

Media Units 1 & 2

Chapter 11 — Technical skills, constraints and evaluation

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Contents

Section	Page
11A Technical skills in the operation of media technologies	2
11B Ethical, legal and community constraints in production and distribution	18
11C Evaluating narrative productions: media language in design, production and evaluation	35
Topic 5 Test — Narratives in production	49
Topic 5 Test — Part B: solutions	57

Chapter 11 Technical skills, constraints and evaluation — 11A Technical skills in the operation of media technologies

Theory

Chapter 10 dealt with the production process and the roles people take inside it. This subtopic deals with the part of a production that cannot be borrowed, hired or downloaded: what the operator can actually **do**. The key knowledge is *technical skills used in the operation of media technologies* and the key skill is to *apply technical skills in the operation of media technologies*. The area of study puts it plainly — “the production and distribution of narratives involves the skilled use of media technologies”. Not the *use*; the **skilled** use.

Technology, technique, skill — the distinction this subtopic turns on. Subtopic 4D taught what **media technologies** are: “the analogue and digital technologies used in the development of media products” — the camera, the microphone, the editing software, the press, the paper. Subtopic 4C taught **techniques**: the named things you do with them, such as cutting on action or booming a microphone just out of frame.

A **technical skill** is neither. It is the *learned, practised ability to operate a media technology reliably enough to get the result the narrative needs, on the day, under pressure*. It sits in the person, not in the kit. Three consequences follow, and each one is worth marks:

- **A skill survives a change of equipment.** Someone who understands gain staging can set levels on a recorder they have never touched, because the skill is the principle plus the practised hands.
- **A skill is demonstrable.** You can be asked to prove it — and the proof is a recording, a test frame, a working export, not a claim that you “know how to use” something.
- **A skill has a level.** It is not on or off. This is why skills belong in the same sentence as time and budget: the media production process specification names “the requirement to work under constraints including **time, budget and skills**”. Your skill level is a hard constraint on what narrative you can actually make this term.

The four layers of a technical skill. Students routinely think a skill is layer one, and stop there. All four are assessed by what the finished narrative looks and sounds like.

Layer	What it is	Example: setting recording level on a field recorder
1. Operation	Knowing the control — which dial, which menu, which shortcut	Knowing that the gain knob for input 1 sets that microphone’s level
2. Procedure	Doing it in the right order, repeatably, at working speed	Headphones on, gain up while the speaker talks at performance volume, watch the meter, set, roll
3. Judgement	Knowing what this narrative moment needs	This is a whispered confession before a shout, so leave extra headroom
4. Recovery	Diagnosing and fixing it when it goes wrong	The meter hit the top and the take is distorted — lower the gain, re-record, do not “fix it later”

An operator with layers 1–2 can produce material. An operator with layers 3–4 can produce a *narrative*, because they are making decisions in the service of a story and can save a shoot when something fails.

Where technical skills are built. Not on the shoot. The production process specification puts skill development in two named places, and both are before the camera rolls.

- **Development.** Practitioners “may investigate equipment, materials and technologies” and “may perform **experiments** using materials, equipment and technologies to develop their skills”. This is open-ended play with a purpose: find out what the tool does.

- **Pre-production.** Practitioners “may undertake **technical tests** and experiments prior to production, reflecting on their success or failure”. This is narrower and answers a specific question the plan has raised.

The cycle that turns a technology into a skill is the same in every media form:

model → attempt → measure → review → adjust → repeat. Find a product that does the thing you want (model); try it (attempt); capture the result and the settings that produced it (measure); look and listen back on the device the audience will use (review); change **one** variable (adjust); go again. Three deliberate cycles beat an afternoon of unrecorded fiddling, because only the recorded cycles leave you knowing *which* setting produced the result.

What makes a technical test worth doing. A test that changes three things at once has taught you nothing. A useful technical test has five features:

1. **One question.** “Will the 50 mm lens at f/2 hold both faces sharp at this table?” — not “will the scene look good?”
2. **One variable.** Change the aperture; hold the lens, distance, light and subject constant.
3. **Matched conditions.** Test in the room, at the hour and with the people you will shoot with. A low-light test done at 4 pm proves nothing about a 9 pm shoot.
4. **Recorded settings.** Write down the aperture, shutter, ISO, gain, distance, colour temperature — whatever you changed. An untitled test file is a lost test.
5. **A stated success criterion, reviewed on the delivery device.** Decide beforehand what “pass” means, then check it where the audience will meet it — the phone screen, the printed page, the car speakers — not on the camera’s own display.

The skill ladder. Rate every skill your production depends on, honestly, before you write the shooting plan. This is a **skill audit**, and it is the single most useful planning document in this key knowledge.

Level	What it looks like	What you may safely put in the plan
1 Aware	You have seen it done and can describe it	Nothing. Build it first or design it out
2 Assisted	You can do it with someone talking you through	Only shots with unlimited retakes and no live subject
3 Independent	You can do it alone, given time and a calm set	Planned set-ups where you control the schedule
4 Reliable	You can do it first time, quickly, while other things go wrong	Live events, single-take moments, other people’s time
5 Transferable	You can teach it, and adapt it to unfamiliar equipment	Directing others; being the crew’s backup on that skill

The gap between levels 3 and 4 is where most student productions fail. A skill that works in the classroom and collapses when a subject is waiting, the light is going and the battery warning is on was never at level 4.

Technical skills by media form. Notice that every entry below is a **verb** — something a person performs — and every one has a test that proves it. That is what distinguishes this list from the equipment list in 4D.

Media form	Core operable skills	The test that proves it
Moving image	Exposing correctly; setting white balance; holding and shifting focus; framing and levelling on a support; setting audio gain; assembling a timeline; matching shots in the grade; mixing dialogue, atmos and music; exporting to a delivery specification	A 30-second test sequence that cuts together cleanly, is legible on a phone, and whose dialogue is intelligible with the volume at half
Still image	Metering; controlling depth of field; focusing accurately; shaping light	A test print at the final size where the eyes are sharp, the shadows hold

Media form	Core operable skills	The test that proves it
	with one source and a reflector; processing raw files; retouching without visible damage; sizing and sharpening for a stated output	detail and the skin tones match across the set
Audio	Placing a microphone for a purpose; gain staging with headroom; monitoring on closed-back headphones; capturing room tone; editing dialogue invisibly; equalising and compressing a voice; balancing a mix to a loudness target	An edited two-minute segment with no audible edit points, no clipping, and consistent loudness between speakers
Print	Building a grid and master pages; setting a type hierarchy; managing image resolution at final size; working in the right colour space; setting bleed and trim; preflighting and exporting a print-ready file	A proof printed at final size on the intended stock with nothing important inside the trim margin and no low-resolution image
Digital and interactive	Preparing and compressing assets; laying out responsively; building and testing an interaction; managing version control; testing on a real device; publishing to a platform's specification	The build opens on a device you did not make it on, and the interaction works for someone who has not been told how it works
Convergent or hybridised	The skills of each contributing form, plus registering and synchronising them, and testing the join	An audience member moves between the joined components without being told to

Technical skills in distribution. Distribution is a stage of the media production process, and it has its own skills, which are the ones most often missing. A narrative that exists only as a project file has not been distributed to anybody.

- **Encoding and export.** Moving image for online delivery is commonly exported as H.264 in an MP4 container at the project's own frame rate — in Australia, usually 25 fps. Exporting at the wrong frame rate or scaling a project set up incorrectly produces judder you cannot remove later.
- **Loudness.** Delivery targets are real numbers, not opinions. Australian free-to-air television is delivered to the Free TV Australia operational practice **OP-59**, which sets a program loudness target of **−24 LKFS**; speech content for online listening is commonly normalised around **−16 LUFS** for stereo. Mixing “so it sounds loud on my laptop” and delivering it unmeasured is the most common distribution failure in student audio.
- **Print preflight.** Print files are built at **300 ppi at final size**, converted to **CMYK**, and given **3 mm of bleed** past the trim. Preflighting — running the check that reports missing fonts, low-resolution images and objects outside the trim — is a technical skill, and it is cheaper than a reprint.
- **Platform specification.** Aspect ratio, maximum file size, caption format, thumbnail dimensions, metadata. Reading a platform's specification and meeting it is a skill; guessing produces a narrative that is letterboxed, cropped through a character's face, or rejected on upload.
- **Quality control on the delivery device.** Watch, listen to or read the exported file the whole way through, on the device the audience will use, before you release it. Every stage of skill can be correct and the export still be silent for the first four seconds.

Skill as a constraint on the narrative. This is the analytical heart of the dot point. Two makers with identical equipment and identical ideas will produce different narratives if their skills differ, because skill decides which plot decisions are even available. If nobody can shift focus reliably, you cannot write a moment whose meaning depends on the audience's attention being pulled from a face to a doorway behind it — and if you write it anyway, the audience gets a soft shot and a lost beat.

When ambition outruns skill there are exactly three honest responses, and a good production report names which one was taken:

1. **Build the skill.** Only if development time genuinely exists. Budget the cycles: three tests, not “I’ll practise”.
2. **Re-plan the moment so a skill you have can carry the same meaning.** The pull to the doorway becomes a cut to the doorway, or a sound cue off-screen, or a deep-focus frame that holds both. The narrative beat survives; the technique changes.
3. **Bring in the skill.** Give the shot to the crew member who has it, or ask someone outside the group. This is legitimate, and it must be acknowledged in your documentation.

What is not a response is planning the shot anyway and hoping. “Design to the skill you have, then extend it on purpose” is the whole principle.

Skills across a crew. In a collaborative production, skill is a property of the group, not of individuals. Run the audit across everyone, then do three things: **allocate** each technical role to the highest-rated available person; build **redundancy** so no single skill sits with one person only — if the one person who can operate the recorder is away, you do not shoot; and write a short **handover** for each item of equipment, so the level-2 operator can step up to a checklist rather than to a guess. Roles and responsibilities themselves are the business of 10C; here the point is narrower — who is allowed to touch what, and on what evidence.

Troubleshooting is a technical skill. Layer 4. Under pressure, work the method rather than the panic:

1. **Stop and describe the fault precisely.** “No sound on track 2”, not “the audio’s broken”.
2. **Check the signal chain end to end**, in order: source → cable → input → gain → recorder → monitoring. Most faults are in the boring middle.
3. **Substitute one component at a time.** Swap the cable. Still dead? Swap the microphone. Changing two things at once means you never learn which failed.
4. **Change one setting at a time**, and put it back if it does not help.
5. **If it cannot be fixed now, capture a fallback** — record the scene on a second device, shoot a wide safety, note the problem in the log — and move on. A shoot day lost to a fault nobody wrote down is lost twice.

Common failure	Immediate response	The skill that prevents it
Distorted, harsh dialogue	Lower gain, re-record the line; clipping is unrecoverable	Gain staging with headroom, monitoring continuously
Shots will not cut together — colour jumps	Match in the grade if the information is there	Locking white balance and exposure across set-ups
Focus soft on the important frame	Reshoot; sharpening cannot restore information never recorded	Checking focus magnified, marking distances
Card full or battery dead mid-take	Swap to spares, log the interrupted take	The pre-shoot check; carrying two of everything critical
Print proof shows a pixelated image	Replace with a higher-resolution file and re-proof	Working at 300 ppi at final size from the start
Export has no sound, or is the wrong length	Re-export; check the timeline’s in and out points	Quality control on the delivery device before release

Operating safely is part of operating competently. A production is a workplace. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), your school as an employer must provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, and must also ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that people who are **not** its employees — students included — are not exposed to risks arising from its undertaking. In practice that means weighted light stands, taped or covered cable runs, no rigging above people, checking leads for damage before use (portable electrical equipment in many schools and workplaces is inspected and tagged under the in-service testing standard AS/NZS 3760), and a supervising teacher who knows where you are shooting. The *ethical, legal and community* constraints on production and distribution — consent, privacy, copyright, classification — are the subject of 11B; the narrower point here is that an operator who cannot rig a light safely has not mastered the technology.

Evidencing your technical skills. The outcome asks you to *apply* the skills, and applying them is proved on paper as well as on screen. Keep a **skill log** across the production with five columns: *date · skill · what I did · result against the criterion · what I changed*. Keep the **technical test records** themselves, with the settings written on them. Name files systematically and keep versions, so improvement is visible. Back up to the **3-2-1 rule** — three copies, on two kinds of media, one kept elsewhere — because unrecoverable footage is a skill failure like any other. Then, in your production documentation, write skill claims as evidence rather than assertions: “after three lighting tests I could set a two-source interview in eight minutes, which let us shoot both subjects in one lunchtime” is worth marks; “I have good lighting skills” is worth none. Evaluating the finished narrative is the business of 11C; what belongs here is the record of what you could do, and when you could do it.

Looking ahead: in Units 3 and 4 these skills are demonstrated through documented production exercises that support a School-assessed Task — the test-and-record habit you build now is the one assessed there.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Brackenlow Secondary College students are making a six-minute drama, *Weatherboard*. One line of the shot list reads: “Scene 4, shot 6 — night, kitchen. Ana sits at the table lit only by the open fridge. Hold on her face as she reads the letter, then she looks off to the hallway.”

Identify the technical skills this one shot requires, and describe how the group would develop them before the shoot. (5 marks)

Working	Comment
The shot needs four technical skills: exposing a very low-light frame; setting white balance for a single cold practical source; holding focus on a face at a wide aperture; and recording clean dialogue-free atmos in a kitchen with a running fridge.	Start by <i>naming the skills as verbs</i> . A list of equipment here scores nothing — the question asks what the operator must be able to do.
Exposure is the hardest: a fridge globe is dim, so the operator must be able to open up, raise ISO to the point where noise is acceptable, and judge that point rather than guess it.	Says what the skill actually consists of. Naming the judgement — “where noise is acceptable” — is layer 3, and layer 3 is what separates a 5 from a 3.
To develop it, we run a technical test in that kitchen, at night, with the same fridge: one variable, ISO, stepped through four values with aperture, shutter and distance held constant, and every setting written down.	A test with one question and one variable. Naming the constants proves you understand why.
We review the test on a phone screen, because that is where the audience will watch it, and the pass criterion we set beforehand is that Ana’s eyes are readable and the noise does not crawl.	Stated success criterion + reviewed on the delivery device. Both are marks.
For focus, the operator practises holding a face sharp at f/2 while the subject shifts slightly, and we mark the table distance with tape so the same distance can be reset take after take.	A practised skill plus a practical control. Marking distance is the level-4 move — it makes the skill repeatable when the pressure is on.
For sound, the recordist practises setting gain on the fridge hum alone, then decides in the test whether to switch the fridge off and replace the hum from a separately recorded track.	Ends on a judgement made <i>in the test</i> , which is exactly what development and pre-production are for.

Takeaway: one shot-list line hides four skills; name them as verbs and attach a test to each.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Tinhouse Sound has asked a work-experience student to test whether a dynamic microphone held close or a shotgun microphone on a boom is better for a narrator recorded in a small carpeted room.

Describe how the student should design and run this technical test. (5 marks)

Working	Comment
The test asks one question: which microphone gives the more usable narrator voice in that room? Everything else is held constant — same room, same speaker, same script, same recorder, same distance from the wall, same gain target.	One question, one variable. State the constants explicitly; markers look for them.
The student records the same four sentences twice: once on the dynamic microphone about a hand's width from the speaker's mouth, once on the shotgun on a boom about half a metre above and just out of the frame line.	The variable is the microphone and its placement together, described operationally with distances.
Gain is set for each so the loudest sentence peaks around -12 dB, leaving headroom, and the student monitors on closed-back headphones while recording rather than trusting the meters alone.	Correct target and correct reason. Monitoring is a named skill, not a formality.
The settings, distances and file names are written into the test record as the takes are made, not afterwards.	An untitled test file is a lost test. This is a mark.
The pass criterion, set beforehand: the voice should be close and free of room echo, with no handling noise or plosives, and should stay intelligible when a music bed is laid underneath.	A criterion tied to what the finished narrative will do to the track — not “sounds nicer”.
The student reviews both takes on the delivery device — here, small speakers and earbuds — and reports which failed and why, because a failed test that explains itself has done its job.	The study design's own wording is “reflecting on their success or failure ”. A test that fails is a successful test.

Takeaway: a technical test is a controlled comparison with a criterion written down before you press record.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

A group is producing a four-minute narrative about a night-shift cleaner. Their treatment includes a moment where the camera holds on a locker, then shifts focus to the cleaner reflected in the mirror behind it, revealing she has been watching. In the skill audit, the camera operator is level 2 on focus shifts — able to do it with someone counting them through — and the shoot is a single evening in a working building with no second night available.

Explain how the group should respond to this mismatch between the narrative and the available technical skill. (6 marks)

The mismatch is real and must be resolved in pre-production, not discovered on the night. A level-2 skill means the operator can perform the shift when conditions are calm and repeatable; a single evening in a working building is the opposite of that, so planning the shot as written is planning to lose the story's key reveal.

Three responses are available. **Building the skill** is possible but weak here: a reliable focus shift needs distance marks, a rehearsed subject and repetition, and the group has one evening for the whole production. **Bringing in the skill** — asking a more experienced operator to shoot that one set-up — is legitimate, costs nothing but a favour, and must be acknowledged in the documentation. The strongest answer, though, is to **re-plan the moment so that a skill they already have carries the same meaning**. The narrative beat is *the audience discovers they are being watched*; the focus shift is only one way to deliver it. The group can hold the locker in a deep-focus frame at a narrow aperture with the mirror already sharp, so the reveal comes from the audience's eye finding her rather than from an operated lens; or they can cut — locker, then a clean shot of the reflection — and let the edit make the discovery; or they can pull the reveal onto the soundtrack, holding the locker while a mop handle knocks off-screen behind the camera.

The group should re-plan, and shoot a deep-focus version as the primary and a two-shot cut version as protection, so post-production has a choice. *Takeaway:* the narrative beat is the thing that must survive; the technique is negotiable, and choosing a technique you can actually execute is a technical skill in itself.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Coldharrow Press is publishing a 16-page comic narrative made by a Unit 2 student, printed on uncoated stock and released as a free PDF at the same time.

Analyse the technical skills the student needs across production and distribution, and explain how a failure in any one of them would damage the narrative. (8 marks)

At **production**, the student's core skills are drawing or photographing panel artwork to a consistent standard, and capturing it cleanly — scanning line art at a resolution high enough that a 300 ppi placement at final size is possible, with even lighting and no shadow across the gutter if a copy stand is used. A scan made at screen resolution cannot be rescued: enlarging it to A4 softens every line, and in a comic the line *is* the storytelling, so blurred inking reads to a reader as amateur before a single panel is understood.

At **post-production**, the skills are page layout and typography: building a grid so panels sit in a predictable rhythm, setting a type hierarchy that distinguishes narration from dialogue from sound effects, and placing balloons so the reading order is unambiguous. Reading order is a **plot** control in comics — the order in which the reader receives story events — so a layout skill failure is a narrative failure, not a cosmetic one. A reader who takes the third panel before the second has been told the story in the wrong order.

At **distribution**, the two outputs demand different skills, and this is where student productions most often come apart. The print file must be converted to **CMYK**, built with **3 mm of bleed**, and **preflighted** to catch low-resolution placements and objects sitting inside the trim margin; on uncoated stock, which absorbs ink and flattens contrast, the student also needs the judgement to lift contrast before sending. Skipping the preflight risks a panel cropped through a character's face on every copy in the run — a whole print bill spent on unusable comics, with nothing left for a reprint. The PDF release needs different skills again: exporting in **RGB** at screen resolution, compressing so the file downloads on a phone connection, and checking the exported document page by page on a phone, because a spread designed for paper can be illegible at screen size.

The through-line is that no stage protects the next. Production decides what information exists, post-production decides what is built from it, and distribution decides whether the reader receives it at all — and a failure at any one point reaches the reader as a fault in the story.

Takeaway: in an eight-mark skills answer, every named skill is followed by the specific way its failure would reach the audience.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (2 marks) (a) State what a technical skill is. (1 mark) (b) State one way a technical skill differs from a media technology. (1 mark)

Q2. (3 marks) (a) Name the four layers of a technical skill. (2 marks) (b) An operator hears distortion on playback, checks the meter, lowers the gain and re-records the line. Name the layer being demonstrated. (1 mark)

Q3. (3 marks) (a) State what a technical test is. (1 mark) (b) State two features that make a technical test useful. (2 marks)

Q4. (4 marks) Naomi can operate the field recorder only when her teacher stands beside her. (a) Place Naomi on the skill ladder and state what evidence would move her up one level. (2 marks) (b) State one thing her level means for what the group may safely plan. (1 mark) (c) State one way the group can protect the production against her current level. (1 mark)

Q5. (4 marks) (a) State the level a dialogue recording should peak around. (1 mark) (b) Explain why it is set there rather than higher. (1 mark) (c) Name the support technology used to monitor a recording as it is made. (1 mark) (d) State the recovery step if a take is found to have clipped. (1 mark)

Q6. (5 marks) (a) Name three technical skills a maker must be able to perform in the audio form, and for each state the test that would prove it. (3 marks) (b) Name two technical skills required in the print form, and state the test that would prove each. (2 marks)

Q7. (5 marks) (a) Name three technical skills required to deliver a finished narrative to its audience. (3 marks) (b) Explain why distribution skills belong in this key knowledge and not only in the study of the distribution stage. (2 marks)

Un scaffolded

Q8. Outline the difference between having access to a media technology and having the technical skill to operate it. (2 marks)

Q9. Outline why the study design names skills alongside time and budget as a constraint on the media production process. (2 marks)

Q10. Describe how a media practitioner develops a technical skill during the development stage of the media production process. (3 marks)

Q11. Describe the technical skills involved in preparing a completed audio narrative for distribution as a podcast episode. (3 marks)

Q12. (Stimulus.) Read the extract from a student's skill log below.

Date	Skill	What I did	Result	What I changed
12 May	Lighting	Set up the two-light interview	Looked good	Nothing
19 May	Lighting	Set it up again	Better this time	Moved a light
26 May	Lighting	Set it up before the shoot	Fine	—

Explain what this log does and does not demonstrate about the student's technical skill, and describe what would need to be recorded for it to count as evidence. (4 marks)

Q13. Explain why a technical skill that is reliable under pressure is more valuable to a narrative production than one that works only in rehearsal. (4 marks)

Q14. (Stimulus.) Read the technical test record below.

Test — can we shoot the alley scene at night? Took the camera to the school car park after dinner. Tried the fast lens and pushed the ISO up and also tried a work light. Watched it back on the camera screen. Looked alright, so we are good for the alley.

Explain two faults in this test and describe how each should be corrected. (5 marks)

Q15. Explain the method a practitioner should follow to troubleshoot a technical failure during production. Refer to one specific failure in your response. (5 marks)

Q16. “The only technical skill that really matters is editing, because anything that goes wrong can be fixed in post-production.” Discuss this claim. (6 marks)

Q17. (Stimulus.) A producer has completed the skill audit below for a four-person crew making a short narrative on location, with one shoot day.

Crew member	Camera operation	Lighting	Sound recording	Editing
Sam	4	2	1	3
Declan	2	4	2	2
Fatima	1	1	4	2
Ruben	2	2	1	4

(Levels: 1 aware · 2 assisted · 3 independent · 4 reliable · 5 transferable)

Discuss how the producer should allocate technical roles from this audit, and identify the risk that remains. (6 marks)

Q18. Analyse how the technical skills required to produce a narrative in a moving-image form differ from those required in a print form, and explain what this means for a maker working in a form that is new to them. (8 marks)

Q19. (*Extended response.*) Analyse how you developed and applied technical skills in the operation of media technologies across a narrative production you have completed this year, and evaluate the effect those skills had on the finished narrative. (10 marks)

Answers

- Q1.** (a) The learned, practised ability to operate a media technology reliably enough to achieve the result the production needs. (b) Any one of: a technology is a tool that can be borrowed or bought, while a skill is held by a person and must be built; a skill survives a change of equipment; a skill has a level, a technology does not.
- Q2.** (a) Operation, procedure, judgement, recovery. (b) Recovery.
- Q3.** (a) A controlled trial run before production that answers a specific technical question the plan has raised. (b) Any two of: one question; one variable with everything else held constant; matched conditions; recorded settings; a success criterion stated beforehand and reviewed on the delivery device.
- Q4.** (a) Level 2, assisted; evidence of moving up = setting the recorder correctly alone, from a cold start, on a recorded test. (b) Any one of: no live event or single-take material assigned to her; only set-ups with time for retakes. (c) Any one of: build redundancy so a second person can also operate the recorder; write a handover checklist; pair her with a level-4 operator on the day.
- Q5.** (a) Around -12 dB to -6 dB. (b) To leave headroom so a sudden louder moment does not clip; clipping is unrecoverable. (c) Closed-back headphones. (d) Lower the gain and re-record the line — distortion cannot be removed in post-production.
- Q6.** (a) Any three of: microphone placement; gain staging with headroom; monitoring on headphones; capturing room tone; invisible dialogue editing; equalisation and compression; mixing to a loudness target — each with a matching test. (b) Any two of: building a grid; setting a type hierarchy; managing image resolution at final size; working in CMYK; setting bleed; preflighting and exporting — each with a matching test, e.g. a proof at final size on the intended stock.
- Q7.** (a) Any three of: encoding and exporting to a delivery specification; measuring and setting loudness; preflighting a print file; meeting a platform's specification; quality-checking the export on the delivery device. (b) Because the study design's area of study names the skilled use of media technologies in production **and distribution**; a narrative that is not correctly delivered does not reach its audience, so the skill failure reaches the audience as a fault in the narrative.
- Q8.** Access means the tool is available; skill means a person can operate it reliably to get a planned result. Borrowing a camera does not produce a usable image.
- Q9.** Because skill level limits what can actually be made, in the same way time and budget do; a production cannot include a technique nobody can execute, so the plan must be built to the skills that exist or the skills must be built first.
- Q10.** Investigate the equipment and technologies; experiment with them without a fixed outcome; model an existing product's result, attempt it, record the settings, review on the delivery device, change one variable and repeat.
- Q11.** Editing the dialogue invisibly with room tone under the joins; balancing speakers and mixing to a loudness target of roughly -16 LUFS for stereo speech; exporting to the host's file specification with correct metadata, then listening to the export the whole way through on earbuds or a car.
- Q12.** Shows: the skill was attempted three times and the student was faster by the third. Does not show: what was set up, what result was measured, against what criterion, or what specifically changed and why. Needs: the actual settings, a stated success criterion, an outcome measured against it, and the specific adjustment made.
- Q13.** Under pressure — a subject waiting, light going, one take — conditions are the opposite of rehearsal; a skill that needs calm collapses exactly when the narrative's key moment is being captured, and unlike rehearsal there is no second attempt.
- Q14.** Faults, any two: two variables changed at once (fast lens and ISO, plus a work light) so no conclusion is possible; unmatched conditions (car park, not the alley); no recorded settings; no stated success criterion; reviewed on the camera screen rather than the delivery device. Corrections given for each.
- Q15.** Describe the fault precisely; check the signal chain end to end in order; substitute one component at a time; change one setting at a time; if unfixable, capture a fallback and log it. Applied to a specific named failure.

Q16. Position: the claim is largely false. Post-production can only rework information that was captured — clipped audio, missed focus and unrecorded angles are unrecoverable; editing skill is necessary but not sufficient; and distribution skills sit beyond editing entirely. Concede that some faults (pace, colour matching, level balance) genuinely are post-production problems.

Q17. Sam camera, Declan lighting, Fatima sound, Ruben edit — each allocated to their level-4 skill. Risks: no redundancy on the three shoot-day skills (behind the 4 in camera, in lighting and in sound the next-best rating is only a 2, so no backup reaches level 3; editing is the one column with a genuine deputy, Sam at level 3, and editing is also the one skill that need not happen on the day); a single shoot day means one absence stops the production. Mitigations required.

Q18. Must include: moving image as a time-based form, so its skills are **live** and performed as the event happens (exposure, white balance, focus, support, gain with monitoring), with continuity of decisions across set-ups; print as a spatial form, so its skills are **deferrable** but irreversible at output (grid, type hierarchy, resolution at final size, colour space, bleed, preflight), plus predicting how the stock changes the work; the transferable layer is judgement and method — the practice cycle, the technical test, reviewing on the delivery device, auditing skill before planning; consequence for a new form = do not assume competence transfers, and build one small complete piece end to end, including its distribution step, during development. See Fully-worked solutions for the full model.

Q19. Must include: named production and the media form; how at least two or three specific technical skills were **developed** (experimentation at development; a technical test at pre-production with one variable, recorded settings and a criterion checked on the delivery device); how each was **applied** on the shoot; the **effect on the narrative** in each case, tied to a named moment; at least one skill that was not built, and which of the three honest responses was taken (build it, re-plan the moment, bring the skill in); an evaluative verdict with a specific change for next time. See Fully-worked solutions for the full model and common errors.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) A **technical skill** is the learned, practised ability to operate a media technology reliably enough to achieve the result a production needs, under the conditions of a real shoot. (b) A media technology is a tool — it can be borrowed, hired or bought, and it is the same object in anyone's hands. A technical skill sits in the person: it has to be built through practice, it has a level that can rise or fall, and it travels with the operator to unfamiliar equipment.

Marker's note: answering (b) with “a skill is not physical” is thin; say what follows from that.

Q2. (a) **Operation** (knowing the control), **procedure** (performing it in order, repeatably, at working speed), **judgement** (knowing what this narrative moment needs) and **recovery** (diagnosing and fixing a failure). (b) **Recovery** — the operator identifies a fault, diagnoses its cause from the meter, applies a correction and re-captures.

Q3. (a) A **technical test** is a controlled trial run, carried out before production, that answers one specific technical question the plan has raised — the study design places these at pre-production, where practitioners undertake tests “reflecting on their success or failure”. (b) Any two, developed: **one question** (so the result means something); **one variable** with all other conditions held constant (so you know what caused the result); **matched conditions** — the real room, the real hour, the real subject; **recorded settings**, written down as the takes are made; and a **success criterion stated beforehand**, checked on the device the audience will use.

Q4. (a) Naomi is at **level 2, assisted**: she can perform the skill with someone talking her through it, but not alone. The evidence that would move her to **level 3, independent**, is a recorded test in which she sets the recorder correctly from a cold start with nobody prompting — settings written down, level checked on headphones, playback clean. (b) The group must not assign her material that cannot be repeated: no live event, no single-take moment, nothing that depends on a subject's limited time. (c) Build **redundancy** — train a second person to level 3 on the recorder, so the production does not stop if she is absent or freezes — or write a handover checklist she can work from, which converts a guess into a procedure.

Q5. (a) Around **−12 dB to −6 dB**. (b) Because the difference between that peak and 0 dB is **headroom**: speech is unpredictable and a sudden laugh or shout will be several decibels louder than the level you set. Recording closer to 0 dB removes the margin. (c) **Closed-back headphones** — they isolate the listener from the room, so what is heard is

what is being recorded, not what is in the air. (d) Lower the gain and **re-record the line**. When a digital recording **clips**, the peaks of the waveform are not merely loud but absent, and no post-production process can restore information that was never written to the file.

Marker's note: “turn it down in the edit” is the trap here and earns nothing.

Q6. (a) Any three, each with its proof: **microphone placement** — a test comparing two placements in the actual room, judged on closeness and room echo; **gain staging with headroom** — a recorded take whose loudest moment peaks near -9 dB with no clipping; **invisible dialogue editing** — a two-minute segment a listener cannot hear the joins in; **mixing to a loudness target** — a measured export sitting at the intended figure with speakers balanced. (b) Any two: **managing image resolution at final size** — a proof at final size on the intended stock with no visible pixelation; **preflight and export** — a print-ready file that passes a preflight check with no missing fonts, no low-resolution placements and nothing important inside the trim margin.

Q7. (a) Any three, named as operations: **exporting** to a delivery specification (correct codec, container, frame rate and resolution); **measuring and setting loudness** to the target for the delivery route; **preflighting** a print file and converting to CMYK with bleed; **meeting a platform's specification** for aspect ratio, file size and captions; **quality-checking** the export end to end on the device the audience will use. (b) Because the area of study describes the skilled use of media technologies in the **production and distribution** of narratives, and because distribution is the point at which every earlier skill either reaches the audience or does not. An export at the wrong frame rate, an unmeasured mix or a print file that crops through a character's face destroys work that was correct at every earlier stage — the audience experiences it as a fault in the narrative, not as a technical footnote.

Q8. Having **access** to a media technology means the tool is available to you — the school owns the camera, the software is installed. Having the **technical skill** means you can operate it to a planned result under the conditions of a real production: you can expose the frame, hold focus, set the level and recover when something fails. The distinction matters because access alone produces material nobody can use; the skill is what converts a technology into a narrative.

Q9. Because a constraint is anything that limits what can actually be made, and skill does exactly that. A production cannot include a technique nobody in the group can execute, in the same way it cannot include a location nobody can afford or a schedule nobody has time for. The study specification names “time, budget and skills” together for that reason: all three are assessed honestly before planning, and a plan built above the group's skill level is as unrealistic as one built above its budget.

Q10. In the **development** stage, a practitioner “may investigate equipment, materials and technologies” and “may perform experiments using materials, equipment and technologies to develop their skills”. In practice, they find an existing product that achieves the effect they want and work out how it was made (**model**), try to reproduce it (**attempt**), record both the result and the settings that produced it (**measure**), review it on the device the audience will use (**review**), then change a single variable and go again (**adjust and repeat**). The recording is what makes it development rather than fiddling: three documented cycles leave the practitioner knowing which setting produced which result, and that knowledge is the skill.

Q11. The producer edits the dialogue so the joins are inaudible, patching each cut with room tone recorded in the same space so the background does not drop out. They balance the speakers to a comparable loudness, apply equalisation and gentle compression so quiet lines sit with louder ones, and mix to a delivery target — commonly around -16 LUFS for stereo speech online. They then export to the podcast host's required file format and bitrate, complete the episode metadata, and listen to the exported file the whole way through on earbuds or in a car, which is where the audience will meet it.

Q12. The log demonstrates something real but small: the skill was attempted three times across a fortnight, and by the third attempt the student could set the interview up before the shoot rather than during it, which suggests the operation became faster. That is genuine evidence of repetition.

What it does not demonstrate is any of the things a marker needs. “Looked good”, “better this time” and “fine” are judgements with no criterion behind them, so a reader cannot tell whether the lighting was successful for the narrative or merely present. Nothing records **what** was set up — no positions, distances, power, colour temperature or ratio — so the student could not reproduce the 26 May setup if asked, which means the skill has not been captured. “Moved a light” names an adjustment without naming which light, where to, or what it fixed.

To count as evidence, each row needs: the actual settings and positions used; a **success criterion** stated beforehand (for example, “the subject’s shadow side still shows detail and the background reads as a room, not a black void”); the result measured against that criterion; and the specific change made with the reason for it. Attaching the test frames themselves would turn the claim into proof.

Q13. Under pressure is where narrative productions are actually made. On a real shoot the subject has given you twenty minutes, the light is going, the battery is warning, someone is asking a question and the moment you have planned the whole scene around happens once. A skill that is **reliable** — level 4 — can be performed first time, quickly, while other things go wrong; a rehearsal-only skill needs the conditions rehearsal provides, which is precisely what a shoot does not provide.

The consequence is narrative, not technical. In rehearsal a failed attempt costs nothing because you simply go again. On the day, a missed focus or a mis-set level on a single-take moment means the audience never receives that story beat at all — the reveal lands soft, the confession is unintelligible — and no later stage can restore it. This is why the skill audit is done before the shooting plan: a level-3 skill may be planned into set-ups you control, but only a level-4 skill may be planned into a moment that happens once.

Q14. *Model response (5 marks).* The record shows a test that cannot support the conclusion drawn from it, for two reasons.

First, more than one variable was changed at once. The student used a fast lens, raised the ISO and added a work light in the same trial, so when the result “looked alright” there is no way to know which change produced it — or whether the work light was doing all the work and the lens choice was irrelevant. The correction is to isolate one variable per pass: shoot the same frame at a fixed aperture and distance, stepping only the ISO; then, separately, add the work light and shoot the same steps again. Each pass answers one question, and the settings are written down as the takes are made so the comparison is retrievable afterwards.

Second, the test was neither conducted nor reviewed under the conditions it is meant to predict. A school car park after dinner is not the alley: the ambient light, the surfaces, the spill from streetlights and the practical sources are all different, so a pass there tells the group nothing about the location they will shoot in. The review compounds the error, because the camera’s own screen is bright, small and flattering — noise and crushed shadows that are invisible on it will be obvious on the delivery device. The correction is to test in the alley itself, at the hour of the planned shoot, and to review the footage on the screen the audience will watch it on, against a criterion written down before recording — for example, “the actor’s eyes are readable and the noise does not crawl in the shadows”.

Marker’s note: answers that say only “they should have been more careful” do not identify a fault; name the specific methodological error and the specific fix.

Q15. *Model response (5 marks).* The method is deliberate rather than frantic, and it works because it changes one thing at a time. Take a common failure: midway through an interview the recordist looks down and the meter for the boom microphone is flat — no sound on that channel.

Describe the fault precisely — not “the audio is broken” but “no signal on input 1; input 2 is reading normally”. That already halves the search, because a fault confined to one channel is not the recorder’s power or its card. Then **check the signal chain end to end, in order:** microphone, cable, connector, input selection, gain, phantom power, monitoring. Most faults sit in the boring middle — a cable half-seated in the connector, a channel muted, phantom power switched off for a condenser microphone that needs it — and working in order prevents jumping to the most dramatic explanation.

Substitute one component at a time. Swap the cable and test; still dead, restore the cable and swap the microphone. Changing both at once fixes the fault without teaching the recordist which part failed, which guarantees a repeat later in the day. **Change one setting at a time** on the same principle, and put it back if it does not help, so the recorder never ends up in an unknown state.

If it cannot be fixed now, capture a fallback and log it. Move the interview to the working channel with a different microphone, or record to a phone beside the subject as a safety track, note the take numbers affected, and keep going — the subject’s time is the scarcest resource on the day. A fault that is documented can be worked around in the edit; a fault nobody wrote down costs the shoot twice.

Q16. Model response (6 marks). The claim is mostly false, though it contains a grain of truth worth conceding first.

Some problems genuinely are post-production problems, and editing skill solves them. A sequence that drags can be tightened by cutting shot durations; shots that do not match can be brought together in the grade if the tonal information is there; unbalanced voices can be levelled; a music bed can be ducked so a line sits clear. For faults of **assembly and balance**, the editor is the person who fixes them, and a strong edit rescues a great deal of ordinary material.

But post-production can only rework information that production actually captured, and this is where the claim collapses. A **clipped** audio take is not merely loud — the peaks of the waveform were never written to the file, so there is nothing to recover, and no plug-in restores it. A shot that missed focus contains no sharp detail to sharpen. A scene shot without a wide cannot be given establishing geography by an editor who does not have one. In each case the skill that mattered was exercised at production — gain staging, focus, coverage — and the edit inherits the consequence. The narrative consequence is direct: the confession is unintelligible, the reveal lands soft, the audience is lost in the space.

The claim also defines “post-production” too narrowly to survive contact with the study design, which describes the skilled use of media technologies in production **and distribution**. Encoding, loudness measurement, preflight and platform specification are distribution skills, and none of them is editing. A perfectly cut narrative exported at the wrong frame rate, or a print file that has not been preflighted, reaches the audience damaged despite a flawless edit.

The defensible position, then, is that editing is a necessary technical skill but not a sufficient one. Skills are sequential and each stage protects the next: production decides what information exists, post-production decides what is built from it, and distribution decides whether the audience receives it. Planning to fix things later is a decision to accept whatever production happened to capture.

Marker’s note: a discuss item needs a position. Answers that list post-production’s powers without weighing them against what it cannot do stall in the middle band.

Q17. Model response (6 marks). The audit gives the producer one clear allocation and one serious problem, and a strong answer addresses both.

The allocation follows the level-4 ratings, because each crew member is reliable in exactly one discipline and no two overlap. **Sam** takes camera operation (4), **Declan** takes lighting (4), **Fatima** takes sound recording (4) and **Ruben** takes the edit (4). This is efficient: every technical role on the shoot is held by the only person rated reliable in it, and Ruben’s post-production rating means the shoot-day crew is effectively three, with Ruben available to support and to log material with an editor’s eye for what the timeline will need.

The risk is that the allocation is also the crew’s greatest weakness: **on the shoot day there is no redundancy at all**. Read the columns rather than the rows and the picture is stark — behind the 4 in camera, the 4 in lighting and the 4 in sound, the next-best rating is a 2, so not one of the three on-location skills has a backup even at level 3. If Fatima is unwell on the shoot day, the highest sound rating available is Declan at level 2, assisted, and there is nobody at level 3 or above to assist him; sound would be captured by somebody who needs talking through it, on the only day available. The same holds for camera and lighting. Editing is the single exception — Sam sits at level 3 there — and it is the exception that sharpens the point, because editing is the one skill in the table that does not have to happen on the day. With one shoot day and a location, a single absence does not degrade the production, it stops it, and a level-2 substitute on a single-take narrative moment will not deliver material the edit can use.

The producer should therefore act on the audit rather than merely record it. Before the shoot, each of the three on-location operators trains a nominated deputy to level 3 on their equipment, evidenced by a recorded test rather than a promise — Ruben is the obvious deputy for camera, since his own work does not begin until the edit, and Sam for lighting. Sound is the one that resists doubling: Declan at level 2 is the only person in that column above level 1, and he is already the lighting operator. The edit needs none of this work, because Sam is already at level 3 there — which is exactly what the other three columns should look like and do not. Each operator writes a short handover checklist for their equipment, so a deputy steps up to a procedure rather than a guess. Where a skill genuinely cannot be doubled in time, the plan is adjusted so the narrative does not depend on it: fewer lighting set-ups, wider coverage, a second recording device as a safety track. The audit’s value is that it makes the fragility visible while it can still be fixed.

Marker's note: answers that only assign the four roles have done half the task. The marks sit in reading the columns for redundancy — including noticing which column already has a deputy and which do not — and proposing a concrete mitigation.

Q18. Model response (8 marks). The two forms demand different technical skills because they resolve into different things — one into time, the other into space — and that difference runs through every stage.

Moving image is a time-based form, so most of its skills are about capturing and controlling material that unfolds. At production the maker must expose a frame correctly, set white balance so shots taken minutes apart will cut together, hold and shift focus on moving subjects, level and operate a support, and set audio gain with headroom while monitoring on headphones — several of these simultaneously, in real time, with a subject waiting. The skills are therefore **live** skills: they must be performed at the moment the event happens and cannot be deferred. At post-production the maker assembles a timeline, matches shots in the grade and mixes dialogue, atmos and music, and at distribution exports to a codec, container and frame rate that suit the delivery route. A distinctive demand is **continuity of skill across time**: an exposure or white-balance decision made in one set-up constrains every shot that must cut against it.

Print is a spatial form, so its skills are about constructing and specifying a fixed surface. The maker builds a grid and master pages, sets a type hierarchy that controls the reading order, manages image resolution at final size, works in the right colour space, sets bleed and trim, and preflights before output. These are **deferrable** skills — the file can be worked on, reversed and re-proofed for weeks — but they are also **unforgiving at the end**, because print is a single irreversible commitment. A moving-image export that is wrong can be re-exported in ten minutes; five hundred misprinted copies cannot. Print also demands a skill moving image does not: predicting how the output medium will change the work, since uncoated stock absorbs ink and flattens contrast that looked correct on a backlit screen.

What transfers between them is the layer that is not equipment-specific: **judgement and method**. The practice cycle is identical, the discipline of the technical test is identical, the habit of reviewing on the delivery device is identical, and so is the understanding that a skill has a level which must be audited before the plan is written. Someone who has learned to test properly in one form learns the next form faster, because they know what a useful test looks like.

For a maker entering a new form, this means two things. First, do not assume competence transfers: being reliable with a camera says nothing about whether you can preflight a print file, and the narrative will show the gap. Second, spend development time buying back the difference — build a small complete piece in the new form, end to end including its distribution step, before committing the narrative to it. The cheapest way to discover that you cannot yet export a print-ready file is on a one-page test, not on the finished narrative the night before it is due.

Marker's note: the top band requires the *analysis* — why the differences exist (time-based versus spatial, live versus deferrable) — not two lists of skills side by side.

Q19. Model response (10 marks). (*A model built on a Unit 2 narrative production; your response must use your own.*)

Our production was a five-minute moving-image narrative about a young worker's last shift at a suburban laundromat, shot over two evenings and released online. Three technical skills decided what the finished narrative could do: matching the laundromat's fluorescent light, recording dialogue in a hard-surfaced room, and exporting for online delivery. A fourth — operating a moving camera — I could not perform reliably, and what we did about that is part of the answer. I developed the three before production and applied them with mixed success, and the differences between them are visible in the finished piece.

Development. In the development stage I investigated the technologies available and experimented without a fixed outcome, which taught me the shape of the problem: the laundromat's fluorescent tubes threw a green cast and, on one clip, rolling bands across the frame, and the tiled walls returned every sound. In pre-production I converted that into two technical tests with one question each.

The light test asked whether we could shoot under the tubes as they were. Shutter speed was the only variable, with the lens, ISO, distance and framing held constant and every setting written into the record as the takes were made. At 1/60 s the banding was in every frame; at 1/50 s it was gone, because tubes running on Australian mains pulse at twice the 50 Hz supply and a 1/50 s exposure at 25 fps covers a whole number of those pulses. That one number fixed our shutter for the whole shoot. The test then answered a question I had not thought to ask: a custom white balance read off a grey card under the tubes made the skin tones correct and the room ordinary. Getting the technology right made

the location worse. So I set the balance part of the way back towards daylight, leaving green in the tiles and the machines while keeping her face readable — a judgement I could only make because I could see both versions side by side on a phone, which is where our audience would meet the film, before we wrote the shooting plan.

The sound test asked whether that room could hold a whispered line at all. The microphone was fixed — a lapel under her collar, because the shot was wide — and the only variable was the room: one pass bare, one with a moving blanket over the folding table and towels laid along the machine fronts behind her, gain unchanged and peaking near -12 dB in both. The criterion, written down first, was that the whisper stay intelligible on phone speakers at half volume with no slap on the consonants. The bare pass failed it and the treated pass passed, which is why the scene stayed in the laundromat instead of being moved somewhere easier to record in.

Application, and the effect on the narrative. The lighting skill I took to level 4: on the night I could set the frame first time while the actor was ready, because the shutter, the balance and the reasons for both were already decided. That is why the scene where she counts the float works — the audience can read her face in a room that still looks like a green, fluorescent-lit laundromat at 10 pm, so the setting does its narrative work instead of being corrected into somewhere generic. Sound was our best decision, and it came from the half of the test that failed: bare, the room made her whisper sound as though it were happening across the shop, so we hung the blanket and the towels for every dialogue set-up on both evenings. The result is that the whispered line to her co-worker is intelligible, and because the audience receives it the ending reads as a decision rather than a mood.

The skill I did not build was operating a gimbal. The script ends with her walking the length of the laundromat and out the door, and we wanted it unbroken — one move from the last machine to the street, so the decision to leave plays in real time instead of being assembled out of cuts. In the skill audit I was level 2: I could get a smooth pass with someone walking beside me calling the speed, but not first time, and not while also watching the frame. Of the three honest responses, building the skill was out, because a move that has to work in one take with an actor waiting needs more repetition than the fortnight before our first evening allowed; and re-planning would have cost the thing the shot existed for, since cutting the walk is precisely what an unbroken take is there to avoid. So we **brought the skill in**: a Year 12 student who used a gimbal every week operated that set-up on the second evening while I stayed on framing and focus, and we named their contribution in our production documentation rather than letting the shot read as ours. The beat lands as written and the audience stays with her for the whole walk. The honest cost is that the production got the shot and I still cannot perform it, so it sits on my development list rather than in my skill log.

Distribution was where our skills were weakest, and it cost us. We exported correctly at 25 fps in H.264, but we never measured the mix against a loudness target; we balanced it by ear on one laptop, and on phone speakers the atmos sat too close to the dialogue, so roughly a third of our test audience missed a line in the second scene. The technical failure became a narrative failure at the exact point where the audience received the work.

Evaluation. Overall the skills we tested were the skills that held up, and the one we did not measure is the one that damaged the narrative — which is the clearest evidence I have that the test- and-record method works. The gimbal decision is the one I would defend: recognising that a single-take moment was the wrong place to spend a level-2 skill, then buying the skill in and saying so in the documentation, protected the beat without claiming a competence I did not have — and choosing *which* skill to buy in is a judgement, not an admission. Next production I would treat loudness as a tested delivery specification rather than an opinion, measuring the mix to a stated target and quality-checking the export end to end on a phone before release.

Marker's note: the marks here are in the **chain** — skill developed, skill applied, effect on the narrative — repeated across several skills, including one that failed. A response that describes equipment used, or that claims skills without evidence of how they were built and what they changed, cannot reach the top band.

Chapter 11 Technical skills, constraints and evaluation — 11B Ethical, legal and community constraints in production and distribution

Theory

In Unit 2 you are no longer only analysing narratives — you are making one. That changes the question this chapter asks. In Unit 1 the question was *what conditions shaped the narrative I am studying?* Here it is *what conditions bind me, and what must I do about them before Friday?* The study design is explicit: the production of narratives is a creative process, but narratives “are produced for specific audiences and are constrained by the contexts in which they are produced, distributed, consumed and read”. The key skill you are working towards is not to describe constraints from a distance. It is to **develop and produce narratives within ethical, legal and community constraints** — to do the work properly while they apply.

What a constraint does here. A **constraint** is a condition outside your creative idea that limits, permits or redirects what you may make and how it may reach an audience. Two things are true of all three families in this subtopic. First, a constraint is discharged by an **action**, and in production that action almost always has a document attached — a release, a licence, a permit, a consent, a risk assessment. Second, a constraint that is dealt with early is cheap and a constraint discovered late is expensive: a music licence you cannot afford is a nuisance in development and a catastrophe the week before your screening.

The three families, and what separates them. Ethical, legal and community constraints are the study design’s own grouping for this dot point, and they are distinguished by **where their authority comes from** and **what happens when you breach them**.

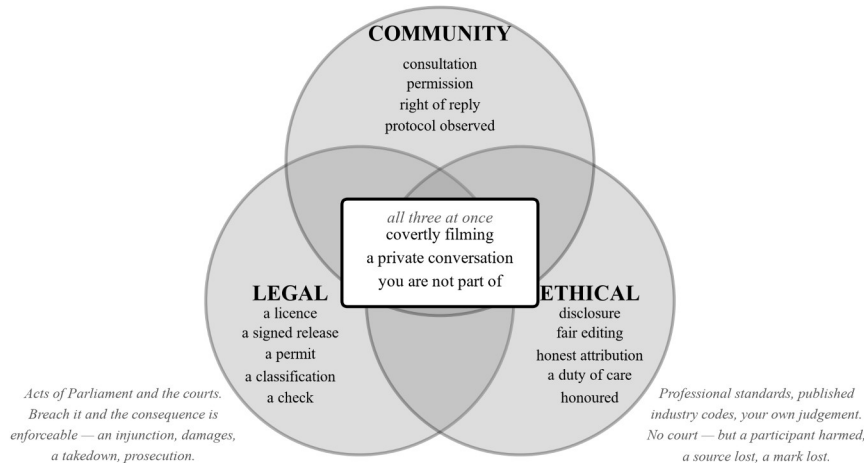
Family	Where the authority comes from	What happens if you breach it	How you discharge it
Legal	Acts of Parliament and the courts — Commonwealth and Victorian law that applies to you whatever you think of it	Enforceable consequences: an injunction stopping distribution, damages, takedown, prosecution, loss of the right to publish at all	Permission in the form the law recognises — a licence, a signed release, a permit, a classification, a check
Ethical	Professional standards, published industry codes and your own judgement about right conduct	No court, but real consequence: a participant harmed, a source lost, a mark lost, a reputation that does not recover	A decision you make when nobody is forcing you — disclosure, fair editing, honest attribution, a duty of care honoured
Community	The expectations of the community you make in , make for and depict — including cultural protocols and the rules of your own school	Refusal of access, withdrawal of cooperation, complaint, protest, a community that will not deal with you again	Consultation, permission, right of reply, protocol observed, standards met before publication rather than after

The three overlap constantly, and the overlap is the point rather than a problem. Covertly filming a private conversation you are not part of is **legal** (the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) makes it an offence), **ethical** (the person did not agree to be in your narrative) and **community** (word travels, and nobody in that street will talk to you again). A strong answer says which family is doing the work at which moment, and says when one act answers all three.

The table above has to keep the families apart to define them; the figure below shows them doing what they actually do. Each lobe carries what that family alone asks of you — the action, with the document attached — and the centre carries the act that is all three at once. The band underneath holds the licence condition students discover latest and most expensively.

The three families overlap constantly — and the overlap is the point, not a problem.

*The community you make in, make for
and depict — including cultural protocols
and your school's own rules. Breach it and
nobody there deals with you again.*



It is LEGAL — the Surveillance Devices Act 1999 (Vic) makes it an offence. It is ETHICAL — the person did not agree to be in your narrative. And it is COMMUNITY — word travels, and nobody in that street will talk to you again. One act, three families, and one refusal answers all three.

The Creative Commons condition that ends a plan: ND — no derivatives

Cutting a track to length IS making a derivative. Every Creative Commons licence provides that where the material is a musical work or sound recording, synchronising it in timed relation with a moving image always produces adapted material. So an ND track cannot go into a video you publish at all — not even uncut, at full length and attributed. In an audio-only narrative, ND means run it whole or not at all.

Australia has fair dealing, not fair use: research or study · criticism or review · parody or satire · reporting news are the only purposes a student production will argue.

Where this subtopic sits. Unit 1 subtopic 7B studied **institutional, economic, social and political** constraints on Australian narratives — a different four-family list, applied to narratives someone else made. Do not import that list here, and do not import this one there. This subtopic is the producer's side of the same reality, using the study design's own words for Unit 2 Area of Study 2, and it applies to **your** production. Within this chapter, 11A deals with the technical skills you operate the technologies with and 11C with the media language you design, document and evaluate in; 11B is the set of conditions all of that work happens inside.

Legal constraints: other people's material. Almost everything you might drop into a narrative belongs to somebody.

Copyright. Under the **Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)** copyright exists automatically the moment an original work is put into material form. There is no registration, no fee and no © symbol requirement in Australia, so "I found it online with no copyright notice" is never a defence. The owner controls copying, adapting and **communicating the work to the public**, which is what uploading does. Protection lasts the life of the author plus 70 years for literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works, and 70 years from first publication for films and sound recordings.

Fair dealing is narrow. Australia has **fair dealing** exceptions, not the broader United States doctrine of fair use. The purposes are closed: research or study, criticism or review, parody or satire, reporting news, professional legal advice, and access by a person with a disability (added to the Act in 2017). Only the first four will ever be arguable for a student production. Two traps follow. A use must genuinely *be* for that purpose — putting a song under your montage is not criticism or review of the song. And the act you perform in class is not the act you perform online: a clip used in a school exercise may sit inside research or study, while publishing the same narrative to a public platform is a communication to the public and is judged on its own.

So you license instead. A **licence** is permission on stated terms. **Creative Commons** licences are the ones you will use most, and their conditions are creative conditions:

- **BY** — attribution required. You must credit as the licence specifies, in the form it specifies.
- **SA** (share-alike) — your finished narrative must carry the same licence, which decides how you may later distribute it.
- **NC** (non-commercial) — no monetised upload, no paid screening, no sponsorship.

- **ND** (no derivatives) — you may not publish an edited version. For a media producer this is usually fatal. Cutting a track to length *is* making a derivative, and every Creative Commons licence provides that where the material is a musical work or sound recording, synching it in timed relation with a moving image always produces adapted material. So an ND track cannot go into a video you publish at all — not even uncut, at full length and attributed. In an audio-only narrative ND means run it whole or not at all.
- **CC0** — dedicated to the public with no conditions.

Commercial music carries **two** copyrights — the musical work (composition and lyrics) and the sound recording — so a commercial track normally needs two permissions: a **synchronisation licence** for the composition and a **master use licence** for the recording. In Australia APRA AMCOS administers many rights in musical works and PPCA administers rights in sound recordings, and the practical result for a student budget is simple: original composition, a production library, or Creative Commons material.

Moral rights. Part IX of the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) gives creators three **moral rights**: the right of **attribution** of authorship, the right **not to have authorship falsely attributed**, and the right of **integrity** of authorship — not to have the work treated in a way prejudicial to the creator's honour or reputation. Moral rights are personal. They cannot be sold or transferred, so they survive even when the copyright is owned by someone else, and a person may only *consent* to particular acts. For a film the Act treats the principal director, principal producer and principal screenwriter as authors. In practice moral rights are discharged by your credits list: crediting every collaborator accurately, in the form agreed, is a legal obligation before it is a courtesy.

Generative AI. Two separate constraints apply. Legally, Australian courts have held that copyright requires human authorship, so material generated without meaningful human authorship may attract no copyright at all — and the terms of use of the tool are a contract that binds you regardless. Ethically, the constraint is **disclosure**: if a voice, image or passage in your narrative was machine-generated, the audience and the assessor are entitled to know, and your production documentation should say so.

Legal constraints: the people you record. Consent is the centre of this subtopic.

Recording. The *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) makes it an offence to use a listening device to record a **private conversation**, or an optical surveillance device to record a **private activity**, that you are **not a party to**, without the express or implied consent of each party. That party exception is the respect in which Victoria differs from New South Wales and most other states: a producer who is *in* the conversation does not commit the recording offence. It buys less than students assume, because the Act separately makes it an offence to **communicate or publish** a record of a private conversation or private activity obtained with such a device without the consent of each party. Being there lets you record; it does not let you release, and that is what a signed release is for. Note also that a conversation is only *private* where the circumstances show the parties wanted it heard by themselves alone — an interview a person agrees to give for your narrative is on the record from the start, so the real exposure is the covert recording, the microphone left running and the exchange captured in the background of a shot.

Privacy. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) governs how organisations handle personal information, but it generally binds Australian Government agencies and businesses with an annual turnover above \$3 million, so it usually does not apply to a student production or a two-person company. What does apply to any person is newer: a statutory cause of action for **serious invasions of privacy**, introduced by the *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* (Cth) and available since 10 June 2025, covering intrusion on seclusion and misuse of information where a person had a reasonable expectation of privacy. As with anything this recent, check the current position rather than assume it.

Release forms. A **talent release** is written permission from an identifiable participant. A usable one tells the person what the product is, who is making it, where it will be shown, and how long the permission runs. A release is not magic — a signature obtained by not explaining the project is a weak document and a worse ethical position — but without one you have no evidence of permission at all.

Children. Filming people under 18 adds layers. A parent or guardian consents in addition to the young person. In Victoria, adults engaged in child-related work generally require a **Working with Children Check** under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), and organisations including schools must meet Victoria's **Child Safe Standards** under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) — compulsory in this state since they commenced in stages on 1 January 2016 and 1 January 2017, and replaced on 1 July 2022 by an updated set of **eleven** Standards. If a child is *employed* in entertainment rather than taking part in an unpaid school exercise, the employer needs a **child employment licence**

from Wage Inspectorate Victoria under the *Child Employment Act 2003* (Vic) and must meet the mandatory code of practice covering supervision, hours and breaks.

Legal constraints: what you say about people. The *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic) applies to any publication in this state that could damage a person's reputation, and "publication" means communication to even one other person — a podcast episode, a caption, a screening, a post. Since the reforms commencing 1 July 2021 a plaintiff must show **serious harm**, and publishers can rely on a **public interest** defence; other defences include truth, honest opinion and qualified privilege, and an intending plaintiff must issue a **concerns notice** before starting proceedings. Two points matter for producers. A person who runs a page can be treated as a publisher of comments left on it, so moderation is part of distribution. And the defence you will actually rely on is evidence: attribution to named sources or documents, and a right of reply sought and included.

Legal constraints: where and how you film. Permission to be at a place is separate from permission to film there. There is no single approval pathway for Victorian public land: the local council, land manager or Parks Victoria responsible for a site grants permission for that site on its own terms, so the first question is always *who manages this ground?* The *Filming Approval Act 2014* (Vic) sits over those decisions rather than replacing them — it requires the responsible public authorities to apply film friendly principles and to determine applications within set timeframes, with VicScreen coordinating and publishing guidance — and it is directed at commercial film production, so a non-commercial student shoot is handled under the land manager's or council's ordinary permission rules. Private property is a matter of the owner's permission. Safety is not optional at any scale: the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic), administered by WorkSafe Victoria, is the reason a **risk assessment** is a pre-production document rather than paperwork done afterwards. Drones are flown under Part 101 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (Cth) — within visual line of sight, in daylight, below 120 metres, at least 30 metres from people who are not part of the operation and not over crowds — with registration and accreditation requirements once any payment is involved. Where a location is culturally sensitive, cultural heritage obligations and the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party come into it as well; that ground is covered in 7A.

Legal constraints: distribution. Reaching an audience is a separate act with separate rules. Films and computer games must be **classified** before they are sold, hired or publicly exhibited in Australia under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth), enforced here through the Victorian enforcement Act — so a public screening or release is a different proposition from a classroom one. A platform's **terms of service** are a contract: you grant the platform a licence to host your work, you promise you hold the rights to everything in it, and the platform may remove or restrict it without your agreement. Automated copyright matching means an unlicensed thirty seconds of music can mute or block a whole narrative. The *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) supports removal of image-based abuse and cyberbullying material, which is a constraint on what you may distribute about other people. And since 10 December 2025, under the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth), age-restricted social media platforms must take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 holding accounts — a planning constraint for any Year 11 distribution plan that assumed a personal account would carry the work.

Ethical constraints: what the law does not reach. The law sets a floor. Most of the decisions that determine whether your narrative treats people well sit above it.

Informed consent is a process, not a signature. The ethical version of consent asks whether the person actually understands what they agreed to: what the narrative is about, what their contribution will be used for, who will see it, and that they can raise a concern before the edit is locked. A participant who signed a release in the first week and is astonished by the finished product was not, in any useful sense, informed.

Duty of care. You are responsible for the wellbeing of people who appear in and work on your narrative — during production and after publication. A participant may face consequences you will not: recognition, family conflict, employment risk. Duty of care includes deciding not to use material you are lawfully entitled to use.

The ethics of the edit. This is where non-fiction lives or dies. Editing is selection, and selection is legitimate — but the test is whether the assembled version fairly represents what the person meant. Tightening an answer is normal; splicing two answers into one sentence, cutting the qualification that followed a strong claim, or reversing an order to manufacture a contradiction is not. The same applies to reconstruction: staged material in a factual narrative should be signalled to the audience, not smuggled in as observed.

Representation. Depicting a group is not endorsing what you depict, but the choice of who speaks, who is seen and who is spoken about is yours and is answerable. Ethical practice asks whether people in the narrative would recognise themselves in it.

Attribution and crew. Moral rights are the legal floor; the ethical standard is that everybody who contributed is credited in the form they agreed, and that unpaid labour on your production is genuinely a learning collaboration rather than a way of getting work for nothing.

Published codes. Professionals do not invent these judgements each morning. The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance **Journalist Code of Ethics** sets out honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others across twelve clauses; the Australian Press Council's Standards of Practice bind participating publishers; the national **Mindframe** guidelines shape how suicide and mental ill-health are reported and depicted. None of these is a statute, and all of them are real constraints on what is made.

Community constraints: the people on the other side of the camera. Every narrative is made inside a community and answers to it.

Community standards are what a particular audience, in a particular place, at a particular time, will accept. Classification is the codified version, but standards run ahead of and behind it: material that passes a classification can still be wrong for a Year 7 assembly, and a community's tolerance differs from the next suburb's.

The community you depict. Consultation before production changes narratives more than any note given afterwards: it changes who tells the story, which locations are available, what may be filmed and what is left out. Sharing a rough cut with participants before release is not surrendering editorial control; it is how errors are caught. Where a narrative engages First Nations people, culture or concepts, established protocols apply — Screen Australia publishes long-standing guidance for filmmakers — and the reason protocols carry so much weight is that copyright law protects Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property poorly. An individual work by an identifiable First Nations creator is protected by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) like any other: a photograph, a song recording, a painting. What copyright cannot hold is communal, intergenerational cultural expression, because it recognises individual authors rather than communities, protects only what has been fixed in material form rather than the story, song, dance or knowledge itself, and expires. Protocol and consent carry the weight copyright leaves unheld. Subtopic 7A develops that ground; here the point is narrower — protocol is one mechanism by which community constraint operates.

The community you make inside. For a school production this is concrete: a code of conduct, child-safe policy, permission to film on the grounds, rules about uniforms and identifiable students, and a duty to other people's classes while you shoot. These are constraints in exactly the sense used here.

The community's sanction is relational. A court can stop you distributing; a community simply stops cooperating. In a small town, a regional newsroom or a school, the producer has to live with the audience afterwards, and that is often the constraint that changes behaviour most.

Where constraints bite, stage by stage. Constraints are not a single gate before release. They arrive at every stage of the media production process, and the document that discharges each one belongs to that stage.

Stage	Legal	Ethical	Community	Document produced
Development	Can this be cleared at all — rights, access, classification target?	Should this story be told by us, and who is affected?	Who needs to be consulted before the idea is fixed?	Concept and clearance outline
Pre-production	Releases, location permits, licences, checks, safety obligations	Consent explained properly; participants briefed on where it will be shown	Consultation, protocols, school and site permissions	Release forms, permits, risk assessment, consent record
Production	Recording only what consent covers;	Duty of care on the day; the right to stop	Behaviour on location; access	Call sheet, shot log, on-day consent notes

Stage	Legal	Ethical	Community	Document produced
	safety on set; surveillance-device limits		honoured on the terms given	
Post-production	Licences for every asset; moral-rights credits; defamation risk in the cut	Fair representation of what was said; disclosure of reconstruction and AI	Right of reply; rough cut shown back where promised	Asset and licence log, credits list, legal read
Distribution	Classification where required; platform terms; online-safety limits; age rules	Honest framing in titles, captions and promotion	Screening suitability; community notice; complaint handling	Distribution plan, content advice, permissions register

The paperwork is the constraint made operational. A short list covers most student productions: a **talent release** for every identifiable person; **parent or guardian consent** for anyone under 18; a **location agreement or permit**; a **licence and attribution record** for every asset that is not yours, kept in the asset log; a **risk assessment**; a **credits list**; and a **distribution note** recording where the work may be shown under the permissions you actually hold.

Method for this subtopic. Four steps carry almost every 11B question:

1. **Name the constraint precisely** — the actual obligation or expectation, not the category. Not “copyright”; “the track is licensed CC BY-ND, so it cannot be edited — and synching it to picture would edit it”.
2. **Classify it** — ethical, legal or community, and say where it is more than one.
3. **Name the stage and the action** — where in the production process it bites and what you did about it, including the document.
4. **Name the impact** — what the audience finally receives, and what the narrative gained or lost.

Looking ahead: the formal study of media regulation and control in Australia belongs to Units 3 & 4; here the constraints are studied as conditions on your own production and distribution.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Explain how a legal constraint shaped a production decision in a narrative you have produced. Refer to the student short film *Cold Store*. (4 marks)

“Explain” needs a chain — constraint, action, impact — not a definition of copyright.

Working	Comment
<i>Cold Store</i> is a nine-minute fictional short made by a Year 11 crew working under the production name Hobsley Pictures, about two night-shift workers in a regional cool room.	Open by naming the product, form and length. The scale matters: constraints are the same, resources are not.
The original edit ran a commercial track by the band Pellow Street under the closing sequence, taken from a streaming service.	Set up the situation the constraint acts on, concretely.
Under the <i>Copyright Act 1968</i> (Cth) that use required two permissions — a synchronisation licence for the composition and a master use licence for the recording — and no fair dealing purpose applied, because the film neither criticises nor reviews the song.	Step 1 — name the constraint exactly, including why the obvious escape route is closed. This is the sentence that earns the mark.
The quoted fee was \$1,800 against a total production budget of \$400, a shortfall of \$1,400, so the crew	Step 2 — name the action taken, and note that the response has its own document.

Working	Comment
commissioned a two-minute guitar and field-recording cue from a Music student instead, with a written licence and a credit.	
The impact is audible: the closing sequence now runs under a sparse original cue built from the cool-room hum recorded on location, which ties the ending to the film's own soundscape instead of borrowing an outside mood.	Step 3 — name the impact on the narrative the audience receives. The constraint changed meaning, not just the credits.
The constraint was limiting and enabling at once — it removed a track the crew liked, and produced a soundtrack that is original, cleared and distributable on any platform.	Close on the enabling side, and note that clearance is what makes distribution possible at all.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Explain how an ethical constraint can shape the post-production of a non-fictional narrative. Refer to the podcast episode *The Second Siren*. (4 marks)

The stem says **post-production** and **ethical**, so an answer about permits, or about the law, drifts off the question.

Working	Comment
<i>The Second Siren</i> is a 28-minute audio narrative made by Wickerby Audio about a country football club's decision to merge with its nearest rival.	Name the product and form. Audio narrative is one of the study design's own task types.
In the edit, one interviewee's strongest line — "the club was finished either way" — was followed on tape by a qualification she made immediately afterwards about the club's junior teams.	Identify the specific moment. Ethical questions in the edit are always about a particular cut, never about editing in general.
Using the line without the qualification would have been lawful and would have made a sharper act break, but it would not have represented what she meant, so the producers kept both sentences and lost eleven seconds of pace.	Step 1 — name the ethical constraint : fair representation of what a participant meant. Note explicitly that the law did not require this.
They also sent her the section before release, as promised at the interview, and she asked for one place name to be removed because a family was identifiable in a town of 900 people.	Step 2 — the action : consent treated as a process, and duty of care to someone who lives there afterwards.
The impact is a narrative that is slower at its turning point but more credible: the audience hears a person reasoning rather than delivering a verdict, and the merger reads as genuinely contested rather than settled.	Step 3 — the impact . The ethical decision produced a different reading of the whole story.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Describe how community constraints can affect the distribution of a narrative made about a small community. (3 marks)

Community constraints reach distribution through the simple fact that the audience and the subject are the same people. A photographic narrative about a drought-affected district, shot by a student in the town where she lives, can be distributed lawfully to anyone — but the families in the images will see it, and so will their neighbours. That expectation changes distribution decisions in visible ways: the series is shown first at the Ashcott Community House with the subjects invited before it goes online, captions are checked with the people named in them, and one image of a closed shopfront is withdrawn at the owner's request because the business was still trading. The community's sanction is not legal but relational — refusal of access next time, and a reputation that follows a young producer in a

district of two thousand people. *Takeaway*: community constraint shows up in distribution as sequence, consultation and withdrawal — who sees the work first, and what does not travel.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Analyse the impact of ethical, legal and community constraints on the production and distribution of a media narrative. (6 marks)

Take *Last Bus from Tarnbury*, a twelve-minute non-fictional audio-visual narrative about the withdrawal of a regional bus service, made by a student crew in the town it is about.

At **production** the three families arrive together at a single decision: whether to film inside the bus depot. The **legal** constraint is that the depot is private property and the drivers' crib-room exchanges are private conversations the crew would not be part of, so the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) rules out recording them without each party's consent — and separately rules out publishing such a record without it — while the operator's permission is needed to be there at all. The **ethical** constraint is that two drivers were about to lose their jobs and had not told their families, so the crew explained where the narrative would be shown before asking them to sign a release, and offered one of them the option of audio only. The **community** constraint is that the depot is the district's largest employer, and being seen to film there without asking first would have cost the crew access to everything else in the town. The combined effect on the narrative is structural: the film is built from two consenting drivers, the depot exterior and the last scheduled run, rather than from the interior vérité footage originally planned, and it is more intimate and less institutional as a result.

At **distribution** the constraints change shape. Legally, the soundtrack had to be cleared for public communication before upload, because an automated platform match on an unlicensed track would have muted the film; ethically, the crew removed the surname of a driver who asked for it after seeing the rough cut, even though the release covered it; and as a community matter the first screening was held at the local hall for the people in the film, a week before the public link went out. The audience therefore receives a narrative told by named participants who chose to be named, released to its own community first. *Takeaway*: the same three families reach both stages, and at each stage the decision that answers them is what shapes what the audience actually gets.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Define each of the following as it applies to the production and distribution of media products. (a) A legal constraint. (b) An ethical constraint. (c) A community constraint. (d) State one way in which a single decision can involve all three. (4 marks)

Q2. Constraints rarely arrive one at a time. (a) Classify each condition into the family it most clearly belongs to: (i) a track is licensed with a no-derivatives condition; (ii) a staged reconstruction is labelled on screen so the audience is not misled; (iii) a school requires permission before filming in the yard; (iv) an identifiable person must sign a release. (b) Explain why classifying a constraint is more than a labelling exercise. (c) Give one example of a decision that answers a legal and an ethical constraint at the same time. (6 marks)

Q3. The dot point names both production and distribution. (a) State the difference between a constraint on production and a constraint on distribution. (b) Classify each as mainly production or mainly distribution: (i) a talent release; (ii) a platform's terms of service; (iii) a location permit; (iv) a classification requirement. (c) Explain how one constraint can operate at both stages. (5 marks)

Q4. Using someone else's material is governed by statute. (a) Name the Commonwealth Act that governs copyright in Australia, and state when copyright begins. (b) Name two fair dealing purposes recognised in Australia. (c) Explain why a producer planning to publish a narrative online should license material rather than rely on fair dealing. (6 marks)

Q5. Creators hold rights that cannot be bought. (a) Name the three moral rights held by a creator under Australian law. (b) State the production document that most directly discharges the right of attribution. (c) Explain why moral rights still apply where someone else owns the copyright. (5 marks)

Q6. Recording people carries obligations before anything is published. (a) Name the Victorian Act that restricts the use of listening and optical surveillance devices. (b) State two things a usable talent release should tell the participant. (c) Explain why a signed release is not the same thing as informed consent. (5 marks)

Q7. Apply the four-step method to a narrative you have produced this year. (a) Identify one ethical, legal or community constraint that applied to it. (b) Describe the action you took, and name the document it produced. (c) Explain the impact of that action on the finished narrative or its distribution. (6 marks)

Un scaffolded

Q8. Outline the difference between a legal constraint and an ethical constraint. (2 marks)

Q9. Describe how community constraints can shape the **production** of a narrative made about the community the producer lives in. (3 marks)

Q10. (Stimulus.) Read the extract from the asset log for a short audio-visual narrative below.

Stimulus.

Asset	Source	Licence	Status
Opening theme, 45 s	Barrowsedge Sound Library	CC BY-ND	Logged by the crew as cleared
Street footage, 20 s	Downloaded from a video platform	None identified	Not cleared
Interview audio	Recorded by crew	Release signed	Cleared

Describe how the two licence conditions in this log would shape the finished narrative. (3 marks)

Q11. Explain how a legal constraint can act on the **distribution** of a media narrative. (4 marks)

Q12. (Stimulus.) Read the release wording below.

Stimulus. “I agree to appear in a student media production and to the use of my image and voice in any media, anywhere, forever.”

Explain two problems with this wording, one legal and one ethical. (4 marks)

Q13. Explain why an editing decision that is entirely lawful may still be unethical in the post-production of a non-fictional narrative. (4 marks)

Q14. (Stimulus.) A producer reviews the clearance register below, eight days before a public screening.

Stimulus.

Item	Position
Archival news clip, 35 s	Rights holder has not replied
Interviewee aged 16	Signed; parent or guardian consent not obtained
Rooftop drone shot	Flown over a crowded market on a Saturday
Closing music	Original composition, licence signed

Discuss how the producer should respond to this register and what the impact on the narrative would be. (5 marks)

Q15. Discuss whether working within ethical constraints limits a media narrative or improves it. (5 marks)

Q16. (Stimulus.) Read the distribution plan below.

Stimulus. Hobsley Pictures plans to release its fifteen-minute narrative through a personal social media account held by a 15-year-old crew member, to screen it at a public film night in a hired hall, and to sell tickets at \$5 to cover costs. The soundtrack uses a library track licensed for non-commercial use.

Analyse the legal and community constraints on this distribution plan. (6 marks)

Q17. Explain how a single production decision can answer ethical, legal and community constraints at once. Use examples in your response. (6 marks)

Q18. Analyse the impact of ethical, legal and community constraints on the production **and** distribution of a narrative you have produced this year. (8 marks)

Narrative produced (form): _____

Q19. (*Extended response.*) Analyse the impact of ethical, legal and community constraints on the production and distribution of media narratives. (10 marks)

Your response should:

- refer to two narratives in different media forms, at least one of which you have produced
- address all three families of constraint
- deal with both production and distribution
- trace specific decisions to their impact on the finished narratives

Narrative 1 (form): _____

Narrative 2 (form): _____

Answers

Q1. (a) A condition imposed by law — statute or court — enforceable against the producer. (b) A condition set by professional standards, published codes or the producer's own judgement about right conduct, with no legal enforcement. (c) A condition created by the expectations of the community the work is made in, made for and depicts, including cultural protocols and school rules. (d) Any valid example, e.g. seeking consent before filming an identifiable person is legal (surveillance and release), ethical (the person agreed knowingly) and community (access is preserved).

Q2. (a) (i) legal; (ii) ethical; (iii) community; (iv) legal. (b) Classification tells you who enforces it, what discharges it and what the consequence of breach is — a licence condition needs a licence, a community expectation needs consultation. (c) Any valid example, e.g. crediting a collaborator discharges moral rights (legal) and honours the agreement made with them (ethical).

Q3. (a) Production constraints shape the making — what may be recorded, where, with whose permission; distribution constraints shape the reaching of an audience — platform, classification, screening, terms. (b) (i) production; (ii) distribution; (iii) production; (iv) distribution. (c) Copyright operates at both: a licence is needed to include material in the edit, and communicating the work to the public is a separate act again.

Q4. (a) The *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth); copyright exists automatically when an original work is put into material form — no registration required. (b) Any two of: research or study; criticism or review; parody or satire; reporting news; professional legal advice; access by a person with a disability. (c) Fair dealing is narrow and purpose-limited, publishing online is a communication to the public judged on its own, and platform matching can block or mute the work — a licence gives certainty.

Q5. (a) Attribution of authorship; not to have authorship falsely attributed; integrity of authorship. (b) The credits list. (c) Moral rights are personal to the creator and cannot be sold or transferred, so they survive any assignment of copyright; a creator can only consent to particular acts.

Q6. (a) The *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic). (b) Any two of: what the product is and who is making it; where and how it will be shown; how long the permission lasts; how to raise a concern. (c) A signature records agreement; informed consent requires that the person understood the project, its audience and the use — a release obtained without explanation is legally thin and ethically inadequate.

Q7. (a)–(c) Any produced narrative: a named constraint, the action and document, the impact on the finished work or its release.

Q8. *Outline (2)*. Legal = imposed by law and enforceable through courts or regulators; ethical = a standard of right conduct with no legal enforcement. One example each.

Q9. *Describe (3)*. Subjects and audience are the same people; permission sought face to face and explained; consultation before the idea is fixed; visible effects on what is shot — locations offered or refused, people who decline framed out, detail not pursued; the sanction is loss of access and cooperation.

Q10. *Describe (3)*. The ND condition rules the theme out of an audio-visual narrative altogether — synching music to picture is itself making a derivative — so the crew's "cleared" entry is wrong and a differently licensed theme, an original cue or a negotiated permission has to replace it, which reopens the opening sequence. The uncleared street footage cannot lawfully be published and must be reshot or cut, changing what the audience sees.

Q11. *Explain (4)*. Chain: rule → decision → effect on reach. Classification before public exhibition or sale; platform terms and automated copyright matching; online-safety limits on material about others; the under-16 account rule since 10 December 2025.

Q12. *Explain (4)*. Legal — "any media, anywhere, forever" is so broad it may not evidence genuine agreement, no parent or guardian consent is provided for, and no withdrawal path exists. Ethical — it tells the participant nothing about the project, so it cannot amount to informed consent.

Q13. *Explain (4)*. Law sets a floor; the edit is where meaning is made. A release lawfully covers material that would harm a participant; splicing answers or cutting a qualification is lawful but misrepresents what a person meant;

undisclosed reconstruction or generative AI is lawful but deceives the audience. Trace one to a specific change in the cut.

Q14. Discuss (5). Uncleared archive must be cut or replaced; parent or guardian consent must be obtained or the interview removed; the drone flight already breached Part 101 and nothing undoes it, though Part 101 penalises the flight and not the footage — so cutting the shot is a duty-of-care and school-policy call rather than a legal bar on using it; only the music is safe. Impact — a shorter, restructured narrative; reach a position on proceeding.

Q15. Discuss (5). Limits: pace lost, material withheld, structures changed. Improves: credibility, access, accuracy, distributability, participant trust. Reach a position — the constraint usually changes the narrative rather than weakening it.

Q16. Analyse (6). Legal — the under-16 social media account rule; ticket sales breach the non-commercial licence; a public screening engages classification and venue obligations. Community — audience suitability, notice to those depicted, complaint handling. Show how the plan must be rebuilt.

Q17. Explain (6). At least two worked examples where one act discharges all three — consent before filming; consultation before an idea is fixed; a rough cut shown back before release. Name which family each element answers.

Q18. See Fully-worked solutions for a full model.

Q19. See Fully-worked solutions for a full model plus band descriptors and common errors.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) A **legal constraint** is a condition imposed by law — Commonwealth or Victorian statute, or the courts — that binds a producer regardless of agreement, and is enforceable through injunctions, damages, takedown or prosecution. (b) An **ethical constraint** is a condition set by professional standards, published industry codes or the producer's own judgement about right conduct; nobody enforces it in a court, but breaching it harms participants, sources and reputation. (c) A **community constraint** is a condition created by the expectations of the community a work is made in, made for and depicts — including cultural protocols, community standards and the rules of a school or organisation — enforced by refusal of access, complaint and withdrawal of cooperation. (d) Seeking permission before filming an identifiable person answers all three at once: the law wants the consent that makes both the recording and its publication lawful, the ethics require the person to understand what they are agreeing to, and the community expects to be asked.

Q2. (a) (i) **legal** — a licence condition under copyright; (ii) **ethical** — disclosure the audience is owed, which no statute requires; (iii) **community** — the rules of the organisation you make inside; (iv) **legal** — the evidence of permission the law recognises. (b) Classification is not a labelling exercise because each family is discharged differently and fails differently. A licence condition is satisfied by obtaining a different licence; a community expectation is satisfied only by consultation; an ethical obligation is satisfied by a decision you take voluntarily. Naming the family tells you what to *do*. (c) Crediting a collaborator in the form agreed discharges the moral right of attribution under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) — a legal obligation — and simultaneously honours the working agreement made with them, which is the ethical standard.

Q3. (a) A **production** constraint governs the making — what may be recorded, where, of whom, with whose permission and under what safety obligations. A **distribution** constraint governs reaching an audience — the platform, the screening, the classification, the terms on which it may be hosted or sold. (b) (i) production; (ii) distribution; (iii) production; (iv) distribution. (c) Copyright is the clearest example. A licence is needed to include a track in the edit, and **communicating the work to the public** by uploading it is a separate exclusive right again — so a clearance sufficient for a classroom exercise may be insufficient for release. Consent works the same way: permission to be recorded is not permission to be published everywhere.

Q4. (a) The *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth). Copyright exists automatically as soon as an original work is put into material form; there is no registration system in Australia and no notice requirement. (b) Any two of: **research or study; criticism or review; parody or satire; reporting news; professional legal advice; access by a person with a disability**. (c) Australia has fair dealing, not the broader United States doctrine of fair use, so the purposes are closed and the use must genuinely be for one of them — a song under a montage is not criticism or review of the song.

Publishing online is also a distinct act: **communicating the work to the public** is judged on its own terms, not on the classroom use that preceded it. Practically, automated copyright matching on platforms will mute or block an unlicensed track whatever the legal argument, so a licence buys certainty as well as lawfulness. *Marker's note:* answers that say “you can use 10 per cent” or “it's fine if you credit it” are describing rules that do not exist.

Q5. (a) The right of **attribution** of authorship; the right **not to have authorship falsely attributed**; and the right of **integrity** of authorship — not to have the work subjected to treatment prejudicial to the creator's honour or reputation. (b) The **credits list**. (c) Moral rights are personal rights held by the creator, not property rights, so they cannot be sold or transferred with the copyright. A producer who commissions and owns a score still cannot leave the composer uncredited or alter the work in a way prejudicial to their reputation; the most the creator can do is *consent* to specified acts. For a film, the Act treats the principal director, principal producer and principal screenwriter as authors, which is why credit blocks are negotiated rather than improvised.

Q6. (a) The **Surveillance Devices Act 1999 (Vic)**. It makes it an offence to use a listening device to record a private conversation, or an optical surveillance device to record a private activity, that the user is **not a party to**, without the express or implied consent of each party — and, separately, to communicate or publish a record of a private conversation or private activity obtained with such a device without that consent. Being in the room answers the first prohibition, not the second. (b) Any two of: what the product is and who is making it; where and how it will be shown; how long the permission lasts; whether the person can be identified; how to raise a concern. (c) A signature is evidence that someone agreed; **informed** consent requires that they understood what they agreed to — the subject of the narrative, the audience it will reach, and the use of their contribution. A release signed without explanation is weak evidence legally and inadequate ethically, which is why consent is treated as a process running from the first approach to the locked edit rather than a form collected on day one.

Q7. (a)–(c) *Model response (student production: a five-minute observational documentary):* (a) The narrative was shot in a working café, which is private property, so the owner's permission was required and customers appearing recognisably in shot had to be identified and released. (b) The crew arranged a location agreement with the owner limiting filming to a quiet weekday hour, put a notice at the door, and collected releases from the three regulars who appear; two other customers declined and were framed out. Documents: a location agreement, three signed releases and a note on the shot log recording who declined. (c) The impact is a narrative built around three named regulars rather than the busy service the crew had planned, so the film became a portrait of a few people rather than a study of a crowd — quieter, more personal, and distributable without any risk of an unreleased face.

Q8. “Outline” asks for the key distinction, briefly. A **legal constraint** is imposed by law and enforceable — copyright clearance for a music track, for instance, where an unlicensed use can be blocked or sued on. An **ethical constraint** carries no legal force but binds professional practice — disclosing that a sequence was reconstructed, for example, which no statute requires.

Q9. “Describe” asks for an account. When a producer makes a narrative about the community they live in, the subjects and the audience are the same people, and that changes how the work is made. Permission is sought face to face and explained rather than posted as a form, because the person will be met again at the shops. Consultation happens before the idea is fixed, so the community's account of what is happening shapes who is approached and what is worth filming at all. On the day, the constraint is visible in what is recorded: some locations are offered and others quietly refused, people who decline are framed out rather than argued with, and a line of questioning is not pursued because the family concerned would be identifiable in a district of two thousand people. The sanction, if the producer gets it wrong, is not a court but the loss of every future interview in the district.

Q10. “Describe” asks for an account of both conditions. The theme is licensed **CC BY-ND**: it may be used as it stands and must be attributed, but it may **not** be edited, so cutting or looping it to fit a title sequence would be making a derivative. For an audio-visual narrative the condition reaches further than that, which is why the log's “cleared” entry is wrong. Every Creative Commons licence provides that where the licensed material is a musical work or sound recording, synching it in timed relation with a moving image always produces adapted material — so laying this theme under picture is an edit whatever its length, and a no-derivatives licence does not let you publish the result. The theme has to give way to a differently licensed track, an original cue or a separately negotiated permission, and the opening is rebuilt around whatever replaces it. (Had the product been a podcast, the answer would be the familiar one: run the full 45 seconds or drop it.) The street footage has **no identified licence**, so it cannot lawfully be published and would in any case risk an automated platform match; it must be replaced with footage the crew shoots themselves or

cut, which changes what the audience sees in the establishing sequence. *Marker's note*: the marks are for the effect on the narrative, not for spotting that one row says "Not cleared".

Q11. "Explain" asks for a chain, not a list. A legal constraint acts on distribution by deciding who may lawfully receive the work. Films and computer games must be **classified** under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth) before they are sold, hired or publicly exhibited, so a producer moving from a classroom screening to a ticketed public one enters a scheme that costs money and can restrict the audience by age. A platform's **terms of service** are a contract: the producer warrants that they hold every right in the work, and automated copyright matching will mute or block a narrative containing an unlicensed track — so an unresolved clearance becomes an unreachable audience. Since 10 December 2025, under the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth), age-restricted social media platforms must take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 holding accounts, so a plan that depended on a student's personal account may need a school or teacher-held channel instead. In each case the chain is the same: a rule fixes a condition, the producer changes the release, and the audience that receives the narrative changes with it.

Q12. "Explain" asks for two developed problems, one of each kind. **Legally**, the wording is unusable. It does not identify the production, so there is nothing to tie the permission to; "any media, anywhere, forever" is so broad that it is poor evidence of genuine agreement; there is no provision for a parent or guardian to consent where the participant is under 18; and there is no withdrawal path, so a participant who later objects has only a complaint and the producer has only a signature. **Ethically**, it fails the informed-consent test outright: it tells the person nothing about the subject of the narrative, who will see it or how their contribution will be used, so the signature records compliance rather than understanding. A workable release names the production and producer, states where the work will be shown, sets a term, and tells the person who to contact — and is explained in conversation before it is signed.

Q13. "Explain" asks why the two families come apart at exactly this point. The law sets a floor and the edit sits well above it, because editing is selection and selection can change meaning without changing a word. Nothing in the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), a signed release or the *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic) prevents a producer from splicing two answers into one sentence, cutting the qualification that immediately followed a strong claim, or reordering exchanges so that a speaker appears to contradict themselves — yet each produces a version the participant never gave, which fails the ethical test of **fair representation of what the person meant**. The same gap opens twice more. A **release lawfully covers** material whose publication would expose a participant to harm they did not anticipate, and the ethical decision is to cut it anyway. And staged reconstruction or a machine-generated voice can be used without breaching any statute, while **disclosure** is what stops the audience being deceived about what they are watching. The point to make is that legality is decided before the edit and ethics is decided inside it: each of these judgements shows up in the finished narrative as something concrete — a slower turning point, an on-screen label, a name removed. *Marker's note*: answers that only define the two words score two marks; the marks are for showing where a lawful cut goes wrong.

Q14. "Discuss" asks for developed responses and a position. Three of the four lines have to change, though not all three for the same kind of reason. The **archival clip** has no permission: silence from a rights holder is not a licence, so at eight days out it must be cut or replaced with an interviewee describing the same events, which costs 35 seconds of the strongest visual evidence and forces the sequence to carry more narration. The **16-year-old interviewee** has signed, but a parent or guardian consent is missing; the producer should obtain it immediately and, failing that, remove the interview, which would cost a whole perspective and require the structure to be rebalanced. The **drone shot** was flown over a crowd, outside the standard operating rules in Part 101 of the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (Cth), and no later consent cures a flight that has already happened. Be precise about what that means: Part 101 penalises the **flight**, not the footage, and unlike the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) — which separately restricts publishing a record obtained with a surveillance device — it places no bar on using the shot. It should still come out. Screening it advertises an unsafe operation over a crowd, no school will authorise it, and the people below were put at risk for one pretty frame — but that is duty of care, reputation and school policy rather than a legal prohibition on use, and an answer that says otherwise misstates the law. An establishing shot must be found from ground level. Only the **original composition** is secure. My position is that the screening should proceed with a shorter, restructured narrative rather than be delayed: two of the three problems are curable by cutting, one by a phone call, and going ahead with unlicensed archive and an unconsented minor would expose the producer far more than losing a minute of running time. *Marker's note*: answers that list the problems without saying what the narrative loses do not reach the top band.

Q15. “Discuss” wants both sides developed and a position reached. The case that ethical constraints limit a narrative is real and should be conceded honestly. They cost pace: keeping a qualification that follows a strong quote weakens an act break. They cost material: a participant who withdraws after seeing a rough cut takes a scene with them. They cost time in a schedule that has none, since consent explained properly is a conversation rather than a form. The case that they improve the narrative is stronger. Consent treated as a process buys access — people who trust a producer say more, and the strongest material in most non-fiction comes from participants who were not ambushed. Fair editing buys **credibility**: an audience that senses a quote has been trimmed to a point stops believing the whole narrative. Disclosure of reconstruction or generative AI protects the work from the single most damaging accusation a factual narrative can attract. And ethical practice is often what makes the work distributable at all, because the same care that respects a participant produces the releases and clearances a platform or screening requires. My position is that ethical constraints rarely make a narrative weaker; they make it *different*, usually slower and more qualified, and almost always more trustworthy — and trust is the currency non-fiction trades in.

Q16. “Analyse” asks you to break the plan into elements and show how they interact. The plan has three legal problems and one community problem, and they compound. **The account.** Since 10 December 2025 the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth) has required age-restricted social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 holding accounts, so a release built on a 15-year-old’s personal account is not a plan that can be relied on; the crew needs a school-held or teacher-held channel, which also puts the release under the school’s own policies. **The licence.** The soundtrack is licensed for **non-commercial** use, and selling \$5 tickets is a commercial use even where the money only covers costs — so either the tickets go (a free screening with a donation tin is a different proposition) or the music is replaced. **The screening.** A ticketed public event in a hired hall is a public exhibition rather than a class screening, which engages classification obligations under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth), and the venue will have its own insurance, capacity and safety conditions. **The community dimension** runs across all three: an audience at a public film night is not a media class, so content advice should be given at the door, anyone identifiable in the narrative should be told before strangers see it, and there should be a person named to handle complaints. Analysed together, the plan is not fixable by one change — the account, the licence and the ticket price are linked, because each of them turns on the same fact that this is a public, quasi-commercial release rather than a school exercise.

Q17. “Explain” asks how the families converge on one act. The most efficient production decisions discharge more than one constraint at once, which is why experienced producers front-load them. **Consent sought properly before filming** is the clearest case. Legally it puts the crew on the right side of both limbs of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) — the recording and the later publication of a record of it — and produces the release that evidences permission. Ethically it satisfies informed consent, because explaining the project is how the person comes to understand what they are agreeing to. As a community matter it preserves access, because a producer who asks first is a producer the next family will talk to. **Consultation before the idea is fixed** works the same way: it reduces defamation and privacy risk because errors are corrected before publication (legal), it prevents a group being represented without a voice (ethical), and it is what the depicted community expects (community). **Showing a rough cut back to participants** discharges a promise (ethical), catches factual errors that create legal exposure (legal), and sequences the release so the community sees the work first (community). The point to make in an answer is that these are not three separate tasks stacked on a schedule — one action, taken early, answers all three, and taken late it answers none of them.

Q18. *Model response (8 marks) — student production: a fifteen-minute non-fictional audio-visual narrative about a suburban skate park under threat of closure.*

At the **production** stage the binding legal constraint was consent, because the park’s users are mostly under 18. Every identifiable rider needed a signed release and, for those under 18, a parent or guardian consent as well; adults supervising the shoot at a site used by children raised the school’s child-safe obligations under Victoria’s Child Safe Standards, and the council’s permission was needed to film on public land. The action was a two-week pre-production block that produced eleven releases, nine parent consents, a council permit and a risk assessment covering the ramp area. The impact on the narrative was direct: four riders whose parents did not respond were filmed only in wide shots from behind, so the film’s visual grammar is built on long lenses and silhouettes rather than the close observational style originally storyboarded — which, unplanned, gave the park a collective rather than individual character.

The ethical constraint at production was duty of care to a fifteen-year-old whose interview turned to his home situation. He had signed, his mother had consented, and the material was strong. The crew’s decision was to keep the

section about the park and cut the rest, and to tell him that was the plan before the edit was locked. Nothing legally required this. The community constraint operated through the council: the crew sought comment from the officer responsible for the closure proposal and gave her a right of reply, which both improved the film's balance and made the council willing to be filmed at the public meeting that becomes the narrative's climax.

At **distribution** the constraints changed shape. Legally, the soundtrack was original because a commercial track would have needed synchronisation and master use licences under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) that the production could not afford, and an unlicensed one would have been muted by automated matching on upload; the credits list was written to discharge moral rights for every contributor. The under-16 account rule meant the release ran through a teacher-held channel rather than a crew member's personal account. Ethically and as a community matter, the first screening was held at the park itself for the riders and their families a week before the public link went out, and one rider's surname was removed from the credits at his request even though the release covered it.

The overall impact is that the audience receives a narrative told through consenting participants, shot in a style that the consent position itself produced, balanced by a right of reply, released to its own community first and distributable without a clearance risk. The constraints did not sit outside the creative work. They produced its look, its balance and its release pattern.

Q19. Model response (10 marks).

Ethical, legal and community constraints are not obstacles placed in front of a finished idea. They are conditions that operate through the whole production process, and the decisions taken in response are visible in what the audience finally receives. Taking a student-produced audio-visual narrative and a published podcast series together shows that all three families reach both production and distribution, but through different mechanisms and with different force.

Legal constraints are the least negotiable and the easiest to underestimate. In the audio-visual narrative they arrive as consent and clearance. Recording identifiable people engages the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic), which makes it an offence to record a private conversation or private activity you are not a party to without each party's consent and, separately, to publish a record so obtained without it, so a release is collected for every identifiable participant and a parent or guardian consents for anyone under 18. Every asset that is not the crew's own needs a licence under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), where fair dealing is narrow and purpose-limited and a commercial song would need both a synchronisation licence and a master use licence — which is usually why student soundtracks are original or Creative Commons, and why a no-derivatives track cannot go under picture at all, since synching music to a moving image is itself an adaptation the licence will not let you publish. For the podcast the sharpest legal constraint is defamation: the *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic) governs publication in this state, and although since 1 July 2021 a plaintiff must show serious harm and publishers can rely on a public interest defence, the defence is built from evidence, so allegations are attributed to documents and a right of reply is sought and included. At **distribution** the legal picture changes again: a narrative screened publicly rather than in class engages classification, a platform's terms of service are a contract in which the producer warrants they hold every right, automated matching blocks unlicensed music, and since 10 December 2025 the under-16 social media account rule has removed a distribution channel students previously assumed.

Ethical constraints operate where the law stops. In both narratives the central one is that consent is a process rather than a signature: the participant should understand the subject, the audience and the use, and should be able to raise a concern before the edit is locked. In post-production the constraint becomes the ethics of the edit — tightening an answer is legitimate, splicing two answers together or cutting the qualification that followed a strong claim is not, because the assembled version has to represent what the person meant. Reconstruction and any generative-AI element are disclosed rather than smuggled in. Duty of care decides the hardest cases: material that a release lawfully covers may still be cut because publication would expose a participant to harm they did not anticipate. In the audio-visual narrative this costs pace at a turning point; in the podcast it costs an entire strand. Both are better for it, because the audience hears people reasoning rather than being used, and credibility is the currency non-fiction trades in.

Community constraints decide what is possible before either of the others is engaged. The narratives are made about communities whose members are also the audience, so consultation happens before the idea is fixed, not after the cut. Where a narrative engages First Nations people, culture or concepts, established protocols apply, and they carry particular weight because copyright protects Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property poorly: an individual work by an identifiable First Nations creator is protected like any other, but communal, intergenerational cultural expression is not, because copyright recognises individual authors, protects only what is fixed in material form, and expires.

Consent and protocol do the work a statute does elsewhere. For a school production the community is also institutional: a code of conduct, a child-safe policy and permission to film on the grounds. At distribution, community constraint governs sequence and suitability — the people in the work see it first, content advice is given where an audience is young or the material is difficult, guidance such as the national Mindframe recommendations shapes any treatment of suicide or mental ill-health, and someone is named to handle complaints.

Read together, the three families are layers on the same decision rather than separate processes. The decision to seek consent before filming answers the law, the ethics and the community at once; the decision to cut an uncleared clip answers copyright and, because it is replaced by a participant's own account, strengthens the narrative's voice; the decision to screen first for the people depicted answers a promise, a risk and an expectation together. The impact is therefore not a list of things the producers could not do. It is the shape of the work itself: who speaks, what is seen, how long the opening runs, where the turning point sits, which platform carries it and who sees it first. Constraints are limiting and enabling at the same time — the same care that restricts what may be recorded is what secures the access, the trust and the clearances that let the narrative reach an audience at all.

Band descriptors (out of 10):

- **High (8–10):** all three families named and used accurately and kept distinct; **both** production and distribution analysed; two narratives in **different forms**, at least one produced by the student; specific decisions traced to specific impacts on the finished work; constraints shown interacting; instruments named correctly; the enabling side addressed.
- **Mid (5–7):** all three families present but unevenly, or legal treated as the whole subject; production analysed more fully than distribution; two narratives present but one thinly used; impacts asserted rather than traced; general reference to “copyright” or “permission” without the specific condition.
- **Low (1–4):** constraints listed as rules without impact on any narrative; one narrative only, or two in the same form; ethical and legal used interchangeably; no distribution content; no documents or evidence.

Common errors: treating the three families as one and calling everything “legal”; **listing** obligations instead of tracing their **impact** on the narrative; stopping at production and ignoring **distribution**; importing Unit 1's institutional/economic/social/political list from 7B instead of the three families this dot point names; asserting a fair-use style rule that does not exist in Australian law; describing a release form as though a signature settles consent; and answering about media law in general rather than about a narrative and the decisions its producers actually took.

Chapter 11 Technical skills, constraints and evaluation — 11C Evaluating narrative productions: media language in design, production and evaluation

Theory

Unit 2 Area of Study 2 asks a practical question: *how can we use the production process to create our own media narratives?* Subtopic 11A dealt with the technical skills you apply when you operate the technologies, and 11B with the ethical, legal and community constraints you work inside. This subtopic deals with the words. Not the words in your narrative — the words **around** it: the sentences you write to plan it, the notes you keep while you build it, and the judgement you write when it is finished.

You already have the general framework. Subtopic 5C established **media production language** — the precise vocabulary and register practitioners use to design, produce and evaluate media products, and the difference between a sentence that ends in a meaning and a sentence that ends in a decision. All of that carries over unchanged and is not repeated here. What changes in Unit 2 is the **object**. You are no longer building a representation that can be judged one frame at a time. You are building a **narrative**, and a narrative can only be judged as a chain.

The study design's four words. The key knowledge for this area of study names “media language appropriate to the **design, production and evaluation** of media products”. The matching key skill names one more: “use media language appropriate to the **design, construction, production and evaluation** of media productions”. *Construction* appears in the skill and not in the knowledge, and it is not padding — it is the moment at which a set of separate decisions has to be assembled into a chain that holds. Treat the four as four jobs your language does:

Moment	The question your language answers	Where the language lives
Design	What narrative will exist, for whom, and what is it demonstrating?	Logline, premise, statement of intention and audience, treatment, series statement
Construction	In what order does the audience receive it, knowing what, joined how?	Step outline or beat sheet, scene breakdown, panel breakdown, sequence plan, branching map
Production	What was actually made, what departed from the plan, and what did the departure do to the chain?	Script and shooting script, shot list, run sheet, production log, edit notes
Evaluation	Did the narrative do what it was designed to do, for this audience — and was the decision sound?	Written evaluation, reflective statement, oral report

The four are one vocabulary used at four moments, which is why a vaguely designed narrative is almost impossible to evaluate well: there is nothing precise enough to test the finished product against.

What a narrative adds to the job. The study design defines 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. Each of those four features generates something your production language now has to specify:

- **a chain of events** — not just *what is in the shot* but *which event this is* and where it sits;
- **cause and effect** — the **join** between two events, because causation is read into joins, not stated in them;
- **space** — where the audience is placed, and whether the space is continuous or has jumped;
- **a period of time** — **duration** as a decision, and any **ellipsis** you are asking the audience to cross.

So the smallest unit of narrative design language is not a shot. It is a **beat** — one event, with a stated position in the plot and a stated consequence for what the audience knows. A shot list that names sizes, angles and durations but never says which event is being delivered is a technical document, not a narrative one.

The narrative design line. A usable line of narrative production language names five things in order: **story event** → **plot decision** → **code and convention** → **audience access** → **intended read**. The plot decision is drawn from the

four levers established in 8A — **selection, order, duration and access** — used here to *choose* rather than to analyse. Compare:

“Scene 4 is where Ida decides to leave. I’ll make it feel tense and sad.”

with

“Scene 4 delivers the story event ‘Ida decides to leave’ (**event**). The audience sees her burn the letter but is never shown what it said (**selection and access**), and the scene is held as a single static wide of eight seconds with the fire out of focus in the foreground (**camera and duration**), so that a 15- to 18-year-old audience knows a decision has been made before it knows what the decision was (**intended read**).”

The second can be storyboarded, shot, cut, and then honestly questioned: did withholding the letter make the audience curious, or confused? The first can do none of that. It is the same test 5C set — can somebody else act on this sentence, and can you later check it? — applied to an event rather than to an image.

The document is form-specific, and so is the join. Unit 2 productions are made in a chosen form, and each form organises a narrative into a different structural unit and hands the audience a different kind of gap to cross. Use the document and the unit that belong to your form.

Media form	Narrative planning documents	Unit of structure	The join the audience reads across
Moving image (short film, drama, animation)	Logline, treatment, step outline or beat sheet, scene breakdown, script, storyboard, animatic, shooting script	The scene, then the shot	The cut, dissolve, match cut or fade — and the ellipsis it covers
Audio (radio drama, narrative podcast)	Premise, episode outline, segment rundown, script with sound cues	The segment or scene, then the cue	The cross-fade, the hard cut in the mix, and silence used as a gap
Still image (photographic narrative series)	Series statement, frame list, sequence plan, contact-sheet edit	The frame, then the run of frames	The gap between frames, and the order in which they are hung or printed
Print (graphic narrative, photo essay, feature layout)	Synopsis, page and panel breakdown, thumbnails, flatplan	The page, then the panel	The gutter between panels and the page turn
Digital and interactive (game, branching video)	Premise, level or quest outline, branching map, greybox plan	The level or branch, then the beat	The trigger, the checkpoint and the player choice point

Two consequences worth stating plainly. First, **the join is a design decision with a name**, so it must be written down: “cut on the movement of her hand so the two events read as consecutive” is design language; “then it cuts to the next bit” is not. Second, **a term precise in one form does not exist in another** — a photographic series has no cutting rate, a podcast has no gutter — so a plan written in the wrong register is not merely inelegant, it fails to specify anything.

The second standard: the concept your exercise demonstrates. The study design says Unit 2 narratives are created “in the form of **media exercises** that demonstrate one or more concepts covered in Area of Study 1”. That gives a Unit 2 production **two** standards rather than one, and your language must name both:

1. the **narrative intention** — the chain of events you set out to deliver and how you wanted a specified audience to read it; and
2. the **concept being demonstrated** — the distinctive style of a creator, the manipulation of media codes and conventions, the use or subversion of genre, the influence of a historical or cultural context, or the influence of the narrative on audience engagement.

A design document that says “a four-page graphic narrative about a stolen bicycle” states neither. One that says “a four-page graphic narrative delivering the story of a stolen bicycle, made to demonstrate **genre subversion**: crime-genre conventions established on pages 1–2 and withdrawn on pages 3–4” states both, and can therefore be evaluated against both. Naming the concept is the single most commonly missed move in Unit 2 folios.

Construction: holding the chain while everything else moves. During construction your plan will change, and the risk is specific to narrative — a lost location costs you a *scene*, and a lost scene may cost you a *cause*. Three habits keep the chain intact and the changes reviewable.

Version the structure, not just the shot list. A beat sheet marked v1 and v2 with the reason for the revision attached shows the plot as a set of choices; an undated plan silently overwritten shows nothing. **Anchor everything to numbered beats and scenes**, so a later note can say exactly which link in the chain moved. And **write the consequence in narrative terms**. A production log entry in Unit 2 records what 5C’s entries recorded — what was planned, what was done instead, why — and then adds the question that belongs to this unit: *what did this change do to the cause-and-effect chain, and to what the audience knows at that point?* An entry that stops at “reshot at the produce stall instead” has recorded a schedule. An entry that adds “which removes the only visible cause for beat 5, so the audience now has to infer it from dialogue” has recorded a narrative decision.

Evaluating a narrative production. This is the subtopic’s headline and the job most often done badly, because the two easiest things to write are both wrong: a **retelling** of the plot, and a verdict on the **story idea** rather than on the production. Evaluation is a judgement of decisions you made, measured against standards you stated. Work at three levels.

Level	What you are judging	A sentence at that level
The decision	Did this one choice do the job it was designed to do?	“The eight-second hold on the burning letter delivered the decision without the content, as designed.”
The sequence	Do the decisions around it hold together as a run?	“But scenes 4 to 6 all withhold, so the withholding stops reading as tension and starts reading as evasion.”
The narrative	Does the audience receive the chain, and read it as intended?	“The result is that the departure lands, while the reason for it never quite does.”

A verdict needs **evidence**, and a narrative production offers two kinds. **Product evidence** is the named decision itself — a shot length, a beat order, a panel gap, a cue. **Audience evidence** is what the narrative was actually understood to be. The cheapest and most useful instrument is a **rough-cut screening** in which you ask viewers or listeners one question — *what did you think happened, and why?* — and write down the answers verbatim. Their answers tell you whether the chain is **legible**. Three cautions: five classmates are not a sample, so report it as evidence and not as proof; the question tests comprehension, not quality, so do not convert “they liked it” into anything; and a disagreement about meaning may be exactly what you designed, in which case say so rather than treating every variation as a fault.

Judge the decision, not only the outcome. Four cases exist, and naming which one you are in is what separates a strong evaluation from a shrug:

- a sound decision that worked — say why it worked, in production language;
- a sound decision that did not work — the reasoning was right and something in execution, timing or context defeated it;
- an unsound decision that worked anyway — worth admitting, because it will not work twice;
- an unsound decision that did not work — the ordinary case, and the one to diagnose precisely.

Graded verdicts (*successfully, largely, partially, only in part, did not*) do the same work here as in 5C, and a split verdict is usually the honest one. Finish with a change that is **concrete and reasoned** — “shorten shot 22 to four seconds so duration stops pointing at the car” — not “improve the pacing”.

Three register traps. Do not slip into the analytic voice when you mean your own choice: “the film constructs Ida as decisive” describes a product as a critic; “I cut from the letter to the empty platform so Ida reads as decisive” describes a decision as its maker. Do not evaluate the **idea** — the marks are for the production, and an original premise executed badly is a weak production. And do not retell: if a sentence of your evaluation could sit in a plot synopsis unchanged, it is not evaluating anything.

Looking ahead: in Units 3 and 4 this language becomes the medium of a formally assessed pre-production plan, and of the documentation of the development, refinement and resolution of the product you make from it.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

A student has written the note below in the construction section of their folio for a short film. Rewrite it in media production language so that it could be given to a collaborator and later evaluated. (4 marks)

Student’s note. “Scene 4 is the big one where Ida decides to go. I want it to be really tense and for the audience to not know what’s going on yet.”

Working	Comment
Scene 4 of <i>Brindlecoe Crossing</i> delivers beat 3 of the plot — the story event “Ida decides to leave” — for an audience of 15- to 18-year-old students.	Name the event and its position in the chain first. “The big one” identifies nothing a collaborator can build; a numbered beat can be found, moved and checked.
The audience is shown Ida burning the letter but is never shown what the letter said: the content is selected out and released in scene 7.	The plot decision, in the vocabulary of selection and access. “Not know what’s going on” is a feeling; “the content is withheld until scene 7” is a decision with a stated end point.
The scene is a single static wide, held eight seconds, with the fire out of focus in the foreground and Ida sharp in the mid-ground; no score, room tone only.	Camera , duration and sound named at a level a camera operator and an editor can execute. Eight seconds is a commitment; “really tense” is not.
The long hold with no cutaway is intended to make the audience read a decision as already made before they learn its cause, so the scene builds anticipation rather than confusion.	Close the chain — the intended read , for this audience. Note it also states the failure mode being guarded against, which gives the evaluation something to test.
Recorded as beat 3 on the beat sheet (v2) and scene 4 on the scene breakdown; the withheld content is released at beat 9.	Anchoring the withholding to the beat where it is paid off is what makes it evaluable — an unpaid withholding is a plot hole, not a technique.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Using the stimulus below, evaluate the production at the level of the decision, the sequence and the narrative. (6 marks)

Stimulus. Production: *Halfway to Vantry*, a 6-minute narrative podcast episode. Intention: “to deliver the story of a bus driver who drives past his own stop for the third time, so that a 15- to 18-year-old audience reads his silence as a choice rather than an accident.” Concept demonstrated: the manipulation of sound codes in narrative construction. Construction decisions: the driver has no dialogue in segments 1–3; each pass of the stop is marked by the same four-second bed of engine tone and indicator tick; a passenger’s voice-over carries all exposition; segment 4 opens on eleven seconds of silence before the depot door closes.

Working	Comment
The intention was to deliver three passes of the driver’s own stop so that a 15- to 18-year-old audience read his silence as a choice; the exercise was to demonstrate the manipulation of sound codes.	Move 1 — restate both standards. Unit 2 evaluations that restate only the story intention leave half the question unanswered.

Working	Comment
At the level of the decision , the repeated four-second bed of engine tone and indicator tick worked as designed: an identical cue used three times converts a repeated event into a pattern the listener can count, which is what makes the third pass legible as deliberate.	Level 1 — one named decision, judged, with the reason it works stated in the vocabulary of the form.
At the level of the sequence , the decision to give the driver no dialogue across segments 1–3 works with the cue but against the exposition: because the passenger’s voice-over carries every fact, the listener receives the driver’s silence and the passenger’s explanation at the same moment, and the explanation resolves the silence before it has had time to be read as a choice.	Level 2 — the run of decisions. This is where most marks sit: a decision that is sound alone can be undercut by its neighbours.
At the level of the narrative , the episode partially achieved its intention: the chain of three passes is delivered cleanly, but the causal reading — that the silence is chosen — is available rather than compelled, and the eleven seconds of silence in segment 4 arrives after the point at which it could have done that work.	Level 3 — a graded verdict on the whole chain, with the shortfall located at a named point rather than described as “pacing”.
I would move the eleven-second silence to immediately after the second pass and cut the voice-over’s explanation to a single line, so the listener sits inside the driver’s silence before it is accounted for.	One concrete change with the reason it would work, in the same vocabulary. Note it changes the order of information , not the story.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Write a production log entry documenting a change made during construction of a photographic narrative series, in media production language. (4 marks)

8 August — Quorrel Street, frames 6–9 (beats 4 and 5). Planned frames 6 to 8 as three frames of the shopfront being boarded at dusk, to deliver beat 4 (“the shop closes”) and supply the visible cause for beat 5 (“the owner is packing the car”, frame 9). The contractors finished two hours before I arrived and the shopfront was already sheeted, so the boarding itself could not be photographed. The chain now has no image of the cause: with a sheeted shopfront and a packed car side by side, a viewer can read the sequence as *the shop closed and so he is leaving* or as *he left and so the shop closed*, and the second reversal breaks the intention. I shot frame 6 instead as a tight frame of the contractor’s docket taped to the glass, dated, added a wide of the empty interior as frame 7, and moved the packed car forward from frame 9 to frame 8, so that the interval sits between the cause and its consequence. The docket now carries the cause and the empty interior carries the interval, so the order of frames does the work the missing event would have done. Confirmed on the contact sheet before the sequence was printed.

Takeaway: a Unit 2 log entry earns its place when it names what the change did to the **cause-and-effect chain** and to what the audience can know at that point — not merely what was shot instead.

Example 4 — unscaffolded

Evaluate the extent to which the production below demonstrated the concept it was designed to demonstrate. (7 marks)

Stimulus. *Corriwell Yard*, a four-page graphic narrative. Concept to be demonstrated: the **subversion of genre**. Construction: pages 1–2 use crime-genre conventions — a night-time establishing panel of a locked yard, high-contrast shadow, a figure in silhouette, a dropped set of keys in close-up, six panels a page. Pages 3–4 withdraw them — the figure is the yard’s owner locked out of her own gate, the panel count drops to two a page with the gutters widened to match, the shadow is replaced by flat daylight, and the final panel is a wide of her waiting for a locksmith.

Corriwell Yard **largely demonstrated** genre subversion, and the reason it does is structural rather than decorative: the subversion is carried by the way the pages are built, not by the surprise itself.

Pages 1–2 establish the crime genre with enough discipline that there is something to withdraw. The night-time establishing panel, the silhouetted figure and the close-up of dropped keys are **genre conventions** doing their ordinary work of setting an expectation, and the six-panel grid contributes to it — a dense grid reads as fast and fragmentary, which is how the genre is usually paced. That density is the most useful decision in the exercise, because it makes the genre a property of the **layout** and not only of the content, so it can be withdrawn by a layout change.

Pages 3–4 perform the withdrawal at the level of the panel rather than the caption. Dropping to two panels a page slows the reading rate, and widening the gutters lengthens the gap the reader crosses between them; flat daylight removes the shadow that carried the threat. Because the reader's own pace changes, the subversion is something they experience rather than something they are told, which is the difference between subverting a genre and simply having a twist.

Where it falls short is the join at the page 2 to page 3 turn. The page turn is the strongest gap the form offers and the plan does not use it: page 3 opens on the owner mid-explanation, so the reader is given the answer before the turn has had a chance to hold the question. The consequence for the reading is that the genre expectation is **corrected** rather than **subverted** — the reader is told they were wrong instead of being led to discover it. I would hold the reveal one panel longer, ending page 2 on the keys entering the lock and opening page 3 on the wide of her hand on her own gate, so the turn carries the reversal.

Takeaway: a media exercise demonstrates its concept when the concept is visible in the **construction decisions** — panel count, gutter width, page turn — and not merely in what happens in the story.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. (2 marks) (a) Name the four activities the study design's key skill says media language must be appropriate to. (1 mark) (b) State one thing a narrative design document must specify that a design document for a single photograph need not. (1 mark)

Q2. (3 marks) For each of the following media forms, name one narrative planning document and state the unit of structure it is organised by: (a) short film; (b) narrative podcast; (c) graphic narrative.

Q3. (4 marks) Classify each line below as **design**, **construction** or **evaluation** language (3 marks), and give a reason for one of your choices (1 mark).

- (i) "Beat 5 moves ahead of beat 4 so the audience meets the consequence before the cause."
- (ii) "The eleven-second silence arrived too late to make the driver's silence read as a choice."
- (iii) "A 6-minute narrative podcast delivering three passes of the same bus stop, for 15- to 18-year-olds."

Q4. (4 marks) (a) Rewrite each of the following retelling sentences as an evaluative sentence: (i) "Then Ida burns the letter and we don't find out what it said until later."; (ii) "The last panel is just her waiting for the locksmith."; (iii) "There's a bit of silence before the depot door closes." (3 marks) (b) State the feature that all three of your rewrites have and the originals do not. (1 mark)

Q5. (4 marks) Read the design line below, then identify the element named in each part.

"Scene 4 delivers the story event 'Ida decides to leave'. The audience sees her burn the letter but is never shown what it said, in a single static wide held eight seconds, so that a 15- to 18-year-old audience knows a decision has been made before it knows what the decision was."

- (a) The story event. (1 mark) (b) The plot decision about audience access. (1 mark) (c) The media code and the duration carrying it. (1 mark) (d) The intended read. (1 mark)

Q6. (5 marks) At a rough-cut screening of *Halfway to Vantary*, three listeners answered the question *what did you think happened, and why?*

Listener 1: “He missed his stop because he was distracted — you can hear him not answering anyone.”

Listener 2: “He went past on purpose. It happens three times and the sound is exactly the same each time.”

Listener 3: “I wasn’t sure whether it was the same stop each time.”

- (a) State what each answer tells the producer about the legibility of the narrative. (3 marks)
(b) Write one evaluative sentence this evidence licenses, carrying a graded verdict. (2 marks)

Q7. (6 marks) Below are three consecutive scenes from a student’s scene breakdown.

Scene	What the audience sees
3	Ida packs the car at night outside the cottage
4	The car sits abandoned at the crossing at dawn
5	Ida boards the train and does not look back

- (a) Identify where the cause-and-effect chain breaks. (2 marks) (b) Write the missing beat in production language. (2 marks) (c) Explain what the audience is likely to read instead if the beat is not supplied. (2 marks)

Unscaffolded

Q8. (2 marks) Outline the difference between design language and construction language in a narrative production folio.

Q9. (3 marks) Describe how a logline uses media language to fix what a narrative production will build.

Q10. (3 marks) Explain why an evaluation of a narrative production must judge the decision and not only the outcome.

Q11. (4 marks) Read the evaluation extract below.

Extract. “I think my podcast *Halfway to Vantry* had a really strong story. The idea of a bus driver who keeps driving past his own stop is original and nobody else in the class did anything like it. The ending is sad but true to life. If I did it again I would think of an even better idea.”

Explain why this extract does not evaluate the production, and rewrite one sentence of it so that it does.

Q12. (4 marks) A student is constructing a narrative podcast in which a night-shift cleaner finds a set of keys and does not hand them in. Write a design note for the opening 30 seconds, using media production language appropriate to the audio form.

Q13. (5 marks) Explain how media language allows a producer to keep the cause-and-effect chain intact when a planned scene cannot be shot.

Q14. (5 marks) Read the opening five beats of two versions of a beat sheet below.

Beat	Version 1	Version 2
1	The letter arrives at the cottage	Ida at the crossing at dawn, holding a burnt corner of paper
2	Ida burns the letter	The letter arrives at the cottage
3	Ida packs the car at night	Ida burns the letter
4	Ida at the crossing at dawn	Ida packs the car at night
5	Ida boards the train	Ida boards the train

Note attached to Version 2: “Reordered so the audience meets the ending first.”

Describe what the revision changes about the audience’s access to information, and identify one item of information the document does not record.

Q15. (6 marks) Explain how evaluating a narrative production differs from evaluating a single media representation.

Q16. (6 marks) Five readers of *Corriwell Yard* answered the question *what did you think happened, and why?*

Reader	Response
1	“Someone was breaking into the yard, then it turned out to be the owner.”
2	“She’s locked out of her own place. The shadows on page 1 were a trick.”
3	“A break-in that got interrupted — I wasn’t sure who the figure in the shadows was.”
4	“She’s locked out. You can tell because the pages slow right down.”
5	“I read pages 3 and 4 as a flashback.”

Discuss how this evidence should, and should not, be used in the producer’s evaluation.

Q17. (8 marks) Discuss the claim that a narrative production which was designed vaguely cannot be evaluated well. In your response, refer to a narrative production you have completed this year.

Q18. (8 marks) Read the evaluation extract below.

Extract. “My intention was that the audience would read Ida’s departure as a decision already made before the film begins, and the exercise was to demonstrate the manipulation of editing to restrict audience knowledge. At the rough-cut screening, three of five viewers said the car had broken down. That is a misreading of the ending, but it is not a mistake the audience made — it is a consequence of a decision I made. Shot 22 holds on the abandoned car for eleven seconds, longer than any other static shot in the film, and the cut out of it is the only match cut in the sequence. Duration and the match cut both signal significance, so I signalled the car and not the letter. In the final cut I shortened shot 22 to four seconds, replaced the match cut with a straight cut, and moved the eleven-second hold to the burnt corner of the letter in Ida’s hand, so the longest shot in the film points at the cause I intended.”

Analyse how the media language in this extract converts an audience misreading into a reviewable production decision.

Q19. (10 marks) Evaluate a narrative production you have created this year, using media language appropriate to its design, construction, production and evaluation. In your response, refer to your stated intention and audience, the concept your exercise was designed to demonstrate, and evidence of how your audience read the narrative.

Answers

Q1. (a) Design, construction, production and evaluation. (b) Any one of: which event in the chain it delivers; where it sits in the plot; what the audience knows at that point; the join to the next event; the duration or ellipsis.

Q2. One document plus its unit per form, e.g. (a) short film — beat sheet or scene breakdown, organised by the scene; (b) narrative podcast — episode outline or segment rundown, organised by the segment; (c) graphic narrative — page and panel breakdown, organised by the page and panel.

Q3. (i) Construction. (ii) Evaluation. (iii) Design. Reason: e.g. (i) fixes the order in which the audience receives beats, which is assembly, not intention.

Q4. (a) Three rewrites, each naming a decision and judging it against an intended effect rather than reporting what happens. (b) All three judge a named decision against a standard; the originals only report plot events.

Q5. (a) Ida decides to leave. (b) The content of the letter is withheld — the audience sees the burning but not the words. (c) Camera — a single static wide, held eight seconds. (d) That the audience reads a decision as already made before it learns the cause.

Q6. (a) Listener 1 — the chain is legible but the cause is misread as accident, so the intention has not landed; Listener 2 — the repeated cue worked, and the pattern is what carried it; Listener 3 — the basic identity of the location is not legible, which is a more serious failure than the misread cause. (b) A sentence with a graded verdict and evidence, e.g. that the episode partially achieved its intention because the repeated cue delivered the pattern for some listeners but the sameness of the location was not established.

Q7. (a) Between scenes 3 and 4 — nothing shows why a packed car is abandoned at the crossing. (b) A scene supplying the visible cause, e.g. the car stalling at the crossing with the level-crossing lights on, named with its shot, duration and the code carrying it. (c) That she changed her mind, or turned back — a reading which contradicts a departure that is meant to be decided.

Q8. Design language states what narrative will exist and for whom; construction language states how it is assembled — the order of beats, what the audience knows at each point, and how the joins work.

Q9. A logline fixes the chain in one sentence — who, the situation, the complication and what is at stake — so that every later decision can be tested against it; it is a commitment, not a description.

Q10. Because outcomes have causes. A decision can be sound and defeated by execution, or unsound and lucky; naming which case you are in is what makes the evaluation useful and the change reasoned.

Q11. It evaluates the **idea**, not the production: no decision is named, no standard is restated, no evidence from the product is cited, and “an even better idea” is not a change to anything that was made. Rewrite: one sentence naming a decision, a graded verdict and evidence.

Q12. A design note naming the form’s codes and structures — the cold open, room tone or ambience, microphone placement, the cue marking the found keys, the withheld information, timings, and the intended read for a specified audience.

Q13. By identifying which **cause** the lost scene carried, then finding another element — order, a substitute event, a sound cue, a caption, an added frame — that can carry it, and recording the substitution with its reason so the repair can be evaluated.

Q14. Version 2 opens with the outcome, so the audience reads beats 2–4 knowing where they lead; attention shifts from *what happens* to *why*. Not recorded — any one of: the reason for the change tied to an intended effect; the concept being demonstrated; scene numbers or durations; which beat pays off the withheld content of the letter; how the new beat 1 will be distinguished from the return to the crossing at beat 5.

Q15. A representation can be judged element by element against a stated intention; a narrative must also be judged as a chain — whether cause and effect is legible at the joins, whether the audience’s access to information landed, and whether the structure resolved. It also carries a second standard, the concept the exercise demonstrates.

Q16. Use it as evidence of **legibility**: four of five reconstructed the reversal, and Reader 4 names the layout decision that carried it, which confirms the mechanism. Reader 5's flashback reading identifies a real ambiguity at the page turn. Do not use it as proof (five readers, self-selected), do not read it as a verdict on quality, and do not treat every variation as a fault where the ambiguity was designed.

Q17. Must argue the dependency both ways: vagueness in design removes the standard, so evaluation collapses into feelings; but a precisely designed production can still be evaluated badly, and a vague plan can be partly rescued by precise documentation. Grounded in the student's own production with named specifics.

Q18. Must identify: both standards restated; the misreading treated as data, not blame; the decision named precisely (shot 22, eleven seconds, the only match cut); the mechanism explained (duration and match cut signal significance); the diagnosis (the wrong element was signalled); the change made, with the reason it addresses the diagnosis.

Q19. Extended evaluation: intention and audience restated; the concept demonstrated named; judgement at the level of the decision, the sequence and the narrative; product evidence in the correct register for the form; audience evidence reported with its limits; a graded verdict; one weighed shortfall diagnosed as a decision; one concrete reasoned change.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. (a) **Design, construction, production and evaluation** — the key skill's four words. (b) A narrative design document must specify which **event in the chain** the item delivers and what the audience knows at that point; a single photograph has no chain, so it needs only the representation, the codes carrying it and the intended read. *Marker's note*: "it needs a story" is not an answer — the mark is for naming something the language must **specify**.

Q2. (a) Short film — a **beat sheet** (or step outline, scene breakdown, storyboard), organised by the **scene**, with the shot as its smaller unit. (b) Narrative podcast — an **episode outline** or **segment rundown**, organised by the **segment**, with the sound cue as its smaller unit. (c) Graphic narrative — a **page and panel breakdown**, organised by the **page**, with the panel as its smaller unit and the gutter as its join.

Q3. (i) **Construction** — it fixes the order in which beats reach the audience, which is assembly rather than intention. (ii) **Evaluation** — it carries a judgement against a stated effect ("read as a choice") and locates a shortfall. (iii) **Design** — it states what will exist, in what form, at what length, for which audience, before anything is assembled.

Q4. (a) (i) "Withholding the letter's content until scene 7 **worked as designed**: the eight-second hold delivers the decision while the cause stays open, so the audience carries a question forward rather than a fact." (ii) "The final wide of her waiting for the locksmith **partially achieved** the deflation the ending needed, but at two panels a page it sits alongside the reveal rather than after it, so the release is crowded." (iii) "The eleven seconds of silence before the depot door **did not** construct the driver's silence as a choice, because by segment 4 the voice-over has already explained him." (b) Each rewrite names a **decision** and measures it against an **intended effect**, reaching a verdict; the originals only report what happens, which is retelling.

Q5. (a) The story event is "Ida decides to leave". (b) The audience is shown the burning but not the content of the letter — information is withheld, restricting audience access. (c) **Camera** — a single static wide — held for **eight seconds**. (d) That a 15- to 18-year-old audience reads a decision as already made before it learns what the decision was. *Marker's note*: (c) asks for the code **and** the duration; naming the shot without the hold loses the mark, because duration is the decision doing the work here.

Q6. (a) **Listener 1** shows the chain is legible — the three passes were received — but the cause was read as distraction rather than choice, so the intended reading did not land. **Listener 2** shows the central decision worked, and names the mechanism: the identical four-second cue used three times made the repetition countable, which is what converts an event into a pattern. **Listener 3** identifies a more basic failure: if the sameness of the stop is not established, the repetition cannot be read at all, and this is more serious than Listener 1's misreading because it undermines the structure rather than the interpretation. (b) "The episode **partially achieved** its intention: the repeated engine-and-indicator cue delivered the pattern for listeners who recognised the stop, but the location itself was not established clearly enough for every listener to count the passes at all."

Q7. (a) The chain breaks **between scenes 3 and 4**. Scene 3 shows a car being packed and scene 4 shows it abandoned at the crossing, but no event connects them: nothing supplies a cause for the abandonment, so the join carries no meaning the audience can retrieve. (b) “Scene 3a — the car stalls at the crossing as the boom lights start. A static wide from the road, held six seconds; engine turning over three times and failing, then only the crossing bell. Delivers the cause for the abandoned car in scene 4.” (c) Faced with a gap, an audience fills it with the most available explanation. Here that is a **change of heart** — she packed, drove out, and turned back — which directly contradicts the intention that the departure was decided before the film begins. The problem is not that the audience is confused; it is that they are confident and wrong, which is harder to detect and worse for the narrative.

Q8. Design language states what will exist: the narrative to be delivered, its form and length, its specified audience, the intended reading and the concept the exercise demonstrates. **Construction language** states how it is assembled: which beats reach the audience and in what order, what the audience knows at each point, how long each event is given, and how the joins between events are made so that cause reads as cause. Design fixes the standard; construction fixes the chain that will be measured against it.

Q9. A **logline** compresses the narrative into a single sentence naming the central character, the situation, the complication that disturbs it and what is at stake. Written in media language it is a commitment rather than a description, so every later decision can be tested against it: a scene that serves no part of the logline is a candidate to cut, and a scene the logline requires but the breakdown does not contain is a hole found at the cheapest possible moment. It also fixes **scale**, which is what stops a six-minute exercise being planned as a feature.

Q10. Because an outcome on its own does not tell a producer what to do differently. A decision may be sound and still fail — the reasoning was right, and execution, running time or the screening conditions defeated it — in which case the fix is in the execution, not the plan. A decision may also be unsound and work anyway, which is worth naming because it will not work a second time. Judging only outcomes produces “it didn’t work, I’d do it better”, which is not a finding; judging the decision produces a diagnosis and therefore a specific change.

Q11. The extract evaluates the **idea**, not the production. It restates no intention and no specified audience, so there is no standard against which “strong” could be measured; it names **no decision** — not a cue, a segment, a duration or a structural choice — so there is no evidence from the product at all; its comparison (“nobody else in the class did anything like it”) is about originality rather than execution; and “think of an even better idea” proposes a change to the premise instead of to anything that was made, which means nothing in the extract could be acted on. Rewritten: “The episode **partially achieved** my intention of representing the driver’s silence as a choice: repeating the same four-second engine-and-indicator cue at each pass made the repetition countable, but the passenger’s voice-over explains him before the third pass arrives, so the silence is resolved before it can be read.” *Marker’s note:* a rewrite that is merely more enthusiastic (“the sound design was really effective”) earns nothing — the mark is for a named decision plus a verdict.

Q12. “Opening 30 seconds, narrative podcast, stereo mix. 0:00–0:06 — cold open on the cleaner’s own working sound with no narration: a trolley wheel with a flat spot, a floor buffer starting and settling, recorded on a cardioid microphone four or five metres down the corridor so the reverberant tail of the space comes with them and the space reads as large and empty around her. 0:06–0:14 — the buffer stops mid-pass and the room tone of the corridor is held alone for four seconds; this is beat 1, and the silence is the event. 0:14–0:20 — a single clear keyring sound, close and dry, cut hard against the reverberant room tone so the keys sound nearer than everything else in the mix; this delivers beat 2, the find. 0:20–0:30 — the buffer restarts and runs under the first line of voice-over, which states where she is and what shift it is but **not** what she did with the keys. The withholding is deliberate and is paid off at the end of segment 2. The proximity contrast between the dry keyring and the reverberant corridor is intended to make a 15- to 18-year-old listener register the keys as the cleaner’s private information before any narration frames them, so her silence afterwards reads as a decision.” *Marker’s note:* answers that describe what the podcast is **about** without naming placement, ambience, timings, mix relationships or the withheld information are writing a synopsis, not a design note.

Q13. Model response (5 marks). The first move is diagnostic, and it depends entirely on the plan being written in narrative terms: the producer asks not “what have I lost?” but “**what cause was that scene carrying, and which beat depended on it?**” A scene breakdown that numbers beats and states what the audience knows at each point answers that question immediately; a shot list that names only sizes and durations cannot answer it at all.

The second move is substitution. Once the missing link is identified as a cause rather than as content, a producer can look for another element able to carry it — a change in the **order** of the remaining beats, a substitute event that implies the same cause, a sound cue, a caption or intertitle, an added frame, or a line of dialogue that reports the event rather than showing it. Each of these is a named decision with a known cost: reporting an event is weaker than showing it, and reordering may disturb a later reveal. Naming the cost is part of the language.

The third move is recording it. The log entry states what was planned, what happened, what the change did to the chain and what the audience can now know at that point, so that the repair is visible in the folio and can be judged in the evaluation. Without that entry the finished narrative simply contains a weak join, and neither the producer nor a reader can tell whether it was a failure of design or a repair made under pressure.

Q14. Version 1 runs in story order, so the audience receives cause before effect and reads forward, asking *what will happen*. Version 2 opens on beat 4 — Ida at the crossing holding the burnt paper — so the audience receives the outcome first and then reads the middle beats knowing where they lead. Access shifts from *what happens* to *why it happened*, and the burnt paper in the new beat 1 turns the burning in beat 3 into a recognition rather than a surprise; suspense is exchanged for dramatic irony. One item the document does not record: **the reason for the change tied to an intended effect on the audience**. (Also acceptable: the concept the exercise is demonstrating; scene numbers or durations; which beat pays off the withheld content of the letter; how the new beat 1 will be visually distinguished from the film's return to the crossing at beat 5, since the two are the same location and risk reading as a continuity error rather than as a return.)

Q15. *Model response (6 marks).* A **representation** can be evaluated element by element. The standard is a statement of intention and a specified audience, and each decision — a lighting set-up, a paper stock, a crop — is judged for whether it constructs the intended qualities. Judgement is essentially **local**: an element that fails can be identified and replaced without disturbing anything else.

A **narrative** must additionally be evaluated as a **chain**, and three things follow. First, the joins become evidence. Because causation is inferred at the point where two events meet, an evaluation has to ask whether cause reads as cause at each join, which is a question about the gap rather than about either event on its own — the strongest scene in a production can sit next to the weakest join. Second, **audience access** becomes a criterion: what the audience knew at each moment, whether information withheld was paid off, and whether the structure resolved. A representation is either legible or not; a narrative can be perfectly legible shot by shot and still deliver the wrong chain. Third, evaluation requires evidence about **comprehension**, not only about construction, which is why a rough-cut screening asking *what did you think happened, and why?* is a narrative instrument specifically — the answers show whether the chain was received.

There is also a difference in **standards**. A Unit 2 narrative is a media exercise designed to demonstrate a concept from Area of Study 1, so it is measured twice: against its own narrative intention, and against the concept — style, the manipulation of codes and conventions, genre use or subversion, context, or audience engagement. A production can deliver its story cleanly and still demonstrate its concept weakly, and an evaluation that reports only the first has answered half the question.

Q16. *Model response (6 marks).* The evidence should be used as evidence of **legibility**, and read closely rather than counted. Four of the five readers reconstructed the reversal, which tells the producer that the withdrawal of the crime-genre conventions on pages 3–4 was received. Reader 4 is the most useful response in the set, because it names the mechanism — “you can tell because the pages slow right down” — confirming that the drop from six panels to two did the work the plan assigned to it, and that the subversion is carried by **layout** rather than by content alone. Reader 2's “the shadows on page 1 were a trick” confirms that pages 1–2 established the genre firmly enough for there to be something to withdraw. Reader 5's flashback reading is the finding that matters most: a single reader identifying a **structural** ambiguity at the page 2 to page 3 turn is worth more than three readers agreeing, because it locates a decision the producer can change.

Equally, there are things this evidence cannot do. Five self-selected readers are not a sample, so the producer should write “four of five readers” and never “most readers”, and should not report a proportion as though it measured anything beyond this room. It answers a **comprehension** question, so it says nothing about whether the narrative is any good — a perfectly legible narrative can still be inert, and enjoyment reported in the same session is not what the instrument tested. Nor should every variation be treated as a fault: Reader 3's uncertainty about who the silhouetted figure was may be exactly the ambiguity the opening pages were built to create, and an evaluation that promises to

“fix” a designed ambiguity has misread its own plan. The disciplined use is to separate readings that show a decision working, readings that show a decision misfiring, and readings that show the design succeeding at something the producer had forgotten they intended. *Marker’s note:* answers that simply count the responses, or that treat the screening as an opinion poll on quality, cannot reach the top band.

Q17. Model response (8 marks). The claim is largely true, and the reason is structural rather than attitudinal: evaluation is measurement, and measurement needs a standard. A vague design supplies none.

My own production this year was *Brindlecoe Crossing*, a five-minute short film delivering the story of a woman leaving a town, made to demonstrate the manipulation of editing to restrict audience knowledge. The first version of my plan said scene 4 should be “tense, and the audience shouldn’t know what’s going on”. When the rough cut was screened, I had no way to tell whether that had been achieved, because “tense” names no decision and “shouldn’t know what’s going on” does not say **what** is being withheld, from when, or until when. Rewritten as a commitment — the letter’s content withheld from scene 4 and released at beat 9, carried by a single static eight-second wide with the fire out of focus — the same scene became testable. I could ask whether an eight-second hold with no cutaway produced anticipation or impatience, and the answer changed what I cut.

The claim needs two qualifications, though. First, a precise design does not guarantee a good evaluation: a producer can state a standard clearly and then retell the plot anyway, or judge outcomes without diagnosing decisions. Precision in design makes a good evaluation **possible**, not automatic. Second, a vague design can be partly rescued by precise **documentation**. My beat sheet was thin, but the log entry recording that the stalling shot was lost to a road closure — and that its loss removed the only visible cause for the abandoned car — let me evaluate a decision I had never consciously designed, because the documentation had captured the chain even where the plan had not.

The claim is therefore best stated as a dependency rather than an absolute: an evaluation can only be as specific as the most specific record of the production, whether that record is the design, the construction documents or the log. Where all three are vague, the evaluation has nothing to hold, and what a student writes instead is a feeling about the finished product. *Marker’s note:* a response that only asserts “planning is important” without a named production and named decisions cannot reach the top band.

Q18. Model response (8 marks). The extract works because it treats the misreading as **data about a decision** rather than as a fact about the audience, and its media language is what makes that conversion possible.

It begins by restating both standards — the narrative intention (the departure read as a decision already made) and the concept the exercise demonstrates (the manipulation of editing to restrict audience knowledge). Without both, “three of five viewers said the car had broken down” would be an anecdote; with both, it is a measured shortfall against a stated intention, because the response the viewers gave is specifically the reading the design was built to prevent.

The next move is the pivot: “it is not a mistake the audience made — it is a consequence of a decision I made.” That sentence relocates the problem from reception, where the producer can do nothing, to construction, where they can. Everything after it is a diagnosis in editing vocabulary. The extract names the decisions with precision — shot 22, an eleven-second hold, the longest static shot in the film, and the only **match cut** in the sequence — and, crucially, states their **mechanism**: duration and a match cut both signal significance to a viewer. That generalisation is what turns a description into an explanation, because it says why *any* audience would attend to the car. The conclusion follows without special pleading: “I signalled the car and not the letter.” The producer has found not that the film failed but exactly which element was told to be important.

The change is then reasoned from the diagnosis rather than proposed as an improvement in general. Shortening shot 22 to four seconds removes the duration signal; replacing the match cut with a straight cut removes the emphasis at the join; moving the eleven-second hold to the burnt corner of the letter re-points the film’s longest shot at the intended cause. Each of the three changes addresses one of the identified signals, which is why the extract is reviewable: another reader can check whether the diagnosis follows from the evidence, whether the mechanism is stated correctly, and whether the three changes actually address it. An entry reading “some people didn’t get the ending so I made it clearer” offers none of those checks, because it names no decision, no mechanism and no standard. *Marker’s note:* answers that summarise what the producer did, instead of analysing how the language makes the reasoning checkable, cannot reach the top band.

Q19. Model response (10 marks). My narrative production this year was *Brindlecoe Crossing*, a five-minute short film delivering the story of Ida, who leaves the town she has lived in all her life. My stated intention was that a 15- to 18-

year-old audience would read her departure as **a decision already made before the film begins**, rather than as a reaction to anything they see. The concept my exercise was designed to demonstrate was the **manipulation of editing to restrict audience knowledge**. Judged against both standards, the production **largely achieved** its intention and **successfully demonstrated** its concept, though the two came apart at one identifiable point.

Design. The design fixed the withholding as a structure rather than a mood: the content of the letter that prompts Ida's departure is withheld from beat 3 and released at beat 9, and the audience is given her decisions before their causes throughout. Writing that as a commitment — rather than as “the audience shouldn't know what's going on” — is what made every later judgement possible, because it stated what was withheld, from when, and until when.

Construction. The beat sheet went to a second version in which beat 4 was moved to the opening, so the audience meets Ida at the crossing holding a burnt corner of paper before it sees the letter arrive. This exchanged suspense for dramatic irony and is the decision that carries the concept: the audience spends the middle of the film knowing an outcome and not a cause, which is restricted knowledge produced by **order** rather than by concealment within the frame. Scene 4 delivered the same idea locally — a single static wide held eight seconds on Ida burning the letter, the fire out of focus in the foreground, no score and room tone only.

Production. The one significant departure is documented in my log for 2 September: the stalling shot at the crossing was lost to a road closure, which removed the only visible cause for the abandoned car at the crossing. I substituted a wide of the open driver's door with the interior light still on, on the reasoning that an abandoned car left open reads as left in a hurry. That was a substitution of an **implied** cause for a **shown** one, and the log records it as such.

Evaluation. At the level of the **decision**, the eight-second hold in scene 4 did what it was designed to do: at the rough-cut screening, viewers described that moment as the point where “she had already decided”, which is the reading the design specified. At the level of the **sequence**, the substituted shot at the crossing did not carry its cause. Three of five viewers at the screening said the car had broken down, which is precisely the accidental reading the intention rules out — and the diagnosis is not that the audience misread but that shot 22 held on the abandoned car for eleven seconds, the longest static shot in the film, so duration signalled the car as the significant element instead of the letter. At the level of the **narrative**, the chain is delivered cleanly and the concept is demonstrated throughout, but the causal reading is available rather than compelled: the audience reliably receives *that* she left and less reliably receives *that she had already chosen to*.

The screening evidence should be reported for what it is. Five classmates in a media room are not a sample, and the question I asked — *what did you think happened, and why?* — tests comprehension, not quality; what it establishes is that the chain was legible and that one join was signalled wrongly.

Two changes follow from that diagnosis rather than from a general wish to improve. I would shorten shot 22 to four seconds and move the eleven-second hold to the burnt corner of the letter in Ida's hand, so the longest shot in the film points at the cause I intended; and I would restore a shown cause for the abandoned car — the car stalling as the boom lights start — so that the beat does not depend on an inference the audience has no reason to draw. The broader lesson is the one the concept was meant to teach: restricting what an audience knows only works when you also control what they are told to look at, and duration is one of the strongest instructions a film can give. *Marker's note:* a response that retells the narrative, evaluates only the story idea, or reports the screening as a verdict on quality rather than on comprehension cannot reach the top band; the question requires judgement at the level of decisions, against both stated standards.

Topic 5 Test — Narratives in production

This assessment demonstrates **Unit 2 Outcome 2**: “apply the media production process to create, develop and construct narratives.” It has two parts. **Part A** is a teacher-run narrative production task, marked by your teacher against the rubric at the end of this brief. **Part B** is an in-book written paper of 30 marks, completed in class in 45 minutes, on the process you ran, the roles you undertook, the technical decisions you made, the ethical, legal and community constraints you worked inside, and your evaluation of what you built.

All assessment at Units 1 and 2 is school-based. Procedures for assessing levels of achievement are a matter for school decision, levels of achievement are not reported to the VCAA, and there is no external examination at this level. This booklet therefore sets no VCAA-prescribed mark total or duration for Part A; it sets a scope, a set of deliverables and a rubric, and leaves the reporting instrument — grades, descriptive statements or other indicators — to the school.

The written paper is not, on its own, evidence of this outcome. Outcome 2 is demonstrated by **applying** the media production process to make a narrative. Part B examines what you can say about that work; only Part A can show that you did it. A student who writes a strong Part B and submits no production has not met the outcome.

Part A — the production task brief

What the outcome asks

The study design’s own wording for Unit 2 Area of Study 2 sets the standard this task is built to. The key skills are:

- design and produce narratives using the stages of the media production process;
- undertake roles and responsibilities within the media production process;
- apply technical skills in the operation of media technologies;
- develop and produce narratives within ethical, legal and community constraints;
- use media language appropriate to the design, construction, production and evaluation of media productions.

Those five skills are the five criteria of the rubric on the last page of this brief. Nothing else is assessed, and nothing on that list is optional.

The study design also frames Unit 2 productions as **media exercises that demonstrate one or more concepts covered in Area of Study 1**. Your production therefore carries **two** standards, not one: the narrative intention you set, and the concept you set out to demonstrate. Name both in your development document, because both are marked.

The commission — Held Over

The commissioning organisation, its brief and every name in it are constructed for this task.

The Wrenfield Regional Collection occupies the former stationmaster’s residence on Skellow Road. It is four rooms of things nobody threw out: a shearing tally book, nine hundred school photographs, a shop awning, a box of bus tickets. Each year the Collection commissions a set of short media narratives from young people in the district under a single title, and hangs, screens or plays them in the front room for twelve months.

This year’s title is **Held Over**. The Collection’s note to makers reads:

“Everything in this building was kept when it could have been thrown out, and somebody made that decision. We want narratives about that moment — somebody deciding to hold on to something, or to let it go. Not a history lesson, and not an interview about the past. A story, set now, in this district, about somebody who is still here: a beginning, a turn and an end. Make it for people your own age, because they are the audience who do not come in the door.”

Specified audience: people aged roughly 15 to 18 who live in the district and who do not currently visit the Collection. They will meet your narrative in the front room, on their own, without an introduction and without a teacher explaining it.

Distribution: the front room of the Collection for twelve months, in the form your media form requires — hung, screened on a wall-mounted panel, played on headphones at a listening post, or laid out on the reading table. A second copy is lodged with the Collection’s catalogue.

Choose **ONE** task type

Comparable scope and demand. The study design directs that “where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand”. The five options below are set to comparable **demand**, not to comparable running time. Each requires the same five stages, one documented planning instrument belonging to its own form, at least two recorded technical tests, a complete clearance set, a distribution step delivered to a real specification, and an evaluation built on audience evidence. The extents are calibrated so that the number of **narrative decisions** — events selected, ordered, weighted and joined — is similar across the five, which is what makes them comparable. A teacher who alters an extent should alter the others to match.

Option	Task type (study design)	Extent	The planning instrument you must produce
1	Audio-visual or video sequence	3–5 minutes finished, including titles and credits	Treatment or step outline · storyboard · shot list · shooting schedule
2	Radio or audio sequence	4–6 minutes finished	Premise and episode outline · script or segment rundown with sound cues · recording plan
3	Photographs	10–12 original images, presented in a fixed order at a stated print size	Series statement · frame list · sequence plan · location and light plan
4	Print layout	8–12 pages (graphic narrative, photo essay or illustrated narrative)	Synopsis · flat plan · page and panel breakdown · type and grid specification
5	Sequence or presentation using digital technologies	4–6 minutes linear, or 8–12 screens or branch nodes if interactive	Premise · branching map or wireframe · beat sheet · asset list

A note on posters. A poster is on the study design’s list of suitable tasks for this unit and is a legitimate assessment task — but a single poster holds one moment, not a chain of events in a cause-and-effect relationship over a period of time. It cannot demonstrate *this* outcome, which is about constructing narratives, so it is not offered here. A poster suits a task about constructing a representation, where one made image is the whole of the argument; it does not suit this one.

Working alone or in a crew. Either is permitted; the study design describes production as a process that “may be a collaborative process involving a number of people with specific roles or it may be an individual process”. If you work in a crew, the roles do not change, they are shared out. If you work alone, the roles do not disappear, they stack — and you must show how you separated them in time. Either way, your folio must make **your own** contribution visible: dated documents authored by you, drafts saved under your name, and a production log kept as you go. That evidence cannot be reconstructed afterwards.

What you submit

The finished narrative **and** the folio below. The folio is not paperwork attached to a product; it is the evidence that the product was made by a process.

1 — Development

- A **premise** of one or two sentences containing a chain of events: who, what happens to them, and what the audience is left with. “A film about letting go” is a topic, not a premise.
- The **specified audience**, stated by more than a demographic label: where they will meet the narrative, in what frame of mind, and what they can be assumed to know.
- The **media form** chosen, with the reason it suits this chain of events.
- The **concept from Area of Study 1** your exercise demonstrates — a creator’s distinctive style, the manipulation of codes and conventions, the use or subversion of genre, the influence of a historical or cultural context, or the influence of the narrative on audience engagement.
- Research notes on two or more comparable narratives in your form, and a record of at least one **skills experiment**.

2 — Pre-production

- Your form’s **planning instrument** from the table above, and a note of what it locked.
- A **structure document** — beat sheet, step outline, sequence plan or branching map — versioned, with the reason for each revision attached.
- A **crew list**: every person, their role, and their responsibility at each stage. If you are working alone, list the role functions and the times at which you will hold each.
- A **skill audit** rating every technical skill the production depends on, and what each rating means for what may safely be planned.
- **Two or more technical test records**, each with one question, one variable, matched conditions, written settings, and a success criterion stated beforehand and checked on the delivery device.
- A **risk assessment**. A shoot is a workplace: under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic) an employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide a safe working environment for employees and ensure that persons other than employees are not exposed to risks arising from its undertaking — which is your school, and you.
- A **distribution plan** naming the destination, its format specification and the date the file or print is due.

3 — Production

- A dated **production log**, with entries recording what was planned, what was done instead, and what the difference did to the chain of events.
- A **shot log, recording log or frame log**, and continuity notes.

4 — Post-production

- The **versioned structure document** showing the delivered order, duration and access.
- Evidence of **one iteration**: a fault found, the stage that owned it, the return made, and what the return changed about the narrative.

5 — Constraints

A clearance set covering everything in the finished narrative:

- a **talent release** for every identifiable person, and **parent or guardian consent** in addition for anyone under 18;
- a **location agreement or permit** for every place filmed, photographed or recorded;
- an **asset and licence log** listing every element you did not make, its source, its licence and the attribution that licence requires — remembering that a no-derivatives condition means the asset cannot be cut to length;
- a **credits list** crediting every contributor in the form agreed. Under Part IX of the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) creators hold moral rights — attribution, protection against false attribution, and integrity — which are personal to the creator and are not transferred with copyright, so the credits list is a legal instrument before it is a courtesy;

- a **disclosure note** for any reconstructed or staged material presented as observed, and for any machine-generated image, voice or text;
- where the narrative engages Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, culture or concepts, evidence that established protocols have been followed. Screen Australia publishes long-standing guidance for filmmakers on this, and it carries weight because copyright protects Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property poorly. An individual work by an identifiable First Nations creator — a photograph, a song recording, a painting — is protected by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) like any other. What copyright cannot hold is communal, intergenerational cultural expression: it recognises individual authors rather than communities, protects only what has been fixed in material form rather than the story, song, dance or knowledge itself, and expires. Consultation and protocol carry the weight copyright leaves unheld;
- a **distribution note** recording where the work may be shown under the permissions you actually hold. Permission to be recorded is not permission to be published everywhere, and a screening in a public room is a different act from a screening in a classroom.

6 — Distribution

- The finished narrative, delivered to the destination's stated specification.
- Accompanying material: title, credits, captions or transcript, and content advice where the audience or the material requires it.

7 — Evaluation

- A **rough-cut screening record**: the single question *what did you think happened, and why?*, asked of viewers, listeners or readers before the work was locked, with their answers written down verbatim.
- A short written evaluation judging the production at three levels — the decision, the sequence and the narrative — with a graded verdict and one concrete, reasoned change. (The extended evaluation is examined in Part B; this one is the working note it is built from.)

Conditions

- Assessment is part of the regular teaching and learning program and is completed **mainly in class and within a limited timeframe**. A suggested block is five weeks: one week development, one week pre-production, one week production, one week post-production, one week distribution and evaluation.
- Work carried out by cast, crew or anybody outside the class must be under your direction and must be documented.
- All planning, logging and evaluation documents are written in **media production language** — a sentence that names a decision a collaborator could act on and you could later test, rather than a sentence that names a feeling.

Assessment rubric — Part A

Aligned to the outcome statement “*apply the media production process to create, develop and construct narratives*” and to the five key skills of Unit 2 Area of Study 2. Weight the five criteria equally unless your school decides otherwise; the study design prescribes no weighting at this level.

Criterion	Very high	High	Medium	Low
1. Design and produce narratives using the stages of the media production process (KS1)	All five stages evidenced; a premise with a genuine chain and a specified audience used to justify decisions; plot decisions made deliberately at pre-production and revised knowingly in	Five stages evidenced; premise and audience clear; plot decisions visible in the documents; an iteration recorded but its stage asserted rather than diagnosed	Middle three stages evidenced; development and distribution thin; premise reads as a topic; decisions present but not connected to the chain of events	Stages named on a schedule rather than run; no premise or no audience; no evidence that plot decisions were made anywhere but in the edit

Criterion	Very high	High	Medium	Low
	post-production; at least one iteration diagnosed to the stage that owned the fault			
2. Undertake roles and responsibilities within the media production process (KS2)	Every responsibility has one named owner at a named stage with a dated deliverable; handovers specified and complete; individual contribution unmistakable in a group product	Roles allocated and documented; most responsibilities owned; one handover incomplete; individual contribution visible	Roles named but responsibilities described as activities rather than deliverables; distribution unallocated; individual contribution inferable but not evidenced	“We all did everything”; no crew list; no dated documents attributable to the student
3. Apply technical skills in the operation of media technologies (KS3)	Skill audit honest and acted on; two or more technical tests with one question, one variable, matched conditions, recorded settings and a criterion checked on the delivery device; skills demonstrably reliable on the day; delivery specification met and quality-checked	Tests run and recorded; skills adequate to the plan; one test loose in method; delivery specification met	Skills sufficient for material to exist; tests run informally or without records; delivery specification approximated	Ambition planned above demonstrated skill with no response; no tests; export, print or presentation faulty at the audience’s end
4. Develop and produce narratives within ethical, legal and community constraints (KS4)	Complete clearance set; consent treated as a process and evidenced as such; constraints identified at the stage each bites and discharged with the document that answers it; disclosure of staged or generated material; community consulted and sequenced into the release	Clearance set complete; constraints identified and answered, mostly at the right stage; one document obtained late	Principal releases and permissions held; constraints treated as a gate before release rather than as conditions across the process; gaps in the asset log	Identifiable people unreleased; assets uncleared or unattributed; no risk assessment; constraints not addressed
5. Use media language appropriate to design, construction, production and evaluation (KS5)	Design, construction and log entries name events, plot decisions, codes and joins in the register of the chosen form; evaluation judges	Correct register in most documents; evaluation reaches a verdict with some evidence; one or two decisions asserted rather than	Documents describe what the product is like rather than what was decided; evaluation reports outcomes without diagnosing decisions	Plot retold in place of design; evaluation judges the idea rather than the production; general language throughout

Criterion	Very high	High	Medium	Low
	decisions against stated standards using audience evidence, with a graded verdict and a concrete reasoned change	evidenced		

Recording the result. Because levels of achievement at Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision, this rubric carries no mark total. Report against the four levels, or convert to the school's own scale, or write descriptive statements — the study design permits all three.

Part B — the written paper

Total 30 marks. Writing time: 45 minutes — about 1.5 minutes per mark. Answer all questions in the spaces provided. Stationery only: no notes, no folio, no device. This paper examines Chapters 10 and 11 only — the media production process in specific media forms, the construction of narratives through the process, roles and responsibilities, technical skills, ethical, legal and community constraints, and the evaluation of narrative productions.

Questions 1, 2, 5 and 7 refer to the narrative production you completed this year. Questions 3, 4 and 6 refer to the production folio extracts printed below.

Narrative production — title and media form: _____

Specified audience: _____

Production folio extracts — Nine Mile Siding

Use these extracts to answer Questions 3, 4 and 6. The production, the school, the crew and the note are constructed for this paper.

Nine Mile Siding is a six-minute **non-fictional** moving-image narrative made by four Year 11 students working as Tallowmere Pictures at Hollowbridge Secondary College. It tells the week the local council padlocked the gate of the disused rail reserve that students had used as a shortcut to school for years, followed through the mornings of one Year 8 student, Ruby. Its specified audience is Year 9 and 10 students at the school, at a year-level assembly, and afterwards on the school intranet with captions.

Extract 1 — crew list, and one production log entry

Crew list, submitted with the production plan. **Priya** — producer, and distribution. **Sam** — director and writer. **Jonah** — camera and lighting. **Marisa** — sound, and editor.

Production log, 14 August (assembly edit). “Scene 3 (the padlocked gate) and scene 4 (the long way round) both play as a wide from the same side of the reserve, at almost the same size. They will not cut together — it reads as one shot repeated, not as two events, and the join between them is where the whole film turns. Marisa says she would have asked for a mid and a cutaway if she had seen the shot list before the shoot day, but it was never sent to her. The council re-locked the reserve gate on 9 August and we cannot get back in.”

Extract 2 — technical test record

Test, 26 July. Question: which microphone placement records intelligible dialogue at the reserve gate at 7.40 am, given the freight line 200 m away?

Same gate, same hour, same speaker, same recorder, same script, gain set each time so the loudest line peaked at –11 dB. Variable: microphone placement only, stepped through three values — pass 1, lapel clipped outside the collar a hand's width from the mouth; pass 2, the same lapel worn under the collar; pass

3, shotgun on a boom half a metre above the speaker and out of frame. Settings, distance and file names written on the record as each pass was made. Criterion set before recording: *every word intelligible on phone speakers at half volume, with the train audible but under the voice*. Result: passes 1 and 3 met the criterion; pass 2 failed — the collar fabric dulled the consonants and no gain change recovered them. Also written on the record, outside the comparison: a truck idled at the crossing for ninety seconds partway through, and that ninety seconds is unusable on all three placements, so the gate is not reliably quiet at that hour. Reviewed on a phone, not on the recorder.

Extract 3 — a note received four days before the assembly screening

22 August, from the parent of Ruby, the Year 8 student who appears in scenes 5 and 6.

“Ruby’s very happy to be in it and so are we. Two things, though. She’s told me the film says she ‘walks the reserve every morning’. She doesn’t — she did it once, for you, on the Sunday. People at school will think that’s her routine. Also, the shot of her coming out our front gate has our number on the letterbox, and we’d rather that wasn’t up on the intranet. We signed the form in week 2 but nobody said anything about the intranet, only the assembly.”

Question 1 (2 marks)

Refer to the narrative production you completed this year.

- (a) Name one planning instrument that your media form required in pre-production. (1 mark)
- (b) State one thing that instrument locked before production could begin. (1 mark)

Question 2 (3 marks)

Describe one decision you made at the post-production stage of your production. In your response, state the decision in media production language, name it as a decision about **selection, order, duration or access**, and state its effect on the chain of events your audience received.

Question 3 (4 marks)

Refer to **Extract 1**.

Explain how a responsibility that was not discharged at one stage of the media production process affected a later stage of this production, and state the change to the role allocation that would prevent it.

Question 4 (3 marks)

Refer to **Extract 2**.

Describe what makes this a usable technical test, and state one thing the crew may now safely put in its shooting plan.

Question 5 (3 marks)

Refer to the narrative production you completed this year.

Explain how you developed one technical skill before production, and the effect that skill had on the narrative your audience received.

Question 6 (5 marks)

Refer to **Extract 3**.

Analyse the ethical, legal and community constraints raised by this note, and explain what the crew’s response to them would do to the finished narrative.

Question 7 (10 marks)

Extended response.

Analyse how you applied the media production process to construct your narrative, and evaluate the extent to which the finished narrative achieved its intention for its specified audience.

Your response must:

- identify the media form, the specified audience and the premise you developed;
- analyse a narrative decision made at each of **at least three** stages of the process, and state the effect of each on the chain of events;
- refer to one role or technical decision that changed what the narrative was able to deliver;
- refer to one ethical, legal or community constraint, and what your response to it did to the finished narrative;
- reach a graded verdict supported by evidence of how your audience read the narrative, and give one concrete change with the reason it would work.

End of Part B questions

Topic 5 Test — Part B: solutions

Command terms used in this paper

The definitions below are the VCAA glossary definitions. Every model response is built to the depth its term demands.

Term	Definition	Used at
Name / State	Give a specific name or value or other brief answer without explanation or calculation.	Q1 (2)
Describe	Provide characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, opinion, situation, event, process, effect, argument, narrative, text, experiment, artwork, performance piece or other artefact in an accurate way.	Q2 (3), Q4 (3)
Explain	Give a detailed account of why and/or how with reference to causes, effects, continuity, change, reasons or mechanisms; make the relationships between things evident.	Q3 (4), Q5 (3)
Analyse	Identify components/elements and the significance of the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications; determine logic and reasonableness of information.	Q6 (5), Q7 (10)
Evaluate	Ascertain the value or amount of; make a judgment using the information supplied, criteria and/or own knowledge and understanding to consider a logical argument and/or supporting evidence for and against different points, arguments, concepts, processes, opinions or other information.	Q7 (10)

The model responses for the own-production questions use a single student production throughout, as a student would use one production across a whole paper: **The Keep Pile**, an eleven-frame photographic narrative series made in response to the Held Over brief in Part A. Each model is followed by a bracketed substitution note showing how to transfer the move to your own production and your own form.

The model production, in one paragraph. *The Keep Pile* is a photographic narrative series of eleven frames, printed at A4 and hung in a fixed order in the Wrenfield Regional Collection's front room. Premise: across five weekends a Year 11 student empties her grandmother's shed so the house can be sold; each weekend the throw pile grows and the keep pile shrinks, until only one box is left, and on the last morning she carries that box back into the empty shed and shuts the door. Specified audience: 15- to 18-year-olds in the district who do not visit the Collection and who will meet the series alone, on a wall, without an introduction. Concept demonstrated: **the manipulation of media codes and conventions in the construction of a narrative** — every frame is taken from one marked standing position in the shed doorway, so that change inside the frame is the only variable and is therefore read as cause and effect.

Question 1 (2 marks)

Command term — *name and state*: a specific answer, briefly, with no explanation required.

Model response (student production: The Keep Pile, an eleven-frame photographic narrative series).

(a) A sequence plan, with a frame list attached.

(b) It locked the number of frames and what each one had to show — eleven frames, one per planned event, each specified as a state of the shed rather than as a subject, and all of them to be taken from the same marked standing position in the doorway.

Marks: 1 — a planning instrument that genuinely belongs to the stated media form (storyboard, shot list, animatic, run sheet, script, flat plan, page and panel breakdown, sequence plan, frame list, wireframe, branching map). 1 — something the instrument **locked**, not something it described.

Other creditable answers, by form: moving image — a **storyboard or shot list**, locking the shots that must exist and their order; audio — a **run sheet or segment rundown**, locking the order and duration of segments and who speaks when; print — a **flat plan**, locking the page count and what occupies each page or spread; digital or interactive — a **wireframe or branching map**, locking what the audience can reach from where.

Common errors: naming a document that belongs to a different form from the one you worked in — a mood board brought to a shoot in place of a shot list is the classic; describing what the document looks like instead of what it **fixed**, which is where part (b)'s mark lives; naming a deadline rather than a decision (“it locked in when we had to finish”); offering equipment (“the camera”) as a planning instrument.

[Substitute: name the instrument your own form required, then finish the sentence “before we could start shooting/recording/laying out, this document had already decided ...”.]

Question 2 (3 marks)

Command term — describe: provide the characteristics and qualities of the decision in an accurate way, going beyond naming it.

Model response (student production: The Keep Pile).

The decision was made in **post-production**, which in the still-image form means selecting and sequencing: 380 exposures had to become eleven frames in a fixed order. Stated as a decision, it reads: *from the 380 frames, select only those taken from the marked standing position in the shed doorway, and discard every frame taken from inside the shed, however strong the individual image*. That is a decision about **selection**.

Four of the discarded frames were the best photographs in the set — a close-up of my grandmother's handwriting on a lid, a shaft of light across the throw pile — but each was taken from a different position, and a viewer reading eleven frames along a wall has no other way of measuring change except by holding the frame constant. Its effect on the chain of events is that the eleven frames now read as **one place at eleven moments** rather than as a set of pictures about a shed: because the doorway, the light and the framing do not move, the only thing that changes between frames is the size of the two piles, so the viewer reads each frame as caused by the one before it. Selection did not just remove photographs; it built the causal link the series depends on.

Marks: 1 — the decision stated in production language, specifically enough that somebody else could act on it. 1 — correctly named as **selection, order, duration** or **access**. 1 — the effect on the **chain of events** the audience received, stated causally.

Other creditable decisions: an **order** decision (moving an event so the audience meets a consequence before its cause, exchanging suspense for dramatic irony); a **duration** decision (trimming a scene or segment so that the time given stops signalling importance to the wrong element); an **access** decision (cutting the shot that let the audience see what a character could not, so a reveal changes from suspense to surprise). All four levers are creditable; only the effect on the chain earns the third mark.

Common errors: describing the software rather than the decision (“I edited it in the timeline and it flowed better”); naming a plot lever but never saying what changed for the audience — the third mark is the whole point of the question; offering a **production**-stage decision (what was captured) when the question asked for post-production;

claiming post-production created a new event, when it can only rearrange what production captured; writing a feeling (“it made it sadder”) in place of a stated effect on the chain.

[Substitute: name one thing you actually changed after capture, put it in the sentence “from the material I had, I chose to ...”, label it selection, order, duration or access, and finish with “so the audience now ...”.]

Question 3 (4 marks)

Command term — explain: give a detailed account of how and why, making the relationship between the two stages evident.

Model response.

The responsibility that was not discharged belongs to the **editing role at pre-production**. Marisa held the editor role for the whole production, but a role is a standing position and a responsibility is stage-specific, and the editor’s pre-production responsibility is not editing — it is **coverage advice**: telling the director and camera roles, before the shoot, what has to be captured for the intended cut to work. An editor who reads a shot list and says that two consecutive scenes planned as wides from the same side at the same size will not cut together has prevented a fault at the only point at which it is cheap to prevent. Marisa could not discharge that responsibility because the shot list was never sent to her, which makes this a **handover failure** as well: the pre-production handover is complete only when every role that has to act on a document has received it, and a responsibility is discharged not when you have finished your part but when the next role can use what you gave them.

The consequence lands two stages later, at **post-production**. At the assembly edit, scenes 3 and 4 read as one shot repeated rather than as two events, which means the **cause-and-effect join** between the gate being padlocked and Ruby walking the long way round — the turn the whole narrative is built on — is not delivered to the audience at all. The ordinary remedy is a return to production for a pick-up, because the fault is a missing capture rather than an assembly problem. That remedy is closed: the council re-locked the reserve on 9 August, so the material cannot be re-captured and the film must be finished with a broken link.

The fix is an **allocation** change, not an exhortation to be careful. The crew list should name the editing role as an active contributor at pre-production with a dated deliverable — a written coverage note returned on the shot list before the call sheet is issued — and the producer’s pre-production handover should list the shot list as a document distributed to camera, sound and editor, with the distribution recorded. That converts a courtesy into a responsibility with an owner and a date.

Marks: 1 — the unowned responsibility named precisely, with the **role** and the **stage** it belonged to. 1 — why it is a pre-production responsibility (coverage advice / the handover test). 1 — the specific downstream consequence at a named later stage, expressed as damage to the chain of events. 1 — a fix expressed as a change to the role allocation, with a deliverable and a point in the schedule.

Common errors: diagnosing this as an editing problem and proposing an editing solution — the material that would carry the join does not exist, and no cut can originate it; naming a role without naming the stage, which leaves it unsaid what the person was actually answerable for; blaming the camera role for shooting two similar wides, when the shot list they were given asked for exactly that; retelling the log entry in different words; and offering “they should have communicated better” as the fix, which allocates nothing to anybody.

Question 4 (3 marks)

Command term — describe: an accurate account of the record’s features and qualities, then a specific statement.

Model response.

The record is usable because it is a **controlled comparison with a criterion written down before anything was recorded**. It asks **one question** — which microphone placement captures intelligible dialogue at that gate at that hour with the freight line running — and changes **one variable**, microphone placement, stepped through three values while the gate, the hour, the speaker, the recorder, the script and the gain target are all held constant, so a difference between

the passes can only be attributed to the thing that was changed. It is run in **matched conditions**: the same location at 7.40 am, which is the hour the material will actually be captured, rather than somewhere convenient at a convenient time. The **settings, distance and file names were written on the record as each pass was made**, so a pass that worked can be reproduced rather than remembered. And the **success criterion was set beforehand** — every word intelligible on phone speakers at half volume with the train under the voice — and **checked on the delivery device**, not on the recorder’s own output, which is a far more forgiving listening environment than the one the audience will use.

The failed pass is part of what makes the record useful, not a flaw in it: the study design describes practitioners undertaking technical tests “reflecting on their success or failure”, and pass 2 rules out a placement the crew would otherwise have reached for on the day. The idling truck is a finding of a different kind, and the record is careful to keep it outside the comparison: it did not come from the variable, so it is written down as a condition of the location rather than as a result about placement.

The crew may now safely put in its shooting plan **dialogue recorded at the gate at 7.40 am on a lapel microphone clipped outside the collar a hand’s width from the mouth, gained to peak near –11 dB** — and, because of the truck, a fallback for a vehicle idling at the crossing: a second recorder running as a safety track, or an agreed pause-and-retake window, rather than the assumption that the location is quiet.

Marks: 1 — two or more features of a usable test named and characterised accurately (one question, one variable, matched conditions, recorded settings, criterion stated beforehand, reviewed on the delivery device). 1 — the point that the criterion was checked on the **delivery device**, or that the failed pass is itself a result. 1 — one thing the crew may now safely plan, stated specifically and drawn from the record rather than invented.

Common errors: listing all five features as bullet points with nothing said about why each matters; treating pass 2 as a failure of the test rather than a finding; answering with what the crew should do next time instead of what they now **know**; stating the plan consequence in general terms (“they can record sound there”) rather than at the level of placement, gain and fallback; and forgetting that the review happened on a phone, which is the single feature that separates this record from a test that “looked and sounded fine” on the equipment that made it.

Question 5 (3 marks)

Command term — explain: an account of how the skill was built and why it changed what the audience received.

Model response (student production: The Keep Pile).

The skill was **metering a dim interior against a bright doorway** — holding detail in the piles inside the shed while the open door behind them does not burn out to white. I built it in pre-production as a **technical test** with one question and one variable: the same standing position, the same lens, the same hour on two consecutive Saturday mornings, changing only exposure compensation across five steps, with every setting written on the file and a criterion set beforehand — *the lids and labels on the keep pile are readable at A4, and the doorway still reads as a doorway rather than as a hole*. I reviewed the test as an A4 proof at reading distance, because that is how the audience meets the work, and not on the camera’s own screen. Two of the five steps met the criterion, which fixed a working range before a single narrative frame was taken.

The effect on the narrative is direct, because in this series the chain of events **is** the contents of the two piles. If the interior had been metered for the doorway, the piles would have gone to silhouette and every frame would have shown the same dark shapes in the same room; the viewer would have received eleven photographs of a shed and no chain at all. Because the piles are legible frame by frame, the viewer can see what has been added to the throw pile and what has gone from the keep pile, and reads each frame as caused by the one before it. A technical skill decided whether the narrative was legible, not merely whether the photographs were good.

Marks: 1 — the skill named as something a person **does**, and located in development or pre-production rather than on the day. 1 — how it was developed, with at least one feature of a proper test (one variable, matched conditions, recorded settings, criterion, delivery-device review). 1 — the effect on the **narrative the audience received**, not on the technical quality of the material.

Common errors: naming equipment instead of a skill (“I used a DSLR”); claiming a skill without evidence of how it was built — “I got better at lighting” is worth nothing; describing the effect as technical quality (“the shots looked more professional”) when the mark is for what the audience could then read; placing the skill development on the shoot day, which is the one place the study design does not put it; and choosing a skill the narrative did not actually depend on.

[Substitute: pick the one skill your narrative would have failed without, say what the test changed one variable of, and finish with “because I could do this, the audience was able to read ...”.]

Question 6 (5 marks)

Command term — analyse: identify the components — here the three families of constraint — and the significance of the relationships between them and the finished narrative.

Model response.

The note raises all three families at once, which is the usual shape of a real constraint, and each is doing separate work.

Legal. The binding problem is not that consent is missing but that the consent held does not cover the act now planned. The release was signed in week 2 for an assembly screening; putting the film on the school intranet is a **separate act of publication**, and permission to be recorded is not permission to be published anywhere. Because Ruby is under 18, a parent or guardian must consent in addition to her, and the note makes plain that no such consent was ever sought for the intranet destination: “nobody said anything about the intranet, only the assembly”. The letterbox number is the second legal exposure — an identifying detail about a private residence that the family has expressly asked not to be published, and the crew has no permission covering it. The general principle behind both is written into Victorian law: the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999* (Vic) regulates recording and, at section 11, **separately** prohibits knowingly communicating or publishing a record of a private conversation or private activity obtained by a listening or optical surveillance device, subject to exceptions including the express or implied consent of each party. Recording and publishing are two acts, and each needs its own permission.

Ethical. The film states that Ruby “walks the reserve every morning” when she walked it once, on a Sunday, at the crew’s request. That is **staged material presented as observed**, and in a non-fictional narrative it must be signalled to the audience rather than smuggled in — no statute prevents the crew from running the line, which is exactly why the constraint is ethical rather than legal. Behind it sits the larger ethical failure the note identifies: consent was treated as a signature collected in week 2 rather than as a **process** in which the participant understands the subject, the audience and the use, with a chance to raise a concern before the edit is locked. **Duty of care** completes the picture, and it is the sharpest point in the note: the consequence of the claim lands on a Year 8 student among people who will see the film — “people at school will think that’s her routine” — and not on the crew.

Community. The crew is making inside the community it is making for; the audience at the assembly and the subject of the film are the same people, sitting in the same room. The sanction here is relational rather than legal: a family that is told after the fact that its address was published is a family that will not agree to the next production, and word travels through a school faster than through a district. The institution carries obligations of its own — a school is an organisation to which Victoria’s eleven Child Safe Standards, mandatory since 1 July 2022, apply — so the crew’s handling of a child participant is also the school’s exposure, not only theirs.

What the response does to the narrative. Four actions answer the note, and each changes the finished film. The narration is re-cut so the film claims only what it can show — one morning, filmed with Ruby’s agreement — or carries an on-screen line disclosing that the walk was staged for the camera; either way the film loses a claim to routine and gains accuracy, and the sequence tightens by a few seconds. The front-gate shot is re-framed, cropped or replaced with the reserve gate, which removes an exterior and pushes the opening of Ruby’s strand straight to the reserve. Parent or guardian consent is obtained in writing for the intranet destination, and if it cannot be obtained in four days the film screens at the assembly only and the intranet release is dropped — a distribution decision, not an editorial one. And the family is shown the cut before the assembly, which is the action that answers the ethical promise, the legal risk and the community expectation simultaneously. The narrative that reaches the audience is

shorter, narrower in what it asserts, and released to fewer people; it is also the only version the crew actually has permission to show.

Marks: 1 — the **legal** constraint identified precisely as consent that does not extend to the new destination (not merely “they need permission”). 1 — the **ethical** constraint identified as fair representation of a staged event and consent as a process, with the point that the law does not require it. 1 — the **community** constraint identified as the audience and the subject being the same people, with a relational rather than legal sanction. 1 — the three kept distinct and shown converging on the same decisions. 1 — the impact on the **finished narrative** traced specifically, including the distribution consequence.

Band descriptors (out of 5):

- **High (4–5):** all three families named, correctly distinguished and applied to this note rather than described in general; the legal point located at **publication** rather than at recording; the staged walk identified as a representation problem; the impact traced to specific, named changes in the film and its release; the observation that one action can answer more than one family.
- **Mid (2–3):** two families handled well and the third asserted, or all three named but “legal” used as a label for everything; the consent issue identified but not as a destination problem; impact stated as “they would have to change it” without saying what changes.
- **Low (1):** the note paraphrased; constraints listed as rules with no reference to the film; ethical and legal used interchangeably; no distribution consequence.

Common errors: treating the whole note as a copyright question; asserting that a signed release settles consent, when the note is precisely a case where it does not; missing the staged-walk problem entirely, which is the one the participant herself has raised; concluding that the crew “should ask permission” without identifying **which** permission, **from whom** and **for which destination**; and importing Unit 1’s institutional, economic, social and political constraint list from 7B, which belongs to a different dot point and answers a different question.

Question 7 (10 marks)

Command terms — analyse and evaluate: break the production into the decisions made at each stage and show how they act on one another; then make a judgement against a stated standard, using evidence.

Narrative production: *The Keep Pile* — an eleven-frame photographic narrative series

Model response (student production: The Keep Pile).

My production was a photographic narrative series of eleven frames in the **still-image** form, printed at A4 and hung in a fixed order. The **premise** was that across five weekends a Year 11 student empties her grandmother’s shed so the house can be sold; each weekend the throw pile grows and the keep pile shrinks, until one box is left, and on the last morning she carries that box back into the empty shed and shuts the door. The **specified audience** was 15- to 18-year-olds in the district who do not visit the Collection and who would meet the series alone, on a wall, with no introduction and no fixed order of attention. My **intention** was that they would read the final act — putting the box back — as a decision rather than as an oversight. The **concept** the exercise demonstrated was the manipulation of media codes and conventions in the construction of a narrative.

Development: the form was chosen as a narrative decision, not an aesthetic one. I first planned this as a short moving-image piece and abandoned it after a test weekend, because the events themselves are almost invisible — nothing happens except two piles changing size over five weeks, and moving image would have had to manufacture drama the story does not contain. The still-image form does the opposite: it can place the same frame beside itself five times and let a viewer measure the difference. The audience decision made in the same week set the limit that everything else obeyed. Because viewers would meet the series on a wall in their own time, with no guarantee of starting at frame 1, the chain could not depend on a revelation held to the end; the outcome had to be legible from any entry point. That is why the shed door appears in every frame.

Pre-production: the plot was fixed by a rule. The **sequence plan** locked eleven frames, one per planned event, all of them taken from a single standing position in the shed doorway, which I marked on the concrete with tape so it could be re-found on five different mornings. That is one decision doing two jobs. As a **plot** decision it fixed **selection** and

order before a single narrative frame existed — eleven events, in the order they occur. As a **construction** decision it fixed the code that carries meaning: with composition, camera position and framing held constant, the only variable left in the frame is the two piles, so change reads as cause and effect rather than as a series of separate observations. This is where the concept lives, and it lives in the plan rather than in the pictures.

Production: over-capture, because the point of commitment is early and hard. Capture ran over five weekends and could not be repeated: the shed was emptied progressively and by week five the states of weeks one to four no longer existed anywhere. I shot 380 exposures rather than eleven, bracketing exposure at each position and taking three or four framings of every planned event, and I kept a frame log noting which planned event each set of exposures carried. I also wrote the time, the weather and the state of both piles on the log every morning, because the five mornings were a week apart and the light was never the same on any two of them, and the series still had to read as one continuous process.

Post-production: selection built the causal link. In the still-image form post-production is selecting and sequencing, and this is where the series became a narrative. From 380 exposures I selected eleven, and the decisive move was to discard every frame taken from inside the shed — including the four strongest individual images in the set — because a viewer reading along a wall has no way of measuring change except by holding the frame constant. That is a **selection** decision, and its effect on the chain is that eleven photographs became one place at eleven moments: the doorway, the light and the framing do not move, so each frame is read as caused by the one before it.

The technical decision that changed what the narrative could deliver. Working alone meant every role stacked on me, and the collision was between producing and capturing on the same mornings, so I separated the roles in time — the permission conversation, the print booking and the equipment check done in writing the night before each weekend, so that on the morning I was only metering. The skill the narrative actually depended on was **metering a dim interior against a bright doorway**. I built it in pre-production with a test that held position, lens and hour constant and stepped exposure compensation across five values, reviewed as an A4 proof at reading distance rather than on the camera screen, against a criterion set beforehand: the lids and labels on the keep pile readable at A4, the doorway still reading as a doorway. Had I metered for the door, the piles would have been silhouettes and the audience would have received eleven pictures of a dark shed and no chain of events at all. The chain is the contents of the piles, so legibility was not a quality issue — it was the narrative.

The constraint, and what answering it did to the finished series. My grandmother is an identifiable participant, the house sale was not yet public, and the prints would hang in a public room for twelve months, so I treated consent as a process rather than a form: I explained the series and where it would hang before I photographed anything, and I showed her the eleven selected frames on the reading table before they were printed. Two changes followed. She asked that the street number in the planned opening frame not be shown, so I re-composed frame 1 tighter, opening on the shed door rather than on the house from the street; and a neighbour who appeared in the background of one weekend's frames was not approached for a release, so I selected an alternative frame from the same position and morning. The first change improved the series — opening on the shed door rather than the street established the repeated composition in the first frame instead of the second, which is the frame that teaches the audience how to read the other ten. The second cost me the only image in which another person appears, and the series is more enclosed as a result. Both changes were made before printing, which is the point of commitment in this form: once a print is made at final size it is a physical object, and there is no patching it.

Evaluation, and the evidence for it. Before printing I laid the eleven frames on a table in front of five viewers from the specified age group and asked one question — *what did you think happened, and why?* — writing the answers down verbatim. Four reconstructed the chain: one of them said “she’s clearing it out and she’s kept one box”, and another named the mechanism without being asked, saying “it’s the same shot every time so you’re just looking at the pile”, which is direct confirmation that the concept was carried by the construction and not by the content. The fifth read the series backwards, as somebody **moving in** rather than clearing out, because the throw pile grows in the first frames and a viewer with no other cue can read growth either way. Five viewers in a classroom are not a sample, and the question tests comprehension rather than quality, so what this evidence establishes is that the chain is legible and that its **direction** is not.

Judged against both standards, the series **largely achieved** its intention and **successfully demonstrated** its concept. The intention was that the final act read as a decision, and for the four viewers who read the chain forwards it did — three of them described the last frame as her keeping something rather than as her forgetting it. The concept is demonstrated at the level of construction rather than content, which is the harder and better version of it. The shortfall

is precise and belongs to me rather than to the audience: the direction of travel is carried by one signal only, the relative size of two piles, and frames 3 to 5 do not disambiguate it. The change I would make is concrete — replace the frame at position 4 with one showing the throw pile at the kerb behind a dated hard-waste notice, taken from the same standing position through the open door, so that a dated, one-way event fixes the direction of the chain for a viewer who enters at any frame. It costs one frame of the eleven and it answers the diagnosis rather than a general wish to be clearer, which is the test of a useful change.

Band descriptors (out of 10):

- **High (8–10):** media form, specified audience and premise all identified and **used** — the audience visibly justifies decisions rather than sitting in the opening paragraph; a specific narrative decision analysed at **three or more** stages, each tied to its effect on the chain of events or on what the audience knows; the stages shown as interrelated, with later decisions depending on earlier ones; one role or technical decision shown changing what the narrative could deliver; one constraint traced to a named change in the finished work; a **graded** verdict against both the narrative intention and the concept, supported by audience evidence reported with its limits; one concrete change that answers a stated diagnosis.
- **Mid (5–7):** most stages covered but at least one described rather than analysed; audience named but not used; the technical or role decision present without its narrative consequence; a constraint named but its impact asserted; a verdict reached without evidence, or evidence reported as proof; the change proposed is general (“improve the pacing”) rather than diagnosed.
- **Low (1–4):** a diary of what the student did, week by week, with stage names attached; no premise or no audience; the story retold in place of the decisions; “we edited it and it was better” with no plot vocabulary; no constraint; the evaluation judges the **idea** rather than the production.

Common errors: retelling the production instead of analysing its decisions — the single most costly error in this outcome; covering only the middle three stages and forgetting that development and distribution are stages where narrative decisions are made; naming a stage without naming a decision made in it; treating the technical skill as a matter of quality rather than of legibility; describing a constraint without saying what the finished narrative gained or lost when it was answered; reporting a rough-cut screening as a verdict on quality when the question it asks tests comprehension; converting five classmates into “most viewers”; and evaluating the premise (“my idea was original”) when the marks are for the production.

[Substitute: run your own production through the same six moves — form and audience as causes, a decision at three or more stages, the skill or role the narrative depended on, the constraint and its cost, the audience evidence and its limits, and a change that answers a diagnosis you have actually stated.]

Mark tally (verification)

Question	Command term	Focus	Source subtopic	Marks
1	Name / State	Planning instrument and what it locked	10A	2
2	Describe	A post-production plot decision and its effect on the chain	10B (with 11C register)	3
3	Explain	An unowned responsibility and its downstream cost	10C	4
4	Describe	What makes a technical test usable	11A	3
5	Explain	A technical skill developed, applied, and its narrative effect	11A	3
6	Analyse	Ethical, legal and community	11B	5

Question	Command term	Focus	Source subtopic	Marks
7	Analyse / Evaluate	constraints, and their impact The whole process applied, and a judged verdict	10A–11C	10
Total	7 questions			30

2 + 3 + 4 + 3 + 3 + 5 + 10 = **30 marks**, in 45 minutes — 1.5 minutes per mark, the same pace the Unit 3 and 4 examination runs at, so students arrive at Unit 3 already fluent in the tariff.

Coverage check. Chapter 10: 10A at Q1 and Q7, 10B at Q2 and Q7, 10C at Q3 and Q7. Chapter 11: 11A at Q4, Q5 and Q7, 11B at Q6 and Q7, 11C at Q2 and Q7. Both chapters of the topic are examined, and the five things the outcome names — process, roles, technical decisions, constraints and evaluation — carry 5, 4, 6, 5 and 10 marks respectively across the paper.

Weighting note. Part B is 30 marks. Part A carries no mark total, because levels of achievement at Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision; it is reported against the four-level rubric above. The outcome is demonstrated by Part A. Part B examines what the student can say about it.

Sources for the real-world material in this test

The *Held Over* commission, the Wrenfield Regional Collection, *Nine Mile Siding*, Tallowmere Pictures, Hollowbridge Secondary College, all three folio extracts and the model production *The Keep Pile* are original constructed stimulus and an invented student production. Following the convention of this series, constructed material carries no source line. The statements of law, regulation and study-design requirement below are verifiable public record.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, VCE Media Study Design, accreditation period 2024–2028 — <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/sites/default/files/2025-10/2024MediaSD.docx>. Accurate as at July 2026. (Unit 2 Outcome 2 and the five key skills of Unit 2 Area of Study 2, quoted in the rubric; the statement that all assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based, that procedures for assessing levels of achievement are a matter for school decision, and that levels of achievement will not be reported to the VCAA, with schools free to report using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators; the direction that assessment be part of the regular teaching and learning program and be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe; the list of suitable tasks for Unit 2 — audio-visual or video sequences, radio or audio sequences, photographs, print layouts, sequences or presentations using digital technologies, posters, written responses and oral reports; the direction that where teachers allow students to choose between tasks they must ensure the tasks are of comparable scope and demand; the description of production as a process that may be collaborative or individual; the framing of Unit 2 productions as media exercises demonstrating one or more concepts from Area of Study 1; and the placement of technical tests and experiments in the development and pre-production stages, “reflecting on their success or failure”.)

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Glossary of command terms — <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce/glossary-command-terms>. Accurate as at July 2026. (The definitions of name, state, describe, explain, analyse and evaluate reproduced in the command-terms table at the head of these solutions.)

Source: AustLII, Surveillance Devices Act 1999 (Vic), s 6 and s 11 — https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/sda1999210/s11.html. Accurate as at July 2026. (Section 6 regulates knowingly installing, using or maintaining a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation to which the person is not a party, without the express or implied consent of each party. Section 11 **separately** prohibits knowingly communicating or publishing a record or report of a private conversation or private activity made as a direct or indirect result of the use of a listening, optical surveillance or tracking device, subject to exceptions including communication or publication made with the express or implied consent of each party. Recording and publishing are two distinct acts, which is the point relied on in the Question 6 solution.)

Source: Federal Register of Legislation, Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) —

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00042>. Accurate as at July 2026. (Part IX confers three moral rights on creators: the right of attribution of authorship, the right not to have authorship falsely attributed, and the right of integrity of authorship. Moral rights are personal to the creator and are not transferred with the copyright, which is why the credits list is treated in this brief as a legal instrument.)

Source: AustLII, Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), s 21 and s 23 —

https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/ohasa2004273/s23.html. Accurate as at July 2026. (An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for employees a working environment that is safe and without risks to health (s 21), and must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the employer's undertaking (s 23). The Act is administered by WorkSafe Victoria. This is the basis for the risk assessment required in the Part A folio.)

Source: Commission for Children and Young People (Victoria), “New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children” — <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/>. Accurate as at July 2026. (Eleven Child Safe Standards replaced the previous seven and became mandatory for organisations including schools on 1 July 2022, with a greater focus on the safety of Aboriginal children and young people, on involving families and communities, and on managing the risk of child abuse in online environments.)

Source: Screen Australia, “Pathways & Protocols: a filmmaker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts”, researched and written by Terri Janke, published May 2009 —

<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/doing-business-with-us/pathways-and-protocols-a-filmmakers-guide/>. Accurate as at July 2026. (Long-standing published guidance for filmmakers on the ethical and legal issues involved in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culture and concepts, including consultation with communities. Referred to in the Part A clearance set as the protocol source a student production should work from. The guide also sets out why protocol carries the weight it does: the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) protects an individual fixed work by an identifiable First Nations creator like any other work, but it recognises individual authors rather than communities, protects only material form rather than the underlying story, song, dance or knowledge, and expires — so communal, intergenerational cultural expression falls outside it.)

End of Topic 5 Test