 marks) (a) State two narrative decisions that would differ between the two versions, and give a reason for each. (b) Name the stage at which each of those decisions is made. (c) Explain why "everyone" is not an acceptable answer to the question of who a narrative is for.

Q5. A student team has four weeks, no budget, two people who can operate a camera and one location it can access reliably. Its development premise requires five locations across a year. (4 marks) (a) Name the three constraints the study design identifies as central to the production process. (b) Redesign the chain of events so it can be constructed within these constraints, keeping the premise's subject. (c) Explain why a narrative designed to a constraint is not the same as a narrative weakened by one.

Q6. Four decisions are made in the post-production stage of a moving-image narrative. (5 marks) (i) A three-minute scene is trimmed to fifty seconds. (ii) The final scene is moved to the opening. (iii) A shot revealing what is inside a locked shed is removed, so the audience learns its contents only when a character does. (iv) A whole subplot about a neighbour is dropped. (a) Name which plot decision — selection, order, duration or access — each of these changes. (b) State the narrative effect of (iii). (c) Change (iv) drops a whole strand of events out of the narrative. Explain what the team must check in the rest of the product before that change can stand.

Unscaffolded

Q7. Outline what is meant by saying a narrative is constructed *through* the media production process rather than written before it. (2 marks)

Q8. Outline why a production team records coverage during the production stage. (2 marks)

Q9. (*Stimulus.*) Read the development document below.

Stimulus. Runnelford Neighbourhood House — development notes. *Premise:* over one winter, a retired plumber teaches a weekly repair session in the hall; a broken sewing machine is brought in that nobody can fix, and it is still on the bench when the session ends for the year. *Audience:* people who use the Neighbourhood House, at a screening in the hall. *Form:* moving image, five minutes. *Skills to test before planning:* recording clean dialogue in a hall with a hard floor.

Describe how this development document establishes the narrative the production will construct. (3 marks)

Q10. Explain how narrative conventions chosen in pre-production build an audience's expectations about what will happen. Use an example. (4 marks)

Q11. (*Stimulus.*) Read the extract from a shot list below.

Stimulus. Shot 14 — MS, hands closing a roller door, 3 s. Shot 15 — CU, a padlock being threaded through the hasp, 2 s. Shot 16 — WS from across the street, the same frame as shot 2 but with the door shut and no cars, 6 s.

Describe how these three planned shots construct a cause-and-effect link for the audience. (4 marks)

Q12. Explain how post-production can substantially change the narrative a product delivers without any new material being captured. (4 marks)

Q13. (*Stimulus.*) Read the student production plan below.

Stimulus. “We are going to film for two days at the skate park and get heaps of footage of everyone, and then we will work out the story in the edit. We think a story will come out of it once we see what we’ve got. We haven’t decided who it’s for yet — probably just whoever watches it.”

Discuss three narrative risks in this plan, and state what should be done instead. (5 marks)

Q14. Explain how audience feedback gathered at the distribution stage contributes to the construction of a later narrative. (4 marks)

Q15. “The narrative is fixed once the script is finished; the remaining stages only carry it out.” Discuss this claim. (5 marks)

Q16. (*Stimulus.*) Read the notes taken at a rough-cut screening below.

Stimulus. Viewer notes, rough cut, seven-minute narrative. “I didn’t understand why she stopped going to training — it seemed to just happen.” · “The three scenes in the car all felt the same; nothing changed between them.” · “The ending was good but it arrived before I knew what was at stake.” · “I couldn’t hear the line about her sister at all.”

Discuss which stage of the production process the team should return to for each note, and what each return would fix. (5 marks)

Q17. Explain how the cultures, histories and contexts a narrative comes from shape the way it is constructed, referring to decisions made at two different stages of the production process. (6 marks)

Q18. (*Stimulus.*) Read the production summary below.

Stimulus. Bracketpine Films, *Low Tide Crossing*, an eight-minute narrative. **Development:** a premise about a teenager who walks a tidal causeway to work and is caught by a rising tide; audience identified as coastal secondary students; form chosen as moving image after audio was trialled and rejected. **Pre-production:** treatment structures the narrative in three crossings; storyboard fixes a point of view that stays with the teenager; distribution planned as a screening at a regional schools film night. **Production:** two shoot days at the causeway, coverage of each crossing at three sizes, continuity notes on tide height. **Post-production:** second crossing cut from ninety seconds to twenty; a shot of a tide chart on a phone moved from the third crossing to the first. **Distribution:** screened, followed by an audience question session.

Analyse how the narrative in this production is constructed across the stages of the media production process. (8 marks)

Q19. (*Extended response.*) Analyse how you used the stages of the media production process to construct a narrative in a production you have completed this year. (10 marks)

Your response should:

- identify the media form, the specified audience and the premise developed
- analyse a narrative decision made at each of at least four stages
- explain at least one point at which the process required you to return to an earlier stage, and what that return changed about the narrative

Production: _____

Answers

Q1. (3) (a) A one- or two-sentence statement of who the narrative is about, what happens to them and what it leaves the audience with — a chain, not a topic. (b) Recording the same action more than once at different sizes, angles or takes so post-production has options. (c) Reading a plan straight through to test that each event causes the next, that information arrives when needed, and that no event changes nothing.

Q2. (4) (a) Development, pre-production, production, post-production, distribution. (b) (i) post-production; (ii) development; (iii) production; (iv) pre-production.

Q3. (4) (a) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (b) 3, 2, 5. (c) Event 1 — selection (referred to but not shown); event 4 — selection (omitted entirely). Both settled in pre-production.

Q4. (5) (a) Any two with reasons, e.g. version A can omit an explanation of what the brigade does and can open mid-callout, because the audience already knows; version B needs an establishing sequence and a slower reveal, because it does not. (b) Both are pre-production decisions about selection and order, made from an audience decided in development. (c) A narrative built for “everyone” has to explain everything to no one in particular; audience decides what can be assumed, withheld and left out.

Q5. (4) (a) Time, budget and skills. (b) Any workable redesign: e.g. one location returned to three times across the year, with the passage of time carried by changes within that place. (c) A constraint used as a structuring principle produces a deliberate design; a constraint ignored until it bites produces a fault the audience can see.

Q6. (5) (a) (i) duration; (ii) order; (iii) access; (iv) selection. (b) The audience is restricted to what the character knows, so the reveal arrives for both at once — surprise rather than suspense. (c) That nothing left in the product still depends on the neighbour subplot: re-run the chain check over the revised cut, looking for a later event whose cause the subplot carried and for lines, sounds or shots that still refer to a neighbour the audience will now never meet. An orphaned reference must be rebuilt from captured material or the subplot kept.

Q7. Outline (2). The narrative is decided in instalments across all five stages — premise in development, plot in pre-production, captured material in production, final order in post-production, context in distribution — rather than being fixed once and executed.

Q8. Outline (2). So post-production has options: coverage lets the edit change order, duration and access, and provides a second route to a causal link if the planned one fails.

Q9. Describe (3). The premise fixes a chain (sessions run, machine arrives, nobody fixes it, year ends with it unfixed) with a deliberate non-resolution; the audience is specified as the hall’s own users, screened in the hall, so the narrative need not explain what the House is; the form and length limit how many events can be shown; the skills test flags that dialogue capture must be solved before planning depends on it.

Q10. Explain (4). Name conventions chosen at pre-production (character, character arc, three-act structure, setting, point of view); show how the choice sets an expectation the audience reads forward with; give one example and state the effect.

Q11. Describe (4). Three planned shots move from action, to detail, to consequence; the padlock close-up supplies the cause and the matching wide shot shows the result, and because shot 16 repeats shot 2’s framing the audience compares the two states and reads closure. Duration weights the last shot at 6 s so the change registers.

Q12. Explain (4). Order (moving a sequence), duration (trimming), access (removing a revealing shot), selection (dropping an event) can all be altered from captured material; the story is unchanged, the plot is different, so the narrative the audience receives changes.

Q13. Discuss (5). Three risks: no premise, so there may be no chain of events at all; no specified audience, so no decisions can be justified; no pre-production, so causal links will not have been captured and cannot be edited in. Instead: develop a premise and audience, plan the plot and shot list, then shoot to it while keeping coverage.

Q14. Explain (4). Distribution generates response — where the audience lost the link, where attention went; this is analysed and reflected on and feeds the development stage of the next production, correcting the model of the audience and the structural habits that failed.

Q15. Discuss (5). Largely false. The script is one pre-production document; production decides what exists, post-production fixes the delivered order, duration and access, distribution decides the context of reception, and iteration revises earlier stages. Concede that the script fixes much of selection and structure. Reach a position.

Q16. Discuss (5). Note 1 → production (capture the missing causal shot) or pre-production if it was never planned; note 2 → pre-production, re-structure so each unit changes the situation; note 3 → post-production, re-order so the stakes precede the ending; note 4 → production for a re-record, or post-production if a usable alternative take exists.

Q17. Explain (6). Culture, history and context decide what the audience already knows, what it will recognise and what it would find careless; show this shaping a development decision (premise, audience, what needs no explanation) and a pre-production or post-production decision (selection, order, access).

Q18. Analyse (8). A named decision at four or more stages, each carried to its effect on the chain. **Development:** the premise supplies its own cause and its own deadline; coastal secondary students as the specified audience licenses assuming knowledge of tides; audio trialled and rejected because the chain depends on *seeing* the water's position. **Pre-production:** three crossings (order and repetition, so meaning is built by comparison); point of view held on the teenager (access); a film night planned as the distribution context. **Production:** coverage at three sizes keeps duration open for the edit; continuity on tide height keeps the narrative's clock credible. **Post-production:** the second crossing cut ninety seconds to twenty (duration — the pace itself says time is running out); the tide-chart shot moved to the first crossing (access — surprise becomes suspense). **Distribution:** the question session generates the feedback the next development stage uses. Top band also needs the **interrelation** — the edit could make those two changes only because production shot coverage and held continuity. See Fully-worked solutions for the full model, band descriptors and common errors.

Q19. Analyse (10). See Fully-worked solutions for a full model, band descriptors and common errors.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (3) (a) A **premise** is a one- or two-sentence statement of the narrative — who it is about, what happens to them, and what the audience is left with. It must contain a chain of events; “a film about loneliness” is a topic, not a premise. (b) **Coverage** is the deliberate recording of the same action more than once at different sizes, angles or takes, so that post-production has options for order, duration and access. (c) A **chain check** is the pre-production routine of reading a plan through and asking whether each event brings about the next, whether the audience receives information when it needs it, and whether any event changes nothing.

Q2. (4) (a) **Development · pre-production · production · post-production · distribution.** (b) (i) **post-production** — the fine cut is where the delivered order is fixed; (ii) **development** — premise and specified audience; (iii) **production** — logged recordings and continuity notes; (iv) **pre-production** — the treatment is a planning document. *Marker's note:* the treatment belongs to pre-production even though it is about the finished shape; documents are placed by the stage that writes them, not the stage they describe.

Q3. (4) (a) Story order: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5.** (b) Plot order of the events shown: **3, 2, 5** — the closing-down sale, then the second job, then the closure. (c) Event **1** is **referred to but not shown** (heard in a phone call) and event **4** is **omitted entirely**; both are **selection** decisions, and both were settled at **pre-production**, since an event not on the shot list is not captured. *Common errors:* calling the treatment of event 1 “order” — moving an event is order, replacing it with a reference is selection.

Q4. (5) (a) *Version A (brigade members, end-of-season dinner).* The narrative can **open mid-callout** with no explanation of what a brigade does, because the audience has done it; and it can rely on **access restricted to the recruit**, since experienced viewers will read the recruit's hesitation against their own knowledge. *Version B (Year 8 assembly).* The narrative needs an **establishing sequence** that shows what the brigade is and why the training matters, because without it the chain of events has no stakes; and it needs **shorter duration on procedure and longer on consequence**, because the audience has no prior interest in the procedure. (b) The audience is identified in **development**; the decisions that follow from it — what to include, in what order, with what access — are made in **pre-production**. (c) “*Explain*” asks for reasoning. “Everyone” gives the makers no basis for any decision: it cannot tell them what may be assumed, what must be shown, how long to hold a moment, or where the product will be

consumed. A narrative that tries to serve every audience explains too much for the informed and too little for the unfamiliar. *Marker's note:* two decisions **with reasons** — a bare list of differences scores half.

Q5. (4) (a) Time, budget and skills. (b) A workable redesign holds the subject and rebuilds the chain inside the limits: the narrative returns to the **one accessible location three times** across the year, and the passage of time and the change in the situation are carried *within* that place — what has been added, removed or worn — rather than by travelling to new places. Two performers carry it, and the causal links are built by what has changed between visits. (c) *“Explain” asks how the two differ.* A narrative **designed to** a constraint uses the limit as a structuring principle: returning to one place three times is a recognised and strong structure, and an audience reads it as intentional. A narrative **weakened by** a constraint keeps the original plan and delivers it badly — the fifth location shot in ten rushed minutes, the year implied by a title card because there was no time to build it. The material outcome may be the same shortage; the narrative outcome is not. *Common errors:* answering (b) by shortening the original premise rather than restructuring the chain.

Q6. (5) (a) (i) duration; (ii) order; (iii) access; (iv) selection. (b) Removing the revealing shot restricts the audience to the character's knowledge, so the audience discovers the shed's contents at the same moment she does. The narrative effect is a shift from **suspense** (the audience knowing more than the character and waiting) to **surprise** (both learning at once), which also transfers the audience's alignment more completely to her. (c) *“Explain” asks what follows from the change.* Dropping the neighbour subplot removes screen time, but it also removes whatever narrative work those events were doing for the rest of the chain, and that is what has to be checked. The team re-runs the **chain check** over the revised cut and asks its three questions again. *Does each remaining event still bring about the next* — or has a cause been cut out from under one of them, leaving a later scene with nothing to explain it? *Does the audience still receive what it needs when it needs it* — the neighbour may have been the only source of a fact a later event assumes? And is there anything left behind that now refers to nothing: a line naming her, a shot of her fence, a sound from next door that no longer belongs to anybody? An orphaned reference costs more than the subplot did, because the audience keeps waiting for a link that never arrives. If a link is orphaned and cannot be rebuilt from material already captured, the selection change cannot stand as it is. *Marker's note:* the mark is for treating selection as a decision with consequences elsewhere in the chain, not as deletion.

Q7. “Outline” asks for the key point, briefly. It means the narrative is decided in instalments across the whole process rather than settled once and executed: development fixes the premise, audience and form; pre-production converts the story into a plot; production determines what material exists; post-production fixes the delivered order, duration and access; and distribution places the narrative in the context in which it is read. *Marker's note:* two marks need the idea of progressive construction plus at least two stages doing different narrative work.

Q8. “Outline” asks for the key point, briefly. Coverage gives post-production **options:** with the same action recorded at several sizes and angles, the edit can change the order, shorten or lengthen a moment, and alter how much the audience sees — and if the planned shot carrying a causal link fails, another route to that link already exists. *Common errors:* “in case something goes wrong” — true, but the narrative point is that coverage keeps plot decisions open into the edit.

Q9. “Describe” asks for an account of what the document establishes. The document establishes four things the production will build on. First, the **premise** contains a genuine chain: the sessions run, a machine arrives, nobody can fix it, and the year ends with it still on the bench — and the deliberate **non-resolution** is itself a narrative decision, since the last event is the absence of a repair. Second, the **specified audience** is the Neighbourhood House's own users, watching in the hall, which means the narrative does not have to explain what the House is or who attends. Third, the **form and length** — five minutes of moving image — cap how many events can be shown in full, so pre-production will have to select. Fourth, the **skills test** identifies dialogue capture in a hard-floored hall as a risk to be solved in development, before any plan depends on it. *Marker's note:* describe what the document *fixes* for the later stages; summarising the premise back is not an answer.

Q10. “Explain” asks for the how and the why. **Narrative conventions** are the shared storytelling structures an audience already recognises — the study design names **character, character arc and three-act structure**, and the accepted list extends to setting, point of view, structuring of time and resolution and closure — and choosing them in pre-production is choosing what the audience will expect. Because audiences have read many narratives, a convention arrives carrying its own history: it tells the viewer what kind of chain they are in and what is likely to happen next, before anything has happened.

For example, a team planning a six-minute narrative about a night-shift worker fixes in its storyboard a **point of view** that never leaves her — every scene is one she is present for. That single pre-production decision creates two expectations: that whatever is learned will be learned by her first, and that anything happening elsewhere will arrive as a consequence rather than as a warning. The audience therefore reads the narrative forwards with a particular kind of attention, watching for what she notices. The makers can then meet that expectation, or plan to break it at one chosen moment for effect — but either way the expectation was constructed at pre-production, not discovered later. *Common errors*: listing conventions without showing the expectation each creates; expectation is the whole point of the question.

Q11. “Describe” asks for an account of how the link is built. The three shots are planned so that the audience assembles a cause-and-effect relationship without being told one. Shot 14 shows an **action** — the roller door being closed — in medium shot, with hands doing the work, so the event is attributed to a person. Shot 15 cuts to a **close-up of the padlock**, isolating the detail that makes the action permanent; the size change signals that this detail carries the meaning of the moment. Shot 16 then returns to a **wide shot framed exactly as shot 2**, so the audience compares two states of the same place — earlier, open with cars; now, shut and empty — and reads the closure as the **result** of what shots 14 and 15 showed. Duration completes the construction: the wide is held for 6 s against the 2 s close-up, so the consequence is given time to register while the cause is delivered quickly. *Marker’s note*: the repeated framing is the key evidence; noticing that shot 16 matches shot 2 is what turns a description of three shots into an account of a causal join.

Q12. “Explain” asks how the change is possible and what it does. Post-production revises the plot without touching the story, because all four plot decisions operate on material that already exists. **Order**: moving a sequence changes what the audience knows when — a scene shifted to the opening turns an explanation into a question. **Duration**: trimming a three-minute scene to fifty seconds changes where the narrative’s emphasis falls, since audiences read time given as importance. **Access**: cutting a shot that showed the audience something a character could not withhold that knowledge and changes suspense into surprise, or the reverse. **Selection**: dropping an entire event removes it from the narrative, and the audience will not know it existed.

Sound extends this further: carrying a sound across a cut binds two shots into one causal unit, and music entering on an action tells the audience that action mattered. None of this requires a new recording. The limit is equally important — post-production cannot construct a link for which nothing was captured — which is why the stage is best described as choosing the **best available plot** of the story it was given. *Common errors*: claiming the edit can “create a new story”; the story is fixed by what was captured, the plot is what changes.

Q13. “Discuss” asks you to develop each risk and reach a position on what to do. The plan is not a production plan; it is an intention to gather material and hope. Three risks follow.

First, there may be no chain of events at all. A narrative requires events in a cause-and-effect relationship. Footage of many people skating over two days is a set of moments; nothing in the plan ensures that any one thing brings about another. The team may finish with material that can only be assembled as a montage, which is not a narrative.

Second, no specified audience means no decision can be justified. Without knowing who the product is for and where they will meet it, the team cannot decide what to explain, how long to hold anything, or how to end. Every choice in the edit will be settled by personal taste, and disagreements will have no way of being resolved.

Third, the causal links will not have been captured. This is the fatal one. Editing can rearrange what exists; it cannot originate a shot. If nobody planned which event causes which, the specific material that carries each link — the reaction, the detail, the matching wide shot — will not be on the cards, and no amount of editing will put it there.

What should be done instead: complete **development** by writing a premise containing a chain and naming the audience and the screening context; complete **pre-production** by planning the plot as a structure outline and shot list built from that premise; then shoot **to** the plan while recording generous coverage, so the edit has options without depending on luck. The team’s instinct is not worthless — documentary and observational work does discover material on location — but discovery is something a plan absorbs, not something it replaces. *Marker’s note*: five marks need three risks **developed**, not listed, and an explicit statement of the alternative.

Q14. “Explain” asks for the mechanism, not just the fact. Distribution places the narrative in front of its specified audience in a planned context, and the audience’s response is the first information the makers have had that is not their own opinion. That response is gathered — questions asked after a screening, where viewers laughed or looked away,

what they say they did not follow — and then **analysed, reflected on and evaluated** against the intention the production was built to serve.

What it produces is a corrected model of the audience, and that model is an input to the **development** stage of the next production. Two things typically change. The first is the **assumption set**: if viewers could not follow a link, the next narrative's development will plan for less prior knowledge, or build the link twice. The second is a **structural habit**: a maker who learns that their middle sections stall will develop the next premise around a chain in which every unit changes the situation. This is what makes the process a cycle rather than a line — distribution is not the exit door, it loads the next production. *Common errors*: answering that feedback is used “to improve the product”; once distributed, the product is usually finished — the feedback improves the **next** narrative.

Q15. “Discuss” asks you to weigh the claim and reach a position. The claim is largely false, though it contains something true. What is true is that a script is a powerful document: it fixes much of the **selection** (which events exist) and much of the **structure**, and a production that abandons its script mid-shoot usually loses the chain. A narrative genuinely does take its shape in pre-production.

But the script is one pre-production document among several, and three stages of narrative decisions come after it. **Production** determines what physically exists: a scripted line abandoned on the shoot day is not in the narrative, however clearly it was written, and coverage recorded beyond the script is what allows the plot to change later. **Post-production** fixes the delivered plot — order, duration and access can all be revised from captured material, so the narrative an audience receives may differ substantially from the scripted one. **Distribution** determines the context in which the narrative is read, and a chain that reads as tense at a film night can read as slow on a phone.

The claim also misdescribes the shape of the process. The stages are **iterative and interrelated**: a fault found in the edit routinely sends a production back to pre-production to re-structure or to production for a pick-up, and each return revises the script rather than executing it. The position to reach is that the script is the point at which the narrative becomes **committed**, not the point at which it becomes **finished** — every later stage can still strengthen it, weaken it, or change what it means. *Marker's note*: five marks reward a genuine concession to the claim before the refutation; a flat “no, it's wrong” caps the response.

Q16. “Discuss” asks you to justify each return, not just name it. Each note points at a different stage, and the skill is diagnosing which.

“**I didn't understand why she stopped going to training.**” This is a broken causal link. If the shot or line carrying the cause was planned but not usable, the return is to **production** for a pick-up that supplies it — a detail, a reaction, an object. If it was never planned at all, the return is to **pre-production**, because the chain itself is missing a link and re-planning is needed before anything can be shot. Editing alone cannot fix it.

“**The three scenes in the car all felt the same; nothing changed between them.**” This is a structural fault and belongs to **pre-production**. Three units that change nothing means the chain has stalled; the fix is to re-structure so that each scene alters the situation, which may mean cutting one of the three and re-writing another, and then re-cutting to the revised structure.

“**The ending arrived before I knew what was at stake.**” This is an **order** and **access** problem in material that already exists, so it can be solved in **post-production**: move the information that establishes the stakes earlier, or re-time the approach so the audience is given it before the final sequence. No new material is required.

“**I couldn't hear the line about her sister.**” A technical capture failure. If a usable alternative take exists, it is fixed in **post-production**; if not, the return is to **production** to re-record it — and if it cannot be re-recorded, pre-production must supply another way to carry the same information. The general principle worth stating is that a narrative fault must be traced to the stage whose decision caused it: fixing a pre-production fault in the edit only disguises it. *Marker's note*: five marks need a stage **and** a justification for each of the four notes; naming stages alone is a list, not a discussion.

Q17. “Explain” asks for a how-and-why chain across two stages. The study design says narratives are *constructed and shaped by cultures, histories and contexts*, and in production that abstract claim becomes a set of concrete decisions about what the audience already carries into the room.

At the **development** stage, context decides the premise and what the narrative must establish. A production made about a town's 2022 flood, for an audience in that town, is developed on the knowledge that every viewer was there: the flood does not need to be established, and building the premise around the moment of the water arriving would tell the audience nothing it does not know and would risk treating a shared hardship as spectacle. The premise therefore develops elsewhere — the year afterwards, the rebuilt hall, what was not restored. The same premise developed for an audience in another state would need the flood established, because without it the chain of events has no cause. One contextual fact has produced two different narratives.

At the **pre-production** stage, context governs selection and access. Because the local audience knows the people and the places, the plan can select events by what they *reveal* rather than by what they explain, and it can restrict access to one household's experience without the audience feeling under-informed — viewers supply the wider picture themselves. A plan for the distant audience must select at least some events for their explanatory work and widen access so the situation is legible. Cultural context adds a further constraint on both plans: where a narrative involves communities, sites or histories that are not the makers' own, what may be depicted and how is a matter for the people concerned, and that too is settled in planning, not discovered on the shoot.

The general point is that context does not decorate a narrative. It sets what can be assumed, and what can be assumed determines the chain of events that needs to be built at all. *Marker's note*: six marks need **two named stages** with a decision at each; a general discussion of "culture influencing media" without stage-located decisions sits in the middle band.

Q18. Command term — analyse: break the production into its stages, show what narrative decision each stage made, and show how those decisions work together to produce the narrative the audience receives. Eight marks expect decisions at four or more stages and an explicit account of the effect on the chain of events.

Model response (8 marks).

Low Tide Crossing shows a narrative being constructed progressively, with each stage settling a different set of decisions and each decision constraining the ones after it.

Development fixes what the narrative can be. The premise — a teenager caught by a rising tide on a causeway she crosses to work — already contains a chain with a built-in cause and a built-in deadline, which is the single most consequential decision in the whole production. The **audience** is identified as coastal secondary students, so the narrative can assume familiarity with tides and does not need to explain the danger. The **form** decision is made by testing rather than assumption: audio was trialled and rejected, which is a development-stage judgement that this chain depends on the audience *seeing* the water's position relative to the causeway — a spatial relationship an audio narrative cannot deliver without narration.

Pre-production converts that story into a plot. The **structure** — three crossings — is a decision about order and repetition: by returning the audience to the same physical space three times, the treatment allows the narrative to build meaning through change rather than through new information, and each crossing can be read against the previous one. The storyboard fixes **access** by keeping the point of view with the teenager, so the audience is denied the reassurance of seeing the tide from outside and shares her limited view of her own situation. The **distribution plan** — a regional schools film night — confirms the audience decision and supports an eight-minute duration with a single sustained tension, which a phone-screen distribution would not.

Production makes the plot possible rather than merely intended. **Coverage of each crossing at three sizes** is the decision that keeps the plot open: it allows post-production to change the duration and emphasis of any crossing without a reshoot. **Continuity notes on tide height** are narrative documentation, not housekeeping — the tide is the narrative's clock, and if its height does not increase consistently across the three crossings, the cause-and-effect chain that drives the whole product collapses.

Post-production then makes two decisions that reshape what the audience receives. Cutting the second crossing from ninety seconds to twenty is a **duration** decision that accelerates the middle of the narrative, so the three crossings are unequal and the pace itself communicates that time is running out. Moving the tide-chart shot from the third crossing to the first is an **access** decision: it gives the audience the information early, which converts the later crossings from surprise into suspense, since viewers can now read the danger the character is understating. Both changes were only available because production shot coverage and kept the tide consistent.

Distribution completes the process by placing the narrative in a screening with a question session afterwards — a context that generates the response the makers will carry into their next development stage.

Analysed together, the production shows that no single stage made this narrative. The premise made it possible, pre-production committed it to one plot, production made that plot buildable, and post-production selected the strongest version of it — and the two post-production changes, which arguably do the most for the audience's experience, could not have been made had earlier stages not left room for them.

Band descriptors (out of 8):

- **High (7–8):** decisions identified at **four or more stages** and analysed, not listed; each linked to its effect on the chain of events or on the audience's knowledge; the interrelation between stages made explicit (later decisions depending on earlier ones); precise media language.
- **Mid (4–6):** decisions covered at three or four stages, with at least one asserted rather than analysed; effects on the narrative gestured at; the stages treated as a sequence rather than as interrelated.
- **Low (1–3):** summarises the stimulus back stage by stage; names decisions without narrative effects; no use of plot vocabulary.

Common errors: paraphrasing the stimulus instead of analysing it; treating the post-production changes as “fixes” rather than as narrative decisions; ignoring development on the assumption that nothing is made there; and omitting the interrelation — the reason the edit could shorten a crossing is that production shot coverage, and saying so is what earns the top band.

Q19. Command term — analyse: deconstruct your own production into the decisions made at each stage, show what each did to the narrative the audience received, and show where the process required a return to an earlier stage. Ten marks expect four or more stages, a specific decision at each, and a genuine account of one iteration.

Production: a six-minute moving-image narrative, *Two Buckets*

Model response (10 marks).

My production was a six-minute narrative in the **moving-image** form, built for an audience of Year 9 and 10 students at a lunchtime screening in the school library. The **premise** developed was that a student who has been given the job of watering the school's kitchen garden over the summer keeps doing it after the garden is handed to a new teacher who does not want it — and finally stops. That premise mattered because it contained a chain with a cause (the handover), a middle that could repeat, and an end that was a decision rather than an event.

Development settled two things that shaped everything after. First, the audience: because the viewers would be students who know the school and the garden, I could assume the location and spend no time establishing it, which bought me most of a minute. Second, the form: I trialled the premise as a photographic series and abandoned it, because the narrative depends on the *repetition* of an action and a photo series would have shown the states between waterings rather than the act itself. I also tested recording dialogue outdoors and found it unusable in wind, which changed the premise before planning: the narrative would carry its meaning through action and one short conversation shot indoors.

Pre-production converted the story into a plot. I structured the narrative as **four waterings**, which is an **order** and **duration** decision: the audience sees the same action four times, and the meaning is carried entirely by what has changed around it. In the structure outline that change was principally the **state of the beds**, planned to run from watered and turned at the first watering to dry and gone to seed at the fourth. I fixed **access** by deciding that the new teacher would never appear on screen at all: the audience would know him only by his traces — a different car in the staff park, a note taped to the shed — so it reads the handover the way she does, off what has changed, and nobody in the product ever explains it to either of them. And I planned the **distribution** context — a library screening on a small monitor with people walking past — which pushed me towards tighter framing than I would otherwise have chosen, because wide shots would have been unreadable there.

Production ran across three afternoons. The decision that mattered most for the narrative was **coverage**: I shot each watering wide, medium and as a close-up of the buckets, without knowing yet how long each repetition would need to be. I kept continuity notes on the state of the beds so that the four waterings would read in the right order regardless of

the day I shot them, since I shot the fourth watering first for access reasons. I also recorded the indoor conversation in two versions, one where the student explains why she keeps going and one where she does not.

Post-production is where the plot was finally set. In the assembly the four waterings ran at similar lengths, which made the routine read as steady when it needed to read as worn down. Two decisions followed. I cut the third watering to eleven seconds, so the four repetitions ran long, medium, very short, long, and the pace itself communicated that the routine had stopped being a choice and become a habit. And I selected the version of the conversation in which the student does **not** explain herself, which was an **access** decision: it denies the audience the reason and makes the final watering — and her stopping — something the audience has to interpret.

The **iteration** worth reporting ran backwards out of production rather than out of the edit. I shot the fourth watering first, because that was the one afternoon I could get the shed open, and it needed the beds at their most neglected. Between that afternoon and the next, the groundskeeper cleared and re-mulched every bed. My continuity notes caught it before I shot anything else: waterings one, two and three would now all be made in front of the same fresh, identical beds, and the fourth — already shot — would be the only one that looked different, so the decline the whole narrative was built on had collapsed into a single jump at the end. It was tempting to call this a shooting problem and wait for the beds to deteriorate again, but the shoot had not gone wrong; the plan had. My **pre-production** structure outline had staked the entire passage of time on one variable I did not control. So the return was to **pre-production**: I revised the structure outline to carry time on changes the production could hold — the tap key going back to the office, so the hose is unavailable and she carries two buckets; a padlock appearing on the shed; the tools gone from the bench by the fourth watering — and re-planned the two afternoons that were left around them. That return changed what the narrative is about. Time is now read from what is quietly withdrawn from her rather than from a garden dying, which is what makes her stopping at the end a decision rather than a defeat, and it is where the title came from.

Distribution at the library screening produced feedback I could not have generated myself: viewers followed the chain but several read the ending as the student being punished rather than choosing to stop. That tells me the final watering needed one more beat of her deciding, and it is a development correction I will carry into my next production rather than a fix to this one.

Across the whole process, the narrative I delivered is recognisably the one I developed, but it is not the one I planned. Development decided what chain was possible; pre-production committed to one plot; production determined what could actually be built and sent one plot decision back to be re-made; post-production selected the strongest version available and changed the meaning of the ending by withholding a reason; and distribution told me what the next premise has to do better.

Band descriptors (out of 10):

- **High (8–10):** form, specified audience and premise all identified; a **specific** narrative decision analysed at **four or more stages**, each with its effect on the chain of events or the audience's knowledge; a genuine iteration traced from the fault, to the stage that owned it, to what the return changed; plot vocabulary (selection, order, duration, access) used accurately; the stages treated as interrelated.
- **Mid (5–7):** most stages covered but at least one described rather than analysed; the audience named but not used to justify decisions; an iteration mentioned without diagnosing which stage owned the fault; some narrative effects asserted.
- **Low (1–4):** recounts what the class did week by week instead of analysing decisions; no premise or audience stated; “we edited it and it was better” with no plot vocabulary; no iteration.

Common errors: writing a diary of the production rather than an analysis of its narrative decisions — the single most costly error in this subtopic; naming a stage without naming a decision made in it; claiming an iteration that was really just ordinary editing; forgetting that development and distribution are stages and covering only the middle three; and describing effects on “the audience” without ever saying what the audience knew, when.

Chapter 10 Producing media narratives — 10C Roles and responsibilities across the stages of production

Theory

A production is a set of *jobs* before it is a set of stages. Somebody has to book the room, somebody has to decide what the story means, somebody has to hold the microphone in the right place, and somebody has to notice that the file was never exported. When one person makes a media product alone, all of those jobs still exist — they are simply stacked on one pair of hands. When a group makes one, the jobs have to be *shared out*, and how they are shared out decides whether the product gets finished.

This subtopic is about that sharing out. The key knowledge you own here is **the roles and responsibilities within different stages of the media production process**, and the key skill is to **undertake roles and responsibilities** in your own narrative production. Two words in the key knowledge carry the marks: *within* and *different stages*. The question is never simply “who does what” — it is **who is answerable for what, at which stage, and to whom does it pass next**.

(Chapter 4 established the five stages themselves — development, pre-production, production, post-production and distribution — and established that they are iterative and interrelated rather than linear. This subtopic assumes that and asks a different question of it. How the process reshapes itself for a particular media form belongs to 10A; how a narrative is built through the process belongs to 10B.)

Role and responsibility are not synonyms. Students lose marks by treating them as one word, so separate them now and keep them separate.

- A **role** is the named position a person holds in a production, and the area of the product that position is answerable for. A role is a *standing* thing: you are the editor for the whole production, not just on the day you edit.
- A **responsibility** is a specific task or decision that the role must deliver, together with being **answerable** for it. Responsibilities are *stage-specific*. The same role carries different responsibilities in pre-production and in post-production, and listing the role without saying which stage you mean answers half the question.
- **Accountability** is the third term and the practical one: every responsibility must have exactly one owner. If two people own a responsibility, neither does it; if nobody owns it, its absence is discovered at the worst possible moment — usually the shoot day, or the export.

So: *sound recordist* is a role. *Booking and testing the radio microphones in pre-production* is a responsibility of that role at that stage. *Capturing thirty seconds of room tone before the location is released* is a different responsibility of the same role at the next stage. Write about responsibilities and you are writing about stages automatically.

Where the role names come from. The study design does not issue a list of roles, and you should not expect one. It requires you to know that roles and responsibilities exist within the stages, and to undertake them. The role *names* come from industry practice, and they differ by **media form** — which is why “the crew” of a zine looks nothing like “the crew” of a short film.

Media form	Roles you would expect to see named
Moving image (film, television, video, animation)	Producer · director · writer · director of photography or camera operator · sound recordist · production designer · editor · sound designer or mixer · colourist
Audio (radio, podcast)	Producer · host or presenter · story or script editor · field recordist · sound editor · mix engineer
Print (magazine, zine, newspaper)	Editor · writer or journalist · photographer or illustrator · sub-editor · designer or layout artist · print liaison
Still image (photography)	Photographer · assistant · stylist · picture editor · retoucher · printer or framer
Digital (video game, app, website)	Designer · artist · programmer · sound designer · tester ·

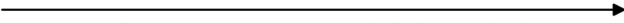
Do not memorise this table as a list of correct answers. Memorise instead the five **role functions** underneath it, because these exist in every media form and let you allocate roles sensibly in a crew of three.

Role function	What it is answerable for	Where it lives
Producing	Resources and coordination — schedule, budget, permissions, equipment, people, delivery	Every stage; heaviest in pre-production and distribution
Directing (creative or editorial lead)	The intention, and the decisions that serve it	Development to post-production; heaviest in pre-production and production
Capturing	Operating the technology that records the material	Production; planned in pre-production, consulted in post-production
Resolving	Refining and resolving the captured material into a finished product	Post-production; advises on coverage in pre-production, delivers the export for distribution
Delivering	Placing the product in front of its specified audience, and gathering the response	Distribution, planned in pre-production

A crew of three does not have three roles. It has five role functions and three people, and part of the pre-production work is deciding which person carries which function at which stage.

Roles mapped onto stages. The matrix below takes a small screen crew and shows where each role **leads** — owns the decision and the deliverable — and where it merely **contributes**, doing defined work under someone else's lead. Read it across a row, not down a column: a row is the shape of one person's job over the life of the production.

	Development	Pre-production	Production	Post-production	Distribution
Producer	■	■	□	□	■
Director	□	■	■	□	
Writer	■	■	□		
Camera / cinematography		□	■	□	
Sound recordist		□	■		
Production designer		■	■		
Editor		□	□	■	□
Sound designer / mixer		□		■	
Distribution coordinator		□			■
<i>roles active</i>	3	9	7	5	3



iterative — a return sends responsibility back up the line

■ leads — owns the decision and the deliverable at that stage
 □ contributes — defined work under another role's lead
 blank — the role is not involved at that stage

Three patterns in that matrix are worth stating in words, because each is a ready-made answer.

*The crew is not a constant size, and it changes shape as well as size. Read the tally under each column: 3, 9, 7, 5, 3. Development is two or three roles. **Pre-production activates the most roles** — very nearly all of them — because every role owes a planning document, but they work separately and mostly on paper. **Production puts the most people in one place at one time:** fewer roles are active than in pre-production, but they all work *simultaneously*, with equipment and a location, and each capturing role brings whatever assistance it needs, so this is the stage with the largest head count and the least slack. (The matrix counts *roles*, not people: at production one marker can mean four pairs of hands.) Post-production then contracts to a handful working in sequence, and distribution narrows again to two or three roles — in a school production, usually to one person. A production that staffs every stage identically has misunderstood the process.*

*Only one role runs the whole way. The **producer** is the only role in the matrix with a marker in every column — the only one carrying a responsibility at all five stages — which is why it is the role that a school production most often leaves unassigned and most badly misses. Producing is not a reward for the person with the best ideas. It is the job of knowing what has to happen next, and by when.*

*Leading and contributing are different responsibilities. The camera role *leads* production but *contributes* to pre-production, where it does not choose the shots — the director does — but is answerable for saying whether the shots the director wants can be captured with the equipment available. That is a real responsibility, and discharging it late is one of the most common causes of a failed shoot day.*

Stage by stage: what each role is answerable for.

Development. Few roles, big consequences. The producing function is answerable for whether the idea is *feasible* — can it be made, by these people, with this equipment, in this time. The directing function is answerable for the **intention**: what the narrative is for and what it should make an audience feel or understand. Both are answerable for identifying the specified audience. In a screen crew the writer is usually the third person in the room, because the idea has to become a premise and a treatment before any other role has something to plan from. Development is also where the honest skills audit happens: the experiments that Chapter 4 places in this stage are how a crew finds out who can actually do what, and role allocation should follow that evidence rather than preceding it.

Pre-production. The stage with the most roles active and the clearest rule: **every role's pre-production responsibility is a document.** This is the single most useful thing in the subtopic, because it converts a vague “we planned it” into markable evidence.

Role	Its pre-production deliverable	Who uses it next
Producer	Schedule, call sheet, equipment booking, location agreements	Everyone, on the day
Director	Shot list, storyboard, direction notes on performance and meaning	Camera, sound, cast, editor
Writer	Locked script, treatment or running order	Director, cast, editor
Camera	Equipment list, test footage, a note of what is and is not achievable	Producer (booking), director (revising the shot list)
Sound	Microphone plan, test recordings, a note on location noise	Producer, sound designer
Production designer	Look book, props and costume list, setting notes	Producer (budget), camera (framing)
Sound designer	Sound plan: what will be recorded, sourced or composed, and what the recordist must capture for it	Sound recordist, editor
Editor	Coverage advice — what must be captured for the cut to work	Director, camera
Distribution	Distribution plan: platform, context, format specification, date	Editor (export settings), producer

Note the last two rows. An editor with no pre-production responsibility is an editor who receives material that will not cut together; a distribution plan written after the edit is a plan that discovers the wrong aspect ratio, the wrong length or the wrong file format when it is too late to fix. Both are recurring Unit 2 failures, and both are failures of *role allocation*, not of skill. Where no separate distribution role is held — the usual case in a crew of three — the producing role writes the distribution plan itself. That is still one owner; it is simply the same person wearing a second hat at a different moment.

Production. Responsibilities narrow and sharpen. Each role now executes its own documented plan, and adds two responsibilities that only exist at this stage: **logging** — recording what was actually captured, so that it can be found later — and **flagging** — telling the person who leads this stage, immediately, when reality has departed from the plan. A sound recordist who knows a take was ruined by a passing tram and says nothing has failed a responsibility even though the recording itself was not their fault. There is also a **decision protocol** to agree in advance: on a shoot, the director calls creative decisions and the producer calls decisions about time, safety and money, because a crew that debates every change on the day loses the location.

Post-production. The crew contracts, and one responsibility dominates: the **handover**. The editor can only resolve material that arrives in a usable state, so the production stage's real deliverable is not "the footage" — it is footage plus a shot log, plus a sound report, plus every card backed up to two separate drives under a consistent naming system. Post-production adds responsibilities of its own: the editor leads structure and pace and is answerable for **picture lock**, the decision that shot order and duration will not change again; the sound designer and colourist work *after* lock, because their work would otherwise be thrown away; and the director contributes creative approval without operating the software. Feedback is sought here, and someone must be answerable for *acting* on it rather than merely collecting it.

Distribution. The most under-allocated stage in student productions. Its responsibilities are concrete: exporting to the destination's specification, writing the accompanying material (captions, titles, credits, a description, accessibility text), securing the venue or platform slot, telling the specified audience the product exists, and **gathering the response** — because that response is the raw material of the next production's development stage. Someone has to own this. If nobody does, a finished product sits on a drive.

The handover is where responsibilities actually meet. A useful test, and one worth carrying into your own production:

A responsibility is not discharged when you have finished your part. It is discharged when the next role can use what you gave them.

The seams between stages are where productions fail, so name the handover artefacts and treat them as deliverables in their own right:

Handover	What passes	The failure if it does not
Pre-production → production	Call sheet, shot list, equipment list, location agreement	The crew arrives without a plan, a permission or a lens
Production → post-production	Backed-up media, shot log, sound report, continuity notes	The editor cannot find, sync or trust the material
Post-production → distribution	Locked export to specification, captions, credits, a title	The product will not play on the screen it was made for
Distribution → next development	Audience response, personal reflection, an evaluation	The next production repeats this one's mistakes

Undertaking a role — the key skill. Knowing the role names is knowledge; holding one is a skill. Four practices carry it.

1. **Allocate on evidence, then write it down.** Match roles to demonstrated skills from the development experiments, not to friendship or to who spoke first. Record the allocation in a short **crew list** naming each person, their role, and their responsibility at each stage. An allocation that exists only in conversation is not an allocation.

2. **Work to the plan, and raise objections at the right time.** Part of holding a role is executing a decision you did not make and would not have made. The time to argue about the shot list is pre-production; the time to shoot it is the shoot day. A crew that re-opens settled decisions on location converts a creative disagreement into a scheduling failure.
3. **Communicate in one direction that everyone knows.** Agree who calls what, and how a problem is escalated. “I told someone” is not escalation.
4. **Keep evidence of your own contribution.** Unit 2 Outcome 2 asks *you* to apply the production process, and in a group production your assessor needs to see which part was yours. A dated production log, your own planning documents, and drafts saved under your name are what make an individual contribution visible inside a collaborative product. Do this as you go; it cannot be reconstructed afterwards.

When you work alone, the roles do not disappear — they stack. The study design is explicit that production “may be a collaborative process involving a number of people with specific roles or it may be an individual process”. A solo photographer is producer, director, camera, editor and distributor, and every responsibility listed above still has to be discharged; there is simply nobody else to discharge it. The specific difficulty of solo work is not workload but **collision**: two of your roles want your attention at the same moment, and you cannot direct a nervous interviewee and watch your focus and levels at once. The discipline is to **separate the roles in time** — do the producing work at a producing moment (the night before, in writing), so that on the day you are only wearing one hat at a time. Solo practitioners also lose the free error-checking a crew provides, so they substitute a deliberate one: a checklist read aloud before recording, and a rough version shown to someone outside the production before it is locked.

Responsibilities that are not creative. Some responsibilities attach to a role because of the law or a duty of care rather than because of the product, and a role holder is answerable for them just as much as for the shot list. Three matter at this level.

- **Safety.** A shoot is a workplace. In Victoria, workplace health and safety is governed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), which requires safe systems of work; the producing role customarily owns the **risk assessment** and the decision to stop. A school production carries this duty even though nobody is paid, and the school retains its own duties in relation to its staff and students.
- **Paid crew.** Where people are employed, they are engaged under the national workplace relations system created by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), and much screen, broadcast and post-production work falls under the *Broadcasting, Recorded Entertainment and Cinemas Award 2020*. Hours, breaks and rates are therefore the producing role’s responsibility, not an optional courtesy.
- **Credit and attribution.** Crediting contributors accurately is a responsibility of the producing and editorial roles. Australian creators also hold **moral rights** under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) — the right of attribution, the right against false attribution, and the right of integrity — which sit with the individual creator and are separate from who owns the copyright.

The *constraints* themselves — ethical, legal and community — are the business of Chapter 11. The point here is narrower and examinable: a constraint does not float above a production. It lands on a **named role**, at a **named stage**, as a responsibility somebody has to discharge.

The method for this subtopic. Two routines carry most 10C questions.

1. **Naming a responsibility.** Name the **role**, name the **stage**, name the **deliverable**, and say **who uses it next**. A role named without a stage is half an answer; a stage named without a deliverable is the other half missing.
2. **Analysing a breakdown.** Name the **responsibility** that was not discharged, the **stage** at which it should have been, the **downstream consequence** in a later stage, and the **fix** expressed as a change to role allocation rather than as “we should have tried harder”.

Looking ahead: in Units 3 and 4 the production is an individual one, so every role in the matrix above is held by the same person — which makes the habit of separating the roles in time a skill worth building now.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain the difference between a role and a responsibility in the media production process. Refer to one role at two different stages. (4 marks)

“Explain” wants a chain, not two dictionary entries. The table builds the response a sentence at a time.

Working	Comment
A role is the named position a person holds in a production and the area of the product they are answerable for; it stands for the whole production.	Define the first term, and note that a role does not change from stage to stage.
A responsibility is a specific task or decision that role must deliver at a particular stage, together with being answerable for it — so one role carries a different set of responsibilities in each stage it is active in.	Define the second term <i>against</i> the first. The words “at a particular stage” are what the question is testing.
The sound recordist on a short documentary holds one role across the production, but in pre-production their responsibility is planning: testing the location for noise, specifying which microphones are needed and telling the producer what must be booked.	Take one role and pin its first responsibility to a named stage, with a concrete deliverable.
At the production stage the same role’s responsibilities are entirely different: capturing usable dialogue, monitoring levels on headphones as each take is recorded, keeping a sound report, and capturing room tone before the location is released.	The same role, a different stage, different responsibilities — this contrast is where the marks are.
The role is therefore the continuing position, while the responsibilities are what that position owes at each point in the process; naming the role without naming the stage does not say what the person was actually answerable for.	Close by answering the question asked, rather than restating the definitions.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Describe the responsibilities of the producer role during the pre-production stage of a short narrative film. (4 marks)

“Describe” asks for an account of the features. This example uses Wraycombe Pictures, a small fictional independent screen company, to keep the description concrete.

Working	Comment
Wraycombe Pictures is making a twelve-minute narrative film, and in pre-production the producer’s role is to turn the director’s intention into something that can actually be shot.	Open with what the role is <i>for</i> at this stage. A describe answer still needs a controlling idea.
The producer builds the schedule — which scenes are shot on which days, in what order, and how long each set-up is allowed — and issues a call sheet telling every crew member and cast member where to be and when.	Name deliverables, not activities. “Organises things” earns nothing.
They are responsible for resources : booking the camera, sound and lighting equipment against the lists supplied by those roles, securing the locations in writing, and keeping the spend inside the available budget.	Show the producer working <i>from other roles’ documents</i> — this is what coordination means.
They own the production’s risk assessment , since a shoot is a workplace under the <i>Occupational Health and</i>	One non-creative responsibility, correctly attached to the role that carries it.

Safety Act 2004 (Vic), and they hold the authority to stop or move a set-up that is not safe.

They also write the **distribution plan** at this stage — which screening or platform the film is for, in what format and by what date — because that decision determines what has to be captured and how the edit must be exported.

End on the responsibility students most often place at the wrong stage. Distribution is planned in pre-production.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Explain how roles and responsibilities change between the production stage and the post-production stage of a media production. (5 marks)

The change is not simply that different people are busy; it is a change in what the production is *for*, and the responsibilities follow it. Production exists to capture material, so it is the most simultaneous stage of the process and the one with the most people on the floor: camera, sound, design, direction and performance all operate at once, in one place, against the clock. Each role's responsibility there is to execute its own documented plan, to **log** what was actually captured, and to **flag** immediately when reality departs from the plan — the crew is large, so the coordinating responsibility is heavy and the decision protocol matters, with the director calling creative decisions and the producer calling time and safety.

Post-production exists to refine and resolve that material, and the crew contracts sharply to a handful: an editor and a sound designer doing the work, a director giving creative approval, a producer holding the schedule, and the camera role available for advice. Responsibilities become sequential rather than simultaneous: the editor leads structure and pace and is answerable for **picture lock**, after which the sound designer and colourist do work that would have been wasted if the cut were still moving. The roles that led production either drop out or drop back to contributing — the camera operator may advise on grading intent, but does not choose the shots that survive.

Between the two sits the responsibility that connects them: the **handover**. Production's real deliverable is not the footage but the footage plus a shot log, a sound report and a backed-up, consistently named set of files, because a responsibility is discharged only when the next role can use what it received. *Takeaway*: production is many roles working at once to capture; post-production is few roles working in order to resolve, and the handover is what makes the second possible.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Explain how a media practitioner working alone undertakes the roles and responsibilities of a production. (5 marks)

Working alone does not remove the roles; it stacks them. The study design allows production to be “a collaborative process involving a number of people with specific roles or ... an individual process”, and in the individual case every responsibility set out above still has to be discharged — the producing work of scheduling and permissions, the directing work of holding the intention, the capturing work, the resolving work and the delivering work. What changes is that they all have one owner, so nothing is escalated to anybody and nothing is checked by anybody.

The real difficulty is **collision**, not volume. Two of the practitioner's roles want the same moment: a solo interviewer cannot give an anxious subject their full attention while also watching audio levels and checking focus, and the interview will suffer in whichever role loses. The working solution is to **separate the roles in time**. The producing work is done the night before, in writing — the equipment checked, the schedule fixed, the permission confirmed — so that on the day the practitioner is only holding one role. Technology can be enlisted to hold a role too: a recorder set to a safety track carries part of the monitoring responsibility that a second person would otherwise carry.

The solo practitioner also has to replace what a crew supplies for free, which is error-checking and disagreement. That means a deliberate substitute: a checklist read aloud before recording begins, and a rough version shown to someone outside the production before picture lock, so that at least one judgement about the product is not made by the person who made it. *Takeaway*: in an individual production the roles are unchanged and the responsibilities are undiminished — they are simply separated in time rather than shared between people.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

- Q1.** Roles and responsibilities are related but distinct ideas. (3 marks) (a) Define “role” as it applies to the media production process. (b) Define “responsibility” as it applies to the media production process. (c) State why a responsibility should have only one owner.
- Q2.** Classify each responsibility below by naming the stage of the media production process at which it falls. (6 marks) (i) Issuing the call sheet for a shoot day. (ii) Keeping a sound report while recording interviews. (iii) Exporting the finished sequence to the screening venue’s file specification. (iv) Running an experiment to find out whether the crew can record clean dialogue outdoors. (v) Deciding picture lock. (vi) Writing the equipment list the producer will book from.
- Q3.** Roles are named differently in different media forms. (3 marks) (a) Name two roles you would expect in a **print** production. (b) Name two roles you would expect in an **audio** production. (c) State one responsibility for one of the roles you named in part (a).
- Q4.** A responsibility is discharged only when the next role can use what it received. (4 marks) (a) List three things that should pass from the production stage to the post-production stage of a screen production. (b) State one consequence for the editor if the shot log is not passed on.
- Q5.** The producer is the only role with a responsibility at all five stages. (3 marks) (a) State one producing responsibility at development. (b) State one producing responsibility at pre-production. (c) State one producing responsibility at distribution.
- Q6.** Refer to a media narrative production you have worked on this year. (4 marks) (a) Name the media form and the role you held. (b) State one responsibility you held during pre-production, and the document it produced. (c) State one responsibility you held during production or post-production. (d) State one piece of evidence that shows your individual contribution to the production.

Un scaffolded

- Q7.** Outline the difference between a role that **leads** at a stage of the media production process and a role that **contributes** at that stage. (2 marks)
- Q8.** Outline two responsibilities that a role holder carries at the distribution stage of a media production. (2 marks)
- Q9.** Describe the responsibilities of the editor role at the pre-production and post-production stages of a narrative production. (3 marks)
- Q10.** Describe the handover that takes place between pre-production and production, and explain what makes it complete. (3 marks)
- Q11.** (Stimulus.) A Year 11 group submitted the crew list below with their production plan.
- Stimulus.** Crew list — “The Turnstile”, a five-minute narrative film. Ari — director and camera. Nadia — camera and sound. Ruth — everything else. All three of us will edit together. We will work out distribution once the film is finished.
- Describe two problems with the way roles and responsibilities have been allocated here. (4 marks)
- Q12.** Explain why the number of people actively involved in a production is not constant across the five stages of the media production process. (4 marks)
- Q13.** Explain how a crew of three should decide who holds which role, and why that decision belongs at the end of development rather than at the start of production. (4 marks)
- Q14.** (Stimulus.) Read the production log entry below.

Stimulus. *Bantwick Sound* — “Six O’Clock Swim”, episode 2. The field recordist recorded both interviews on the same afternoon and delivered the files that evening. No sound report was written and the files were named take1 through take9. Nobody had been given the job of checking the recordings before the interviewees left. In the edit two weeks later, the sound editor found that the second interviewee’s radio microphone had been rubbing on a jacket for most of the recording, and could not tell from the file names which take was which.

Explain how a breakdown in roles and responsibilities at one stage affected a later stage of this production. (5 marks)

Q15. Explain three responsibilities carried by the producing role that are not creative decisions, and why each attaches to that role. (5 marks)

Q16. Discuss whether a media narrative is better made by a crew holding specialised roles or by one person holding every role. (5 marks)

Q17. (Stimulus.) Read the production brief below.

Stimulus. Ardlow Neighbourhood House has asked a Year 11 media class for a four-minute narrative video telling the story of one family who use its Saturday food co-op. It will be shown at the Neighbourhood House annual meeting on a projector, and afterwards on the organisation’s website with captions. The family have agreed to appear but do not want their address shown. The class has three students, four weeks, one camera, one radio microphone and no budget.

Explain how you would allocate roles and responsibilities across pre-production, production and post-production for this brief. (6 marks)

Q18. (Stimulus.) Read the account of a print production below.

Stimulus. Coldacre Bindery, a four-person zine collective, produced a 32-page illustrated narrative zine. In development, two members researched existing zines and tested three paper stocks; the other two were not involved. In pre-production the editor locked a page plan and commissioned six illustrations with dated deadlines, the designer built a grid and a type specification, and the print liaison booked a printer, which fixed the page count at a multiple of four and set a file-delivery date. During production the illustrations arrived, but one illustrator delivered at low resolution because nobody had told them the print specification. The designer discovered this during layout, and the illustration was re-supplied two days before the printer’s deadline. At the launch, one member had been asked to gather feedback but no one had been made responsible for bringing the printed copies to the venue.

Analyse how roles and responsibilities were undertaken across the stages of this production. (8 marks)

Q19. (Extended response.) Analyse the roles and responsibilities you undertook across the stages of a media narrative production you completed this year. (10 marks)

Your response should:

- identify the media form, the specified audience and the role you held
- refer to specific responsibilities you held at pre-production, production and post-production
- refer to at least one handover you gave to, or received from, another role
- refer to one responsibility that was not discharged, and what it cost a later stage

Media production: _____

Answers

Q1. (a) The named position a person holds in a production, and the area of the product they are answerable for; it stands across the whole production. (b) A specific task or decision a role must deliver at a particular stage, together with being answerable for it. (c) Because a responsibility owned by two people is done by neither, and one owned by nobody is discovered missing too late. **Q2.** (i) Pre-production; (ii) production; (iii) distribution; (iv) development; (v) post-production; (vi) pre-production. One mark per correct classification. **Q3.** (a) Any two of: editor, writer or journalist, photographer or illustrator, sub-editor, designer or layout artist, print liaison. (b) Any two of: producer, host or presenter, story or script editor, field recordist, sound editor, mix engineer. (c) One stage-specific responsibility, e.g. the designer builds the page grid and type specification in pre-production. One mark for each pair correctly named, one for the responsibility. **Q4.** (a) Any three of: backed-up media files, a shot log, a sound report, continuity notes, a consistent file-naming system. (b) The editor cannot find the material efficiently, cannot tell good takes from unusable ones, and loses edit time re-viewing everything — or cuts with the wrong take. **Q5.** (a) Testing feasibility — whether the idea can be made by these people, with this equipment, in this time. (b) Building the schedule and call sheet, booking equipment, securing locations, owning the risk assessment, writing the distribution plan (any one). (c) Delivering to the platform or venue, telling the specified audience it exists, gathering the audience response (any one). **Q6.** (a)–(d) Student's own production: form and role named; one pre-production responsibility with its document (shot list, equipment list, page plan, call sheet); one production or post-production responsibility; one item of individual evidence (dated production log, a planning document authored by the student, a draft saved under their name). **Q7.** *Outline (2).* A role that **leads** owns the decision and the deliverable at that stage and is answerable for it. A role that **contributes** performs defined work at that stage under another role's lead, without owning the decision — e.g. at production the camera role leads while the editor only contributes by reviewing whether the coverage will cut. **Q8.** *Outline (2).* Any two of: exporting to the destination's specification; writing captions, credits, titles or a description; securing the venue or platform slot; informing the specified audience; gathering the audience response for the next production. **Q9.** *Describe (3).* **Pre-production** — the editor contributes rather than leads, advising on **coverage**: what must be captured for the intended cut to work, which feeds the director's shot list and the camera role's equipment list. **Post-production** — the editor leads: assembling the material, finding structure and pace, resolving the narrative against the intention and specified audience, and is answerable for **picture lock**, after which sound and colour work can proceed. **Q10.** *Describe (3).* What passes: call sheet, shot list or running order, equipment list, location agreement, permissions. It is complete when the crew can execute the shoot day from those documents without further instruction — a responsibility is discharged only when the next role can use what it received. **Q11.** *Describe (4).* Two problems, each named and explained: roles doubled at the same stage (Ari is director and camera simultaneously; Nadia is camera and sound simultaneously) so the roles collide during production; “everything else” is not an allocation and leaves producing responsibilities unowned; “all three of us will edit” gives post-production no accountable lead; distribution is deferred to after the edit, so format, venue and audience are unplanned. **Q12.** *Explain (4).* Development is two or three roles because the work is exploratory; pre-production activates the most roles because each must produce a planning document, though they work separately and on paper; production has fewer roles active but the most people present at once, because people, equipment and a location must coincide and each capturing role brings a team; post-production contracts to a handful because resolving is sequential; distribution narrows to two or three roles, often one person. The stage's purpose sets both the number of roles and the head count. **Q13.** *Explain (4).* Allocate on the evidence of development experiments (demonstrated skill), against the five role functions, then record it in a crew list. It belongs at the end of development because each role's pre-production responsibility is a document — an unallocated role produces no document, and production then runs on a plan with a hole in it. **Q14.** *Explain (5).* The unowned check-before-release responsibility at production; the missing sound report and unusable file naming at handover; downstream consequence at post-production — unusable audio discovered two weeks late, no ability to identify takes, no possibility of re-record; fix expressed as an allocation change. **Q15.** *Explain (5).* Three of: safety and the risk assessment (*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)); employment conditions where crew are paid (*Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), the *Broadcasting, Recorded Entertainment and Cinemas Award 2020*); accurate credit and attribution (moral rights under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth)); permissions and location agreements. Each attaches to producing because that function owns resources, coordination and delivery. **Q16.** *Discuss (5).* Specialised crew: depth of skill, simultaneous work, error-checking, but coordination cost and handover risk. Solo: total control and no handover loss, but role collision, no error-checking, and a workload ceiling. Reach a position, with the deciding factor named. **Q17.** *Explain (6).* Three students, five role functions, mapped stage by stage with the brief's constraints driving the allocation — captions and website plus projector are a distribution responsibility owned from pre-production; the address restriction is a producing and directing responsibility at pre-production and production; one camera and one microphone constrain who can capture what. **Q18.** *Analyse (8).* Must include: **development** — two

members were excluded from the research and the stock test, so half the collective entered pre-production without the evidence, and paper stock is a design decision taken without the designer or the illustrators; **pre-production** — the stage that worked, because every active role produced a document another role used, and the printer’s booking is the clearest interrelation, constraining the page plan behind it and the layout schedule ahead of it; **production** — the low-resolution illustration is a **handover** failure, not an illustrator’s failure, because the commission carried a deadline but not the print specification that already existed inside the production; **post-production** — the cost surfaces two stages downstream and consumes the whole schedule buffer, leaving two days against a page count the printer had fixed; **distribution** — feedback was allocated but delivery of the copies to the launch was not, and that one unowned task defeats every responsibility discharged upstream. A response must reach the pattern — strong allocation in the middle of the process, unowned responsibilities at both ends — not just list the stages. See Fully-worked solutions for a full model plus common errors. **Q19.** See Fully-worked solutions for a full model plus band descriptors and common errors.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) A **role** is the named position a person holds within a production and the area of the product for which they are answerable — producer, editor, sound recordist. It stands across the whole production. (b) A **responsibility** is a specific task or decision that role must deliver at a particular stage, together with being answerable for having delivered it. (c) Because **accountability** cannot be shared: a responsibility owned by two people is quietly assumed by each to be the other’s, and one owned by nobody is only noticed when the thing it was meant to produce is found to be missing. *Marker’s note:* a definition of “responsibility” that omits the words “at a stage” is the commonest way to lose this mark.

Q2. (i) **Pre-production** — the call sheet is a planning document issued before the shoot. (ii) **Production** — a sound report is written while material is captured. (iii) **Distribution** — exporting to the destination’s specification is a delivery responsibility. (iv) **Development** — experiments that test what the crew can do belong to the exploratory stage. (v) **Post-production** — picture lock is the editor’s decision that shot order and duration will not change again. (vi) **Pre-production** — the equipment list is a planning deliverable the producer books from. *Common errors:* putting (iii) in post-production. The export *file* is made in post-production, but the responsibility of exporting to a venue’s or platform’s specification is a distribution responsibility, and it fails when nobody owns it.

Q3. (a) Any two of: **editor, writer or journalist, photographer or illustrator, sub-editor, designer or layout artist, print liaison.** (b) Any two of: **producer, host or presenter, story or script editor, field recordist, sound editor, mix engineer.** (c) For example, the **designer** is responsible in pre-production for building the page grid and type specification that every later page is laid out on; or the **sub-editor** is responsible during production for checking accuracy and house style before copy goes to layout. *Marker’s note:* the role names differ by form, but the five role functions — producing, directing, capturing, resolving, delivering — are the same everywhere, and naming the function a role performs is never wrong.

Q4. (a) Any three of: **backed-up media files** (every card copied to two separate drives), a **shot log** recording what was captured and which takes were good, a **sound report, continuity notes**, and a **consistent file-naming system.** (b) Without the shot log the editor cannot tell which takes were marked good or what was actually captured, so they must view everything before they can begin, lose edit time they had scheduled for cutting, and risk building the sequence on a take the crew had already rejected. *Common errors:* answering (a) with “the footage”. The footage is the material; the handover is the material **plus** what makes it usable.

Q5. (a) **Development** — the producing role tests **feasibility**: whether this idea can be made by these people, with this equipment, in the time available, and identifies the specified audience alongside the directing role. (b) **Pre-production** — building the schedule and issuing the call sheet; booking equipment against the lists supplied by the camera and sound roles; securing locations in writing; owning the risk assessment; and writing the distribution plan. (c) **Distribution** — delivering the product to the planned venue or platform in the planned context, telling the specified audience it exists, and gathering the audience response that feeds the next production’s development. *Marker’s note:* the producer is the only role in the matrix with a marker in all five columns; that is the point of the question, and saying so is worth stating explicitly.

Q6. (a)–(d) Model response (student production: a four-minute narrative video): **(a)** The media form was **moving image**; I held the **producer** role. **(b)** In pre-production I was responsible for the schedule and the call sheet: I produced a one-page call sheet naming the location, the call time, the shooting order and who was bringing which piece of equipment. **(c)** During production I was responsible for time and safety — keeping the day to the schedule and moving one set-up off a driveway after deciding it was not safe to shoot there. **(d)** My individual contribution is evidenced by my dated production log and the call sheet and schedule, both saved under my name and revised twice with the changes visible. *Marker’s note:* part (d) is not a formality. In a group production, evidence of your own contribution is what allows your work to be assessed separately from your crew’s, and it cannot be reconstructed after the fact.

Q7. “Outline” asks for the key distinction, briefly. A role that **leads** at a stage owns the decision and the deliverable produced there, and is the person answerable if it is not produced — the editor leads post-production and owns picture lock. A role that **contributes** at a stage does defined work under another role’s lead without owning the decision: the camera operator contributes to post-production by advising on grading intent, but does not choose which shots survive the cut. The same role can lead at one stage and contribute at another, which is why an answer has to name the stage before it can say what the person was answerable for. *Marker’s note:* two marks need both terms characterised; “leads means they are in charge” without the idea of an owned **deliverable** takes only one.

Q8. “Outline” asks for the key features, briefly. Two of: **exporting the product to the destination’s specification** — the file format, resolution, aspect ratio and duration the venue or platform requires; **preparing the accompanying material** — captions, credits, titles, a description and accessibility text; **securing the slot** — the screening venue, publication date or platform listing; **telling the specified audience the product exists**; and **gathering the audience response**, which becomes the raw material of the next production’s development stage. *Common errors:* treating distribution as “uploading it”. Uploading is one task inside a stage that has an owner, a specification and a feedback responsibility.

Q9. “Describe” asks for an account across two named stages. At **pre-production** the editor **contributes** rather than leads, and the responsibility is easily overlooked: advising on **coverage** — what has to be captured for the intended cut to work. An editor who says before the shoot that a scene will need a cutaway, or that two shots at the same size will not cut together, changes the director’s shot list and the camera role’s equipment list, and prevents a problem that is otherwise only discovered when the material can no longer be re-captured.

At **post-production** the editor **leads**. They assemble the captured material, find the structure and pace of the narrative, and resolve it against the intention and the specified audience, working from the shot log handed over at the end of production. The stage’s defining responsibility is **picture lock** — the decision that shot order and duration will not change again — because the sound designer and colourist cannot begin work that would survive until it is made. *Marker’s note:* three marks want the *contrast*: the editor contributes at one stage and leads at the other, and the coverage advice given in pre-production is what makes the cut possible later. Answers that describe only editing software score at the bottom.

Q10. “Describe” asks for an account; the second half asks what completeness means. The handover from **pre-production to production** passes the documents the shoot day runs on: the **call sheet** (who is where, when), the **shot list or running order**, the **equipment list** confirming what has been booked, and the **location agreement or permission** confirming the crew may be there. It is complete when the crew could execute the shoot day from those documents without further explanation — that is the general test: a responsibility is discharged not when you have finished your part of the work, but when the **next role can use what you gave them**. A shot list that exists only in the director’s head has not been handed over, however clear it is to the director. *Common errors:* listing the documents without stating the completeness test, which is the mark the question is really buying.

Q11. “Describe” asks for an account of two faults. First, roles are doubled at the same stage, so they collide during production. Ari is both director and camera, and Nadia both camera and sound. These are all *capturing* and *directing* functions that operate simultaneously on a shoot: a director watching a performance cannot at the same time watch focus and framing, and an operator holding a camera cannot monitor audio levels on headphones. The allocation guarantees that at every moment of the shoot at least one responsibility is unattended. Doubling roles is not itself the problem — a small crew must — but the doubling has to pair roles that are *active at different times*, such as producer and editor, rather than two roles that peak in the same minute. **Second, producing and distribution are effectively unallocated.** “Everything else” is not a role allocation: no one is named for the schedule, the call sheet, the equipment booking, the permissions or the risk assessment, and “all three of us will edit together” leaves post-

production with no accountable lead, so no one owns picture lock. Deferring distribution until “once the film is finished” removes it from pre-production altogether, so the group will not know the screening format, venue or audience while they still have time to shoot for it. *Marker’s note:* four marks want two problems **named and explained by reference to the process** — which stage the responsibility belonged to and what it will cost — rather than a general observation that the group is small.

Q12. “*Explain*” asks *how and why*. The crew size follows the *purpose* of the stage. **Development** is exploratory — researching products, identifying the audience, testing skills — and that work is done by two or three roles, the producing and directing functions and whoever is writing, because the production has nothing yet for other roles to work on. **Pre-production** activates the most roles of any stage, because each role’s responsibility here is to produce a planning document: a shot list, an equipment list, a microphone plan, a look book, a distribution plan. Those roles work separately and on paper, though, so activity is not the same as crowding. **Production** activates fewer roles than pre-production but puts the most people in one place at one time, because it is the only stage in which people, equipment and a location must exist together, every capturing role is working at once, and each of those roles brings whatever assistance it needs. **Post-production** contracts sharply to a handful, because resolving is sequential rather than simultaneous — the editor must reach picture lock before the sound designer and colourist can work without wasting it — so a large crew there would be idle. **Distribution** narrows to two or three roles, and in a school production usually to one, since delivery, accompanying material and feedback are coordination work rather than craft work. *Common errors:* explaining the pattern as “some stages take longer”. The driver is what the stage is *for*, and whether its work is simultaneous or sequential.

Q13. “*Explain*” asks *for a method and a justification of its timing*. A crew of three should first stop thinking in job titles and think in the five **role functions** — producing, directing, capturing, resolving and delivering — because three people cannot fill nine positions but can cover five functions. They should then allocate on **evidence**: the experiments run during development show who can actually hold focus, who can get a clean recording and who can cut a sequence, and that evidence should decide the allocation rather than friendship, confidence or who spoke first. Each person should hold functions that peak at *different* moments, so producing pairs sensibly with editing and badly with camera. The allocation must then be **written down** in a crew list naming each person, their role and their responsibility at each stage — an allocation that exists only in conversation is not an allocation.

This decision belongs at the **end of development** because of what pre-production is. Every role’s pre-production responsibility is a document, and a role nobody holds produces no document. If the crew enters pre-production unallocated, there is no equipment list to book from, no microphone plan, no distribution plan — and the shoot day then runs on a plan with holes in it, at the one point in the process where a hole costs a location. *Marker’s note:* four marks want both halves: the method (functions, evidence, written record) **and** the reason the timing matters.

Q14. “*Explain*” asks *for a causal chain from an unowned responsibility to a downstream consequence*. The breakdown at **production** was not a technical failure but an **unallocated responsibility**: the log states that nobody had been given the job of checking the recordings before the interviewees left. Monitoring what is being captured, while it can still be re-captured, is the defining production-stage responsibility of the sound role, and here it had no owner. Two further responsibilities of that role were also not discharged: no **sound report** was written, and the files were named take1 to take9 rather than under a system that identifies the interviewee, the location and whether the take was usable.

The consequences all land in **post-production**, two weeks later. The rubbing radio microphone — exactly the fault that monitoring on headphones is designed to catch in the first minute — is discovered when nothing can be done about it, because the interviewee has long gone and the recording cannot be repeated. The missing sound report means the sound editor has no record of which takes were clean, and the meaningless file names mean they cannot even tell which recording is which without listening to all nine in full. Time budgeted for the edit is therefore spent on identification, and the episode must be built from compromised audio. This is what “interrelated” means at the level of people: a responsibility skipped in one stage does not stay in that stage.

The fix is an **allocation** change, not an exhortation. One named person holds the responsibility of listening back to each recording on headphones before the contributor leaves, with the authority to ask for a re-record; the same role delivers a sound report and files named to a system agreed in pre-production. *Marker’s note:* five marks reward the chain — unowned responsibility, the stage it belonged to, the specific downstream cost, and a fix expressed as an allocation. “They should have been more careful” is not a fix.

Q15. “*Explain*” asks for three responsibilities and the reason each attaches to the producing role. **Safety.** A shoot is a workplace, and in Victoria workplace health and safety is governed by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), which requires safe systems of work. The producing role owns the **risk assessment** and holds the authority to move or stop a set-up, because that role already controls the schedule, the location and the money — the three things a safety decision changes. A school production carries this duty even where nobody is paid.

Employment conditions. Where crew are paid, they are engaged under the national workplace relations system created by the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), and much screen, broadcast and post-production work falls under the *Broadcasting, Recorded Entertainment and Cinemas Award 2020*, which sets minimum rates, hours, breaks and penalties. This attaches to producing because it is the same decision as the schedule: a sixth consecutive shooting day or a night call is a scheduling choice with a cost attached, and only the role that builds the schedule can make it.

Credit and permissions. Crediting contributors accurately, and holding the location agreements and consents that allow the material to be used, sit with producing because that role is answerable for delivery. Australian creators also hold **moral rights** under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) — the rights of attribution, against false attribution, and of integrity — which belong to the individual creator regardless of who owns the copyright, so a credit list is a legal responsibility and not only a courtesy. *Marker’s note:* the constraints themselves are Chapter 11’s subject; the mark here is for showing that each one lands on a **named role at a named stage** rather than hovering over the production in general.

Q16. “*Discuss*” asks for a developed position, not a list. A **specialised crew** allows depth of skill, and — more importantly for the process — allows several roles to work **simultaneously** during production, which is the only way a demanding shoot day fits into the time a location is available. A crew also supplies free error-checking: the sound recordist hears the fault the director is too absorbed to notice. Against this, a crew imports **coordination cost**, since every handover is a place where a responsibility can be assumed by two people or by none — and the failures in most student productions are handover failures rather than craft failures. The **individual** loses nothing in translation and has no handovers to fail, but pays structurally: roles **collide**, so a solo practitioner cannot direct a performance and monitor levels in the same moment, nothing is checked by anybody, and there is a workload ceiling no planning removes.

The deciding factor is the **shape of the product**. Where the work is genuinely simultaneous — dialogue recorded on location, a multi-camera event, a shoot with performers — a specialised crew is better, because one person cannot do that work in sequence. Where the production can be **separated in time** — a photographic series, an edited audio essay, a designed zine — an individual can hold every role well, provided they deliberately replace the error-checking a crew would have supplied. The question is therefore answered by asking whether the responsibilities peak at the same moment: if they do, share them; if they do not, stacking them is not a compromise. *Marker’s note:* “discuss” requires a **position** with a stated deciding factor. Listing three advantages and three disadvantages and stopping sits in the middle band.

Q17. “*Explain*” asks for an allocation, stage by stage, driven by this brief. *Model response.* The brief sets four conditions that must drive the allocation: three people and five role functions; two distribution destinations with different requirements (a projector and a captioned website); a family whose address must not be shown; and one camera, one microphone, four weeks and no budget.

Pre-production. I would allocate by function rather than by title. **Student A — producing and distribution:** builds the four-week schedule, issues a call sheet for each shoot day, holds the consent conversation with the family, writes down the address restriction as a location rule the crew must follow, and — critically at this stage, not later — writes the distribution plan specifying the projector’s aspect ratio and the website’s captioning requirement, because captions have to be budgeted in time before the edit begins. **Student B — directing and writing:** works with the family to shape the narrative, produces the shot list and interview questions, and marks on the shot list which set-ups are restricted by the address rule. **Student C — capturing and resolving:** produces the equipment list, tests the single radio microphone in the co-op space and reports back whether usable dialogue can be captured there, and advises the director on what coverage the edit will need given that there is only one camera.

Production. With one camera and one microphone, capture is sequential and the allocation must respect that. **Student C** operates the camera. **Student B** directs, watches the performances and calls when a set-up is complete. **Student A** monitors audio on headphones, keeps the shot log, watches the clock, and enforces the address rule on location — checking each frame for the street number and the letterbox before the take, which is a producing responsibility

because it protects a commitment made to a contributor. Anything the log records as questionable is re-shot while the family is still present.

Post-production. The crew contracts. **Student C** leads the edit and is answerable for picture lock. **Student B** contributes creative approval, checking the cut against the intention agreed with the family. **Student A** takes the two deliverables the distribution plan specified — a projector export at the venue's ratio, and a web version with accurate captions — and is answerable for screening the file on the actual projector before the annual meeting, not on a laptop. *Marker's note:* six marks split across three stages, so each must carry real allocation detail; the strongest responses let the brief's own conditions (one microphone, two destinations, the address restriction) visibly decide who does what.

Q18. Command term — analyse: break the production into its roles and stages and show how the responsibilities acted on one another, with specific evidence from the stimulus.

Model response (8 marks). The Coldacre Bindery zine shows roles and responsibilities working well at the centre of the process and failing at both ends, and the pattern is instructive: where a responsibility had a named owner it was discharged, and where it did not, the failure surfaced one or two stages later.

Development — a role gap that is easy to miss. Two members researched existing zines and tested three paper stocks; the other two were not involved. Development is the stage where a crew finds out what it can do and what the product will be, so the two absent members entered pre-production without the evidence the other two were working from. The stock test in particular is a *design* decision — paper stock is a media code, and it determines how illustrations reproduce — yet the designer and the illustrating members took no part in it. The consequence does not appear immediately, which is what makes it worth naming.

Pre-production — the stage that worked, and why. Every active role produced a document: the editor locked a page plan, the designer built a grid and type specification, and the print liaison booked the printer. Each of those is a deliverable another role uses, which is what makes pre-production allocation effective. The printer booking is the clearest **interrelation** in the account: it fixed the page count at a multiple of four and set a file-delivery date, so one role's decision now constrains the editor's page plan behind it and the designer's layout schedule ahead of it. Commissioning six illustrations with **dated deadlines** was likewise a real allocation — a responsibility with an owner and a date, rather than an intention.

Production — the handover that was never specified. One illustrator delivered at low resolution because nobody had told them the print specification. This is not an illustrator's failure; it is a **handover failure**, and it belongs to whoever commissioned the work. A commission is complete only when the person receiving it can produce something the next role can use, and here the brief carried a deadline but not the specification that the printer's booking had already fixed. The information existed inside the production; it simply had no route from the print liaison to the illustrators. Had the illustrating members taken part in the development stock test, they would have known why resolution mattered.

Post-production — the cost lands downstream. The designer discovered the problem during layout, which is the zine's post-production, and the illustration was re-supplied two days before the printer's deadline. The production absorbed the failure, but only by consuming its entire schedule buffer: an unowned responsibility at pre-production became a two-day margin at the deadline, and had the illustrator been unavailable the fixed page count would have left no acceptable option. This is the process being **iterative** at the level of people — post-production reaching back and demanding new material from a stage that appeared closed.

Distribution — one responsibility allocated, one not. A member was made responsible for gathering feedback, which is a genuine distribution responsibility and the one that feeds the next production's development. But nobody was made responsible for bringing the printed copies to the venue, and that single unallocated task defeats every other responsibility discharged upstream: a zine that is not present at its own launch has not been distributed at all, whatever its page plan, grid or paper stock. It is the clearest illustration in the account that a responsibility with no owner is not a small risk — it is the one that stops the product reaching its audience.

Analysed as a whole, this production allocated well in the middle of the process and poorly at its edges. The lesson it demonstrates is that the strength of a role allocation is not the quality of the people in the roles but the **completeness** of the map: every stage, including development and distribution, and every handover carrying not just the work but the specification the next role needs. *Common errors:* retelling the stimulus in order with a stage name attached to each

sentence. The marks are for the **relationships** — especially the printer’s page count reaching in both directions, the missing specification surfacing two stages later, and the unowned delivery task at the launch.

Q19. Command term — analyse: break your own production into its roles and responsibilities and show how they acted on one another across the stages, with specific decisions and documents as evidence.

Media production: a five-minute narrative podcast episode

Model response (10 marks) (student production: a five-minute narrative podcast episode).

My production was a five-minute narrative podcast episode in the **audio** form, made for a specified audience of Year 9 and 10 students at my school who listen to short audio on their phones on the bus. I held the **producer** role in a crew of three, with one classmate directing and writing and the other holding the capturing and resolving functions.

Development and the allocation itself. My first responsibility was not a document but a decision: who should hold which role. We allocated at the end of development, on the evidence of our experiments rather than on preference. One of us had produced a clean test recording in a corridor while the rest of us had not, so that person took the capturing function; the classmate whose treatment survived the group’s questioning took directing. I took producing because nobody else wanted the schedule, which is a poor reason to allocate a role and a good illustration of why allocation should follow demonstrated skill. I wrote the allocation into a one-page crew list naming each of us, our role, and our responsibility at each stage — the first document of the production.

Pre-production. My responsibilities here were resources, time and distribution. I built a three-week schedule working backwards from the publication date; issued a call sheet for each of the two recording sessions naming the room, the time and who was bringing what; booked the recorder and the two lapel microphones from the media storeroom against the equipment list our capturing role supplied; and secured written permission from the two interviewees and from the teacher whose classroom we used at lunchtime. I also wrote the **distribution plan**, and this was the pre-production decision that shaped the most: the episode would be published to the school intranet with a written transcript, and that requirement meant time for transcription had to be scheduled before the edit, not discovered after it. Our directing role produced a running order and interview questions; our capturing role produced the equipment list and a note, after testing, that the classroom’s air conditioning would be audible on lapel microphones and that we should record with it switched off.

Production. My responsibilities changed completely. I no longer planned anything; I held time, and I held the log. I kept the sessions to the call sheet, wrote a running sheet noting which take of each answer we would use and why, and enforced the one rule our own technical test had produced — the air conditioning stayed off, which meant we could only record in a twenty-minute window before the room became uncomfortable. That constraint came from a responsibility discharged properly at pre-production, and it saved the recordings.

The handover I gave. At the end of the second session I copied every file to two drives and renamed them to a system agreed in pre-production — interviewee, topic, take number, and “GOOD” on the takes the running sheet marked — then passed the drive, the running sheet and the permissions to our resolving role. This was the moment I understood what “discharged” means: my part was not finished when the recording stopped, but when the person editing could find and trust what I had given them. They began cutting the same afternoon rather than spending a session identifying files.

The responsibility I did not discharge, and what it cost. I had written “publish with transcript” in the distribution plan but had never allocated the transcript to anyone, and I had not put it on the schedule as a task with an owner and a date. It surfaced three days before publication, when our resolving role reached the export and asked who was writing it. All three of us then spent an evening transcribing five minutes of audio, which pushed the final mix to the night before release and meant the mix was never checked on phone speakers — the exact listening context our specified audience uses. The cost was not the transcript; it was the check we lost at the end of the queue. The fix is an allocation one: every item in a distribution plan needs a named owner and a date on the schedule at the moment it is written, or it is a wish rather than a responsibility.

Evaluation. Across the production the responsibilities that had a named owner and a document were discharged, and the one that had neither was the one that failed — which is the strongest evidence I have that roles and responsibilities are a structural part of the process rather than an administrative layer on top of it. If I held the producing role again I

would treat the distribution plan the same way I treated the shoot: as a call sheet, with names and times against every line.

Band descriptors (out of 10):

- **High (8–10):** the role held is named and its responsibilities analysed **stage by stage** with specific documents and decisions as evidence; at least one handover analysed against the test that a responsibility is discharged only when the next role can use what it received; a genuine failure named, traced to its downstream cost and fixed as an allocation change; media form and specified audience identified and used throughout; precise media language.
- **Mid (5–7):** stages covered and the role clear, but one stage thin; responsibilities described as activities rather than as deliverables with owners; the handover mentioned but not analysed; the failure named without its downstream cost; audience identified but not used.
- **Low (1–4):** a narrative account of what the student did, in order, with a role name attached; little stage-specific evidence; no handover; no accountability analysis; distribution absent.

Common errors: **retelling the production** instead of analysing how the responsibilities acted on one another; naming a role but never pinning it to a **stage**; describing responsibilities as things you “helped with” rather than things you were **answerable** for; leaving out the handover, which is where roles actually meet; and omitting distribution, which is the stage students most often leave unallocated in the production and then unmentioned in the analysis.