

Media Units 3 & 4

Practice Examinations

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Practice Exam 1 — Section A

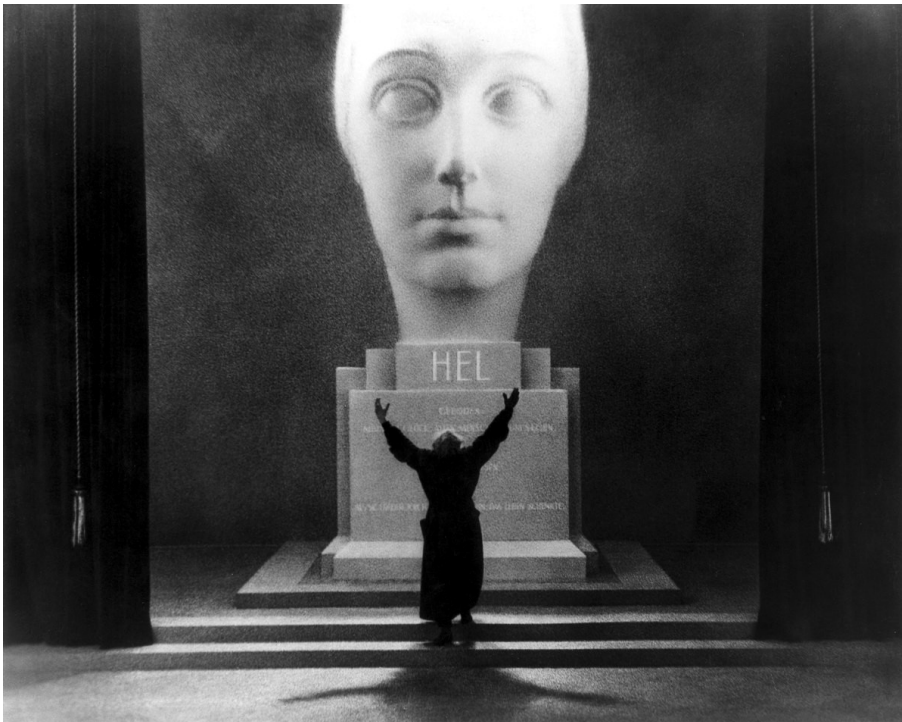
Reading time: 15 minutes. Writing time: 2 hours. Section A: 50 marks. Section B: 30 marks. Total 80 marks. Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers. Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape. No calculator is allowed in this examination. There is no formula sheet and no insert. All questions are compulsory.

Section A — 50 marks. Answer all questions in the spaces provided. Questions are grouped under the three areas of study. Question numbering restarts in Section B.

Narratives and their contexts

Question 1 (3 marks)

Study the film still below.



Source: *Metropolis*, film, Fritz Lang (dir.), UFA, Germany, 1927

Describe how one media code conveys meaning in the film still shown above. Name the code you are writing about.

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'.

You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 2 and 3.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (6 marks)

Discuss how the creator of the media narrative you have studied has used narrative conventions to engage a specific audience. In your response, identify the audience specifically and refer to at least two narrative conventions.

Question 3 (8 marks)

Analyse how the construction of one representation in the media narrative you have studied reflects or challenges one view or value held in the context in which the narrative was produced. In your response, identify the context by its time, place and social group, and refer to specific media codes.

Use different evidence from the evidence you used in Question 2.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 4–7.

The Tanner Street Tool Library — Community Engagement Plan 2027–2029 (extract)

The Tanner Street Tool Library is a volunteer-run not-for-profit organisation. Members pay a small annual fee and can borrow tools — drills, sanders, sewing machines, garden equipment — instead of buying them. We also run free monthly repair workshops where volunteers help people mend clothing, furniture and household appliances.

Where we are now. Our 900 members are mostly aged over 45. Very few people aged 18–30 have joined, even though people in this age group regularly tell our volunteers that they cannot afford tools and have nowhere to store them.

Our intention for the next three years. We want young adults in our area to see borrowing and repairing as a normal, everyday part of setting up a first home — not as a niche environmental club. We will commission a series of media products that show borrowing and repairing as ordinary, practical and social.

What we can offer makers. Access to the tool library and its workshops, to our volunteers and members, and a small production budget. Any product must be one we can release and distribute ourselves at no ongoing cost.

Question 4 (4 marks)

Develop one idea for a media production that responds to the Tanner Street Tool Library’s engagement plan. Your production must be in **one** of the following media forms:

- moving image
- photography
- audio
- print
- digital and online media

Outline your idea using the boxes provided below.

Box	Your response
Audience	
Media form	
Title and idea	
Style and/or genre	

Question 5 (4 marks)

Describe an experiment you would conduct to develop one specific skill in the use of equipment, media technologies or processes appropriate to the media form of the production you proposed in Question 4.

In your response, identify the skill, the single variable you would change, and the instrument you would use to evaluate the outcome.

Question 6 (6 marks)

Explain the narrative of the production you proposed in Question 4, and how that narrative would achieve the intention stated in the engagement plan.

In your response, refer to the way your narrative begins and the way it resolves.

Question 7 (4 marks)

Describe one research method you would use to test whether your proposed production would engage the audience identified in the engagement plan. In your response, state what the method would involve and what it would tell you.

Agency and control in the media

Question 8 (4 marks)

Describe one way in which audiences are able to exercise agency in the contemporary media landscape. In your response, refer to a specific example.

Question 9 (5 marks)

Discuss one contemporary example in which it is claimed that the media has influenced an audience. Use evidence to support your response.

Question 10 (6 marks)

Explain how globalised media institutions have changed the **distribution** of media products in Australia. In your response, use a different example from the one discussed in Question 9.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 1 — Section B

Section B — 30 marks. Answer both questions. Each question is worth 15 marks. Question numbering restarts in this section.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Analyse how media codes and narrative conventions work together to convey meaning in the media narrative that you have studied this year.

Your response must analyse:

- two specific sequences in the media narrative, each with stated boundaries
- multiple media codes and multiple narrative conventions
- how the codes and the narrative conventions work **together** in each sequence, rather than separately.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (15 marks)

‘The rules that govern Australian media were written for a handful of local broadcasters and publishers. Audiences now spend much of their time on global platforms that those rules were never designed to reach.’

Analyse the issues and challenges involved in the regulation and control of the media and audiences in Australia. In your answer, refer to the statement above as well as to additional examples, evidence and/or ideas you have studied this year.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 1 — Solutions

Every model response below is one high-scoring answer, not the only one. Where a question requires your own studied media narrative or your own production idea, the model shows the **shape** of a full-mark answer; substitute your own material and keep the structure.

Marks in this paper: Section A $3 + 6 + 8 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 6 = 50$; Section B $15 + 15 = 30$; total 80.

Section A — solutions

Q1. Command term — *describe: give an account of the features of something. Three marks reward one code, named, with an account of what its use conveys.*

Visual composition. The still is composed symmetrically around a single vertical axis: an enormous sculpted head fills the upper half of the frame, directly above a stepped plinth carrying carved lettering, while one small human figure in dark clothing stands at the very bottom centre of the frame with both arms raised towards it. The composition places the figure at the foot of a line that draws the eye upwards, and the extreme difference in scale between the head and the person makes the person read as tiny by comparison. This construction conveys the meaning that the figure is subordinate to whatever the monument represents — the audience reads the moment as one of worship, appeal or powerlessness rather than as an equal encounter.

Other fully creditable answers: **lighting** — the head is brightly lit and almost white against a dark background while the figure is close to silhouette, so the light directs attention to the monument and absorbs the person into shadow; **mise en scene** — the stepped monument, the carved lettering and the heavy drapes to either side construct the space as a shrine or memorial rather than an ordinary room; **acting** — the raised arms and braced stance of the figure construct pleading or reverence.

Common errors: naming a code and then describing the content of the image (“there is a big head”) without saying what the code choice conveys; confusing a low camera angle with a high one; writing thinly about three codes instead of one code well.

Q2. Command term — *discuss: develop the point with evidence and reach a position. Six marks need a specifically identified audience, at least two narrative conventions, and a stated position on how the engagement works.*

Model response (studied narrative: Jasper Jones, 2017):

The audience. *Jasper Jones* (Rachel Perkins, 2017) is constructed to engage Australian viewers of roughly 15–25 — the young-adult readership the 2009 source novel had already built in Australia — who are close in age to its central characters and are being invited to judge an Australian town of an earlier generation.

Narrative convention 1: point of view. The narrative is anchored to Charlie Bucktin, a bookish fourteen-year-old, and events reach the audience only as they reach him. Charlie is taken into the bush at night and shown Laura Wishart’s body before he — or the audience — has any way of knowing what has happened or whether Jasper can be trusted. Because the audience knows only what Charlie knows, it is placed in his position: out of its depth, and forced to work out whom to believe. For viewers of Charlie’s own age, that rationing of information produces identification rather than mere sympathy.

Narrative convention 2: multiple storylines. The narrative braids the mystery of Laura’s death with two other strands — Charlie’s first relationship with Eliza Wishart, and Jeffrey Lu’s fight to be allowed onto the town cricket team. The braiding widens the film’s grip: a viewer not held by the mystery is still held by the friendship and the romance. Because the strands also intersect — Eliza is Laura’s sister, and the town’s hostility towards Jeffrey is the same hostility that makes Jasper its automatic suspect — each strand pays the others off rather than diluting them.

Position. The two conventions engage the audience in different registers at once, and that is why the engagement holds. Multiple storylines supply **cognitive** engagement: the audience is set a puzzle and given three lines of it to follow. Point of view supplies **emotional** engagement: because information is rationed to Charlie’s level, the audience feels his uncertainty rather than observing it. Neither would be sufficient alone — the same mystery told from outside Charlie would be a puzzle without stakes.

Common errors: offering a **genre** convention (the coming-of-age story, the murder mystery) where a **narrative** convention is required — the 2024 and 2025 reports both flag this confusion; naming a vague audience (“teenagers”, “modern audiences”) when the stem asks for a specific one; describing the conventions without saying **how** they produce engagement; sliding from engagement into **consumption** (how the narrative is accessed) or **reading** (the meaning made).

Q3. Command term — analyse: break the representation into its constructed parts and show how they work together, with specific evidence. Eight marks need construction evidence, a specific context (time, place, group) and an explicit reflect/challenge verdict.

Model response (studied narrative: Jasper Jones, 2017):

The representation analysed is that of **the Lu family** — Jeffrey and his father An Lu — as Vietnamese-Australians in the small Western Australian town of Corrigan in 1969.

The representation is built first through **selection**. The narrative repeatedly selects incidents of racial hostility: the racial abuse directed at Jeffrey by other boys in the town, his exclusion from the Corrigan cricket team by its coach and players, and the assault on An Lu in his own front garden. Nothing is left ambiguous — the abuse is shown often enough that the audience reads it as the ordinary condition of the family’s life rather than as one bad day.

Second, the representation is built through **acting and characterisation**. Jeffrey is constructed as quick, funny and verbally sharp, Charlie’s intellectual equal in their running exchanges. Because the audience is aligned with him and enjoys his company, the abuse he absorbs is read as unjust rather than as period colour.

Third, **mise en scene and setting** anchor the family in a specific historical moment: a small country town in 1969, while Australia was at war in Vietnam. The construction makes the family’s Vietnamese heritage the reason for the town’s hostility, so the racism is shown to be produced by that context rather than by anything the family does.

The specific context in which the narrative was **produced** is Australia in **2017** — culturally, a multicultural society in which racial abuse is publicly named as unacceptable. Measured against the views of the **depicted** 1969, the representation **challenges** the view, dominant in white Australia at the time, that Asian Australians were outsiders whose belonging was conditional; 1969 was only three years after the 1966 migration review began dismantling the White Australia policy, which was not formally ended until 1973. Measured against its own **production** context, the same construction **reflects** a dominant 2017 value: that this treatment was a national wrong, and that recognising it is part of who Australians now understand themselves to be. The two verdicts are not in conflict — the film invites a 2017 audience to look back at 1969 and judge it, and the construction is designed to make that judgement inevitable.

Source: National Museum of Australia, “Ending the White Australia policy” (Defining Moments) — <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/end-of-white-australia-policy>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: attaching the reflect/challenge verdict to the **depicted** era instead of the **production** context — the single most common error on this archetype; offering a **theme** (“racism”) where a **representation** is required; writing “society” instead of a context pinned to time, place and group; asserting the view or value without code-level evidence.

Q4. Command term — develop (plus outline): generate an idea and set out its key features briefly. Four marks reward four specific boxes that answer the client’s plan, not four vague ones.

Box	Model response
Audience	People aged 18–30 in the local area who are setting up a first rented home or share house: renters with little storage space and low disposable income, who already watch short-form video on their phones.
Media form	Moving image — a short-form online video series.
Title and idea	Borrowed — six videos of 60–90 seconds. In each one a different young renter arrives at the tool library with a single specific household problem (a wobbly chair, a hem that has come down, a bike with a flat tyre), is lent

Box	Model response
	one tool and shown how to use it, and finishes the repair in their own home before the video ends.
Style and/or genre	Observational documentary: handheld camera, natural light, no voice-over, real members rather than actors, and a warm, matter-of-fact tone rather than a campaigning environmental tone.

Common errors: proposing a product that **advertises the engagement plan itself** rather than responding to it (the 2025 report’s leading complaint on this item); unspecific boxes (“young people”, “a video”, “modern style”); an idea the client could not release and distribute at no ongoing cost, which the stimulus rules out.

Q5. Command term — describe: give an account of the features. Four marks need a named skill, a controlled variable and a stated evaluation method.

Model response:

The skill: recording clear, usable dialogue on location in the tool library’s workshop, where drills and sanders run in the background. This is the skill most likely to sink *Borrowed*, because the whole series depends on a volunteer’s spoken instructions being intelligible on a phone speaker.

The experiment: I would film the same 30-second explanation by the same volunteer, in the same spot, four times in one session, with the workshop noise held at the same level.

The variable I would change: the microphone and its placement — and nothing else. Take 1: the camera’s on-board microphone at two metres. Take 2: a shotgun microphone on a boom about 60 cm above the speaker’s head. Take 3: a lapel microphone clipped about 20 cm below the chin. Take 4: the lapel microphone with the machinery switched off, as a control. Speaker, script, framing, camera settings, room and distance all stay fixed so that any difference is caused by the microphone alone.

How I would evaluate the results: I would play each take back on headphones and on a phone speaker, and score each on a 1–5 intelligibility scale. I would then give the four takes, unlabelled, to two people who were not present and ask them to transcribe each one; the take with the fewest transcription errors wins. Every take, its variable and its score would be logged in my production diary as evidence, and the winning set-up becomes the standard for all six episodes.

Common errors: “I would practise with the camera until I got better” — no isolated variable and no evaluation method, which the 2025 report identifies as the main reason this item scored 60%; changing more than one thing between takes; naming a skill that does not belong to the media form chosen in Question 4.

Q6. Command term — explain: give a how/why chain, not a description. Six marks need an actual narrative built on cause and effect, then a demonstration of how it delivers the client’s stated intention.

Model response (Episode 1 of Borrowed):

The narrative. Maya, 22, has just moved into a share house. The second-hand kitchen chair she was given wobbles so badly that she cannot sit on it. **Because** she cannot afford a new one and has nowhere to keep tools, she goes looking for another option, **and as a result** she turns up at the Tanner Street Tool Library on a Saturday morning. There a volunteer, Ken, turns the chair over, shows her that the joints are only loose, and lends her a clamp and a drill. **This leads to** Maya carrying them home on the bus and working through the two steps Ken showed her at her own kitchen table. **Consequently** the episode ends with the chair holding her weight at dinner with her housemates, and with Maya returning the clamp the following weekend — where she stops to hold a bike steady for somebody else.

How the narrative achieves the intention. The plan’s stated intention is that young adults see borrowing and repairing as “a normal, everyday part of setting up a first home”, not as a niche environmental club. The narrative is built to produce exactly that reading in four ways. First, the **problem is domestic and ordinary** — a wobbly chair, not a planetary crisis — and no character mentions waste, landfill or sustainability, so the audience is never invited to file the library under “environmental cause”. Second, the **protagonist is inside the client’s target audience**: a 22-year-old renter in a share house, so viewers in that group recognise their own situation rather than watching someone

else's. Third, the **resolution is practical and social at once** — the chair works, and the last beat is a shared meal and then a favour returned — which builds the library as a place people belong to rather than a cause they sign up to. Fourth, the **six-episode structure repeats the same pattern with six different people**, and repetition is what makes a behaviour read as normal: by the end of the series, borrowing looks like something everybody around here already does.

Common errors: giving a **theme or topic** (“it’s about sustainability”) where a **narrative** is required — the 2025 report’s specific complaint on this item; describing the production (shots, locations, music) instead of its narrative; asserting that the intention is achieved without showing **how** the narrative choices produce that effect.

Q7. Command term — *describe: give an account of the features. Four marks need a named method, what it actually involves, and what it would tell you.*

Model response:

The method: a structured concept test with the target audience, run before production begins. I would recruit ten to twelve people aged 18–30 who rent in the area and are not members of the tool library — the exact group the engagement plan says it is failing to reach.

What it would involve. Each participant is shown three one-page treatment cards for the same episode of *Borrowed*, told three different ways: (1) the repair with no dialogue and on-screen text captions; (2) the repair with a volunteer explaining each step aloud; (3) the repair filmed entirely in the borrower’s own home, with the tool library seen only at the start. Each participant then answers the same three questions: which version would you watch to the end on your phone? Which version makes the tool library sound like something you would actually use? What would stop you walking in the door? Responses go onto a tally sheet and the written answers are kept in my research folder as evidence. Alongside it I would run a second, cheaper strand — a **content analysis** of short-form videos already published by comparable organisations, logging length, use of captions, and whether the video opens on the problem or on the organisation.

What it would tell me. First, whether the target audience recognises itself in the premise at all. Second, which treatment survives phone viewing, which then settles the form of all six episodes. Third — and most important for this client — whether these viewers describe the tool library as a **service** or as a **cause**, since the engagement plan’s stated intention is that it be seen as an ordinary part of setting up a first home. If most participants call it a cause, the idea has to be recast before a single frame is shot.

Common errors: naming a method with no questions and no record (“I’d ask my friends what they think”); researching the **topic** (the history of tool libraries) when the stem asks you to research the **audience**; describing research whose findings could not change anything — research that cannot alter the production is not research.

Q8. Command term — *describe: give an account of the features. Four marks need a way, a specific contemporary example, and a clear statement of why it counts as agency.*

Model response:

One way audiences exercise agency is by **producing and distributing their own media content in order to organise action that institutional media and official channels are not delivering.**

During the Northern Rivers floods in late February 2022, emergency services in Lismore were overwhelmed by calls for help while residents were stranded on rooftops. Residents used social platforms to publish the locations of people who needed rescue and to coordinate rescues by private boat: on 28 February 2022 the mayor of Lismore, Steve Krieg, posted publicly on Facebook asking anyone with a boat to reach a pregnant woman on a roof in Engine Street. Community-run pages became clearing houses for information about rescues, supplies and clean-up. The independent NSW flood inquiry later recognised the “tinnie army” — residents who pulled neighbours out of the water in their own boats — and recommended that community members in high-risk areas be trained and resourced as first responders.

This is **agency** rather than consumption because the audience was not choosing between products that institutions had made available to it. Audience members used the participatory affordances of the platform to create and distribute their own content, set the agenda for what information circulated, and produce outcomes in the physical world — and the institutional response, in the form of an inquiry recommendation, followed them.

Source: *The Conversation*, “‘Tinnie army’ leads to NSW flood inquiry call to train community members as first responders. How will that work?”, 2022 — <https://theconversation.com/tinnie-army-leads-to-nsw-flood-inquiry-call-to-train-community-members-as-first-responders-how-will-that-work-188900>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Agence France-Presse via Gulf News, “Rooftop rescues in Australia as tens of thousands evacuated from floods”, 1 March 2022 — <https://gulfnews.com/world/oceania/rooftop-rescues-in-australia-as-tens-of-thousands-evacuated-from-floods-1.86074685>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: confusing **agency with consumption choice** (“audiences can choose what to watch on Netflix”) — choosing among what institutions offer is not agency, and this was the flagged error on the live 2025 version of this question; using non-contemporary examples (talkback radio, letters to the editor); naming a way with no example at all.

Q9. Command term — discuss: put the points for and against and reach a position. Five marks need a contemporary example, named evidence, and a judgement about how strong the influence claim actually is.

Model response:

The claim. News Corp Australia’s *Let Them Be Kids* campaign, launched in May 2024 across its mastheads, is claimed to have influenced Australian public opinion and the federal government’s agenda on setting a minimum age for social media.

Evidence supporting the claim. The campaign ran the stories of children harmed on social media and directed readers to a petition calling for the minimum age to be raised to 16; the petition attracted more than 54,000 signatures. In November 2024 the government introduced the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill; the Act received assent on 10 December 2024, and its obligations on platforms commenced on 10 December 2025. Most directly, the Prime Minister publicly credited the campaign by name when announcing the policy — an on-record acknowledgement from the decision-maker that the media campaign was part of the chain.

Evidence and argument against the strong version of the claim. A sequence of events plus an acknowledgement is not proof that the campaign changed what individuals believed. Concern about children’s social media use was already widespread among Australian parents before May 2024, so the campaign may have **amplified and focused** an existing view rather than created one. Commentators also noted the publisher’s commercial position — the platforms targeted compete with News Corp for advertising — which is a reason to weigh the claim rather than accept it at face value.

My position. The evidence supports **agenda-setting** influence rather than direct persuasion: the media did not so much tell audiences what to think as make this issue impossible for politicians to avoid, and the Prime Minister’s acknowledgement is unusually strong evidence of that. The claim that the campaign changed individual attitudes is much weaker, because no evidence isolates the campaign from the concern that already existed.

Source: Crikey, “Timeline of Australia’s plan to ban teens from social media”, 11 November 2024 — <https://www.crikey.com.au/2024/11/11/teen-social-media-ban-australia-timeline/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Federal Register of Legislation, Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (assent 10 December 2024) — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2024A00127/asmade>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: stale examples where **contemporary** is required (early TAC campaigns, the 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast); anecdote offered as evidence; naming a theory (the hypodermic-needle model) as though the theory were itself evidence — theories are analytical frames, and the marks are for the evidence.

Q10. Command term — explain: a how/why chain. Six marks need globalised institutions correctly identified and the change to **distribution** explained, not listed.

Model response:

Globalised media institutions are institutions that produce, distribute and monetise media across national borders through their own platforms — Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, YouTube. (Seven, Nine, Ten and the ABC are national institutions, however large they are in Australia.) Their arrival has changed Australian distribution in four connected ways.

1. Release is simultaneous and global instead of licensed and local. A title is no longer sold to an Australian broadcaster for an Australian schedule; it goes live everywhere at once on the institution's own platform. *Boy Swallows Universe*, an Australian series shot in Queensland, appeared on Netflix worldwide on 11 January 2024 — the same product, on the same day, in every market. The consequence is that the decision about when Australians see an Australian story is made by a company headquartered elsewhere.

2. Distribution and exhibition collapse into a single interface. There is no broadcast slot, no cinema window and no retail copy: the platform is the distributor and the point of consumption at once. Because the institution owns both ends, it captures the viewing data directly — something no broadcast licensing arrangement ever gave a distributor.

3. Recommendation replaces scheduling as the promotional mechanism. What appears on an Australian viewer's home screen is determined by the platform's own recommendation system rather than by a programmer building a night's viewing. Distribution therefore becomes personalised rather than national: two Australians open the same service and are effectively offered different catalogues.

4. Distribution obligations did not follow the audience. Australian commercial broadcasters carry local content obligations; when audiences moved onto platforms, those obligations stayed behind. The national cultural policy *Revive*, released in January 2023, committed to Australian screen content requirements for streaming platforms, to commence no later than 1 July 2024; the requirements were repeatedly deferred and, on 6 November 2024, the Arts Minister confirmed they had been postponed indefinitely. The shift in distribution has so far outrun the rules written for it.

Source: Netflix Media Center, "Boy Swallows Universe" (premiered 11 January 2024) — <https://media.netflix.com/en/only-on-netflix/81449940>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: The Conversation, Alexa Scarlata, "Australia has backed away from plans to introduce local quotas on streaming platforms — again", 14 November 2024 — <https://theconversation.com/australia-has-backed-away-from-plans-to-introduce-local-quotas-on-streaming-platforms-again-243248>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: treating a **local** institution as globalised — the confusion that made this the weakest-scoring question on the 2025 paper; writing about **production** or **consumption** when the stem isolates **distribution** (the 2024 report records exactly this drift on the equivalent item); listing practices ("they use algorithms, they make shows") without explaining how the change to distribution works.

Section B — solutions

Q1. Command term — *analyse: break the narrative into its constructed elements and show how they work together, with specific evidence at named moments. Fifteen marks; all three bullet requirements must be met.*

Media narrative: *Coco* (2017)

Model response (studied narrative: Coco, 2017):

Coco (Lee Unkrich, Pixar, 2017) follows Miguel, a boy from a family that has banned music, into the Land of the Dead during Día de Muertos. Its meaning is not carried by codes and narrative conventions running side by side; in each of the two sequences below, a code is what allows a narrative convention to do its work.

Sequence 1 — the crossing of the marigold bridge, running from Miguel taking the guitar in the cemetery-side mausoleum to his arrival among the dead on the far side of the petal bridge.

Colour is the sequence's controlling code. The bridge is built from the saturated orange of cempasúchil — marigold — petals, and against the muted night of the cemetery that orange reads immediately as both a path and a threshold. **Mise en scene** supplies the logic beneath it: the same petals have already been seen strewn from the family ofrenda alongside its framed photographs, so the audience knows where they came from. **Lighting** completes the move: the Land of the Dead is lit brightly and from many directions compared with the darkened cemetery, so crossing into death is constructed as a move from dark into light — the opposite of what the audience expects the phrase "land of the dead" to look like.

These codes are what make the **narrative convention of setting** function as an argument rather than a backdrop. The bridge exists only because the living laid the petals, so the geography of the world states the film's central law — that

the dead depend on the living to remember them — without a line of dialogue asserting it. Working with setting is the **narrative convention of cause and effect**: Miguel crosses *because* he took the guitar, and everything that follows is caused by that crossing. The two conventions are joined by one code choice: the marigold is simultaneously the visual signature of the setting and the physical mechanism of the causal chain. Remove the colour choice and the setting reverts to scenery while the causal link becomes arbitrary.

Sequence 2 — the final performance of “Remember Me”, running from Miguel entering the family home with the guitar to Mamá Coco taking her father’s letters out of her drawer.

Sound is the controlling code here, and it works by returning. The audience has already heard “Remember Me” as a booming public performance by Ernesto de la Cruz, staged for an arena. It comes back in this sequence stripped down and quiet — a child singing to an old woman in an ordinary room. The melody is identical; the arrangement, the volume and the person addressed are not. **Mise en scene** holds the contrast in place: a domestic room and a torn family photograph instead of a stage and a crowd.

That single sound choice is what makes the **narrative convention of character arc** audible. Miguel began the narrative determined to perform in public in defiance of his family; he ends it performing for one person inside it, on the same instrument and with the same song. The audience registers the completion of the arc not because it is narrated but because the register of the music has changed. Working with the arc is the **narrative convention of structuring of time**: the film has run to a deadline — sunrise on Día de Muertos — and this scene is that structure’s payoff. More importantly, the lullaby means what it means only *because* the arena version came earlier; the earlier performance is the term against which this one is read, so an ordering choice is what gives a sound choice its meaning.

Across the two sequences. Both work by the same method: a code states a rule or a change, and a narrative convention carries it. In sequence 1, colour and mise en scene turn setting into an argument about remembrance, and cause and effect runs along the same marigold path. In sequence 2, sound makes a character arc audible, and the structuring of time is what makes that sound legible. In neither case can the elements be separated and still mean what they mean — strip out the marigold and the setting is only scenery; strip out the arena version and the lullaby is only a sad song. That interdependence is how *Coco* conveys meaning.

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** two sequences, each with **stated boundaries**; **multiple** codes and **multiple** narrative conventions in each; the interaction made explicit — the response shows the code enabling the convention rather than listing both; evidence precise and tied to named moments; specialised media language sustained; all three bullet requirements met.
- **Mid (7–11):** two sequences identified but at least one left unbounded or treated as a whole act; codes and conventions both present but handled in **separate** paragraphs that never meet; some evidence generic; media language present but not sustained.
- **Low (1–6): whole-narrative generality** (“Throughout *Coco*...”); **genre** conventions offered where **narrative** conventions are required; retelling of the plot; one sequence only, or codes with no conventions.

Common errors: whole-film generality instead of bounded sequences — the leading fault on the live 2025 version of this item; offering **genre** conventions (the quest, the musical number) where **narrative** conventions are demanded; listing codes in one paragraph and conventions in the next so that “work together” is never demonstrated; retelling the storyline; analysing only one sequence and so failing a stated bullet requirement.

Q2. Command term — analyse: *break the problem into its parts and show how they work together, with specific evidence. Fifteen marks; the statement must be used as a springboard, and additional examples or evidence are required.*

Model response:

The statement’s claim is a **jurisdictional** one: Australia’s media rules were designed for a small, identifiable set of local broadcasters and publishers, and audiences have moved to services those rules “were never designed to reach”. The claim is largely sound as a description of where the difficulty lies, but it understates how much Australian regulation has already been rewritten for exactly this landscape. The real issue is not the **writing** of rules for global platforms — Australia has done that — but the **enforcement** of them.

Issue 1 — enforcement across jurisdictions. The *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) empowers the eSafety Commissioner to issue removal notices requiring specified material to be taken down, generally within 24 hours, and it applies to any online service with Australian end-users regardless of where the company sits. In April 2024, after the stabbing of a bishop at a church in Wakeley in Sydney on 15 April, eSafety issued a removal notice to X Corp over video of the attack. Meta, Microsoft, Google, Snap, TikTok, Reddit and Telegram removed the material; X geoblocked it for Australian users only. In May 2024 the Federal Court declined to extend the interim order, and in June 2024 eSafety discontinued the proceedings. The case is the statement’s argument in miniature — but read carefully it also refutes the statement’s strongest form. Seven global services complied. The law reached them. What it could not do was make a single non-cooperative platform’s **global** architecture answer to a **national** notice, particularly when Australians could still reach the geoblocked material through a VPN.

Issue 2 — writing law faster than the technology moves, and the limits of new law. The *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* received assent on 10 December 2024, and its obligations commenced on 10 December 2025, requiring age-restricted platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from holding accounts. It is a genuinely new instrument written for global platforms, and it answers the statement directly. But it carries three challenges of its own: it does not mandate a single verification technology, so the standard of a “reasonable step” is worked out after the fact; the obligation falls on platforms rather than users, so a minor who circumvents a check commits no offence; and the Minister, advised by the eSafety Commissioner, decides which services are covered, which keeps the scheme adaptable but makes its scope a continuing political judgement rather than a fixed line.

Issue 3 — self-regulation against government regulation. Much of what governs platform content in Australia is not government regulation at all. The Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation, published by the Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI) in February 2021 and overseen by ACMA, is **voluntary**: signatories opt in, select which commitments they adopt, and report on themselves. When the government tried to convert this into a co-regulatory scheme with enforceable obligations, the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024 passed the House of Representatives but was withdrawn in November 2024, the Minister stating that there was no pathway through the Senate given free-speech objections. The challenge here is not that nobody has written rules; it is that the choice on offer is between a voluntary code with weak enforcement and a statutory scheme that cannot clear the political test.

Issue 4 — scope gaps in the older architecture. The statement is most obviously right about the parts of the system built before the platforms. The Classification Board, established under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth), classifies films, computer games and certain publications — but it does not classify websites, social media or apps. The scheme most Australians would name if asked to describe media regulation therefore does not touch the services where audiences now spend much of their time, and the gap has to be filled by an entirely separate online-safety regime.

Judgement. Taken together, these four issues show that the statement identifies the right problem but misdiagnoses it. Australia’s rules are no longer written only for “a handful of local broadcasters and publishers”: the Online Safety Act 2021 and the 2024 minimum-age amendment are platform-era laws with extraterritorial reach, and they have been used. What has not been solved is that a national parliament can bind a global platform only as far as that platform values access to the Australian market, and that the alternative to statutory regulation — industry self-regulation — is enforceable mainly by the industry’s own consent. The durable challenge of regulation and control in Australia is therefore not drafting the rules but making them bite.

Source: Federal Register of Legislation, Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth) — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2021A00076/latest>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, “Statement from the eSafety Commissioner re: Federal Court proceedings”, June 2024 — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/statement-from-the-esafety-commissioner-re-federal-court-proceedings>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Federal Register of Legislation, Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2024A00127/asmade>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: JURIST, “Australia government abandons legislation requiring social media companies to regulate misinformation”, November 2024 — <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/11/australia-government-abandons-legislation-requiring-social-media-companies-to-regulate-misinformation/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: ACMA, “Online disinformation and misinformation” — <https://www.acma.gov.au/online-disinformation-and-misinformation>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Classification, “What we classify” — <https://www.classification.gov.au/classification-ratings/what-we-classify>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** the statement is **quoted or referred to directly** and used as a springboard rather than restated; at least two distinct issues or challenges, each carried by **named Australian laws, bodies or cases with dates**; analysis of **why** each is difficult, not merely that it is; a clear judgement that engages with, and qualifies, the statement’s claim; specialised media language precise and sustained.
- **Mid (7–11):** the statement acknowledged but lightly used; one or two issues raised with **some** named evidence, but at least one supported only by generalisation; description of the regulatory system rather than analysis of its difficulties; a judgement present but asserted.
- **Low (1–6):** the statement **restated** rather than analysed; general ethics or opinion offered in place of regulation; no named laws, bodies or cases, or non-Australian examples used where Australian regulation is required; no judgement.

Common errors: **restating the statement** instead of using it — the leading fault on the live 2025 version of this item; writing about ethics in general when the question asks about **regulation and control**; naming no law, body or case, or naming them without dates; using **non-Australian** regulators where the question is about Australia (the 2024 report records that non-Australian examples scored zero on the equivalent item); confusing **regulation** with government **use** of media; confusing **self-regulation** (DIGI’s voluntary code) with **government regulation** (the Online Safety Act).

Practice Exam 2 — Section A

Reading time: 15 minutes

Writing time: 2 hours

STRUCTURE OF BOOK

Section	Number of questions	Number of questions to be answered	Number of marks
A	10	10	50
B	2	2	30
		Total	80

Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.

Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.

No calculator is allowed in this examination. There is no formula sheet and no insert.

All questions must be answered. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

Answer all questions in the spaces provided.

Narratives and their contexts

Question 1 (3 marks)

Study the film still below.



Source: *The Kid*, film, Charles Chaplin (dir.), Charles Chaplin Productions, USA, 1921

Describe how one media code conveys meaning in the film still shown above.

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'.

You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 2 and 3.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (6 marks)

Discuss how two media codes work together to develop one narrative convention at a single specific moment, frame or sequence in the media narrative you have studied.

Name the moment, frame or sequence you are discussing.

Question 3 (7 marks)

Analyse how the context in which an audience consumes a media narrative may influence the meaning that audience makes of it.

In your response, refer to two different contexts of consumption for the media narrative you have studied.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 4–7.

Marlow Valley Trades Institute — *Making Things* engagement plan 2027–2029 (extract)

Marlow Valley Trades Institute trains apprentices in carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, hairdressing and commercial cookery for the towns of the Marlow Valley. Enrolments from school leavers have fallen for four years, while enrolments from adults changing careers have risen.

Our own research tells us two things. Year 10 and Year 11 students in the valley believe that a trade is what you do “if you don’t get into university”. They also tell us they almost never see the daily work of a local tradesperson anywhere they already look, watch, read or listen.

Over the next three years the Institute will commission new media work that:

- shows the everyday work of apprentices in the valley as skilled, creative and worth choosing
- is made for, and reaches, 15- to 17-year-olds living in the Marlow Valley
- can be experienced in full in under fifteen minutes.

The Institute will **not** commission recruitment advertising, and will **not** commission work whose subject is the Institute itself.

Your production must be in **one** of the following media forms:

moving image · still image · audio · print · digital · convergent or hybridised media

Question 4 (4 marks)

Develop one idea for a media production that responds to the *Making Things* plan.

Outline your idea using the boxes provided below.

Intended audience

Media form

Working title and production idea

Style and/or genre

Question 5 (4 marks)

Describe one experiment you would conduct to develop a specific skill in the use of equipment, media technologies or processes appropriate to the media form of the production you outlined in Question 4.

In your response, state what you would change or control in the experiment, and how you would judge whether the skill had improved.

Question 6 (6 marks)

Explain the narrative of your proposed production, and how that narrative would achieve the intention stated in the *Making Things* plan.

In your response, show how one event in your narrative leads to another.

Question 7 (4 marks)

Discuss how you would gather feedback during the **post-production** stage of your proposed production, and how you would use that feedback to refine the production for its intended audience.

Agency and control in the media

Question 8 (4 marks)

Describe one way in which the relationship between media institutions and their audiences has changed since audiences began to produce and circulate media content of their own.

Question 9 (6 marks)

Discuss one way in which the media is regulated in Australia, and one challenge that this form of regulation faces in the contemporary media landscape.

Use an Australian example to support your response.

Question 10 (6 marks)

Explain how globalised media institutions use media to build and hold audiences in countries other than the one in which they are based.

In your response, use a different example from the one discussed in Question 9.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 2 — Section B

Answer both questions in the spaces provided. Each question is worth 15 marks.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Analyse how the construction of representations in the media narrative you have studied this year reflects or challenges the views and values of the context in which that narrative was produced.

Your response must analyse:

- **two** representations constructed in the media narrative
- the media codes and/or narrative conventions used to construct each representation
- **one** view or value of the production context that each representation reflects or challenges.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (15 marks)

“The media has never had more power to shape what audiences think. Audiences have never had more power to answer back.”

Analyse **both** the influence of the media on audiences **and** the agency of audiences in the contemporary media landscape.

In your response, refer to the statement above as well as to specific contemporary evidence, arguments and ideas you have studied this year.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 2 — Solutions

Marks: Section A = 3 + 6 + 7 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 6 = 50. Section B = 15 + 15 = 30. Paper total = 80.

Area-of-study split in Section A: Narratives and their contexts 16 · Media production 18 · Agency and control in the media 16.

Section A — solutions

Q1. Command term — describe: give an account of how the code works here. Three steps earn the three marks: **name** the code, **point** to what is actually visible in the still, **state** the meaning it conveys.

Model response (mise en scene — costume): The **mise en scene** code carries the meaning in this still, and within it the costuming of the two figures does the work. The man is dressed in a dark jacket buttoned tightly over a waistcoat, with a high wing collar and tie — formal clothing, worn and ill-fitting — while the child at his side wears a flat cap far too large for their head and a jacket evidently cut down from adult clothing, held up by braces. Because both figures are wearing clothes that do not fit them, the costuming conveys **poverty**, and because that poverty is being dressed up rather than hidden, it also conveys the pair's attempt to hold on to respectability.

Alternative accepted (mise en scene — setting and set dressing): The pair stand in a doorway of a bare, makeshift room — unlined timber walls, a battered dresser at one side, a shelf of mismatched jugs and tins, papers pinned up behind them. The setting is cluttered but has almost nothing of value in it, conveying that this is a home improvised out of what could be found, and positioning the two figures as its only occupants.

Alternative accepted (visual composition): The two figures are framed together in the centre of the shot, the small child pressed against the adult's side with the adult's hand lowered toward them, both contained by the doorway behind. The composition binds the pair into a single unit and separates them from everything around them, conveying **dependence and attachment**.

Marker's note: one code, named from the study design's list — camera, acting, mise en scene, editing, lighting, sound, typography, colour, visual composition, text and graphics, paper stock. That list is the study design's own "may include", so it is not closed; costume, props, setting and staging are elements **within** mise en scene rather than codes in their own right, so a response that names "costume" is credited as mise en scene provided the visual evidence and the meaning are there. One mark for the code, one for specific visual evidence from the still, one for the meaning.

Common errors: naming a code and then describing the plot of the film instead of the image; writing "the lighting shows he is poor" with no visual evidence; describing the still in everyday language ("he looks sad") with no specialised media language; offering more than one code and developing none.

Q2. Command term — discuss: put forward the point and support it with evidence, weighing how the parts work together. Six marks require **two codes**, **one narrative convention**, **one bounded moment**, and the **interaction** between them — not three separate mini-answers.

Media narrative: *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2022)

Model response (studied narrative: Everything Everywhere All at Once, 2022): The moment is the **rock sequence** — bounded by the cut away from the confrontation between Evelyn and Joy to the wide shot of the canyon, and ending when the rocks finally move against the stillness that has held them. Two codes work together here to develop the narrative convention of **character**.

Visual composition places the two rocks as tiny, motionless forms in an enormous, empty landscape, held in static wide framing with no cutting inside the shot for long stretches. **Sound** is stripped back to ambient air: there is no spoken dialogue at all, and the characters' words appear instead as on-screen text. The two codes reinforce one another — the emptiness of the frame is matched by the emptiness of the soundtrack — so that the sequence removes from Evelyn and Joy every resource they have used to communicate elsewhere in the film: speech, movement, spectacle and speed.

Because everything else is taken away, what is left is the **characters** themselves. The convention of character is developed precisely by subtraction: with no bodies to act with and no voices to argue with, Evelyn and Joy are reduced to what they think of each other, and the audience reads their exchange as the first honest one in the narrative.

The stillness of the composition makes the smallest movement — one rock finally shifting toward the other — legible as a decision, so the sequence conveys that the mother-daughter relationship, not the multiverse, is the film’s real subject.

[Substitute: for your narrative, choose ONE bounded moment; name TWO codes; show how they reinforce each other; then say which ONE narrative convention — character, character arc, cause and effect, setting, point of view, structuring of time, multiple storylines, three-act structure — they build, and what it means.]

Common errors: naming a **genre** convention (a chase, a jump-scare, a “final girl”) where a **narrative** convention was asked for; offering a second code that is really the same code renamed; analysing the whole narrative instead of one bounded moment; listing the two codes one after the other without ever showing them working **together**; describing what happens in the moment instead of how it is constructed.

Q3. Command term — analyse: break the consumption context into its specific features and show how each feature acts on the meaning the audience makes. Seven marks need **two** contexts, each with **named features**, and in each case an **explicit link to the reading** — the meaning made. A context described but never linked to a reading is the single most common way marks are lost here.

Model response (studied narrative: Everything Everywhere All at Once, 2022): **Consumption** is how and where an audience accesses a narrative; **reading** is the meaning that audience then makes of it. Change the first and the second changes with it.

Context one: a cinema screening in 2022. The features are specific — a single continuous sitting with no capacity to pause, a large screen and a loud multi-channel sound system, a shared auditorium, and no prior familiarity with the story. An audience consuming the narrative this way meets the film’s rapid verse-jumping edits and layered sound at full force and cannot slow them down. The reading that follows is shaped by that overload: the narrative is read primarily as an experience of being **overwhelmed by possibility**, and Evelyn’s exhaustion is felt rather than observed. The shared room adds a second feature — laughter and audible reaction from strangers — so the absurd sequences are read as comic before they are read as sad.

Context two: streaming at home after release. The features change: the viewer can pause, rewind, turn on subtitles, watch across two or three sittings, and look things up between them. Nothing in the text has changed, but the reading does. Being able to stop the film converts the overwhelming edits from an experience into an **object of study**; a viewer who rewinds the rock sequence reads it as the film’s quiet centre rather than as a strange interruption. Watching alone removes the auditorium’s laughter, so the same absurd moments are more likely to be read as grief. Repeat viewing across sittings foregrounds the mother-daughter storyline, because the viewer already knows the ending and is no longer following the plot for surprise.

The comparison is the analysis. The same constructed narrative yields an experiential reading in the first context and a reflective, relationship-centred reading in the second, because the two contexts differ in three concrete features — **control over pacing, scale of image and sound, and presence or absence of other audience members**.

Consumption does not change the text; it changes what the audience is able to attend to, and therefore what the text is taken to mean.

[Substitute: for your narrative, name two genuinely different sites or modes of consumption, list two or three concrete features of each, and finish each paragraph with the sentence “so this audience reads ... as ...”.]

Common errors: describing the **production** context when the **consumption** context was asked for; naming a context (“modern audiences”, “at home”) without any features; describing both contexts fully and never stating the reading that follows; treating **consumption** and **reading** as the same thing; discussing audience **engagement** (attention, emotion, involvement) instead of the **meaning made**.

Q4. Command term — develop: generate an original idea and set it out in the form required. Four marks, one per box. Each box is marked for **specificity**, and the idea must do the client’s job rather than advertise the client.

Model response:

Box	Model entry
Intended audience	Year 10 and Year 11 students aged 15–17 living in the

Box	Model entry
	Marlow Valley towns, who are choosing subjects and considering what to do after school, and who mainly watch short-form video on their phones.
Media form	Moving image — a series of three online short documentaries, four minutes each.
Working title and production idea	<i>Twelve Weeks</i> — three first-year apprentices are each filmed across twelve weeks as they take a single job from a blank start to a finished object: a hand-cut staircase, a rewired shopfront, and a service for eighty covers.
Style and/or genre	Observational documentary, shot on location, with no narrator and no interviews to camera.

Marker's note on each box. **Audience** must be pinned demographically and geographically — “young people” scores nothing. **Media form** must be one form from the menu, named precisely, with a scale or duration. **Title and idea** must be a *story* with a cause and an effect, not a topic; “a video about trades” is a topic. **Style and/or genre** must be named so that the later planning has a direction.

Common errors: proposing a product that promotes the Institute or advertises the plan itself — the plan expressly rules both out; an audience box that says only “teenagers”; an idea box that names a subject (“apprenticeships”) instead of a narrative; a product that cannot be experienced in under fifteen minutes; choosing two forms at once when the menu says one (unless “convergent or hybridised media” is chosen deliberately and named as such).

Q5. Command term — describe: *give an account of the method.* Four marks: **name the specific skill** (1), **describe what is done** (1), **state the variable that is changed or controlled** (1), **state how the result is judged** (1). The 2025 examiners’ report gives “I want to get better at using the camera” as its example of a skill described too vaguely.

Model response (moving image — the skill of holding focus on a moving subject): The specific skill is **pulling focus on a moving subject in a confined workshop space**, which *Twelve Weeks* needs because apprentices work with their hands close to camera while moving around a bench.

The experiment. In the school workshop I would set up one camera on a tripod at a fixed distance and ask a volunteer to repeat the same simple action — picking up a tool at the bench and carrying it two metres to a vice. I would record the action **six times**, changing **one variable each time**: the **aperture**, moving in stops from f/2.8 to f/8, and keeping every other setting — lens, focal length, shutter, lighting, distance and the speed of the action — the same across all six takes.

How I would judge it. I would view the six takes at full size on a monitor and score each one against a short checklist: is the subject’s hand sharp at the start of the move, sharp at the end, and sharp for the whole travel between them; and how much of the workshop behind the subject is legible. The take that holds focus across the whole movement while keeping the background soft identifies the aperture I can work at, and repeating the test with a second, faster action tells me whether the setting survives at working speed. I would log the six takes and the checklist scores in my production journal.

Common errors: naming a general ability (“filming”, “editing”) instead of a specific skill; describing a rehearsal rather than an experiment — nothing is varied and nothing is compared; changing several settings at once so no conclusion can be drawn; giving no method of evaluation at all; choosing a skill that has nothing to do with the form chosen in Question 4.

Q6. Command term — explain: *set out the narrative and make clear **how** it produces the client’s stated intention.* Six marks split roughly in half: the **narrative** — a chain of events in a cause-and-effect relationship — and the **linkage** to the intention. The 2025 report records describing content or a topic rather than a narrative with cause and effect as a common error on this item.

Model response (Twelve Weeks, episode one — the staircase): The intention stated in the *Making Things* plan is to show the everyday work of apprentices in the valley as **skilled, creative and worth choosing** to an audience of 15- to 17-year-olds.

The narrative. Episode one follows Dan, a first-year carpentry apprentice, across a single job. It opens on an empty stairwell in a Marlow Valley house and a stack of unmilled timber. Dan is handed the drawings and told the treads must be cut to the millimetre. **Because** the old stairwell is out of square, his first set of measurements does not fit — the first tread sits proud of the wall by a few millimetres. **As a result**, he has to work out whether to recut the tread or re-scribe the stringer, and he chooses wrong; the second cut wastes a length of expensive timber. **This forces** him to go back to his supervisor, who shows him how to transfer the actual angle of the wall onto the timber rather than trusting the plan. **Consequently**, the remaining treads go in cleanly, and the episode closes on Dan walking up the finished staircase in the same stairwell that was empty in the first shot.

How the narrative achieves the intention. The intention is met by the **structure**, not by anything anyone says. Because the narrative is built as a chain of cause and effect around a **mistake and its correction**, the audience sees that the work requires judgement — the skill is in reading the building, not in following an instruction — and that is what makes it read as **skilled**. Because Dan solves the problem by devising a method rather than by looking one up, the work reads as **creative**. Because the episode is bounded by the same stairwell, empty at the start and finished at the end, the audience is given a visible result produced by one person in twelve weeks, which is what makes the work read as **worth choosing** to a viewer who is currently being told that a trade is a fallback. No character states the plan's message, which keeps the product inside the Institute's instruction not to commission advertising.

Common errors: supplying a **topic** (“the episode is about apprenticeships”) instead of a chain of events; writing a narrative with no causal connective tissue — a list of things that happen; explaining the intention without ever linking it to a specific event in the narrative; producing an advertisement for the Institute after the plan expressly excluded one; writing for an audience other than the 15–17 age band the plan names.

Q7. Command term — discuss: *put the method forward and weigh how it would be used.* Four marks: **the stage is post-production** (feedback gathered on an assembled but unresolved cut, before distribution); a **named method with actual questions**; **who** is asked; and a **specific refinement** that follows. The 2025 report lists “discussing the wrong production stage such as gathering feedback after distribution rather than during post-production” first among the common errors on this question.

Model response: During **post-production**, once episode one of *Twelve Weeks* exists as a rough cut with temporary sound, I would run a **structured screening** with a small sample of the target audience — eight Year 10 and Year 11 students from a Marlow Valley secondary school, none of whom has been involved in the production. This is a post-production activity: the product is assembled but not resolved, and nothing has been published.

The method. I would screen the four-minute rough cut once without comment, then hand out a short written response sheet with specific questions rather than general ones: *at what point, if any, did you stop watching?*; *in one sentence, what was Dan trying to do?*; *which moment told you the job was difficult?*; *was there anything you could not hear or could not follow?* I would then take three minutes of spoken feedback on one question only — what they would cut. Written responses first, discussion second, so that the loudest voice in the room does not set the answer.

Using the feedback to refine. If, for example, six of eight respondents could not say what Dan was trying to do, the diagnosis is that the job is never established, and the refinement is an **editing** one: bring the drawings and the “cut to the millimetre” instruction forward into the first thirty seconds and trim the opening timber shots. If respondents report losing the dialogue in the workshop, the refinement is a **sound** one: re-balance the location audio, add clean room tone under the cuts and consider subtitles for the phone viewing the plan anticipates. Each refinement is then carried back into the cut and, if time allows, tested against a second small screening — which is what makes the production process **iterative** rather than linear.

Common errors: gathering feedback after the product is published — that is distribution, not post-production; naming a method with no questions attached (“I would ask people what they thought”); collecting feedback and never describing the change made to the product; asking the crew or friends rather than the intended audience; describing feedback from the *pre-production* stage, such as pitching an idea.

Q8. Command term — describe: give an account of the change. Four marks reward the **change** — the word “has changed” is doing the work — plus a specific, contemporary example. A description of how media works now, with no before-and-after, will not reach full marks.

Model response: One way the relationship has changed is that audiences are no longer only the **endpoint** of distribution; they are now participants whose organised activity can alter what a media institution distributes. Under broadcast-era conditions, an institution decided what to release and the audience’s options were to consume it or not, with feedback reaching the institution slowly and privately — ratings, letters, sales. Web 2.0 platforms gave audiences the ability to **coordinate publicly, at scale and in view of the institution**, and to keep a demand visible over years rather than days.

The **#ReleaseTheSnyderCut** campaign is a clear contemporary instance. After the 2017 theatrical release of *Justice League*, audiences organised online for an unreleased version of the film, sustaining the campaign across social platforms, petitions and paid billboards, and drawing public support from cast members from November 2019. Warner Bros. confirmed in May 2020 that the alternative version would be made, and *Zack Snyder’s Justice League* was released on HBO Max on 18 March 2021. The change this illustrates is structural, not merely loud: a distribution decision that would once have been final was reopened because an audience, using tools it did not previously have, made its demand continuously visible to the institution.

Common errors: describing what audiences do today without describing what changed; offering a change in **technology** (“we have streaming now”) with no account of the changed **relationship**; using a pre-Web-2.0 example; confusing the ability to choose what to watch (consumption) with the ability to act on an institution.

Q9. Command term — discuss: put forward the regulation and the challenge, supporting both with evidence. Six marks split roughly three and three. **Australian examples only** — the 2024 examiners’ report records that non-Australian regulators scored zero on this knowledge. Name the instrument, say who it binds, say what happens on breach; then name a challenge and show why it bites.

Model response (co-regulation of commercial television): One way the media is regulated in Australia is through **co-regulation** of commercial free-to-air television. Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth), the industry body **Free TV Australia** develops a **Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice** covering matters such as classification zones, the placement of advertising and complaints handling, and the **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** decides whether to **register** that code. The code binds licensed commercial broadcasters, not audiences. A viewer complains first to the broadcaster; if it is not resolved, the complaint may be referred to ACMA, which can investigate, find a breach and respond with enforcement action available under the Act, including remedial directions and additional licence conditions. Registration is therefore the pressure point: the industry writes the rules, but they have force only if the statutory regulator accepts them.

The challenge: the codes are written by the industry they bind, and community expectations move faster than the code does. In March 2025, Free TV Australia completed its review of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice 2015 and submitted a revised code to ACMA for registration. In June 2025, **ACMA declined to register it**, saying it was not satisfied the revised code would provide appropriate community safeguards, and pointing in particular to a proposal to extend the hours in which M-rated content — including alcohol advertising — could be broadcast at times when children are more likely to be watching. The 2015 code therefore **remained in force**, more than ten years after it was written.

That outcome shows the challenge precisely. Co-regulation depends on the regulated industry proposing rules the regulator can accept; when it does not, the regulator’s realistic options are to refuse registration and leave an ageing code in place, or to escalate to determining a standard itself. Either way, the audience is governed for longer by rules drafted before the current landscape existed — and none of this framework touches the global platforms where much of the same audience now watches, because those services hold no Australian broadcasting licence.

Alternative accepted: the **eSafety Commissioner** under the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth), with the challenge of enforcing removal notices against services based overseas; or the **Classification Board** under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth), with the challenge created by the shift to industry self-classification introduced by amendments that commenced on 14 March 2024; or **Ad Standards** administering the **AANA Code of Ethics**, with the challenge that its determinations carry no fine and no court order.

Common errors: using a non-Australian regulator; describing a government **using** the media — a health campaign, a minister’s social media account — which is not regulation at all; naming a body without saying whom it binds or what follows a breach; giving a regulation and then a *complaint* rather than a structural **challenge**; confusing self-regulation (industry writes and enforces) with co-regulation (industry writes, statutory regulator registers and enforces).

Q10. Command term — explain: *make clear **how** the practices work, and why they hold audiences.* Six marks. A list of things globalised institutions do is worth little; each practice must be followed through to its effect on an audience outside the institution’s home country. The 2025 report records “confusing globalised with local institutions” among the common errors here — a single-country commercial network is not globalised; a service distributing directly into many national markets is.

Model response: A **globalised media institution** is one that produces and distributes media directly into many national markets from a single organisational base — Netflix, Disney and Amazon are clear instances, because an Australian audience receives their products from the institution itself rather than through an Australian licensee. Four practices explain how such institutions build and hold audiences abroad.

They commission in the local market and distribute globally. Rather than exporting only home-market programming, globalised streaming services fund productions made in the countries they are expanding into, then release them everywhere at once. This works on two audiences simultaneously: the local audience is given a product that looks like their own place, which is what recruits them; the global audience is given something novel, which is what makes the local commission economically worth making.

They control release and remove the wait. A simultaneous worldwide release date means an Australian audience is never a secondary market receiving a product months later, so the conversation about a new title happens in one global window and the pressure to hold a subscription is immediate.

They localise the interface, not just the content. Subtitling and dubbing at scale, local-language interfaces, and per-territory artwork mean the same catalogue is presented differently in each market, which lowers the barrier to watching material that originated elsewhere.

They recommend rather than schedule. Because the institution holds direct viewing data on each account, the front page is assembled per viewer rather than programmed for a nation. Holding an audience becomes a matter of continuously matching the catalogue to observed behaviour, which is a capacity a licensed national broadcaster with a fixed schedule does not have.

The effect, and the response to it. The consequence for a market like Australia is that a large share of domestic viewing sits with institutions that have no Australian licence obligations. Australia has since legislated on exactly that point: the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Act 2025* (Cth) passed Parliament on 27 November 2025 and received assent on 4 December 2025, and requires large subscription streaming services with at least one million Australian subscribers to invest at least 10 per cent of their Australian program expenditure — or 7.5 per cent of Australian revenue — in new Australian drama, children’s, documentary, arts and educational programs, with the requirement commencing from 1 January 2026 and administered by ACMA. The legislation is itself evidence of the scale of the audience these institutions hold here.

Common errors: naming an Australian commercial network as a globalised institution; listing practices (“they use algorithms”, “they have lots of shows”) without explaining how each one holds an audience; answering about **production** or **consumption** when the stem targets how audiences are built and held; using the same example already used in Question 9, which the stem forbids.

Section B — solutions

Q1. Command term — analyse: *break the narrative into its constructed elements and show how representations are built, then how each connects causally to a view or value of the production context.* Fifteen marks. The three bullet requirements are mandatory: two representations, the codes and/or narrative conventions constructing each, and one view or value per representation. The 2024 report required the context connections to be “integrated into the analysis of representations, rather than being treated as a separate part of the response”; the 2025 report, on its representation-and-view/value question, lists **imbalance** among the common errors — “describing the representation in detail but providing an outline of the view/value”.

Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* (2019) adapts a novel published in 1868–69 for an audience watching in 2019, and the gap between those two contexts is where its meaning is made. The film constructs its representations so that the values of the **production context** — a period in which women's authorship, women's economic independence and the worth of domestic labour were being publicly re-argued — are visible **through** a story set 150 years earlier. Two representations carry that work: the representation of **Jo March as an author**, and the representation of **Amy March as an economic realist**.

Representation one: Jo March as an author, not a heroine waiting for a plot. The construction is deliberate and specific. **Costume** dresses Jo in dark, plain, practical clothing with ink-stained cuffs and loose hair, in contrast to the constructed silhouettes of the women around her, so that she is legible as someone who **works** rather than someone who is displayed. **Visual composition** repeatedly frames her with the instruments of that work — the attic desk, the spread of manuscript pages, the printing office staircase — and in the sequence in which she lays out her completed manuscript on the floor, the composition gives the pages the space usually reserved in this genre for a wedding dress. **Colour**, graded warm in the childhood timeline and cool in the adult one, marks the two halves of her arc and makes visible what authorship has cost her. Above all, the **narrative convention of structuring of time** does the decisive work: Gerwig intercuts the past and present timelines so that the film opens with Jo already selling a story in a publisher's office, and the audience meets her as a professional before it meets her as a girl.

That construction connects causally to a **value of the 2019 production context: that women's creative work is work, and that authorship belongs to women as a profession rather than as an accomplishment**. The connection is not decorative. Because the plot is reordered so that the sale of writing frames everything else, and because the codes place manufacture — desks, ink, paper, a printing office — at the visual centre of Jo's representation, the film argues its production context's value structurally: the story of a woman's life is organised around her labour. It simultaneously **challenges** a value prevalent in the depicted 19th-century context, that a young woman's narrative is completed by marriage, because Jo's negotiation with her publisher over whether her heroine must marry is staged as a **commercial** transaction and shown alongside, rather than instead of, the romantic ending it produces.

Representation two: Amy March as an economic realist rather than a spoiled younger sister. In most prior tellings Amy is constructed as the sibling who takes what Jo deserves. Gerwig's construction reverses this using different tools. **Casting and acting** give Amy the same performer across both timelines, so the audience cannot separate the child who burns her sister's manuscript from the adult who reasons clearly about her position. **Mise en scene** places her in the Paris studio surrounded by her own unfinished paintings, establishing that she has trained and has assessed her own ceiling honestly. The **narrative convention of point of view** is redistributed: the intercut structure gives Amy sequences that are hers rather than Jo's, including her exchange with Laurie in which she sets out, plainly, that marriage is an economic proposition for a woman who cannot own property or earn independently. **Dialogue and performance** are directed flat and unsentimental there — she is explaining a system, not complaining about it.

This connects causally to a second **value of the 2019 production context: that women's choices are made inside economic constraints, and that a woman who accounts for those constraints is not thereby a lesser character**. The connection runs through the construction itself. Because the film gives Amy her own point of view, her own workspace and her own unbroken performance across time, the audience is positioned to read her decision as **analysis** rather than as vanity; the 19th-century view that a woman's marriage was a sentimental matter is challenged, and a production-context value about the economics of women's lives is reflected in its place.

Taken together, the two representations are constructed by the same means to opposite-seeming ends, and that is the film's argument. Jo is built out of costume, composition and a reordered timeline to make creative labour visible; Amy is built out of casting, mise en scene and a redistributed point of view to make economic constraint visible. Neither representation would carry its meaning in the depicted 1860s context on its own; each carries it because the film's **construction** — what the codes emphasise and how the plot is ordered — is the work of a 2019 production context in which those two claims about women's lives were actively being made. The context is not background to the representations; it is the reason they are built the way they are.

[Substitute: for your narrative, choose TWO representations that are constructed by different means; for each, name two or three codes and at least one narrative convention with a specific moment; then name ONE view or value of the **production** context and state, in a sentence beginning “because the film constructs ...”, why the construction reflects or challenges it.]

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** all three bullet requirements met — **two** representations, the **codes and/or narrative conventions** constructing each named at specific moments, and **one** view or value per representation; the context link is **causal and integrated** (“because the film constructs ... it argues ...”), not appended; representation and view/value are **balanced**; specialised media language precise and sustained; distinguishes the **production** context from the **depicted** context.
- **Mid (7–11):** two representations present but one thinly evidenced, or codes named without specific moments; the view or value is stated but generalised (“attitudes to women”) rather than pinned; the context appears as a separate paragraph rather than integrated; some imbalance, usually a full representation analysis followed by one asserted sentence about values; media language present but uneven.
- **Low (1–6):** retells the plot; offers a **theme** (“family”, “growing up”) in place of a specific view or value; treats the depicted period as the production context; one representation only, or representations named without construction; few media terms.

Common errors: a **theme** offered where a **view or value** was required; the **depicted** context analysed as though it were the **production** context; representations asserted rather than shown to be **constructed** by named codes at named moments; the context bolted on in a final sentence; only one representation analysed; retelling instead of analysis; ignoring a bullet requirement.

Q2. Command term — analyse: break the landscape into its parts and show how influence and agency operate, weighing contemporary evidence. Fifteen marks. Two constructs are named, so **both** must be developed: the 2024 report states plainly that lopsided responses are unlikely to score highly. The stimulus must be used as a **springboard**, not restated. “Contemporary” means the current, platform-era landscape — older theories are creditable only when re-lensed through it.

Model response:

The statement asserts two things at once, and both are defensible. Media institutions do exercise real influence over what audiences attend to and believe; audiences do now hold real capacity to respond, organise and produce. The analytical work is to show **how each operates**, and where each runs out — because the influence is not the direct injection of belief that early “hypodermic” accounts imagined, and the agency is not the equality of power the second sentence can be taken to imply.

Influence: what the evidence actually supports. The strongest contemporary evidence for media influence is not evidence that a text changes minds on contact, but evidence that sustained media **exposure shapes what an audience treats as normal**, and that institutions and governments act on that understanding. Australian gambling advertising is the clearest documented case. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs report *You win some, you lose more*, tabled on 28 June 2023 after 161 submissions and 13 public hearings, made 31 recommendations, including a phased prohibition on online gambling advertising, on the basis that saturation advertising normalises betting as an ordinary part of watching sport, particularly for children. The influence claim here is **cumulative and environmental**, and it is treated as strong enough to justify legislating against.

A second, differently shaped instance is the reception of the Netflix series *Adolescence*, released globally on 13 March 2025, which Netflix reported reached 66.3 million views. On 31 March 2025 Netflix made the series available free to all UK secondary schools through the Into Film+ platform, an initiative publicly backed by the UK Prime Minister as a way of helping students understand misogyny and online radicalisation. What this evidence is worth stating carefully: it is not proof that a drama changed adolescent behaviour. It is proof that a government and a globalised institution both **acted on the premise** that a widely consumed narrative can shift how a generation talks about a problem — and the scale of distribution that made the premise plausible is itself a feature of the contemporary landscape, since no single text could have reached that audience simultaneously twenty years ago.

The mechanism, re-lensed for the platform era, is **selection and amplification** rather than injection. Institutions no longer set a national agenda by scheduling; recommender systems set an individual agenda by ranking. That is a genuine expansion of influence — it is personalised, continuous and largely invisible to the person experiencing it — and it is why the first sentence of the statement holds.

Agency: what audiences can actually do. Audience **agency** is the capacity of audiences to act on the media rather than only receive it — to produce, circulate, organise, refuse and hold institutions to account. It is not the same as choosing what to watch, which is consumption.

Australia produced an unusually clean demonstration in February 2021. When Meta responded to the proposed News Media Bargaining Code by blocking Australian users from sharing or viewing news on Facebook from 18 February 2021, the block also caught government emergency-services, health and charity pages. The public and organisational response was immediate and visible, the government did not withdraw the legislation, and news was restored within a week, with the Code passing on 25 February 2021 and taking effect on 2 March 2021. Audiences here were not passive recipients of a platform decision; the visibility and speed of their reaction was a material part of what made the position untenable.

The #ReleaseTheSnyderCut campaign shows the same capacity aimed at a production decision rather than a policy one: a sustained, self-organised audience campaign from 2017 onward produced a studio reversal, with *Zack Snyder's Justice League* released on 18 March 2021. And the most ordinary evidence of agency is structural rather than eventful — audiences are now also producers, and the same platforms that rank content for them also distribute content made by them.

Where each construct runs out — and why the balance matters. The statement's symmetry is misleading, and saying so is the analysis. Audience agency is exercised **on infrastructure the audience does not control**. The Snyder Cut campaign succeeded because its demand coincided with a studio's interest in launching a streaming service; the February 2021 restoration of news was negotiated between a platform and a government, not granted to users. Agency is real but **conditional**, and it is asymmetrical in a way influence is not: audiences must organise visibly and at scale to be heard, while institutional influence operates by default, continuously, at the level of what is shown.

That asymmetry is precisely why the state has intervened rather than leaving the balance to audiences. The *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth), which received assent on 10 December 2024 and came into force on 10 December 2025, requires age-restricted platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from holding accounts, with civil penalties of up to 150,000 penalty units for breach of the minimum-age obligation. That legislation is an influence claim in statutory form: it assumes the platform environment shapes young audiences in ways individual agency cannot adequately answer. The counter-case is equally instructive — the *Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024*, which would have given ACMA powers over platforms' handling of seriously harmful misinformation, was abandoned on 24 November 2024 when it became clear it could not pass the Senate. Both the passage of the first and the failure of the second show a landscape in which claims about media influence are contested, consequential and unresolved.

Conclusion. The statement is right twice and complete neither time. The media's influence in the contemporary landscape is real but works through **normalisation and ranked visibility**, which is why the evidence for it is cumulative and why regulators legislate against environments rather than against individual texts. Audience agency is real but works through **visible collective action on platforms audiences do not own**, which is why its successes are episodic and negotiated. Analysed together, the two are not a balance of equals but a relationship in which audiences can answer back loudly, occasionally and belatedly, against an influence that operates quietly and all the time.

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** both constructs developed to comparable depth and explicitly related to one another; the statement used as a springboard and returned to, not restated; evidence is **named and dated** — laws, bodies, reports, events, figures — and is **contemporary**; theory, where used, is re-lensed for the platform era; sustained analysis with a position argued, not asserted; precise specialised media language.
- **Mid (7–11):** both constructs present but **imbalanced**, usually influence developed and agency asserted; evidence present but partly generic or undated; the statement paraphrased at the start and abandoned; some analysis, but stretches of description of how platforms work; media language present but uneven.

- **Low (1–6):** one construct only, or the two treated as the same thing; the statement restated rather than used; **opinion without evidence**, or anecdote offered as evidence; non-contemporary examples used unmodified; **agency** confused with **consumption choice** (“audiences have agency because they can choose what to watch”); general ethics commentary in place of analysis.

Common errors: developing influence and neglecting agency, or the reverse; restating the statement rather than using it; naming no law, body, report or date; treating old effects theories as evidence rather than as analytical frames; confusing agency with the ability to choose a programme; drifting into a regulation essay that never addresses influence or agency; asserting that “the media brainwashes people” without evidence.

Sources for the contemporary evidence used in these solutions

Source: Federal Register of Legislation (Australia), Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (Cth), assented 10 December 2024, in force 10 December 2025 — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2024A00127/asmade>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, Regulatory guidance (Online Safety Act 2021 schemes and removal notices) — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/industry/regulatory-guidance>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority, “ACMA decision on revised Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice”, June 2025 — <https://www.acma.gov.au/articles/2025-06/acma-decision-revised-commercial-television-industry-code-practice>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority, “Industry codes of practice” (registration of broadcasting codes under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992) — <https://www.acma.gov.au/broadcasting-industry-codes-practice>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Office for the Arts (Australian Government), “Australian screen content requirement for streaming services” — Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Act 2025, passed 27 November 2025, assented 4 December 2025, requirement from 1 January 2026 — <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/screen/australian-screen-content-requirement-streaming-services>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Federal Register of Legislation (Australia), Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Act 2025 (Cth), Act No. 71 of 2025, as made 4 December 2025 — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2025A00071/asmade>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, “You win some, you lose more” — report of the inquiry into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm, tabled 28 June 2023 — <https://apo.org.au/node/323281>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Netflix, “Netflix Makes ‘Adolescence’ Available to All Secondary Schools Across the UK”, 31 March 2025 — <https://about.netflix.com/en/news/netflix-makes-adolescence-available-to-all-secondary-schools-across-the-uk>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Meta (Facebook Newsroom), “Changes to Sharing and Viewing News on Facebook in Australia”, 17 February 2021 — <https://about.fb.com/news/2021/02/changes-to-sharing-and-viewing-news-on-facebook-in-australia/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, “News media bargaining code” (Code passed 25 February 2021, in effect 2 March 2021) — <https://www.accc.gov.au/by-industry/digital-platforms-and-services/news-media-bargaining-code/news-media-bargaining-code>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: JURIST, “Australia government abandons legislation requiring social media companies to regulate misinformation”, 25 November 2024 — <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/11/australia-government-abandons-legislation-requiring-social-media-companies-to-regulate-misinformation/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Variety, “Snyder Cut of ‘Justice League’ Gets Release Date in March on HBO Max”, 2021 — <https://variety.com/2021/film/news/snyder-cut-release-date-justice-league-hbo-max-zack-snyder-1234895641/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Classification, “Legislation” (Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995 (Cth); Industry Self-Classification and Other Measures amendments commenced 14 March 2024) — <https://www.classification.gov.au/about-us/legislation>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: AANA, “Code of Ethics” and Ad Standards self-regulation (Community Panel determinations) — <https://aana.com.au/self-regulation/code-of-ethics/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Wikipedia, “Little Women (2019 film)” — Greta Gerwig (dir.), cinematography Yorick Le Saux, released December 2019 — [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Women_\(2019_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Women_(2019_film)). Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: British Cinematographer, “Yorick Le Saux AFC / Little Women” — warm-graded past timeline and cooler present timeline — <https://britishcinematographer.co.uk/yorick-le-saux-afc-little-women/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Practice Exam 3 — Section A

Reading time: 15 minutes

Writing time: 2 hours

STRUCTURE OF BOOK

Section	Number of questions	Number of questions to be answered	Number of marks
A	10	10	50
B	2	2	30
		Total	80

Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.

Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.

No calculator is allowed in this examination. There is no formula sheet and no insert.

All questions must be answered. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

Answer all questions in the spaces provided.

Narratives and their contexts

Question 1 (3 marks)

Study the film still below.



Source: *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, film, Charles Tait (dir.), J. & N. Tait, Australia, 1906

Describe how one media code conveys meaning in the film still shown above.

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'.

You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 2, 3 and 4.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (4 marks)

Describe one way in which the plot of the media narrative you have studied orders the events of its story, and the effect that ordering has on the audience.

Question 3 (5 marks)

Discuss how the point of view constructed in the media narrative you have studied positions its audience to respond in a particular way to one character, group or idea.

Question 4 (5 marks)

Discuss one factor in the context in which the media narrative you have studied was produced, and how that factor influenced the construction of the narrative.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 5–7.

Barrowfield Water Authority — extract from a communication brief

Barrowfield Water Authority supplies drinking water to the Barrowfield district. From March 2027 the Reservoir Walk — a four-kilometre loop track around Barrowfield Reservoir that has been open to the public for more than forty years — will be closed for about two years while the dam wall is strengthened to meet current safety requirements.

What we need. One media product that helps the district understand why the work is being done and what will happen while the track is closed, and that leaves a record of the walk as it is now.

Who it is for. Residents of the Barrowfield district, and particularly the people who use the track most often: walkers, runners, dog owners and school groups.

Our conditions. The product must include the voices and/or the images of people who use the track. It must be able to be understood by someone who comes to it knowing nothing about the project. It must not be a notice, a set of instructions or a safety warning.

Your production must be in **one** of the following media forms:

moving image · photographic · audio · print · digital or online

Question 5 (6 marks)

Develop one idea for a media production that responds to the brief above.

In your response, name the media form you have chosen and write a **statement of intention** and a **statement of audience** for your idea.

Question 6 (4 marks)

Describe one method you would use to research your intended audience before you began production, and what the findings would tell you about how to construct your production.

Question 7 (4 marks)

Discuss how you would distribute your finished production so that it reaches the audience identified in the brief, and one limitation of the distribution you have chosen.

Agency and control in the media

Question 8 (5 marks)

Discuss one way in which individuals use media to reach audiences directly, without a media institution standing between them and those audiences. Refer to specific evidence in your response.

Question 9 (6 marks)

Explain the difference between government regulation and self-regulation of the media in Australia.

In your response, refer to one Australian example of each.

Question 10 (8 marks)

Analyse how governments use media to communicate directly with audiences, and what that use means for the audiences who receive it.

Use evidence to support your response. In your response, use a different example from the one you discussed in Question 8.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 3 — Section B

Answer both questions in the spaces provided. Each question is worth 15 marks.

Question numbering restarts in this section.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Media narrative: _____

Analyse the factors that may influence the ways in which audiences from different contexts engage with and read the media narrative that you have studied this year.

Your response must analyse:

- **two** different audience contexts, each identified precisely
- how the construction of **one** representation in the media narrative reflects or challenges the views and values of a specific context.

Question 2 (15 marks)

Consider the statement below.

Anything you make can now be seen anywhere, by anyone, for as long as anyone keeps a copy. So can anything anyone else makes about you.

Analyse the ethical and/or legal issues that new modes of production, distribution, consumption and reception have raised in the contemporary media landscape.

In your response, refer to the statement above and use additional examples and/or evidence to support your response.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 3 — Solutions

Marks: Section A = 3 + 4 + 5 + 5 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 8 = 50. Section B = 15 + 15 = 30. Paper total = 80.

Area-of-study split in Section A: Narratives and their contexts 17 · Media production 14 · Agency and control in the media 19.

Command terms are used with the definitions VCAA reproduces for this study: **identify** — recognise and name a specific fact, feature or example; **outline** — provide an overview, with more detail than 'identify'; **describe** — provide the characteristics, features and qualities of a concept, situation, event, process, argument or narrative accurately, going beyond listing to a clear explanation; **discuss** — present a clear, considered and balanced argument that shows the strengths and weaknesses of, or the points for and against, one or more arguments or factors, weighing the evidence before reaching a conclusion; **analyse** — identify the key components and the significance of the relationships between them, drawing out and relating implications. **Explain** is not a definition task: it requires a how or why chain carried through to a consequence.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024 VCE Media external assessment report, 2025 — <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/media/2024/2024media-report.docx>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Section A — solutions

Q1. Describe (3). Three steps, roughly a mark each: **name** one specific media code, **describe** how it is used in this still, **state** the meaning it conveys.

Model response (acting): The media code of **acting** carries the meaning in this still. The central figure stands upright in a dark suit and brimmed hat with both arms raised above his head and his palms open and turned outwards, while three helmeted figures close in on him — two entering from the left of the frame and one at the right, a long firearm held low in his hands. The raised, open-handed posture is a legible gesture of **surrender**, and because it is held still while every other body in the frame is moving inwards, the acting conveys that this man has been overpowered and that the moment of capture has arrived.

Equally creditable (mise en scene): The hand-lettered sign reading 'THE GLENROWAN HOTEL' mounted on a rough post in front of a plain weatherboard building, the dense scrub filling the foreground, and the period jackets, trousers and helmets worn by the converging figures place the action in a specific rural Australian setting of the colonial period, conveying that this is an event of law and disorder occurring at the edge of settlement rather than in a town.

Common errors: naming a code without describing how it is applied or what it means; retelling what is known about the Kelly gang instead of reading the frame that is printed; describing three codes thinly when one is required; general language ('it looks dramatic') instead of media language.

Source: National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, 'The Story of the Kelly Gang' — <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/stories/articles/story-kelly-gang>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: UNESCO Memory of the World, 'The Story of the Kelly Gang (1906)', inscribed 2007 — <https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/story-kelly-gang-1906>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q2. Describe (4). The question turns on the **story/plot** distinction: the story is everything that happens in the world of the narrative, in the order it happened; the plot is the selection and ordering of those events as the audience receives them. Name the ordering device, describe it accurately, then state its effect.

*Model response (media narrative: **The Grand Budapest Hotel**, 2014, Wes Anderson):* The plot orders the story's events by **nesting them inside a chain of narrators, working backwards in time before it moves forwards**. The audience arrives first at a memorial to a writer in the present, then at that writer in 1985, then at his meeting with the elderly Zero Moustafa at the hotel in 1968, and only then at the events of 1932 that occupy most of the running time. The earliest events in the story are therefore the last the audience reaches, and they are reached through three intermediaries.

The effect is to remove suspense about outcome and replace it with something else. Before the audience sees the Grand Budapest at its height, it has already seen the same building in 1968 — faded, nearly empty, and owned by a man who is the only survivor of the story about to be told. Every subsequent scene of splendour is therefore watched with the knowledge that it does not last. The ordering also changes the status of what is shown: the audience is not watching 1932 but watching **Zero's account** of 1932, so the warmth of the portrait of M. Gustave is understood as a survivor's memory rather than a neutral record.

Marker's note: a plot summary is not an answer. The marks are for naming an **ordering device** and tracing its effect.

Common errors: retelling the events; confusing story with plot (or using the two words interchangeably); naming the device ('it uses flashbacks') without describing the ordering or its effect; describing an effect on the characters rather than on the audience.

Q3. Discuss (5). Point of view is an accepted narrative convention: it is the position from which the audience is given access to the narrative. Name whose point of view, show how it is constructed, then argue what it makes the audience feel or think about a named character, group or idea — and weigh the alternative.

*Model response (media narrative: **The Grand Budapest Hotel**, 2014):* The narrative gives the audience almost no unmediated access to M. Gustave. His story is relayed through **nested first-person narration**: a writer recounts what Zero Moustafa told him about the man who employed him as a lobby boy. The point of view is therefore Zero's — a penniless refugee taken on by Gustave and treated, from the first day, as though he mattered.

That construction positions the audience to read Gustave's behaviour as **devotion rather than absurdity**. Described neutrally, a concierge who drenches himself in perfume, recites poetry over dinner service, and breaks from elaborate courtesy into sudden obscenity is a comic grotesque. Because the account comes from someone who owes him everything, the same behaviour reads as a code of conduct maintained against the odds. The audience is invited to find him ridiculous and admirable at once, and the narrative's final judgement — that his manners belonged to a world that had already vanished — is delivered as Zero's judgement, which the audience has been positioned to trust.

It is worth weighing the alternative. A narrative that observed Gustave from outside, without Zero, could show exactly the same actions and produce a satire of a self-important servant. Nothing in the events would need to change; only the position from which the audience receives them. That is the strongest evidence that point of view, not incident, is doing the positioning here.

Common errors: confusing point of view with camera angle; naming the narrator and stopping; treating point of view as a **genre** convention; describing what the audience 'sees' rather than how it is positioned to judge.

Q4. Discuss (5). Name one factor and pin it to a time, a place and a group; trace it into a specific construction choice; then weigh how far it accounts for the narrative.

*Model response (media narrative: **The Grand Budapest Hotel**, 2014):* The most productive factor is **historical and cultural**. The narrative was produced in 2013–14 by filmmakers working from the writings of the Austrian author **Stefan Zweig**, who is acknowledged at the head of the film's closing credits as the inspiration for the production, and whose books describe a cosmopolitan Central Europe destroyed by war.

That factor is visible in the construction, not merely in the subject matter. The narrative is set in an invented country, **Zubrowka**, so that a whole vanished region can be represented without being tied to the history of one nation. It is told in retreating layers, so that the audience reaches the world of the hotel only through intermediaries, each further from it. And its comic register darkens as a militarised state presses in on the hotel, so that the manners the narrative admires are progressively shown to be unenforceable. In short, a twenty-first-century interest in a lost Europe produced a narrative **structure** whose central proposition is that the thing being described is already gone.

It would be too simple to say the context explains everything. Institutional and economic factors also shaped the narrative: an ensemble of returning collaborators and a modest independent budget made an episodic structure of short, densely cast scenes practical. But the historical factor accounts for the design decision that organises all the others — the decision to nest the story rather than tell it forward.

Marker's note: the factor must belong to the context of **production** (the 2013–14 filmmakers, industry and society), not to the era depicted (1932 Zubrowka). Verdicts about views and values attach to the production or reception context, never to the depicted era.

Common errors: describing the historical setting of the story and calling it the production context; naming a factor ('it was an American production') without linking it to a construction choice; listing four factors at a sentence each.

Source: NPR, 'The Rise And Fall Of Stefan Zweig, Who Inspired "Grand Budapest Hotel"', 2 April 2014 — <https://www.npr.org/2014/04/02/298340082/the-rise-and-fall-of-stefan-zweig-who-inspired-grand-budapest-hotel>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q5. Develop (6). Two documents are required, and they answer different questions. A **statement of intention** says what the production is for, what form it takes and what it is meant to achieve. A **statement of audience** identifies who it is for, in specific terms, and why the choices made suit that audience. Roughly three marks each; a vague audience is the standard way to lose half the item.

Model response:

Media form: photographic series with written captions.

Statement of intention. *The Last Lap* is a series of eighteen black-and-white photographs with short written captions, made to give the Barrowfield district a way of holding on to the Reservoir Walk while it is closed, and to make the reason for the closure legible through the people it affects rather than through engineering. Twelve regular users of the track will each be photographed at the point on the loop that matters most to them — a bench, a gate, the turn where the water first comes into view — and each portrait will be paired with a caption in that person's own words about what they will do for the next two years. Six further photographs will record the track itself, unpeopled, at the times of day it is busiest. The series is intended to leave its audience understanding three things: that the closure is temporary, that it is being done because the dam wall must be strengthened to current safety requirements, and that the Authority understands what is being given up. The photographic form was chosen because the brief asks for a **record** as well as an explanation, and because a still image can be looked at for as long as the viewer wants at a trailhead where people are already stopping.

Statement of audience. The primary audience is residents of the Barrowfield district who use the Reservoir Walk at least weekly — realistically adults from their mid-twenties to their seventies, with a large proportion of dog owners, morning runners and parents doing school drop-off loops. They are locals with a routine attachment to a specific four kilometres of ground, and their likely first reaction to the closure is a personal one: where do I walk now. A secondary audience is district residents who never use the track but pay for the water. The series is designed for the primary audience's habits: it will be encountered where they already go, in a form that takes thirty seconds or thirty minutes, and it shows them people they will recognise rather than a spokesperson. Naming each subject and quoting them directly is the choice that matters most for this audience, because it signals that the Authority is speaking to a community it knows rather than to ratepayers in general.

Marker's note: the brief expressly rules out a notice, a set of instructions and a safety warning. An idea that is any of those cannot score well however clearly it is written.

Common errors: an intention that restates the client's words instead of describing the production; an audience given as a bare age bracket, or as 'everyone in the community'; no media form named; the two statements saying the same thing twice.

Q6. Describe (4). Name a method precisely, describe how it would actually be carried out, and state what the findings would **determine** about the production. A method with no stated output is worth about half.

Model response: The method is a **short intercept survey combined with structured observation at the trailhead**, run over one week before production begins. On four days — two weekdays and two weekend days — I would spend an hour at the trailhead at each of three times of day (early morning, after school and early evening), recording a simple count of how many people enter the track, whether they are walking, running or with a dog, and whether they

are alone or in a group. Everyone approached would be asked, with their permission, three short questions: how often do you walk here, which part of the loop matters most to you, and what will you do while it is closed.

The findings would determine three construction decisions. The counts by time of day would determine **when the unpeopled photographs are taken**, because the series should record the track at the hours its users actually experience it rather than at the hour that photographs best. The answers to the second question would determine **the twelve locations** — the portraits go where the audience already attaches meaning, not where the view is widest. The answers to the third question would determine **the caption prompt**, since captions written to a question the audience has already answered in its own words will sound like the district rather than like an authority.

Other creditable methods: a focus group with a matched sample of track users; a short online survey distributed through the district community page; interviews with a local walking or running club; analysis of existing usage data held by the Authority.

Common errors: naming a method ('I would do a survey') with no procedure and no sample; researching **existing media products** when the question asks about the **audience**; gathering findings and never saying what they would change.

Q7. Discuss (4). Distribution means getting the finished product to the identified audience. Name the channels, justify them against that audience, and then weigh one real limitation — the weighing is what makes it a discussion.

Model response: *The Last Lap* would be distributed through three channels working together. The primary channel is a **weatherproof outdoor installation** of the full series mounted on the fence line at the trailhead, where the track is entered and where the closure notice will stand. This reaches the audience at the exact moment of need: the person who arrives for a Tuesday morning loop and finds a gate. The second channel is a **staged online release** of the same series, one portrait at a time, through the district's community page and the Authority's website, which reaches users who stop travelling to the site once it closes and keeps the record circulating across the two years. The third is a **printed insert** of six images and a short explanation in the Authority's quarterly account mailout, which reaches every household in the district, including the secondary audience that pays for the water but never uses the track.

The clearest limitation is that the strongest channel is the least durable in reach. An installation at a closed trailhead only works while people still come to the trailhead, and the brief's own premise is that they will stop. Within a few months the outdoor series will be reaching a shrinking audience of the most committed users — precisely the people who least need convincing. The staged online release is designed to compensate, but it depends on the district's community page continuing to circulate the work, which is outside the Authority's control. On balance the three channels together cover the audience the brief names, but the coverage weakens exactly as the closure lengthens, which is an argument for scheduling the online release across the full two years rather than at launch.

Common errors: describing **promotion** instead of distribution; naming platforms with no reason tied to the identified audience; asserting a limitation ('not everyone will see it') without explaining why it follows from the channel chosen; confusing distribution with the feedback and refinement of the product.

Q8. Discuss (5). The study design treats **use of media by individuals** as its own idea, alongside use by institutions and by governments. Name a specific use, evidence it, then weigh what the individual gains against what they carry.

Model response: One way individuals use media is to **build and hold an audience of their own, publishing directly with no institution between them and the people who receive their work**. An individual can now record, edit, publish and monetise from a phone, and can reach an audience through the same feeds that carry professional media, on the same terms.

The evidence for the scale of this is the movement of audience attention itself. The *Digital News Report: Australia 2025*, published by the News and Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra on 17 June 2025, found that **social media overtook online news sites as a main source of news for Australians** for the first time since the Australian survey began — 26 per cent against 23 per cent — with Facebook the most-used platform for news at 38 per cent and Instagram the most-used among 18–24-year-olds at 40 per cent. Those are the channels on which an individual publisher and a masthead compete on equal footing for the same attention.

The gains for the individual are real: no gatekeeper decides whether the work appears, the relationship with the audience is direct, and the individual keeps editorial control. But the same directness removes the apparatus an institution provides. There is no sub-editor, no legal read before publication, no code of practice, no complaints process and no employer to absorb the consequences — so the individual carries risks, including defamation exposure, that a masthead would have insured against. The audience is also not owned: it sits inside a platform whose ranking decisions the individual cannot see and cannot appeal.

On balance, individuals now have distribution power that was institutional a generation ago, and none of the institutional protection that accompanied it. That asymmetry, rather than the mere existence of individual publishing, is what distinguishes the contemporary landscape.

Marker's note: this question is about how **individuals use** media. It is not the same idea as the changing relationship between media and audiences, and it is not a question about audience agency. Read the noun in the stem.

Common errors: answering about audiences in general rather than individuals; an example with no evidence attached; describing what individuals post rather than analysing what the use achieves; a non-contemporary example.

Source: University of Canberra News and Media Research Centre, 'Digital News Report: Australia 2025', 17 June 2025 — <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/media/media-releases/2025/june-2025/digital-news-report-dnr-australia-2025-shows-social-media-is-driving-changes-in-news-consumption-trends>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q9. Explain (6). Two Australian examples, one from each tier, each traced from its source of authority through to its consequence — then the difference stated explicitly. Roughly two marks per example and two for the distinction.

Model response:

Government regulation: the Classification Board and the National Classification Scheme. The Classification Board is a statutory body established under the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995* (Cth). It classifies films, computer games and certain publications before they may be sold, hired or exhibited in Australia, applying the categories of the National Classification Code: G, PG, M, MA 15+, R 18+, X 18+ and Refused Classification. Its authority comes from Parliament, not from the industry it classifies, and the restrictions it applies are enforced through state and territory law: MA 15+ and R 18+ are legally enforceable age restrictions, so a retailer who supplies a restricted product to an underage customer commits an offence. Note that the scheme regulates the **audience** as well as the media — the age gate is a control on who may lawfully obtain the product.

Self-regulation: the Australian Press Council. The Press Council, established in 1976, is the self-regulatory body for print and online publishers. Its authority is contractual, not statutory: it exists because publishers agree to join and to fund it, and its Standards of Practice bind members only. A reader may complain about published material; the Council adjudicates; and where material is significantly inaccurate or misleading a publisher must provide a correction or other adequate remedial action, and must publish adjudications about its own publications. What it cannot do is decisive: **it has no legal authority to regulate the press and cannot impose a fine or any other penalty.** Compliance rests on membership and on the reputational cost of publishing a finding against yourself.

The difference. Government regulation derives authority from **statute**, binds everyone in the regulated class whether they consent or not, and ends in a **legal** consequence — an offence, a penalty, a licence condition. Self-regulation derives authority from **industry agreement**, binds only those who join, and ends in a **professional and reputational** consequence — a correction, a published adjudication. That is why self-regulation can be quicker, cheaper and more responsive to professional judgement, and why it is weakest against exactly the publishers least interested in belonging to the system that wrote the rules.

Marker's note: Australian examples only. In the 2024 examination, responses offering non-Australian regulators scored zero on the equivalent item.

Common errors: naming a body without naming the instrument it acts under; offering two government bodies and labelling one 'self-regulation'; confusing regulation with government **use** of media; stating the difference as 'one is stricter' rather than by source of authority and consequence.

Source: Australian Press Council, 'What we do' — <https://presscouncil.org.au/about-us/what-we-do>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: Australian Law Reform Commission, National Classification Scheme Review — submission by the Classification Board, 2011 — https://www.alrc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cia_2485_classification_board.pdf. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q10. Analyse (8). Identify the components — the government body, the media channels it uses, the audience, and the fact that government is also a regulator of that same landscape — and the significance of the relationships between them. Named bodies, campaigns, dates and outcomes; a position at the end. This is a question about government **use** of media, not about regulation.

Model response: Governments have always communicated with citizens through media, but the contemporary landscape changes what that use amounts to. A government body that wants to reach an audience must now enter the same feeds, on the same terms, as everyone else — and it must do so in a landscape where it has no power to remove anything it is answering. Analysing government use means analysing that position.

The clearest Australian case. The **Australian Electoral Commission** ran its *Stop and Consider* campaign at the **2019** federal election and again at the **2022** federal election. The advertising was distributed to voters **primarily through their social media feeds and on digital displays**, and it asked voters to check three things about any electoral information they encountered: whether it is **reliable**, whether it is **current**, and whether it is **safe**. Alongside it, at the 2022 election, the AEC published for the first time a **disinformation register** — a searchable public list of false claims about Australian electoral processes, recording for each one the platform it spread on, the timing, the correct information and what the AEC did about it. The instrument was used again for the **2023** referendum.

What the government is actually doing here. Three relationships carry the analysis.

First, the AEC is acting as a **publisher, not a regulator**. It has no power to take down a false claim about how to fill in a ballot paper. So instead of removing the claim it buys placement beside it, adopts the format and cadence of the platform, and competes for the same attention. The significance is that the government's authority does not travel with it into the feed: inside the platform it is one voice among many, and it must persuade rather than direct.

Second, the register **redistributes** rather than exercises authority. By publishing a dated, sourced, citable record, the AEC equips journalists, teachers and ordinary users to do the correcting in the places the AEC itself cannot reach. That is an unusual and effective response to the jurisdiction problem: it treats the audience as the enforcement mechanism.

Third, the same use creates a real difficulty for the audience receiving it. Government communication in a personalised feed is **formally indistinguishable** from the content beside it — same aspect ratio, same length, same interruption of the same scroll. That is the source of both its reach and its risk: an official message must borrow the persuasive grammar of the platform to be seen at all, which is precisely the grammar audiences have been taught to distrust. And correction is structurally disadvantaged: a claim circulates before it is identified, so the corrective always addresses a smaller audience than the claim did. Trust conditions this too — the *Digital News Report: Australia 2025* recorded general trust in news at **43 per cent** (up three percentage points), which is the environment any official communication enters.

Position. Government use of media is best understood as a **substitution of publishing for authority**. Where a government cannot compel a platform to remove material, it becomes a competitor for attention on that platform and builds public records that let audiences act on its behalf. For audiences this is a genuine gain in access — the information arrives where they already are, rather than in a media release — but it also means that the accuracy of what they see now depends on their own capacity to identify a reliable source, which is exactly what the *Stop and Consider* campaign asks them to do. The government's most honest response to losing control of the channel has been to tell the audience to check the channel.

Marker's note: government **use** of media (this question) is not the same as **regulation** of the media (Question 9). Describing ACMA, the eSafety Commissioner or the Classification Board here answers the wrong question — a confusion the examiners' reports name repeatedly.

Common errors: regulation offered as use; a campaign named with no date, body or channel; describing what the campaign said rather than analysing what using media achieved; a non-Australian example where documented Australian ones exist; recycling the Question 8 example against the explicit instruction; asserting that government communication ‘is just propaganda’ without analysing the relationship.

Source: Australian Electoral Commission, ‘AEC launches campaign to combat disinformation’, 12 April 2022 — <https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2022/04-12.htm>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: Australian Electoral Commission, ‘AEC launches disinformation register ahead of 2022 poll’, 7 March 2022 — <https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2022/03-07.htm>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: Australian Electoral Commission, ‘AEC launches Referendum Disinformation Register’, 13 April 2023 — <https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2023/04-13.htm>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: University of Canberra News and Media Research Centre, ‘Digital News Report: Australia 2025’, 17 June 2025 — <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/media/media-releases/2025/june-2025/digital-news-report-dnr-australia-2025-shows-social-media-is-driving-changes-in-news-consumption-trends>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Section B — solutions

B Q1. Analyse (15). Two marked requirements: **two audience contexts, each identified precisely**, and **one representation** whose construction is traced to the views and values of a specific context. A response that analyses audiences brilliantly and never reaches the representation cannot reach the top band, and the reverse is equally true.

*Model response (media narrative: **Red Dog**, 2011, Kriv Stenders):*

Media narrative: *Red Dog* (2011).

Red Dog is a feature film released in Australia on 4 August 2011, directed by Kriv Stenders and adapted from Louis de Bernières’ book about a real dog commemorated by a statue outside Dampier in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. It is constructed as a story a community tells about itself: a truck driver arrives in Dampier in 1979 to find the dog dying, and the town’s residents take turns in the pub recounting episodes of its life from 1971 onwards. That framing device builds the act of reading a narrative into the narrative, which makes the film an unusually clear case for this question.

Context one: audiences in the Pilbara. For an audience in Dampier, Karratha or Port Hedland, the film depicts a landscape they drive through, an industry that employs them, and a memorial they can stand in front of. The dog is not a character invented for a film but a local story with a physical referent, and the film was shot in the region. Proximity changes engagement from curiosity to **recognition**: this audience checks the film against what it already knows, and reads the pub sequences as an account of how their own town tells stories about itself. The factor at work is **place**, and its effect on reading is to make the film testable — this audience can find it accurate or sentimental in a way no other audience can.

Context two: metropolitan Australian audiences in 2011. For an audience in Melbourne or Sydney, none of that verification is available. The Pilbara arrives as a place seen first in this film, so the same sequences are read as **national myth** rather than as local record — a story about what Australians in remote places are like. The factor is again place, but experienced as distance rather than as proximity, and the reading it produces is generalising where the Pilbara reading is specific. The film’s commercial performance belongs to this second reading: it passed \$20 million at the Australian box office within about ten weeks of release, a scale of audience a regional viewership alone could not produce.

Two further factors, briefly. **Time** separates audiences within each of those contexts. The narrative is set across 1971–1979 and was produced in 2011; a viewer old enough to remember the resource industry of the 1970s brings that memory to the caravans, the single men’s quarters and the company town, and may read the film as an account of a working life since reorganised into fly-in fly-out rosters, while a student in 2011 reads the same material as period texture. **Mode of consumption** separates them again: the film was released and marketed as family cinema, and a family audience in a full auditorium engages through the child-legible spine of the story — a dog looking for its owner — while the adults beside them engage through the material that spine carries, which is grief and itinerancy. A later solitary viewing on television flattens both.

The representation, and the views and values it engages. The central representation the film constructs is the **Pilbara mining community**. It is built by **selection** as much as by depiction. The film selects as its community a workforce assembled from elsewhere — an Italian migrant worker, an American newcomer who becomes the dog’s

owner, men who arrived for work and stayed — and it selects as its narrative device the pub, in which that community speaks its own history aloud. It gives the company that employs these people almost no presence, so the town's story is told by workers rather than by management. Through those choices the community is constructed as something people **join** rather than something they are born into, and as a group that authors its own myth.

That construction **reflects** a value prevalent in the Australian society in which the film was produced in 2011: that belonging in Australia is earned through work and mateship rather than through origin. The film's popular reception is itself evidence of how comfortably that value sat with a 2011 audience. At the same time the representation **challenges** a competing view of the resource industry current in the same period — the mining town as a placeless camp of transient labour with no community to speak of. By giving the town a shared story, a memorial and a narrator, the narrative argues that a workforce is a community.

Where the two halves meet. The Pilbara audience reads that representation against a place it knows, and may find it generous or find it sentimental; the metropolitan audience of 2011 reads it as a portrait of a national character it recognises but does not live; a later or international audience reads a dog story set somewhere far away, for which the community functions mainly as setting. The construction is constant. The meaning is not. That is the claim the question is testing: context, not the text alone, completes a media narrative.

Band descriptors (out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** both bullet requirements met in full — **two clearly distinguished audience contexts**, each pinned to a place, time or group rather than to 'modern audiences', and **one representation** analysed through its **construction** and traced to a **specific** view or value of a **named** context; engagement and reading treated as distinct ideas; contexts linked **causally** to the meaning made rather than described and abandoned; specific moments and devices named; specialised media language precise and sustained.
- **Mid (7–11):** two contexts named but one much thinner, or contexts described without being linked to a reading; representation identified but its construction not analysed, or the view or value left general ('Australian values'); some retelling; media language present but intermittent.
- **Low (1–6):** one context only, or 'audiences today'; retells the narrative; representation asserted rather than constructed; views and values confused with themes; no specific moments; the second bullet requirement unattempted.

Common errors: 'modern audiences' offered as a context; confusing **consumption** (how the narrative is accessed), **engagement** (how the audience is drawn in and held) and **reading** (the meaning made); attaching the view or value to the era **depicted** (the Pilbara of the 1970s) rather than to the context that produced or received the narrative; offering a theme ('mateship matters') where a view or value held by a specific society is required; treating the representation bullet as a bolted-on final paragraph.

Source: Variety, 'Red Dog' review, 2011 — <https://variety.com/2011/film/markets-festivals/red-dog-1117944689/>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: The Reel Bits, 'Red Dog passes \$20 million at Australian box office', 16 October 2011 — <https://thereelbits.com/2011/10/16/red-dog-passes-20-million-at-australian-box-office/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

B Q2. Analyse (15). The stem names four modes — production, distribution, consumption and reception — and asks for **ethical and/or legal** issues. The strongest responses separate the two categories explicitly, name Australian instruments, and use the statement as a springboard rather than as the subject. 'Additional examples and/or evidence' is a marked requirement, not a suggestion.

Model response:

The statement compresses the whole problem into two sentences, and its second sentence is the important one. New modes have not only given everyone the means to **produce and distribute**; they have made everyone a potential **subject** of media made by someone else, distributed instantly, consumed anywhere, and retained indefinitely. The issues that follow divide cleanly into those a court can enforce and those only a professional standard reaches, and the gap between the two is where the analysis lies.

A legal issue arising from new modes of production: copyright and moral rights. Australian copyright is governed by the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), and its exceptions are a **closed list** of fair dealing purposes — research or study, criticism or review, parody or satire, and reporting news — not an open standard of the kind that operates in the United States. New modes of production are built on reuse: clipping, remixing, reaction, edits set to somebody else's recording. A great deal of that everyday practice falls outside every listed purpose and is therefore infringing, whatever the platform's own licensing arrangements say. The Act also confers **moral rights** — the right of attribution and the right of integrity of authorship — introduced by amendments in force from 21 December 2000. Moral rights belong to the individual creator and cannot be transferred, which is precisely why they are breached so routinely: a work re-uploaded without credit, or recut so that its meaning inverts, injures a right that the person who did the recutting usually does not know exists.

A legal issue arising from new modes of distribution: everyone is now a publisher. Under the uniform Defamation Acts, as reformed in 2021, a plaintiff must establish that a publication has caused or is likely to cause **serious harm** to reputation, and a **public interest defence** is available. Those reforms were a response to volume — to the fact that publication is no longer confined to publishers. The decisive authority is *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller* (2021), in which a majority of the **High Court** held that media organisations were **publishers of comments posted by third parties** beneath their public Facebook posts, because by maintaining those pages and inviting engagement they participated in making the comments available. The Court decided who counts as a publisher, not whether any comment was defamatory. But the principle does not stop at mastheads: anyone who runs a public page and invites comment is on the same footing, without a masthead's insurance or legal advice.

A legal issue arising from new modes of consumption and reception: privacy. Australia long lacked a general right to sue for invasion of privacy. That changed on **10 June 2025**, when the statutory tort for **serious invasions of privacy** created by the *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* (Cth) commenced, giving individuals a personal right of action for intrusion upon seclusion or misuse of information where there was a reasonable expectation of privacy, where the invasion was intentional or reckless, and where the public interest in privacy outweighs any competing public interest such as freedom of the media. The reform is a direct response to the second half of the statement: material about a person now travels further and lasts longer than the older law assumed.

The ethical issues, which the law does not reach. Three matter most, and none of them is a legal question.

The first is **consent and context collapse**. Footage recorded lawfully in a public place, of a person who has no right to stop it, can now be distributed to millions and re-consumed for years in contexts its subject never anticipated. Nothing unlawful need occur. The ethical obligation — to consider what a disclosure costs the person disclosed, and to weigh that against what the audience genuinely gains — is the only instrument that operates here, and it is the standard the **MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics** articulates for professionals in its requirements of honesty, fairness, independence and respect for the rights of others.

The second is that the **ethical instruments bind members and nobody else**. A code reaches journalists. It does not reach the person filming a stranger's argument on a train. The reach of ethics has not expanded to match the reach of distribution.

The third is the **public interest test itself**, which new modes make harder to apply honestly. The test is whether a matter genuinely affects people's welfare, safety, health or finances, or holds to account those who exercise power — not whether people are interested in it. When the metric available to a maker is attention, and attention is what is rewarded, the distinction between the public interest and public curiosity is the first thing that erodes.

Position. The statement is right that permanence and reach are the new conditions, and the analysis that follows is that the two categories of issue fail in opposite directions. The **law has moved** — the 2021 defamation reforms, the 2025 privacy tort — but it moves after the practice, requires a plaintiff with the means to sue, and stops at the border. **Ethics** operates at the speed and scale of the practice, but binds only those who have accepted it, which is a shrinking fraction of the people now making and distributing media. Neither is sufficient alone, and the contemporary landscape is best described as one in which the number of people with a publisher's power has grown enormously while the number with a publisher's obligations has not.

Band descriptors (out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** ethical and legal issues **clearly distinguished** and both developed, each anchored to named Australian instruments, cases or code clauses with dates; the statement engaged as a springboard and

interrogated rather than paraphrased; **additional evidence supplied** beyond the stimulus; the four modes used analytically to locate where each issue arises; the relationship between the two categories analysed (reach versus enforceability) rather than listed; specialised media language sustained; a defensible position reached.

- **Mid (7–11):** issues identified with some specificity but the ethical and legal partly blurred, or one side much thinner than the other; some named evidence, light on dates and instruments; the statement restated more than used; the modes named but not used to organise the analysis; assertion where analysis is required.
- **Low (1–6):** restates the statement; general talk about ‘the internet’ or ‘fake news’ instead of named issues; no Australian law, body, case or code named, or **non-Australian** instruments offered; ‘ethical’ and ‘legal’ used interchangeably; no additional evidence supplied.

Common errors: **conflating** ethical and legal so neither is analysed; **non-Australian law** (a United States constitutional amendment, a European data regulation), which cannot be credited; asserting that ‘there are no laws’ for online media, when copyright, defamation and privacy all apply; restating the statement; writing about **regulation of platforms** when the question asks about ethical and legal issues; supplying no additional evidence, which the stem expressly requires.

*Source: Federal Register of Legislation, Copyright Act 1968 (Cth); fair dealing provisions ss 40–42, 41A — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C1968A00063/latest/text>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, ‘Statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy’, commenced 10 June 2025 — <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/more-privacy-rights/statutory-tort-for-serious-invasions-of-privacy>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: High Court of Australia, judgment summary, *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller* [2021] HCA 27, 8 September 2021 — <https://www.hcourt.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/publications/judgment-summaries/2021/hca-27-2021-09-08.pdf>. Accurate as at July 2026. Source: Arts Law Centre of Australia, ‘Defamation Law’ information sheet — <https://www.artslaw.com.au/information-sheet/defamation-law/>. Accurate as at July 2026.*

Practice Exam 4 — Section A

Reading time: 15 minutes. Writing time: 2 hours.

Section A — 10 questions, 50 marks. Section B — 2 questions, 30 marks. Total 80 marks.

Answer all questions in the spaces provided. Question numbering restarts in Section B. Students are permitted to bring into the examination room pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers. No calculator, notes or other materials are permitted. There is no formula sheet and no criteria sheet for this examination.

Narratives and their contexts

Question 1 (3 marks)

Read the cover specification below. It was written by the art director of a print magazine for the designer who will build the cover.

Cover specification — *Saltline*, issue 11

Saltline is a quarterly print magazine about coastal communities.

Paper stock. Uncoated, heavy, matt. No gloss varnish anywhere on the cover.

Cover photograph. One image only, filling the whole cover: a woman in her sixties standing waist-deep in grey water at dawn, turned away from the camera towards the horizon. She sits in the lower third of the frame. The upper two-thirds is empty sky.

Masthead. SALTLINE, set in a narrow sans-serif capital, white, small — about one-eighth of the cover width — placed low in the bottom left corner, where it partly overlaps the water.

Cover line. One only, in the same typeface at half the masthead's size, bottom right: "What the tide took".

Colour. Nothing is added. The photograph's own greys, plus one narrow band of pale orange at the horizon, are the entire palette.

Describe how one media code conveys meaning on the cover specified above.

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'.

You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 2, 3 and 4.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (4 marks)

Describe the point of view from which the media narrative is told, and one thing that point of view prevents the audience from knowing.

Question 3 (5 marks)

Discuss how the media narrative uses the conventions of its genre to shape what its audience expects.

Question 4 (6 marks)

Explain how selection and omission have been used to construct one representation in the media narrative, and what the audience is invited to understand as a result.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 5–7.

Wayfinder Australia — commissioning brief (extract)

Wayfinder Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that supports young people who leave regional towns to study or work in a capital city. Next year it will commission one original media production from an emerging media maker.

Our intention. We want a media product that makes a 17- to 20-year-old who has recently moved away from a country town feel recognised rather than lectured. It should show the ordinary, unglamorous first months honestly, and it should leave the audience more willing to reach out to somebody.

Our audience. Australians aged 17–20 who have moved, or are about to move, from a regional town to a capital city for work or study. They consume most of their media on a phone, alone, and late at night, and they distrust anything that looks like an official campaign.

What we will fund. One production in any ONE of the following media forms: moving image (short fiction or documentary); photography (a series); audio (a podcast episode or radio narrative); print (a zine or a magazine feature); digital (an online interactive or a social-first series).

Question 5 (4 marks)

Develop one idea for a media production that responds to the brief above. In your response, state the media form you would use, outline your idea in one or two sentences, and state how the idea addresses Wayfinder Australia's stated intention.

Question 6 (6 marks)

Explain how the narrative of your proposed production would develop through cause and effect across two connected moments, and how this narrative would achieve Wayfinder Australia's stated intention.

Question 7 (6 marks)

Discuss how you would document your work during the **production** stage of your proposed production, and how that documentation would help you make decisions when the plan and the reality do not match.

Agency and control in the media

Question 8 (4 marks)

Participatory media allow audiences to contribute to, circulate and moderate media content rather than only receive it. Describe how one participatory practice has given Australian audiences power over media content, and support your response with dated evidence.

Question 9 (4 marks)

Discuss one way in which Australian law or regulation controls the access that audiences have to media content. Refer to a specific Australian law or regulatory body in your response.

Question 10 (8 marks)

Analyse how the funding and commissioning decisions of globalised media institutions have affected what Australia's screen and news industries are able to make. Use evidence to support your analysis, and use a different example from the one discussed in Question 9.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 4 — Section B

Section B — 2 questions, 30 marks. Answer both questions. Question numbering restarts in this section.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Analyse how the context an audience brings to a media narrative shapes both its engagement with that narrative and the meaning it makes of the narrative. Refer to the media narrative that you have studied this year.

Your response must analyse:

- two audiences whose contexts differ in at least two of the following factors — social, cultural, economic, political or historical
- how the construction of at least one representation in the media narrative contributed to the difference between the two audiences' readings.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (15 marks)

No stimulus material is provided for this question.

Analyse the ethical and legal issues that new modes of media production, distribution and consumption have created in Australia. Your response must give substantial attention to at least one ethical issue and at least one legal issue. Use specific evidence, arguments and ideas to support your response.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 4 — Solutions

Command terms used in this paper

The five terms below are reproduced from the VCAA 2024 VCE Media external assessment report, which sets out how the VCAA Glossary of Command Terms is applied in this study.

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

Source: VCAA, 2024 VCE Media external assessment report, 2025 —

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/assessment/vce/examination-specifications-past-examinations-and-examination-reports/media>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Two further terms appear in this paper. **Explain** requires a how or why chain — the element, the way it works, and the consequence — rather than a definition; it carried the two heaviest non-analyse stems on the 2025 paper. **Develop** is the production-idea stem used in the 2025 and sample papers: elaborate a workable idea in enough detail that a marker can picture the finished product.

Model narratives used below. Section A Questions 2–4 use *Deadloch* (2023); Section B Question 1 uses *Ali’s Wedding* (2017). Substitute your own studied narrative and keep the shape of the response.

Section A — solutions

Narratives and their contexts

Q1. (3 marks — *describe*)

Model response. The media code of **typography** is used against expectation on this cover. The masthead is set in a narrow sans-serif capital, in white, at roughly one-eighth of the cover width, and is pushed down into the bottom left corner where it overlaps the water rather than sitting across the top of the page. Because a magazine masthead is normally the largest and highest element on a cover, a masthead this small and this low reads as a title that is deliberately refusing to compete with the photograph. This conveys that the magazine wants the woman and the water to be the first thing the reader takes in, and that the publication presents itself as quiet and considered rather than as something shouting from a shelf.

Other codes that earn full marks here:

- **Visual composition** — the woman occupies only the lower third while the upper two-thirds is empty sky, so the figure is dwarfed by the space above her; the emptiness conveys isolation and scale, and the fact that she is turned away withholds her face and therefore withholds resolution.
- **Colour** — the palette is restricted to the photograph’s own greys plus one narrow band of pale orange at the horizon; because the orange is the only warm element and it is at the furthest point in the image, it conveys that whatever warmth exists is distant.
- **Paper stock** — uncoated, heavy and matt, with no gloss varnish; gloss is conventionally associated with mass-market magazines, so the matt uncoated stock conveys a serious, unglamorous publication and changes how the reader physically handles it before a word has been read.

The three marks: one for naming a specific code; one for describing accurately how it is used **on this cover**; one for the meaning it conveys.

Common errors: naming a code and then describing the photograph's subject as though it were the answer; treating "it looks sad" as the meaning without identifying what in the specification produces it; writing about all four codes briefly instead of one code fully — the tariff rewards depth on one; forgetting that paper stock, typography and colour are media codes in their own right in this study.

Q2. (4 marks — *describe*)

*Model response (Media narrative: **Deadloch**, 2023, Kate McCartney and Kate McLennan, eight episodes, Amazon Prime Video).*

Deadloch is told from a **point of view restricted to the investigation**: on the crime itself, the audience is held to what Senior Sergeant Dulcie Collins and Detective Eddie Redcliffe know. From the moment a body washes ashore and Dulcie is forced out of a deliberate retirement, the case is followed through her and through Redcliffe, who has been sent down from Darwin, and the audience is admitted to the interview rooms, the station and the two detectives' disagreements about method — Dulcie's fastidious procedure against Eddie's unconventional and often abrasive approach. Away from the case the series is not confined to them: it opens with two local teenagers, Miranda Hoskins and Tammy Hampson, finding Trent Latham's body before the police know anything of it, and it follows town lives the investigation never touches, such as Tammy's ambition to play football professionally and the pressure Margaret Carruthers applies to Miranda over a funded scholarship.

What this point of view prevents the audience from knowing is the one thing a crime narrative could most easily supply: who is doing it, and why. The series never opens a channel to the person responsible — the scenes away from the investigation belong to suspects, families and bystanders, and none belongs to the killer, whose acts are never shown and whose reasoning is not heard until the detectives reach it. The man eventually revealed as responsible, Ray McLintock, moves through the series as an ordinary town resident who becomes romantically involved with Eddie, and the audience is given nothing about him that the detectives do not also hold. Because the withholding is this exact, every fact about the crime arrives as a discovery rather than as background the audience already has, and suspicion has to attach to the whole town at once — which is the condition the series needs in order to show a community keeping a real division out of sight while it performs its best version of itself.

The four marks: identify the point of view precisely — whose knowledge the audience is limited to (1); describe how the narrative maintains it, with reference to what the audience is and is not shown (1); name one specific thing it withholds (1); state the effect of that withholding on the audience (1).

Common errors: naming a camera position ("third person", "over the shoulder") instead of a narrative point of view; describing what the audience *does* see and never identifying what is withheld; treating point of view as the same thing as the protagonist's opinions; retelling the plot.

Source: Wikipedia, Deadloch, 2026 — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadloch>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q3. (5 marks — *discuss*)

*Model response (Media narrative: **Deadloch**, 2023).*

Deadloch is built on the conventions of the crime genre, and it uses them to install a set of expectations it can then work against. The genre conventions are all present and all early: a body discovered at the water's edge in the opening episode; a mismatched detective pairing, in which Dulcie Collins's fastidious, procedural method is set against Eddie Redcliffe's unconventional and often abrasive one; a closed community with something to hide, in which long-established residents and more recent arrivals want incompatible things from the place and the town works to keep that division out of sight; and a fixed deadline in the form of the Winter Festival, which forces the investigation to run in public. An audience that has watched any crime drama reads these signals within minutes and expects the standard contract: a killer to be identified, a town to be exposed, and a detective pairing that will learn to work together.

The series is a black comedy crime mystery, and the comedy is what complicates those expectations rather than replacing them. Because the genre conventions are honoured — the case is real, the deaths are real, the procedure is real — the comedy does not signal that the audience should stop taking the crime seriously; it signals that the audience should stop taking the *genre's usual attitudes* seriously. The clearest instance is the series' treatment of victims: crime drama conventionally opens on a murdered woman, and *Deadloch* has been widely noted for inverting that pattern and centring women as investigators and as the town's living population instead. The audience's genre expectation is used as the measure of the departure — the inversion only registers as an inversion because the convention was so firmly established first.

On balance, then, genre conventions in *Deadloch* do two jobs at once. They give the audience a reliable framework for reading an unfamiliar town quickly, and they give the series something specific for the audience to notice being withheld.

The five marks: identify the genre and at least two of its conventions (1); locate them specifically in this narrative (1); state the expectations they create in the audience (1); weigh how the narrative meets or departs from those expectations (1); reach a position (1).

Common errors: offering **narrative** conventions (character arc, three-act structure) where **genre** conventions were asked for — the study design treats genre conventions as the rules that define genres, and stresses that those rules “are subject to debate and change”; offering **form** conventions (episode length, credit sequence) instead; listing conventions without saying what the audience is led to expect; asserting that the narrative “subverts the genre” without first showing that the convention was established.

Source: Wikipedia, Deadloch, 2026 — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadloch>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q4. (6 marks — *explain*)

*Model response (Media narrative: **Deadloch**, 2023).*

The representation examined here is the representation of **the town of Deadloch itself**.

Selection. The series selects a very particular set of things to show about the town: a coastal Tasmanian settlement running an arts-and-food Winter Festival; a population that has visibly changed, with newer residents and long-established ones holding different views of what the place is for; and a police station too small for the investigation that lands on it. Each selection does work. Choosing a festival as the setting means the town is performing its best version of itself at exactly the moment it is being investigated, so every scene shows the town in costume. Choosing a divided population means the audience is never given a single “local” viewpoint to trust.

Omission. What is left out matters more. The series omits the crime genre's usual centrepiece — the lingering presentation of murdered women as the narrative's visual subject — and it omits the reassuring small-town warmth that Australian regional settings are often given. It also omits the outside investigator as the narrative's centre of gravity: the outsider is Eddie Redcliffe, brought down from Darwin, but the series keeps Deadloch's own senior sergeant at the centre, so the audience is denied the comfortable position of judging the town alongside a visitor. Because these omissions are of things the audience's genre knowledge expects, their absence is felt rather than merely unnoticed.

What the audience is invited to understand. Together, the selections and the omissions construct Deadloch as a place whose surface is a deliberate piece of work and whose divisions are structural rather than accidental. The audience is invited to understand the town not as a picturesque community disturbed by an outside evil — the conventional reading a crime drama would offer — but as a community whose own arrangements produced what happened in it. Because the series will not give the audience an outsider to blame or a victim to look at, the only remaining object of attention is the town, and that is precisely where the representation directs it.

The six marks: name the representation precisely (1); at least two specific selections with their effects (2); at least one significant omission, identified as an omission (1); connect selection and omission to each other (1); state what the audience is invited to understand (1).

Common errors: naming a **theme** (“division”, “secrets”) as the representation — the 2025 report recorded “discussing general themes rather than specific representations” among the common errors on its representation question; describing the town without identifying any construction process; treating omission as “things the show forgot”; listing codes without connecting them to selection and omission.

Source: Wikipedia, Deadloch, 2026 — <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadloch>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Media production

Q5. (4 marks — *develop*)

Model response.

Media form: audio — a single podcast episode, approximately 22 minutes.

Title and idea: *Second Winter*. An eighteen-year-old who has moved from a wheat-belt town to Melbourne for her first year of study records voice memos to her older brother, who never replies. The episode is assembled from those memos across her first four months, together with the room sound of the places she records them in — a share-house kitchen at 1 am, a bus, a laundromat, a stairwell.

How it addresses the intention: the brief asks for a product that makes the audience feel recognised rather than lectured. *Second Winter* has no narrator, no advice and no statistics; the only voice belongs to the audience’s own age group, and the only argument the episode makes is structural — the memos get shorter and more cheerful as the loneliness gets worse, which the audience recognises because they do it themselves. The episode ends with her ringing somebody instead of recording, which models the reaching-out the brief asks for without instructing anybody to do it.

The four marks: a form from the listed menu (1); an idea specific enough to picture, with a title (1); a production the stated audience would plausibly choose (1); an explicit link to the client’s stated intention (1).

Common errors: proposing a product that advertises Wayfinder Australia rather than one Wayfinder Australia would fund — the 2025 report flagged exactly this on the equivalent question; naming a form that is not on the menu; writing a topic (“something about loneliness”) instead of an idea; describing the audience back to the marker instead of describing the product.

Q6. (6 marks — *explain*)

Model response.

Moment 1 — the kitchen memo (about four minutes in). She records a memo at 1 am in the share-house kitchen, telling her brother the week has been good. Midway through she stops, deletes a section and starts the sentence again; the audience hears the delete tone and then the smoother second take. The cause is small and ordinary — she does not want to be a burden. The effect is that the audience is now listening to a performance and knows it, so every later memo is heard twice over: once as what she says and once as what she has cut.

Moment 2 — the laundromat memo (about seventeen minutes in). Five weeks later she begins a memo in a laundromat, gets three words in, and stops. This time she does not delete and re-record; she leaves the fragment unsent and rings somebody instead, and the last sound of the episode is a call connecting.

The cause-and-effect chain between them. Because the audience was shown the deletion in Moment 1, editing herself has been established as this character’s habit; because the habit has been established, the fragment she leaves unsent in Moment 2 registers as a break in the pattern rather than as an accident; and because it registers as a break, the call that follows reads as a decision she makes rather than as an ending supplied by the maker. Nothing is explained to the audience — the meaning is carried entirely by the difference between two versions of the same behaviour.

How this achieves the intention. Wayfinder Australia asked for a product that recognises rather than lectures and that leaves the audience more willing to reach out. The narrative reaches that outcome by withholding advice: the only thing the audience is told is that she stopped editing herself, and the audience supplies the rest. For a 17- to 20-year-

old listening alone on a phone late at night — the audience the brief describes — the recognition is in the deleting, not in the phone call, which is exactly why the phone call is credible when it comes.

The six marks: two moments with positions in the product (1); a genuine causal link rather than sequence (2); the effect on the audience stated at each moment (1); an explicit connection to the client's intention (1); the audience pinned to the brief's description rather than generalised (1).

Common errors: giving a theme or a topic rather than a narrative — both of the common errors the 2025 report recorded on the equivalent question were versions of this; listing moments joined by “and then” with no cause; describing the whole production instead of two connected moments; asserting the intention is achieved without saying by what mechanism.

Q7. (6 marks — *discuss*)

Model response.

What I would document, and how. During the production stage of *Second Winter* — the stage at which the memos are actually recorded — I would keep a **recording log**, one row per take, filled in at the time rather than afterwards. Its columns would be: date and time; location; take number; the equipment and settings used (recorder, microphone, gain, whether a windshield was fitted); the room tone recorded before the take, in seconds; a one-line description of what was captured; a technical rating out of five; and a final column headed “problem and what I did about it”. Alongside it I would keep a **daily production diary** of two or three sentences a day, recording what deviated from the shooting schedule and why, because the log records takes and the diary records decisions.

How the documentation earns its keep when the plan fails. The value of a log is not record-keeping; it is that it converts a problem into a decision that can be checked later. If the laundromat proves too noisy to use — a machine cycle running under the whole take — the log tells me immediately whether the problem is the location or the gain setting, because I have identical settings recorded for the kitchen take that worked. The diary then records what I chose and why: keep the noise because the brief asks for the ordinary and unglamorous, or move to the stairwell and lose the laundromat's meaning. Six weeks later in post-production, when the two takes sound different and I have forgotten why, the log is the only thing that can tell me whether the difference is a mistake to be corrected or a decision to be preserved.

Weighing it. The cost is real: logging every take slows a session, and on a small production it is the first discipline to be abandoned when time is short. A lighter alternative — logging only the takes I think I will use — is faster, but it fails exactly when it is needed, because the take that solves a problem is usually one I did not expect to use. On balance, a full log at the point of recording is worth the time it costs, because the information it captures cannot be reconstructed later, whereas the time it costs can be recovered by cutting a planned take.

The six marks: name specific documentation instruments (1); give their actual fields or content (1); locate them correctly in the **production** stage (1); show the documentation being used to make a decision when reality departs from the plan (2); weigh a cost or an alternative (1).

Common errors: drifting to the wrong stage — storyboards and shot lists are **pre-production** documents, and audience feedback surveys belong to **post-production**; the 2025 report listed stage drift first among the common errors on the equivalent question, which averaged 2.2 out of 4; answering “I would take notes”; describing what the documentation contains but never showing it changing a decision; writing about documenting the finished product rather than the process.

Agency and control in the media

Q8. (4 marks — *describe*)

Model response.

The participatory practice examined here is **audience reporting and flagging** — the tools built into platforms that let an audience member act on content somebody else has published, rather than merely scroll past it. The practice is

participatory because the audience is doing part of the moderation work: the platform's decision to remove or retain is triggered by the audience, not by an editor.

The power this gives Australian audiences is real because it has a second stage behind it. Where a platform declines to act, an Australian who is the target of the material can report it to the eSafety Commissioner, who holds powers under the *Online Safety Act 2021* to issue removal notices to the service. The audience's flag can therefore end in a legal obligation on a company rather than in a declined request.

The dated evidence is the take-up. eSafety received 2,978 valid cyberbullying complaints in 2024, up from 536 in 2019 — a 455 per cent increase across five years — and the Commissioner attributed the growth to more people knowing what to do when it happens and reporting it. That figure is not a measure of how much cyberbullying occurs; it is a measure of how many Australians treated harmful content as something they had standing to act on. Two participatory tools stacked on each other — the platform's report button and a statutory complaint scheme — turned an audience response into a removal power.

The four marks: name the participatory practice specifically (1); describe how it works, showing the audience doing something rather than choosing something (1); dated evidence (1); state the power the audience actually gains (1).

Common errors: offering **consumption choice** ("audiences can pick what they watch") as participation — the 2025 report recorded exactly this confusion, of agency with consumption, on the closest equivalent question; using an undated example where evidence is required; describing the regulator's powers instead of the audience's action; claiming audiences "have all the power now" without evidence.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, "Safer Internet Day calls for kindness as cyberbullying reports surge over 450% in five years", media release, 11 February 2025 — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/safer-internet-day-calls-for-kindness-as-cyberbullying-reports-surge-over-450-in-five-years>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Q9. (4 marks — *discuss*)

Model response.

Australian audiences' access to social media is now controlled directly by statute. The *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* amended the *Online Safety Act 2021* to require age-restricted social media platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 from creating or keeping an account. The obligation took effect on 10 December 2025, is administered by the eSafety Commissioner, and is enforceable against the platforms rather than against children or their parents.

The strength of this instrument is that it controls **access** rather than content, so it does not require a regulator to judge every post; the obligation sits on a small number of large services and is auditable against them. Its weakness is that it depends entirely on age assurance working at scale, and on companies outside Australia deciding to comply. It also leaves open a gap it was never designed to close: a fifteen-year-old prevented from holding an account can still be served much of the same material while logged out or on a service that falls outside the definition, which is why eSafety has separately registered Age-Restricted Material Codes covering search engine services from 27 December 2025 and six further industry sections from 9 March 2026.

On balance the law is a real extension of Australian control over audience access rather than a symbolic one, but it restricts account-holding rather than exposure, and its effect will be settled by enforcement rather than by the drafting.

The four marks: name a specific Australian law or body (1); describe accurately what it requires and who administers it (1); one supported strength (1); one supported limitation, with a conclusion (1).

Common errors: using an overseas example — in 2024 the equivalent question awarded zero for non-Australian regulation; confusing **regulation of the media** with **government use of media**; naming a body without saying what it does; giving strengths only, when "discuss" requires the evidence to be weighed.

Sources: Federal Register of Legislation, *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024*, assented December 2024 — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2024A00127/asmade>; eSafety Commissioner, "Social media age restrictions" — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions>; eSafety

Q10. (8 marks — *analyse*)

Model response.

A globalised media institution is one that operates across national markets and makes its commissioning, funding and distribution decisions for a global business rather than for any single country’s audience — Netflix, Meta, Alphabet and Disney are globalised institutions in this sense, while Seven West Media and Nine Entertainment are large but Australian, operating in one market. The distinction matters here because the influence these institutions exert on Australian **production** is indirect. They do not tell Australian makers what to make. They decide where money goes, and Australian production follows the money.

Commissioning: Australian stories compete against everywhere else. Because a global streaming service can serve Australian subscribers from a catalogue commissioned anywhere, there is no commercial necessity for it to fund Australian programs at all; an Australian drama is assessed against commissioning options from every other market the service operates in. The consequence for Australian production is not fewer viewers but fewer guaranteed commissions, and therefore fewer of the mid-budget dramas, children’s programs and documentaries that a local production sector needs in order to keep crews, writers and facilities working between larger projects. The Australian Parliament treated this as a control problem rather than a taste problem: the Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Bill 2025 passed the Senate on 27 November 2025, and from 1 January 2026 streaming services with more than one million Australian subscribers must invest at least 10 per cent of their Australian program expenditure, or 7.5 per cent of their Australian revenue, in new Australian drama, children’s, documentary, arts and educational programs. A quota is only necessary where an institution’s ordinary commissioning behaviour would not produce the outcome, so the legislation is itself evidence that globalised commissioning was reshaping what Australia made.

Funding: platform decisions move money out of Australian newsrooms. On 29 February 2024 Meta announced that it would discontinue the Facebook News tab in Australia and the United States and would not renew the agreements it had signed with Australian news businesses in 2021 under the News Media Bargaining Code. Those agreements had been paying for Australian journalism — reporters, rounds, regional coverage — and the decision to end them was made outside Australia, on grounds unrelated to Australian news production. The effect on Australian media production was immediate and structural: an income stream that had underwritten newsroom staffing was withdrawn at once, not phased out. The Australian Government’s response on 12 December 2024, a News Bargaining Incentive framed as a charge on large platforms that can be offset by doing deals with news publishers, was designed precisely because a code depending on voluntary designation could be neutralised by a platform simply choosing to carry less news.

How the two mechanisms relate. Both work the same way. The globalised institution never intervenes in an Australian production decision; it changes the financial conditions under which Australian production decisions are made, and the Australian sector adjusts. That is why the Australian regulatory response in both cases attaches an obligation to revenue or expenditure rather than to content — the lever that works on a globalised institution is the one connected to the Australian market it wants access to.

Judgement. The influence of globalised media institutions on Australian production is real, and it operates through funding rather than through content control. But it is not unlimited, and its limit is market access: where Australia has attached a condition to the right to sell to Australian audiences, globalised institutions have adjusted their Australian expenditure rather than leaving. What has most changed for Australian production, then, is not how much media Australians can watch but who decides whether Australian media gets made at all — and, since 2024, how much of that decision Australia has been prepared to legislate back.

The eight marks: define “globalised” and distinguish it from local (1); identify at least two distinct mechanisms affecting Australian production (2); develop each with a specific, dated example (2); explain **how** each mechanism works rather than listing practices (1); relate the mechanisms to each other (1); reach a weighed judgement (1).

Common errors: naming an Australian broadcaster as a globalised institution — the 2025 report named exactly this confusion (Channel 7 treated as globalised, Disney+ as not) on the equivalent question, which was the lowest-scoring item on that paper at 2.9 out of 6; writing about distribution or about audiences' viewing habits when the question asks about what is **produced** in Australia; listing platform practices without a mechanism; recycling the regulation example already used in Question 9, which the stem expressly forbids.

Sources: Parliament of Australia, *Communications Legislation Amendment (Australian Content Requirement for Subscription Video On Demand (Streaming) Services) Bill 2025* — https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r7404; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, “New Australian content laws for streaming services”, 2025 — <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/news/new-australian-content-laws-streaming-services>; Norton Rose Fulbright, “Australia’s News Media Bargaining Code — what happens next”, 2024 — <https://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/en/knowledge/publications/a34c8ca1/australias-news-media-bargaining-code-what-happens-next>; Treasury Ministers, “Albanese Government to establish News Bargaining Incentive”, 12 December 2024 — <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/stephen-jones-2022/media-releases/albanese-government-establish-news-bargaining-incentive>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Section B — solutions

Question 1 (15 marks)

Model response (Media narrative: Ali’s Wedding, 2017, Jeffrey Walker).

Ali’s Wedding was directed by Jeffrey Walker, written by Osamah Sami and Andrew Knight from Sami’s own experiences, produced by Matchbox Pictures, and set in the Iraqi-Australian Shia Muslim community of Melbourne. It premiered at the Adelaide Film Festival in October 2016 and reached Australian audiences through the 2017 festival and cinema release. Sami has described it as the first Muslim romantic comedy. The narrative follows Ali, the musically gifted son of a cleric, who is expected by his community to become a doctor, is promised to one young woman, and falls for another — and who lies about his university results, with consequences that widen through the film.

Two audiences with very different contexts encountered this narrative in the same country in the same year, and the difference in what they made of it is traceable to specific construction decisions.

Audience one: Iraqi-Australian and more broadly Muslim-Australian audiences in Melbourne and Sydney, 2017. Their context differs from the general audience’s in at least three of the study design’s factors. **Culturally**, this audience arrives with the internal knowledge the film assumes — the authority a cleric’s household carries, the weight of a community expectation about a career, the difference between a marriage arranged and a marriage forced. **Socially**, it is an audience for whom the family in the film is a recognisable social unit rather than an object of curiosity. **Historically**, it is an audience that had spent the fifteen years since 2001 seeing itself represented in Australian screen media overwhelmingly in the registers of news, security and threat.

That historical position governs the **engagement**. For this audience the first act of engagement is not with the romance but with the fact of the film’s existence: an Australian feature in which a Muslim family is the narrative’s centre and its comedy, rather than its problem. Engagement is therefore immediate and, in part, evaluative — the audience is watching to see whether the film gets the community right, a mode of viewing that a general audience has no reason to adopt. The **reading** follows from it: the film is read as a work about internal negotiation, in which the pressures on Ali come from love, expectation and his own lie, and in which the community is a source of both the pressure and the eventual accommodation. Ali’s dishonesty is read as a familiar consequence of expectation, not as a character flaw peculiar to him.

Audience two: general Australian cinema audiences in 2017 without that community knowledge. Their context differs from audience one in exactly those cultural, social and historical factors, while being identical in time and place. This audience arrives through **genre**: the marketing, the title and the opening establish a romantic comedy, and the romantic comedy is a form this audience can read fluently without any specialised knowledge. **Engagement** is therefore generic before it is personal — the audience is held by the familiar machinery of the promised match, the unsuitable-but-right love interest, and the escalating lie. The **reading** it is steered towards is universalising: reviewers

recorded the film as using a very specific setting to reach ordinary ideas about families and relationships, and the film reached a 92 per cent approval rating from 26 reviews on Rotten Tomatoes. For this audience the film’s meaning is that a Melbourne Iraqi-Shia family works like other families — which is a different meaning from the one audience one takes, and a shallower one, because it is reached by setting aside the specifics rather than by reading them.

The representation that produces the difference. The decisive representation is the film’s representation of the Melbourne Iraqi-Australian Shia community, and it is constructed as much by omission as by selection.

Selection. The film selects the ordinary institutional life of the community — the mosque, the family home, the community’s investment in Ali’s medical results, the negotiation around the match — and selects a protagonist whose problems are romantic, academic and self-inflicted. It further selects comedy as the register in which all of this is handled, and casts Osamah Sami as a version of himself, which gives the representation an authorial claim on its own accuracy.

Omission. What the film leaves out is what Australian screen media had most often put in. There is no terrorism plot, no security-agency storyline, no radicalisation arc, no explanatory scene in which a character justifies the community to a sceptical outsider. There is also no white protagonist through whom the audience is introduced to the community.

Construction. Those omissions are not neutral, because the audience arrives with them supplied by fifteen years of news coverage. The romantic comedy structure then does the load-bearing work: it obliges the audience to want Ali to succeed, and it puts the community’s ordinary business — a match, a degree, a father’s reputation — in the position that the genre reserves for the things the audience is supposed to care about.

How that construction produced two different readings. For audience one, the omission is the argument: the film is read as declining a frame that had been imposed on the community, and the comedy is read as confidence rather than deflection. For audience two, the same omission is largely invisible — you cannot notice the absence of a frame you were not braced for — so the construction operates differently, working through genre to make the family legible and likeable. The identical selections and omissions therefore generate a **political** reading for one audience and a **generic** reading for the other. The film is doing one thing; the contexts are doing the rest.

Conclusion. The factors that shaped these readings were cultural knowledge (whether the community’s internal rules needed translating), social position (whether the family on screen was one’s own or another’s), and historical position (whether one arrived carrying fifteen years of being represented otherwise). But those factors operated on a narrative that had already narrowed the field: by constructing the community through selection of the ordinary and omission of the expected, and by housing both inside a genre that compels sympathy, *Ali’s Wedding* made a hostile reading difficult for either audience to reach — which is a substantial achievement of construction, and the reason the two readings differ in depth rather than in direction.

Sources: Wikipedia, Ali’s Wedding, 2026 — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali%27s_Wedding; SBS, “How Osamah Sami turned his life into Australian Muslim rom-com, ‘Ali’s Wedding’” — <https://www.sbs.com.au/whats-on/article/how-osamah-sami-turned-his-life-into-australian-muslim-rom-com-alis-wedding/975qf8dsi>; Rotten Tomatoes, Ali’s Wedding — https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/alis_wedding. Accurate as at July 2026.

Band descriptors — Section B Question 1

Axis	High (12–15)	Mid (7–11)	Low (1–6)
Task compliance (bullets)	Two audiences, each differentiated on two or more named factors; the representation bullet integrated into the analysis of both audiences	Two audiences named but one differentiated on a single factor, or one is generic (“modern audiences”); the representation handled in a separate paragraph	One audience only, or contexts asserted without factors; the representation bullet unaddressed
Specificity of evidence	Named construction decisions and named selections and omissions; dated, verifiable	Some specific reference, mostly at the level of “the family scenes”	Whole-narrative summary; plot retold

Axis	High (12–15)	Mid (7–11)	Low (1–6)
	production and reception detail		
Analysis vs description	Traces the causal path from a construction choice to a reading, and explains why the same choice produced different readings	Asserts that different audiences read differently without a mechanism	Describes the narrative and the audiences separately
Media language	Engagement distinguished from reading; selection, omission and construction; representation; genre	Terms present but engagement and reading used interchangeably	Everyday language; “reading” used to mean “opinion”

Common errors: treating **engagement** (being held by the narrative) and **reading** (the meaning made) as the same thing; naming “modern audiences” or “young people” as a context — a context needs factors, and the stem requires at least two; describing a representation without naming any construction process; retelling the narrative in place of analysing it; discussing the two audiences in sequence and never comparing them.

Question 2 (15 marks)

Model response.

New modes of production, distribution and consumption have not created a new category of media harm so much as detached familiar harms from the institutions that used to be answerable for them. When media was made and released by a small number of organisations, an ethical breach had an author with a masthead, a code of practice and an employer; a legal wrong had a defendant with an address in Australia. The modes now in use — anyone producing, platforms distributing, audiences consuming on services incorporated overseas — keep the harm and dissolve the accountability. The ethical and legal issues that follow are best understood as one problem seen twice: the **ethical** question of who should be bound by standards, and the **legal** question of who can be reached by law.

A legal issue: publication has been redefined, and non-professionals are inside it. The clearest Australian instance is *Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller* [2021] HCA 27, decided on 8 September 2021, in which the High Court held by majority that news organisations maintaining Facebook pages were publishers of defamatory comments posted by third parties on those pages, because by facilitating and encouraging the communication they had participated in it. The decision is significant well beyond news organisations. It confirmed that anyone who runs a public page and invites interaction is *prima facie* liable for what other people post there, which imports the whole apparatus of defamation law — a body of law designed for institutions with lawyers — into the ordinary practice of maintaining a comment section. The mode of distribution created the exposure: nothing about the comments would have been actionable against a publisher in an era when the publisher controlled every word that appeared.

A second legal development shows the same pattern moving faster. The *Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material) Act 2024*, which commenced on 3 September 2024, created Commonwealth offences for the non-consensual sharing of sexually explicit material including material created or altered by technology, carrying up to six years’ imprisonment for sharing and seven where the offender also created the material. Here a new **production** mode — generative tools that put convincing fabrication in the hands of anyone — produced a harm that existing offences did not clearly cover, and Parliament legislated the gap closed within about two years of the tools becoming widely available. That is fast for law reform, and it is still slower than the technology.

An ethical issue: the standards are attached to the wrong people. The most instructive Australian example is the new statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy, introduced by the *Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024* and actionable from 10 June 2025. It allows an individual to sue for intentional or reckless intrusion into seclusion, or misuse of their information, where they had a reasonable expectation of privacy and the public interest in protecting it outweighs competing public interests such as freedom of the media. The tort carries an exemption for journalists, their employers and those assisting them, where the invasion involves collecting, preparing or publishing

journalistic material. But “journalist” is confined to those subject to standards of professional conduct or a code of practice.

That definition is the ethical issue in miniature. The exemption exists because professional journalists accept an ethical framework — a code, an employer, a complaints process — in exchange for latitude to intrude in the public interest. Someone doing recognisably journalistic work outside an institution accepts no such framework and receives no such latitude. The result is a system in which the people most likely to be bound by media ethics are the shrinking group who work inside institutions, while a growing share of the material Australians actually consume is produced by people outside every code. The ethical problem is not that non-professionals behave worse; it is that there is no mechanism by which they could be expected to behave better, and no body they answer to when they do not. Australia’s advertising system has the same shape: the AANA Code of Ethics is adjudicated by the Ad Standards Community Panel, and the remedy for a breach is that the advertisement be modified or withdrawn — a self-regulatory sanction that works because advertisers and media owners have ongoing commercial relationships to protect. An individual posting sponsored content has no equivalent stake.

Where the two issues meet: enforcement across borders. New consumption modes put Australians inside services that Australian bodies cannot straightforwardly compel. After the eSafety Commissioner issued a removal notice to X Corp under the *Online Safety Act 2021* over footage of the Wakeley stabbing of 15 April 2024, X Corp geo-blocked the material for Australian users but declined to remove it globally, and the Commissioner discontinued the Federal Court proceedings on 5 June 2024. Australians were protected only to the extent that a foreign company elected to apply a national block. The ethical argument and the legal instrument were both available; what was missing was reach.

The counter-argument, and why it does not fully hold. It can be argued that none of this is new — that photographs were retouched, gossip was published and reputations were damaged long before platforms existed, and that Australia has adapted before, as it did when the Classification Board gained an R18+ category for computer games on 1 January 2013. There is force in this: the underlying ethical questions of consent, privacy, honesty and harm have not changed. But three things have. The **volume** of material is now beyond any classification-style scheme that assesses items one at a time. The **producer** is frequently an individual outside every code. And the **jurisdiction** in which publication occurs is often not Australia. A framework built to regulate a finite number of identifiable Australian publishers cannot simply be scaled up to meet those conditions, which is why the Australian response since 2021 has moved towards obligations attached to services and to revenue rather than to items of content.

Judgement. The ethical and legal issues created by new modes are, at bottom, issues of allocation: who bears the duty, and who can be held to it. Australian law has moved decisively on the legal side — *Voller*, the deepfake offences and the privacy tort all extend liability to conduct that new modes made possible, and all three arrived within four years. The ethical side is further behind, because ethics in media has historically been enforced through institutional membership, and the new modes are defined by the absence of institutions. Until there is some mechanism binding non-institutional producers to standards, Australia will continue to have laws that reach further than its ethics do — which is a serviceable position for punishing the worst conduct, and a poor one for improving the ordinary run of it.

Sources: High Court of Australia, Fairfax Media Publications Pty Ltd v Voller [2021] HCA 27, judgment summary, 8 September 2021 — <https://www.hcourt.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/publications/judgment-summaries/2021/hca-27-2021-09-08.pdf>; Parliament of Australia, Criminal Code Amendment (Deepfake Sexual Material) Bill 2024 — https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bId=r7205; Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, “Statutory tort for serious invasions of privacy” — <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/more-privacy-rights/statutory-tort-for-serious-invasions-of-privacy>; eSafety Commissioner, “Statement from the eSafety Commissioner re: Federal Court proceedings”, 5 June 2024 — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/statement-from-the-esafety-commissioner-re-federal-court-proceedings>; Federal Register of Legislation, Online Safety Act 2021 — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2021A00076/latest>; AANA, Code of Ethics and self-regulation — <https://aana.com.au/self-regulation/code-of-ethics/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Band descriptors — Section B Question 2

Axis	High (12–15)	Mid (7–11)	Low (1–6)
Task compliance	At least one ethical and at least one legal issue,	Both an ethical and a legal issue present, but one is	Only ethical or only legal material; issues asserted



Axis	High (12–15)	Mid (7–11)	Low (1–6)
	clearly distinguished and both developed substantially; the connection to new modes made explicit in each case	developed far less than the other, or the two are not distinguished from each other	without being tied to new modes
Specificity of evidence	Named Acts, cases, bodies and dates, correctly attributed; evidence chosen because it demonstrates the point, not merely because it is recent	Bodies named without what they do, or laws named without dates	“The government”, “the platforms”; opinion offered as evidence
Analysis vs description	Explains why each instrument works or fails; engages a counter-argument; reaches a weighed judgement	Describes several instruments accurately, one after another, without evaluating them	Lists opinions about the internet; no ethical or legal mechanism identified
Media language	Ethical distinguished from legal; self-regulation, co-regulation, classification, jurisdiction, publication used precisely	Terms present but ethical and legal issues conflated, or self- and government regulation confused	Everyday language; “censorship” used for every form of regulation

Common errors: treating every issue as both ethical and legal without ever distinguishing them — an ethical issue concerns what a media practitioner *should* do; a legal issue concerns what the law *requires*; writing generalised ethics (“the media is biased”) instead of issues arising from new modes of production, distribution and consumption; relying on overseas law where the question concerns Australia; offering no dates, so nothing can be judged contemporary; describing new technologies at length without identifying any issue they raise.

Marker’s summary

Section	Questions	Marks
A — Narratives and their contexts	1–4	3 + 4 + 5 + 6 = 18
A — Media production	5–7	4 + 6 + 6 = 16
A — Agency and control in the media	8–10	4 + 4 + 8 = 16
Section A total	10 questions	50
B — Question 1 (U3 AoS1, studied narrative)	1	15
B — Question 2 (U4 AoS2, ethical and legal issues)	2	15
Section B total	2 questions	30
Examination total	12 questions	80

Practice Exam 5 — Section A

Reading time: 15 minutes. Writing time: 2 hours. Section A: 10 questions, 50 marks. Section B: 2 questions, 30 marks. Total 80 marks. All questions are compulsory. Question numbering restarts in Section B. Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers. Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape. No calculator is allowed in this examination. There is no formula sheet and no insert. Answer all questions in the spaces provided.

Narratives and their contexts

Question 1 (3 marks)

SECOND VOICE — Episode 2, Scene 4

[Sound: a desk fan turning. A phone handset lifted from its cradle.]

ROWENA (*flat, professional*): Overnight on 4KND. You're on.

[Sound: three seconds of nothing but the fan. Then breathing, close.]

ROWENA (*softer, unhurried*): That's all right. Take your time.

[Sound: the fan is switched off. The room tone drops away to nothing.]

CALLER (*thin and distant, as though from the far end of a hallway*): I don't know why I rang.

ROWENA (*very close to the microphone now*): Nobody does, the first time. Stay on anyway.

[Sound: a clock somewhere in the studio, ticking into the silence.]

Describe how one media code is used in the extract above to convey meaning.

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'.

You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 2 and 3.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (6 marks)

Discuss how the selection and omission of detail in the construction of one representation in the media narrative works to reflect or challenge a view or value held in the society in which the narrative was produced. Refer to one specific moment or sequence.

Question 3 (7 marks)

Analyse how audiences in two different contexts may read one aspect of the media narrative differently. Identify each context using at least two of the following factors: social, cultural, economic, political, historical.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 4–7.

THE KANDARA ADVOCATE — COMMISSIONING BRIEF

The *Kandara Advocate* is an independent newspaper that has been published in the regional town of Kandara for 150 years. Most of its print readers are over 55. A readership survey commissioned by the paper found that fewer than one in ten Kandara residents aged 16–24 had opened the *Advocate* in the past year, and that almost all of that age group first hear local news from friends or from a social feed.

To mark its 150th year the *Advocate* has set aside a small fund for independent media makers. It invites proposals for a media production that will:

- tell a story about life in Kandara;
- be made for an audience of 16–24 year-olds in the Kandara district; and
- leave that audience with a reason to keep following local news after the production ends.

Proposals may be in ONE of the following media forms: moving image (film or video) · animation · radio or audio · photographic · print · digital or online.

Question 4 (4 marks)

Develop one media production idea that answers the *Kandara Advocate*'s brief, using one of the media forms listed. Complete the boxes below.

Box	Your response
Intended audience — who they are, and one thing the brief tells you about how they already get local information	
Media form and extent	
Working title, and an outline of the idea	
Style and/or genre	

Question 5 (4 marks)

Describe how you would record and evaluate one production experiment undertaken for your proposed idea. In your response, refer to the skill being developed and to the evidence you would keep.

Question 6 (6 marks)

Explain the narrative of your proposed production, and how its use of cause and effect would achieve the intention set out in the *Kandara Advocate*'s brief for the audience you identified in Question 4.

Question 7 (4 marks)

Discuss one way in which your proposed production might have to depart from its pre-production plan during the production stage, and how you would decide whether to allow that departure.

Agency and control in the media

Question 8 (5 marks)

Discuss one challenge that the regulation of media faces in Australia when the services Australians use are provided from outside Australia. In your response, refer to at least one specific Australian law or regulatory body.

Question 9 (5 marks)

Analyse one contemporary example in which audiences exercised agency collectively, in response to a decision taken by a media institution. Use evidence to support your response.

Question 10 (6 marks)

Explain how globalised media institutions use the data they gather from audiences to decide what content to commission and how to present it. Do not use the example you discussed in Question 9.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 5 — Section B

Section B: 2 questions, 30 marks. Both questions are compulsory. Question numbering restarts in this section. Answer both questions in the spaces provided.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Analyse how media codes are used to develop one narrative convention across a media narrative you have studied this year.

Your response must analyse:

- the same narrative convention at two separate points in the media narrative, each identified by its boundaries
- at least three media codes, and what each contributes to that narrative convention
- what has changed in the narrative convention between the two points, and the meaning that change conveys.

Media narrative: _____

Question 2 (15 marks)

“A rule that a regulator cannot check is not really a rule. Most of what Australians now watch, read and post sits inside systems no Australian regulator can open, and audiences who dislike what a platform does can simply leave it.”

Analyse the issues and challenges relating to the regulation and control of the media and audiences in Australia, in response to the statement above. Refer to at least two Australian regulatory instruments (laws, bodies or codes), and use additional examples and/or evidence to support your response.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 5 — Solutions

Mark allocation: Section A $3 + 6 + 7 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 4 + 5 + 5 + 6 = 50$ marks. Section B $15 + 15 = 30$ marks. Total 80 marks. Section A area-of-study split: Narratives and their contexts 16 · Media production 18 · Agency and control in the media 16.

The Section A stimuli — the audio-drama extract and the Kandara Advocate commissioning brief — are constructed for this examination and carry no source line, following the convention of the live paper. All claims about real media products, laws, regulators and events in the model responses are matters of public record; sources are listed at the end of this solutions section.

Command terms used in this paper

The definitions below are the VCAA glossary definitions as reproduced in the 2024 VCE Media external assessment report. Each solution opens with the definition of the term its question invokes, and is built to the depth that term demands.

- **Describe:** provide the characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, opinion, situation, event, process, effect, argument, text or narrative in an accurate way. Students are required to go beyond listing and provide a clear explanation.
- **Discuss:** present a clear, considered and balanced argument or prose that identifies issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of, or points for and against, one or more arguments, concepts, factors, hypotheses, narratives and/or opinions. Students are asked to weigh up the evidence before reaching a conclusion.
- **Analyse:** identify the key components and the significance of relationships between them. Students are required to draw out and relate implications and determine the logic and reasonableness of the information.
- **Outline:** provide an overview of a point of view or text. Students are required to provide more detail than in questions that ask them to ‘identify’.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024 VCE Media external assessment report, 2025 — <https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/exams/media/2024/2024media-report.docx>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Two further terms are used on this paper and are **not** among the five the 2024 report defines, because that report reproduced only the terms that appeared on that paper. Working definitions are given here and flagged as such wherever they are invoked: **explain** requires a how or why chain carried through to a consequence, not a definition; **develop**, the production-idea stem used on the 2025 and sample papers, asks you to generate a workable idea and set it out in enough detail that a reader could act on it.

Section A — answers and solutions

Q1. (3 marks) Command term — describe: provide the characteristics, features and qualities of a given concept, situation, event, process, effect or text in an accurate way, going beyond listing to a clear explanation. Three marks buys three moves: name the code, place it precisely in the extract, state the meaning it makes.

Model response. The media code is **sound**. Across the scene the sound design strips itself back in stages: Rowena’s first line sits over the continuous diegetic hum of the desk fan; there is then a three-second gap in which only the fan and the caller’s breathing are heard; the fan is switched off and the room tone “drops away to nothing”; and the scene closes on a single ticking clock. The microphone perspective is used against that thinning background — the caller is “thin and distant, as though from the far end of a hallway” while Rowena is “very close to the microphone now”. The narrowing soundscape conveys that everything in the studio except this one exchange has been set aside, so the audience hears the call as private and exposed; and the contrast in microphone distance conveys the gap between the two speakers — Rowena’s reassurance arrives close and steady while the caller is still holding back at a distance she has not yet crossed.

Also creditable. Acting — Rowena’s vocal delivery is marked as moving from “flat, professional” for the scripted station identification to “softer, unhurried” once the caller falters, so the performance conveys a practised broadcaster deliberately dropping her on-air register to make room for someone who is struggling to speak.

Common errors: naming a code and then not saying what meaning it makes (the three-mark item still requires an effect); writing about “the music” or “the lighting” when the extract contains neither — an audio text offers sound and

acting, and inventing evidence that is not in the stimulus earns nothing; retelling the extract (“she answers the phone and the caller is nervous”) instead of analysing the construction; treating “silence” as an absence of sound rather than as a deliberate sound choice.

Q2. (6 marks) Command term — discuss: *present a clear, considered and balanced argument that identifies issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of, or points for and against, one or more arguments, concepts or factors, weighing up the evidence before reaching a conclusion. Six marks expects a named representation, a bounded moment, the construction processes identified — the study design’s triad is **selection, omission and construction** — and one view or value pinned to the society of production, not to the era depicted and not to the marker’s own.*

Model response (studied narrative: *Muriel’s Wedding*, 1994, dir. P.J. Hogan). The representation analysed is the representation of **the Australian family**, constructed in the restaurant sequence in which Bill Heslop hosts a visiting Japanese resort developer over a free Chinese meal and uses the table to itemise his own children’s failures — the sequence the National Film and Sound Archive catalogues under the title ‘You’re all useless’.

What is selected. The sequence selects the warmest image available to a film about family — a family sitting down to a meal together — and fills it with a father’s public audit of his children. Bill talks up his own political influence, holds the visitor up as a man who made a fortune at nineteen and, when Muriel produces the one piece of good news she has (an interview for an apprenticeship), tells his children in front of guests that they are useless. The sequence also selects the provenance of the meal itself: it is free, secured through one of Bill’s own favours, so the audience is shown how this family’s small prosperity is made before it is shown how the family talks.

What is omitted. Nobody at the table contradicts him. Betty’s attempt to be pleased for her daughter is talked over and never returned to; there is no ally, no aside, and no character positioned to reassure the audience that fathers are not like this. Equally, the film omits the release that a comedy of embarrassment normally supplies — it does not cut away on the joke. That omission is the decisive construction choice, because it refuses the audience the position of a visitor watching a monstrous stranger and keeps them at the table for the whole of it.

The view or value. Together these choices **challenge** a value dominant in the society in which the film was made — Australia in 1994 — that the ordinary suburban and coastal-town family is the decent centre of national life: egalitarian, good-humoured, and hard on outsiders but never on its own. The film challenges it structurally rather than argumentatively: it locates the cruelty inside an unremarkable family’s ordinary evening, gives the tyrant a public position and a favour economy to run it on, and never supplies the counter-example that would let an audience file him as an aberration. That challenge has force precisely because the film was not marginal to the culture it was aimed at: *Muriel’s Wedding* won Best Film at the 1994 Australian Film Institute Awards, and the National Film and Sound Archive’s curator’s notes describe its picture of the town as “relentlessly bleak, but also immensely sympathetic” — the film argues from inside the society it is indicting, not from above it.

A position. The representation is not simply an attack on a family, and a response that reads it that way misses half of it. The same construction that convicts Bill holds the audience close enough to his children to register what the room costs them, so the film simultaneously **reflects** a value gaining ground in its own production context: that a person is not obliged to remain inside the family they were born into, and that leaving can be told as a good ending rather than as a betrayal. It is that double move, rather than ridicule alone, that makes the representation work as a challenge.

Common errors: offering a **theme** (“belonging”, “family”) where a **representation** — a constructed depiction of a person, group, place, event or idea — is required; attaching the view or value to the era in which the narrative is set rather than to the society in which it was produced; stating a view or value so broadly (“Australians value family”) that no construction choice could either reflect or challenge it; describing what happens in the sequence without ever naming what was selected and what was left out; treating “emphasis” as the third construction process — the study design’s triad is selection, omission and construction, and emphasis is something discussed within construction.

Q3. (7 marks) Command term — analyse: *identify the key components and the significance of the relationships between them, drawing out and relating implications and determining the logic and reasonableness of the information. This is the heaviest Section A item on the paper. Seven marks needs one clearly delimited aspect, two contexts each pinned with at least two named factors, and — the mark most often lost — an explicit causal link from each context to the reading it produces.*

Model response (studied narrative: *Muriel's Wedding*, 1994). The aspect analysed is the film's **comic treatment of Muriel's humiliation**, held still at one sequence: the nightclub scene in which her school friends tell her she is no longer wanted, which the National Film and Sound Archive catalogues as 'You embarrass us'.

Context one: Australian cinema audiences at the film's national release from 29 September 1994. The factors are **cultural** (viewers for whom Porpoise Spit is a legible and specific kind of Australian coastal town — the shopping strip, the surf club, a wedding as the local measure of a young woman's success — so that the friendship group's manners are their own society's manners) and **social** (an audience watching a satire whose target is the suburb and the class a large part of it came from). For this audience nothing in the sequence requires decoding, so attention falls on the accuracy of the cruelty rather than on the setting. The comedy is heard as self-directed: the laugh puts the viewer briefly among the people doing the excluding before it lets them side with Muriel, so the humiliation is read as an **indictment** of a social world the audience belongs to. The causal link is direct — cultural competence removes the exotic, so what is left to judge is whether the film has got its own society right. The National Film and Sound Archive records the reception in those terms: the film "took Australia by storm when it opened in 1994, satirising an Australian family in a way that audiences found extremely moving, as well as hilarious".

Context two: North American audiences at the film's United States release through Miramax from March 1995. The factors are **cultural** (viewers with no referent for a town like Porpoise Spit, for whom its specifics read as national colour rather than as a particular society with particular manners) and **economic** (a distributor releasing the film into a market category that *Strictly Ballroom* (1992) and *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994) had already built — American previews for the film explicitly likened it to both, so this audience arrived having been told to expect a quirky, feel-good Australian comedy). For that audience the same sequence reads not as an indictment but as **eccentricity**: the cruelty is absorbed as the local flavour of an import, and the rejection is heard as one more obstacle in an underdog story the ABBA soundtrack has already promised will end well. The causal link again runs from the context — unfamiliarity converts satire into colour, and a distributor's framing reaches an audience before the film does, so the economic context fixes the frame in which the sequence is read. The mismatch was noticed at the time: reviewing the American release, James Berardinelli objected that the previews' comparisons were "inaccurate, not to mention misleading".

Why one aspect supports both readings. The film supplies identical material to both audiences — the same nightclub, the same rejection, the same performance. What differs is the cultural competence each audience brings, which decides whether the cruelty registers as recognisable or as exotic; and the framing each audience is handed before it sits down, which decides whether the sequence is heard as an accusation or as an eccentric obstacle. That is the mechanism of contextual reading: context does not change the text, it changes what in the text is made to matter.

Common errors: offering "modern audiences" or "younger audiences" as a context — a context is a time, a place and a group pinned by factors, not an age bracket; naming factors in a preamble and then never using them, so the context is described but never linked to the reading; analysing the whole narrative rather than one aspect; giving two audiences the same reading in different words — the item is worth seven marks because the two readings must genuinely diverge; confusing reading (the meaning made) with engagement (the emotional and cognitive effect in the moment) or with consumption (the physical way, place and time of access). Note also that Questions 2 and 3 must both be answered on the narrative declared after Question 1 — switching narratives between them is a task-compliance error, not a stylistic one.

Q4. (4 marks) Command terms — develop (working definition: generate a workable idea and set it out in enough detail that a reader could act on it — 'develop' is not one of the five terms the 2024 report defines) and outline: provide an overview, in more detail than an 'identify' item would ask for. One mark per box; each box must be specific enough that a reader could act on it.

Model response.

Box	Model response
Intended audience — who they are, and one thing the brief tells you about how they already get local information	16–24 year-olds living in Kandara and the surrounding district — school leavers, apprentices and first-year workers, most of whom do not have a car of their own and who get local information from friends and from social feeds rather than from the <i>Advocate</i> .

Box	Model response
Media form and extent	Radio or audio: a four-part podcast, each episode 10–12 minutes (approximately 45 minutes in total).
Working title, and an outline of the idea	<i>The Ten-Forty</i> — a four-part audio documentary named after the last bus out of Kandara. Each episode follows one of four 18-year-olds across the six months in which the shire withdraws the late service: an apprentice who can no longer get home from a late shift, a student who moves closer to town, a worker who buys an unroadworthy car, and one who organises a lift roster. The final episode returns to the council meeting at which the decision was made.
Style and/or genre	Observational audio documentary, told in first person by the four participants with no narrator, recorded on location (bus interiors, workplaces, kitchens) and scored sparingly.

Common errors: an idea that advertises the *Advocate* or its anniversary instead of telling a story about life in Kandara — the brief asks for a media production, not a promotion; “young people” or “the community” as the audience, where the brief itself supplies a 16–24 bracket to be sharpened; naming a form but describing a product that belongs to another form (a “podcast” with on-screen titles); a title and a topic with no narrative in the outline box.

Q5. (4 marks) Command term — describe: provide the characteristics, features and qualities of a process in an accurate way, going beyond listing to a clear explanation. This item tests recording, documenting and evaluating an experiment, not designing one — the four marks sit in the record kept and the judgement made from it. A response that only designs an experiment and stops has answered a different question.

Model response. The skill being developed is recording intelligible dialogue inside a moving bus, where a constant engine and road-noise floor sits under every word — the condition most of *The Ten-Forty*’s interviews will be recorded in.

What I would record. For each of the nine takes (three microphone set-ups × three trials) the log sheet carries a fixed set of fields: take number, date, the section of route, the microphone and its placement, the recorder gain, the wind and weather, and the one thing changed from the previous take. Everything held constant is written down as well as everything varied, because a variable is only isolated if the constants are on the page. I would also keep the audio files themselves under a naming scheme that matches the log (TT_mic02_take03.wav), a phone photograph of each microphone placement, and a screenshot of the waveform and level meters for each take.

How I would evaluate it. Against criteria written before the trial, not after: the speaker’s consonants must remain audible without raising the playback level, and no take may clip. The evaluation is a blind side-by-side listen — three people from the target audience hear the nine takes in random order on earbuds and rate intelligibility from 1 to 5 without knowing which set-up produced which take — plus a check of the waveform screenshots for clipping. In the log’s evaluation column I would write the mean rating, the clipping result and one sentence naming what caused the difference, and finish with a decision line: the set-up carried into production, and what I would test next.

Why the documentation matters. The record is what makes the experiment usable later. A rating and a decision line written at the time can be quoted directly into the production plan; a memory of which microphone “sounded better” cannot, and cannot be defended to anyone else working on the production.

Common errors: describing the experiment and never describing the record — the stem asks how you would record and evaluate it; “I would write down what happened”, with no fields and no evidence kept; evaluating against criteria invented after listening (“it sounded better”), which is a preference, not an evaluation; keeping the audio but not the conditions, so the result cannot be attributed to anything; forgetting to state the skill, which anchors the whole answer.

Q6. (6 marks) Command term — explain (working definition — ‘explain’ is not among the five terms the 2024 report defines): give the how or why as a chain carried through to a consequence. An explanation is a chain, not a

description. Six marks expects a narrative built on causes and effects, and an explicit link from that chain to the client's stated intention.

Model response. *The Ten-Forty* is built as a single cause-and-effect chain that runs across the four episodes. In Episode 1 the shire withdraws the late bus (the cause). Because the service is gone, the apprentice cannot get home from a closing shift, so he begins sleeping on a workshop couch two nights a week — and because he is sleeping badly, his employer moves him to day shifts he cannot afford. Because the student cannot commute, she moves into a share house closer to town, and because she has moved, the volunteer team she played for loses a player and forfeits its round. Because the third participant buys a cheap car to solve the problem, he inherits a second problem — registration, fuel and a vehicle he cannot maintain. Because the fourth participant sees all three outcomes happening around her, she starts a lift roster in a group chat, which by Episode 4 is carrying eleven people a week. Each episode therefore ends with an effect that becomes the following episode's cause, and the four storylines converge on the council meeting where the decision was taken.

That structure is what delivers the *Advocate's* intention. The brief asks for a production that leaves 16–24 year-olds with a reason to keep following local news. The final episode establishes, through the participants' own recollections, that the withdrawal of the service was debated in a public meeting reported in the *Advocate* three months before it happened — and that not one of the four had read it. The audience arrives at that revelation having already lived through six months of consequences, so the point is not asserted by a narrator but produced by the chain of cause and effect the audience has followed: decisions that reshape your week are made in public, months in advance, and reported somewhere you were not looking. For an audience of school leavers and first-year workers in the district, whose own transport, work and study are governed by the same kind of decision, that is a reason to keep reading rather than an instruction to.

Common errors: giving a theme or a topic (“it’s about young people in the country and how hard it is”) instead of a narrative with causes and effects — this was the single largest loss of marks on the equivalent live item; a narrative with no connective tissue, so events are listed in order rather than caused; forgetting the intention altogether, or bolting it on in a final sentence; addressing an audience other than the one nominated in Question 4.

Q7. (4 marks) *Command term — discuss: present a clear, considered and balanced argument showing the points for and against, weighing up the evidence before reaching a conclusion. The stage is pinned: **production** is the stage at which material is captured or recorded, and the question asks about departing from the plan while that is happening — not about changing the plan beforehand, and not about refining the material afterwards. Four marks expects a specific, plausible departure and a stated basis for the decision.*

Model response. *The Ten-Forty* depends on recording its participants in the places where the story happens, and the pre-production plan schedules one of the four interviews on board the 10.40 service itself, with the engine and the road under the voice. The obvious departure is that the location disappears mid-shoot: the operator declines permission to record on a service carrying other passengers, or the run is withdrawn on schedule and the bus no longer exists to record on — which is, after all, the event the series is about. The alternative available on the day is the stop itself, recorded at 10.40 at night with no bus arriving.

How I would decide. Not by convenience, and not by what is easiest to schedule, but against the statement of intention written in pre-production. I would ask three questions in order. First, does the alternative still deliver the intention — a first-person account recorded where the consequence is actually felt? An interview at a cold, empty stop at 10.40 arguably delivers it better than one on a moving bus, because the absence is the subject. Second, does it break anything downstream — will the location sound cut against the material already captured, and does it strand a shot or a line that the rest of the episode depends on? Third, is it recoverable — if the departure fails, can the scheduled version still be shot within the production period? If the answers are yes, no and yes, I take the departure and log it in the production diary with the reason, so that the change is a documented decision rather than an unexplained difference between plan and product.

A position. Departures during production are not evidence that the planning failed. The plan's real function is to make deviation a *decision* rather than an accident: you can only judge a departure against an intention you have already written down, which is exactly why the statement of intention is drafted before anything is recorded. There is a limit, though, and it is worth stating. A departure that changes the intention itself — a different story, a different audience — is not a production decision at all; it sends the project back to pre-production, and pretending otherwise is how productions arrive at post-production with material that no longer answers the brief.

Common errors: naming a departure that belongs to another stage — re-editing, re-sequencing or re-mixing are post-production changes, and rewriting the plan before the shoot is pre-production; “I would just improvise on the day”, with no basis for the decision; treating every deviation as a failure, which the question’s wording does not require; a departure that quietly abandons the client’s intention while the answer keeps claiming the intention is met; describing a problem without ever describing the decision, which is where half the marks sit.

Q8. (5 marks) Command term — discuss: *present a clear, considered and balanced argument that identifies the issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of one or more arguments or factors, weighing up the evidence before reaching a conclusion. Australian instruments only — a non-Australian regulator does not answer this key knowledge and scores nothing. Five marks expects the instrument named precisely, the challenge explained, and dated evidence.*

Model response. The central challenge is that Australia can make a rule that binds a global service, but cannot easily **verify or enforce** it, because the company, its engineers and its data sit outside the jurisdiction in which the rule was made.

The clearest current instance is the minimum-age regime. Under the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth), which amends the *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth), age-restricted social media platforms must take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 holding accounts; the obligation commenced on **10 December 2025**, and systemic non-compliance attracts civil penalties of up to **\$49.5 million**. Australia’s legislative design is deliberate: the duty falls on the platform, not on the young person or their parents, precisely because the platform is the only party the Australian Parliament can practically reach.

The enforcement problem then appears immediately. In its first compliance update, published in **March 2026**, the eSafety Commissioner reported that it had issued **23 legally enforceable information-gathering notices to 10 platforms** and had **five active investigations** into potential non-compliance, with enforcement decisions expected around the middle of 2026. That is the challenge in one sentence: a regulator that would simply inspect a licensed Australian broadcaster must instead compel information out of foreign-incorporated companies, assess self-reported compliance data, and pursue civil penalty proceedings — a process measured in quarters, while the conduct it examines changes in days.

A position. The challenge is one of enforcement and verification rather than of technology or of legal power. The Australian Government’s **Age Assurance Technology Trial**, whose final report was published on **31 August 2025** after testing 48 vendors and more than 60 technologies, concluded that there were no substantial technological limitations preventing age assurance being done in Australia. The tools exist and the law exists; what is hard is proving, from outside a company’s systems, that the tools have actually been applied.

Common errors: naming a non-Australian regulator or law — the key knowledge is the regulation of media and audiences **in Australia**, and overseas examples score zero however well explained; naming “the government” rather than an instrument; describing a government advertising campaign, which is government **use** of media, not regulation; asserting that regulation “doesn’t work” without evidence; treating a platform’s own community standards as Australian regulation — they are private company rules, made and changed unilaterally, with no appeal to any Australian body.

Q9. (5 marks) Command term — analyse: *identify the key components and the significance of the relationships between them, drawing out and relating implications. “Contemporary” means the current landscape — the last few years, or an older case genuinely re-lensed through it. “Use evidence” means dates, figures and named sources, not recollection.*

Model response. A clear contemporary example is the movement of audiences away from X (formerly Twitter) to Bluesky in late 2024, in response to decisions taken by the platform’s owner about moderation, verification and the promotion of content.

The example, with evidence. On **13 November 2024** *The Guardian* announced that it would stop posting from its official editorial accounts on X, describing it as “a toxic media platform” whose owner had been able to use its influence to shape political discourse. In the same period the audience moved in numbers: Bluesky passed **20 million users on 19 November 2024**, having stood at roughly 15 million less than a week earlier, with reported sign-up rates approaching a million a day at the peak.

Why this is agency and not merely consumption. Choosing to watch one thing rather than another is consumption. Agency is the capacity of audiences to act **on** the media system — to make, share, organise and hold institutions to account. What happened here meets that test on three counts. First, the audience withdrew the platform’s actual product: an advertising-funded service sells attention, so leaving is not a taste preference but the removal of the commodity. Second, audiences did not simply leave, they **rebuilt** — moving follower networks, re-forming communities and publishing the tools (shared follow-lists, feed generators) that let others follow, which is participatory production, not passive reception. Third, they acted **in response to a decision**, and publicly framed it that way, which converted individual departures into a collective signal.

The limits — and this is the analysis. Audience agency here was real but bounded. X remained far larger throughout, and by **6 January 2025** TechCrunch was reporting, from platform data, that the Bluesky surge driven by the X exodus was already slowing. Network effects work against exit: the value of a platform to a user is the other users, so the individual who leaves pays a cost the institution does not. Agency of this kind can impose reputational and commercial pressure and can seed a genuine alternative; what it cannot do on its own is compel a change in the institution’s conduct. That gap is exactly why regulation exists alongside agency rather than instead of it.

Common errors: offering consumption choice (bingeing, choosing a streaming service, unfollowing someone) as agency; using a stale example — a decades-old broadcast panic or an early road-safety campaign is not contemporary; asserting influence with no evidence; describing the example at length and never analysing it; giving audience agency without any limit or counterweight, which reads as advocacy rather than analysis.

Q10. (6 marks) *Command term — explain (working definition, as at Question 6): give the how or why as a chain carried through to a consequence. “Globalised” is tested here: a media institution that operates across national borders, with production, distribution or ownership spanning multiple markets. A local commercial network is not globalised; a global streaming service is.*

Model response. A globalised media institution such as Netflix is both the distributor and the point of consumption for its own products, and that single fact is what makes the data loop possible. Because the audience watches inside the service rather than at a scheduled hour on a broadcast channel, the institution observes every act of consumption directly: what was started, what was finished, what was abandoned and at what minute, what was searched for and not found, which artwork was clicked, what was watched next.

That observation is then used at three points, and this is the chain that answers the question. **First, in commissioning:** patterns of completion and abandonment across a global subscriber base indicate which kinds of story, length and genre retain audiences, so the institution’s decisions about what to make and what to license are made against aggregated audience behaviour rather than against a programmer’s judgement alone. **Second, in presentation:** the rows, ranked ordering and promotional artwork an individual subscriber sees are generated from that subscriber’s own history, so two Australians paying the same subscription are offered materially different services. **Third, in retention:** the same data identifies the point at which subscribers disengage, which shapes release patterns and the pacing of what is commissioned next.

The consequence for audiences is that what presents itself as an open catalogue is in fact a shaped offer, and the shaping is done by an institution whose data is drawn from, and optimised across, every market it operates in. This is also why the exposure of Australian audiences to Australian stories has been treated as a regulatory question rather than left to the market: a globalised institution optimising against global audience data has no particular reason to commission a story set in a country that supplies a small fraction of its subscribers. Australia legislated for that gap. Under laws passed on **27 November 2025**, subscription streaming services with more than one million Australian subscribers must invest at least **10 per cent of their Australian program expenditure, or 7.5 per cent of their Australian revenue**, in new Australian drama, children’s, documentary, arts and educational programs, with back-catalogue titles excluded and ACMA overseeing compliance. The data loop explains why the obligation was thought necessary.

Common errors: choosing a local institution (a metropolitan commercial network, a state newspaper) for a question about **globalised** institutions — this was the weakest item on the equivalent live paper; listing practices (“they use algorithms, they collect data, they target ads”) without explaining how any of it works or what follows from it; drifting into privacy law when the question asks about the shaping of media products; re-using the Question 9 example, which the stem explicitly forbids.

Section B — solutions

Question 1 (15 marks) *Command term — analyse: identify the key components and the significance of the relationships between them, drawing out and relating implications and determining the logic and reasonableness of the information. Three bullet requirements govern this response: ONE narrative convention, held constant and traced at two bounded points; at least three media codes, each with a stated contribution to that convention; and an account of what has changed in the convention between the two points. The third bullet is the one most often failed — a response that analyses two sequences well but never says what altered between them has answered only two-thirds of the task.*

Media narrative: *Severance* (2022, created by Dan Erickson, Apple TV+).

Model response.

The narrative convention traced here is **point of view** — a restricted narration in which the audience is given no more than a severed character knows. It is the convention on which the whole narrative rests, because the premise is itself a premise about withheld knowledge: employees of Lumon Industries undergo a procedure that divides their memories, producing an “innie” who exists only at work and an “outie” who retains nothing of the working day. The convention is not built from dialogue. It is built from media codes, and the first episode, “Good News About Hell” (Apple TV+, 18 February 2022, written by Dan Erickson and directed by Ben Stiller), builds it twice — first by imposing it, then by normalising it.

Point one: the opening — from the moment a woman wakes face down on the conference-room table to the moment she is released after completing the survey.

Sound carries the first load. The voice conducting the interview arrives from a small speaker on the table: no visible source, no body, no locatable position in the room. The audience therefore receives the only authority in the scene as pure sound, exactly as the woman on the table does — we hear it, we cannot see it, and so we cannot assess it. Sound’s contribution to the convention is specific: it makes the limit on knowledge *audible*, an authority that can question but cannot be questioned back.

Mise en scene supplies the second. The room is bare, the door does not release her, and nothing is dressed into the space that would tell an audience what the building is or what has been done in it. Where sound withholds the questioner, mise en scene withholds the world. Its contribution is to close the visual channel through which an opening scene normally orients a viewer, so that the restriction is not a stylistic choice the audience notices but a condition it cannot escape.

The two codes together clamp the audience’s knowledge to the character’s — and, because they do, the same construction also characterises her entirely by absence: asked her name and the state she was born in, she can answer neither, so the survey draws her portrait in blanks. The point of view is not a frame around that characterisation; it is the instrument that produces it.

Point two: Mark Scout’s descent in the lift to the severed floor — from the moment the doors close on the outside world to the moment he steps out into the corridor.

Here the third code, **acting**, does the decisive work. The same body is carried across a threshold of a few seconds: the grieving, closed-off man who entered the lift arrives at the bottom holding himself differently — looser, more confident, socially available. Nothing is explained; the performance is the explanation. Acting’s contribution to the convention is that it relocates the restriction *inside a person*. In the opening, the limit on knowledge was a room and a voice; here it is a change of bearing in one continuous body, so the audience understands that the boundary is not architectural but personal.

Mise en scene returns, doing a different job from the one it did in the opening. The corridors of the severed floor are bright, uniform and impersonal, and the character walks into them as though into an ordinary morning. Where the conference room’s emptiness produced alarm, the corridor’s blandness produces the opposite: it makes the restriction look like a workplace. The same code, used on the same convention, has been turned around.

What has changed between the two points, and what that change means. The convention is identical — the audience still knows only what the severed character knows — but its relationship to the audience has inverted. At the first point the restriction is *imposed and resisted*: it is enforced on a character who has just been created, who does not

consent to it, and who cannot leave the room, and the audience learns the rule of this world by watching it applied to someone in distress. At the second point the same restriction is *inhabited and unremarkable*: it is carried by a character who has lived inside it for years, who steps into it voluntarily every morning, and for whom it produces not panic but a better mood. The codes register that inversion precisely — sound and an emptied set in the first, a performance and a furnished corridor in the second.

The meaning the change conveys belongs to neither point alone. Taken together, they say that the arrangement is monstrous *and* that people nonetheless walk into it daily, and that the second fact is the more disturbing of the two. Had the narrative shown only the induction, the point of view would convey captivity; had it shown only the lift, it would convey routine. Developing the one convention across both is what allows it to convey complicity — the audience is made to feel the horror first and then to watch it become ordinary, which is the same journey the character has already made and cannot remember making.

A note on precision. Media conventions are the study design’s “rules or generally accepted ways of constructing meaning or organising media products”, and it divides them. **Narrative conventions** are the “common narrative structures, such as character, character arcs and three-act structures” — point of view is one, and so are characterisation and the structuring of time, which this response touches on only as they are produced by the point of view. **Genre conventions** are the rules that define genres, and the sinister employer, the corporate conspiracy and the whistle-blower figure belong to the workplace thriller under that heading; offering them where a narrative convention is required is the most costly single error on this item. Sound, mise en scene and acting are **media codes** — the technical and symbolic tools used to construct meaning. Holding the three categories apart, and then showing the codes doing identifiable work on one convention, is exactly what the question asks.

Band descriptors — Section B Question 1 (out of 15).

Band	Marks	Descriptor
High	12–15	All three bullet requirements met: ONE narrative convention held constant across the response, named with study-design precision; two points with stated boundaries, genuinely separated within the narrative; at least three media codes, each with a distinct, demonstrated contribution to that convention rather than a general description; and an explicit account of what has altered between the two points, from which meaning is drawn that neither point carries alone. Specialised media language is sustained; there is no retelling.
Medium	7–11	Most requirements met. One convention is nominated but the response drifts into others, or three codes are named while only two do identifiable work. Two points are offered but one is loosely bounded, or they sit so close together that no development can be shown. The change between the points is asserted (“it becomes more intense”) rather than analysed. Some retelling; media language present but uneven.
Low	1–6	Whole-narrative generality instead of bounded points (“throughout the

Band	Marks	Descriptor
—	0	series...”). More than one convention treated in parallel, or a genre convention offered where a narrative convention is required. Codes named but not connected to the convention. No account of change, so the response is two descriptions side by side. Little or no specialised media language. No creditable response.

Positive marking: award marks for what the response demonstrates. But task compliance is the first axis — a response that analyses one point outstandingly, or that analyses several conventions instead of developing one, cannot reach the top band however well it is written.

Common errors: whole-narrative generality where two bounded points are demanded — the single most-reported weakness on the live equivalent of this item; offering **genre** conventions (the conspiracy, the villain, the twist) where a **narrative** convention is required; switching conventions between the two points, so nothing is developed and nothing can have changed; naming three codes but analysing only one; choosing two points that do identical analytical work, which wastes half the response and makes the change bullet unanswerable; retelling the plot of each point before analysing it, which consumes the time the second point needed.

Question 2 (15 marks) *Command term — analyse: identify the key components and the significance of the relationships between them, drawing out and relating implications. The stimulus is a springboard, not the subject: engage its claims directly, then move outward to regulation analysis with named Australian instruments and dated evidence. The stem requires at least two Australian regulatory instruments plus additional examples or evidence.*

Model response.

The statement makes three claims: that a rule a regulator cannot check is not a rule at all; that the systems carrying most of what Australians watch, read and post are closed to Australian regulators; and that audiences can simply leave a platform whose decisions they dislike. The second is substantially true and identifies the central enforcement problem. The first is a useful test but overstated, and applying it carefully is what exposes where Australian regulation still bites. The third is the weakest of the three, because leaving is not a form of accountability.

Where the statement is right: closed systems, and the verification problem. Australian media regulation was built for entities inside the jurisdiction. ACMA regulates **licensed** broadcasters under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth): the licence is the point of leverage, and a global platform holds no Australian licence. The *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) was written to reach past that problem by imposing duties on services provided to Australians wherever they are based — the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024* (Cth) is the most recent extension of that design — and its **Basic Online Safety Expectations** carry a power aimed squarely at the statement’s complaint: the eSafety Commissioner can compel a platform to report on what it is actually doing inside systems no Australian regulator can open.

What happened when that power was used shows both its reach and its price. In **February 2023** eSafety gave Twitter, Inc. a reporting notice requiring it to report on how it was meeting those expectations in relation to child sexual exploitation material; judging the response inadequate, eSafety issued an infringement notice of **\$610,500** in **September 2023**. The company did not pay and went to court, and eSafety commenced civil penalty proceedings in the Federal Court in **December 2023**. Only in **October 2024** was the threshold question resolved — the Federal Court holding that X Corp, into which Twitter, Inc. had been merged under Nevada law in March 2023, remained bound by a notice given to its predecessor — and the Full Federal Court dismissed the appeal in **July 2025**. Roughly two and a half years passed, on the most serious category of online harm there is, over a question that was never about the platform’s conduct at all but about whether an Australian regulator’s notice had survived a foreign corporate restructure. That is the enforcement problem exactly: the rule existed and the power existed, but using them required an Australian regulator to litigate through legal machinery it does not control, on a timescale unrelated to the one the conduct runs on.

Where the “unverifiable rule” test does apply: measurement without enforcement. Platform conduct is governed as much by unilateral private rules — community standards and terms of service — as by any statute, and those rules can be rewritten overnight with no consultation and no appeal to an Australian body. Australia’s attempt to close this gap on misinformation demonstrates the difficulty precisely. The industry code administered by the Digital Industry Group Inc. (DIGI) remains **voluntary**, and the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2024, which would have moved platform misinformation obligations to a co-regulatory footing with ACMA oversight and civil penalties, was introduced in September 2024 and abandoned by the Government in November 2024 when no Senate pathway existed. Meanwhile the problem was being measured: ACMA research published in **November 2025** found that **72 per cent** of Australian adults who used a digital platform in the first half of 2025 believed they had encountered misinformation on it, and that only **43 per cent** of those most recent encounters carried any platform label. Australia therefore has measurement without enforcement on this issue — a regulator that can survey a harm it has no power to sanction.

Where the statement is wrong: market access is leverage that borders do not remove. A globalised service may be built elsewhere, but it sells here, and Australia can regulate the terms of that sale. The *Treasury Laws Amendment (News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code) Act 2021* (Cth), in force from **March 2021**, is the clearest demonstration. The code makes no attempt to inspect a platform’s ranking systems or its moderation decisions. It gives the Treasurer power to **designate** a digital platform, after which that platform must bargain in good faith with eligible Australian news businesses and can be taken to final-offer arbitration. No platform has ever been designated — and that is the point. Faced with the prospect, Google and Meta signed commercial agreements with Australian news businesses instead, and the ACCC’s assessment in reviewing the code was that the code’s existence and the threat of designation were producing the intended effect. A rule the regulator never had to enforce still altered what foreign companies paid for Australian journalism, which is not an outcome the statement’s test can account for.

The same instrument marks the limit of that leverage honestly, and a strong response says so. On **1 March 2024** Meta announced that it would not renew those agreements and would shut down its dedicated Facebook News product in Australia; no designation followed. The Government’s answer, announced on **12 December 2024**, was a **News Bargaining Incentive** — a liability on large platforms that can be reduced by striking commercial deals instead. Leverage over market access is real, but it is leverage over a company that can choose to stop selling the particular product being regulated. The broader reform argument is being made on the same ground: the ACCC’s five-year Digital Platform Services Inquiry, whose final report was released on **23 June 2025**, recommends economy-wide competition rules for digital platforms rather than conduct-by-conduct policing. The statement’s error is to assume that every rule must be verified inside a platform’s systems; some are enforced at the point where the platform takes Australian money.

Where the statement is wrong about audiences: exit is not accountability. Audiences do act, and they can act at scale. When Reddit set third-party developer pricing that would close the independent apps through which many of its communities were actually run, more than **8,000 subreddits went dark or read-only from 12 June 2023** in a protest coordinated by moderators and users. That is the strongest available version of the statement’s third claim — not a drift away but an organised withdrawal of the unpaid moderation and the user-made content the platform sells — and it still failed on its own terms. Reddit confirmed within days that the pricing would proceed, the best-known third-party client shut down at the end of that month, and the communities reopened. The institution’s position did not move.

That outcome is structural rather than accidental. A platform’s worth to any one user is manufactured by all the others, so the cost of leaving falls almost entirely on the leaver and almost none of it lands on the institution. And — decisively for this question — collective exit produces no standard, no obligation and no remedy. Nobody’s content is classified because users left; no child is protected; no advertiser is held to a code; nothing is enforceable the following week. Exit is agency, and agency is not regulation. The two sit alongside each other because they do different work.

What the statement leaves out entirely. A great deal of what Australians consume remains inside instruments that work. Co-regulation still governs broadcast: the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice, registered with ACMA, ties classification to time of day and gives viewers a complaints pathway from broadcaster to regulator. Self-regulation still bites quickly: Ad Standards can have an advertisement modified or withdrawn within weeks on a public complaint, and the Australian Press Council requires member publishers to print adjudications. The Classification Board still determines what may lawfully be sold, hired or exhibited here, and Refused Classification

remains a real control on audience access. None of these are made irrelevant by the existence of global platforms; they simply do not cover them.

Conclusion. The statement is accurate about **conduct** regulation and inaccurate about **market** regulation. Australia's capacity to dictate how a foreign-built service behaves moment to moment is genuinely weak, and two and a half years spent establishing that a reporting notice had survived a corporate restructure show a regulator working slowly and from outside the systems it is examining. Its capacity to set the conditions on which that service may earn revenue here is much stronger, and the bargaining code is the proof of both halves of that: a rule that changed what foreign companies paid for Australian journalism without a single designation, and a rule one of them could ultimately walk away from by abandoning news. The most useful way to read the contemporary landscape is not that regulation has failed, but that its point of leverage has moved: from the licence, which global platforms do not need, to the market, which they cannot do without.

Band descriptors — Section B Question 2 (out of 15).

Band	Marks	Descriptor
High	12–15	Engages the statement's specific claims and uses them as a springboard rather than restating them. At least two Australian regulatory instruments are named precisely (Act, body or code) and their mechanisms explained. Additional evidence is dated and specific — laws, commencement dates, regulator reports, figures. The response analyses where regulation strains and where it holds, reaching a supported position, and distinguishes regulation from audience agency and from platform private rules. Specialised media language is sustained.
Medium	7–11	The statement is engaged but partly restated. One or two instruments are named, with mechanisms asserted rather than explained; evidence is present but undated or general (“there have been reports that...”). More description of the regulatory system than analysis of its pressure points. A position is reached but thinly supported. Some drift into general ethics or privacy where regulation was asked for.
Low	1–6	Retells or paraphrases the statement. No named Australian instrument, or non-Australian regulators offered. Opinion without evidence. Regulation confused with government use of media, or platform community standards presented as Australian regulation. Little specialised media language.
—	0	No creditable response.

Positive marking applies. Note the two hard caps: a response with no Australian instrument named cannot pass the low band, and a response that offers only overseas regulation does not address the key knowledge at all.

Common errors: restating the three claims in the stimulus in the student's own words and calling it analysis; writing about ethics in general (privacy is bad, misinformation is harmful) instead of about regulation and control; naming "the government" or "the law" rather than an instrument; treating a platform's own moderation as Australian regulation; using overseas regulators; asserting that "nothing can be done" without engaging the instruments that demonstrably do work; running out of time because the whole response is spent on one issue — the item rewards range across issues as well as depth within one.

A note on the two model narratives

The Section A model responses use *Muriel's Wedding* (1994) and the Section B Question 1 model uses *Severance* (2022), in order to demonstrate two different products, two different media forms and two different tariffs — a 6- and a 7-mark Section A item, and a 15-mark extended response. In the examination itself a student may declare the same media narrative in both sections: the Section A declaration and the Section B Question 1 write-in are separate lines, and either choice is acceptable. What is not acceptable is answering Questions 2 and 3 on a narrative other than the one declared after Question 1.

The two products were chosen to make a further point. *Muriel's Wedding* is a feature film set in the year it was made, which is why it suits a representation-and-context question — the production context and the depicted context coincide, so the views and values in play are unambiguously those of the society that made it. *Severance* is an episodic streaming drama whose premise is itself about restricted knowledge, which is why it suits a codes-and-conventions question: the storytelling device and the subject matter are the same thing. Choosing a studied narrative that suits the question in front of you is part of the skill being assessed.

Note also how Questions 2 and 3 use that one narrative. The declaration binds you to the product, not to a single sequence, and the two models deliberately work on different sequences — the restaurant scene for the representation question, the nightclub rejection for the audience-contexts question. Answering both items from the same two minutes of a film is legal but expensive: the second response tends to repeat the first's evidence instead of earning new marks, and an assessor reading two analyses of one moment sees a prepared answer rather than a narrative known well enough to be worked from more than one angle.

Sources for the real-world evidence used in these solutions

Source: Federal Register of Legislation, "Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024" (Cth) — <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2024A00127/asmade>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, "Social media age restrictions" (commencement of platform obligations on 10 December 2025; age-restricted platforms; penalties) — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/industry-regulation/social-media-age-restrictions>. Accurate as at July 2026.

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Source: eSafety Commissioner, "eSafety initiates civil penalty proceedings against X Corp." (February 2023 reporting notice under the Basic Online Safety Expectations; \$610,500 infringement notice, September 2023; Federal Court proceedings commenced December 2023) — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/esafety-initiates-civil-penalty-proceedings-against-x-corp>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: eSafety Commissioner, "eSafety statement: Federal Court judgment" (October 2024 — X Corp bound by the transparency notice given to Twitter, Inc. before the March 2023 Nevada merger) — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/esafety-statement-federal-court-judgment>. Accurate as at July 2026.

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Source: Al Jazeera, “Meta says it will stop funding news in Australia, prompting backlash”, 1 March 2024 — <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/3/1/facebook-owner-meta-to-end-deals-funding-news-in-australia-germany-france>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Treasury Ministers (Australian Government), “Albanese Government to establish News Bargaining Incentive”, 12 December 2024 — <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/stephen-jones-2022/media-releases/albanese-government-establish-news-bargaining-incentive>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: TechCrunch, “Thousands of subreddits go dark to protest Reddit’s API pricing”, 12 June 2023 — <https://techcrunch.com/2023/06/12/reddit-blackout-8000-subreddits-went-dark-protest-api/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, “Age Assurance Technology Trial — Final Report”, published 31 August 2025 — <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/media/publications/age-assurance-technology-trial-final-report>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Communications and Media Authority, “Majority of Australians encountering misinformation online”, November 2025 — <https://www.acma.gov.au/articles/2025-11/majority-australians-encountering-misinformation-online>. Accurate as at July 2026.

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Source: Deadline, “Australian Streaming Quotas Become Law”, November 2025 — <https://deadline.com/2025/11/australia-streaming-quotas-sworn-into-law-1236630348/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, “Digital platform services inquiry — final report, March 2025”, released 23 June 2025 — <https://www.accc.gov.au/about-us/publications/serial-publications/digital-platform-services-inquiry-2020-25-reports/digital-platform-services-inquiry-final-report-march-2025>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Al Jazeera, “The Guardian to no longer post on ‘toxic media platform’ X”, 13 November 2024 — <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/13/the-guardian-to-no-longer-post-on-toxic-media-platform-x>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: TechCrunch, “Bluesky tops 20M users, narrowing gap with Instagram Threads”, 19 November 2024 — <https://techcrunch.com/2024/11/19/bluesky-tops-20m-users-narrowing-gap-with-instagram-threads>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: TechCrunch, “Bluesky bump from X exodus is slowing down, data shows”, 6 January 2025 — <https://techcrunch.com/2025/01/06/bluesky-bump-from-x-exodus-is-slowing-down-data-shows/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Apple TV+ press release, “Apple TV+ unveils teaser trailer for new workplace thriller ‘Severance’... and sets global premiere date for February 18, 2022”, December 2021 — <https://www.apple.com/tv-pr/news/2021/12/apple-tv-unveils-teaser-trailer-for-new-workplace-thriller-severance-from-director-and-executive-producer-ben-stiller-and-sets-global-premiere-date-for-february-18-2022/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

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Source: Australian Screen (National Film and Sound Archive), “Muriel’s Wedding — curator’s notes” by Paul Byrnes (Porpoise Spit as a “relentlessly bleak, but also immensely sympathetic” portrait; the Heslop family; P.J. Hogan; 1994 reception) — <https://aso.gov.au/titles/features/muriels-wedding/notes/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Screen (National Film and Sound Archive), “Muriel’s Wedding — clip 1: ‘You’re all useless’” (Bill Heslop hosts a visiting resort developer at a restaurant and belittles his children; Muriel’s apprenticeship interview; Betty overridden) — <https://aso.gov.au/titles/features/muriels-wedding/clip1/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Source: Australian Screen (National Film and Sound Archive), “Muriel’s Wedding — clip 2: ‘You embarrass us’” (Muriel’s school friends exclude her at the nightclub; curator’s note on Hogan holding the scene past the joke) — <https://aso.gov.au/titles/features/muriels-wedding/clip2/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

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Practice Exam 6 — Section A

Reading time: 15 minutes. Writing time: 2 hours.

Section A: 10 questions, 50 marks. Section B: 2 questions, 30 marks. Total 80 marks.

All questions are compulsory. Answer all questions in the spaces provided. Question numbering restarts in Section B.

Approved materials: stationery only. No calculator, no notes and no formula or data sheet are provided or required.

Narratives and their contexts

Identify the media narrative that you have studied this year for 'Narratives and their contexts'. **You must use this media narrative to respond to Questions 1, 2 and 3.**

Media narrative: _____

Question 1 (3 marks)

Describe one way in which the construction of your media narrative is appropriate to its media form.

Question 2 (6 marks)

Discuss how **selection and omission** in the construction of one representation in your media narrative shape the meaning an audience makes of that representation.

Question 3 (7 marks)

Analyse how one representation in your media narrative reflects or challenges the views and values of the society in which the narrative was **produced**, rather than the views and values of the time or place the narrative depicts. In your response, use a different representation from the one you discussed in Question 2.

Media production

Use the information provided below to answer Questions 4–6.

The Brindle Valley Heritage Railway

The Brindle Valley Heritage Railway is a volunteer-run tourist railway that runs restored steam locomotives on a 14-kilometre line between two country towns. Its volunteer workforce has an average age of 63 and has fallen by a third in five years. The Railway's committee has published the following statement of intention and audience for a media production it wishes to commission.

Our intention is to change the way young people picture volunteering at the Railway: not as caretaking of the past, but as a place where they can learn a difficult, physical, hands-on skill alongside people who already have it. We do not want a promotional video that lists our opening hours.

Our audience is 16- to 22-year-olds living within an hour of the line, particularly those studying or working in trades, engineering and hospitality, who use short-form video and audio, and who have never visited the Railway.

The commissioned production may be in **one** of the following media forms: moving image; still image (photography); audio; print; digital; or convergent or hybridised media.

Question 4 (4 marks)

Develop one idea for a media production in response to the information above. Outline your idea using the boxes provided below.

Proforma box

Your response

Media form (one form from the list above)

Title and idea**Target audience****Equipment or media technologies required****Question 5 (4 marks)**

Describe one task you would complete during the **pre-production** stage of your proposed production, and one task you would complete during the **post-production** stage. For each task, state why it belongs to that stage of the media production process.

Question 6 (6 marks)

Explain how you would distribute your proposed production so that it reaches the audience described in the information above, and how your distribution decisions would shape the way that audience consumes it.

Agency and control in the media**Question 7 (4 marks)**

Describe one way in which **individuals** use media for their own purposes in the contemporary media landscape.

Question 8 (5 marks)

Discuss the quality of the evidence offered in support of one contemporary claim about media influence. In your response, state what that evidence does and does not establish.

Question 9 (5 marks)

Discuss one **ethical** issue that arises for an Australian media organisation when it publishes material about an identifiable member of the public who is not a public figure. In your response, explain why the issue you have chosen is an ethical issue rather than a legal one.

Question 10 (6 marks)

Explain how globalised media institutions have changed what is **produced** by media makers in countries other than the one in which those institutions are based. In your response, refer to at least one named globalised media institution.

End of Section A

Practice Exam 6 — Section B

Section B: 2 questions, 30 marks. Answer both questions in the spaces provided. Question numbering restarts in this section.

Question 1 (15 marks)

Media narrative: _____

Analyse how media codes and narrative conventions work together to convey meaning in the media narrative you have studied this year.

Your response must analyse:

- two specific sequences taken from **different points** in the media narrative, each with its boundaries stated
- at least two media codes and at least two narrative conventions
- how the meaning constructed in the second sequence depends on the meaning constructed in the first.

Question 2 (15 marks)

The comments below were posted under a video about advertising rules in the Australian media landscape, on a social media channel.

Comment 1. “Every ad break in the footy used to be a betting ad. Kids can name more betting apps than they can name players. Ban gambling advertising outright and be done with it.”

Comment 2. “A ban will not work. The moment you push it off television it moves to podcasts, streaming feeds and overseas sites that Australian rules cannot touch. All you lose is the ability to see where it went.”

Comment 3. “You are both arguing about advertisements. The real question is who gets to decide. Broadcasters, sporting codes and betting companies largely write the rules they live by, and audiences only find out afterwards.”

Analyse the issues and challenges relating to the regulation and control of the media and audiences in Australia, in response to one or more of the comments above. Use additional examples and/or evidence to support your response.

End of Section B

End of examination questions

Practice Exam 6 — Solutions

Mark allocation: **Section A = 50 marks** (Narratives and their contexts $3 + 6 + 7 = 16$ · Media production $4 + 4 + 6 = 14$ · Agency and control in the media $4 + 5 + 5 + 6 = 20$). **Section B = 30 marks** (15 + 15). **Paper total = 80 marks.**

Every model response below is written at the depth its command term and mark allocation demand, and uses the three-step move examiners reward: **name the precise element** → **apply it at a named moment, frame or sequence with stated boundaries** → **state the meaning, effect or link.**

Section A — solutions

Q1. Command term — describe: provide the characteristics, features and qualities of something in an accurate way. Three marks buys the **media form** named, **one** specific construction choice in the narrative, and a stated reason that choice suits the form. The marks sit in the link between the construction and the form — not in a summary of what the narrative is about.

Model response (Media narrative: Ride Like a Girl, 2019, Rachel Griffiths): The media form is **film** — a mainstream Australian feature made for general theatrical release. One way its construction is appropriate to that form is that the narrative is built on the **three-act structure** of the feature film, with a single public event, the 2015 Melbourne Cup, held back as the third-act climax. A feature is consumed in one uninterrupted sitting of roughly a hundred minutes, so it can run one line of cause and effect to one culminating event and hold an audience across it without a break. The construction takes that capacity as given: the obstacles placed in front of Michelle Payne are arranged as escalating complications, and the race is withheld until last. A serialised television form could not be constructed this way — it would need a hook at every episode boundary and would have to distribute its climaxes across a season — so concentrating everything on one race is a choice made for the form the narrative takes.

Also creditable: the release pattern shaping the construction — the film was made as a wide Australian cinema release for a general family audience (national release 26 September 2019), and that distribution decision specifies the construction: running time, act structure and the pitch of the performances are all built for a single mainstream sitting rather than for a niche or festival audience. This is the link the 2024 examiners named explicitly — how distribution can influence construction. **Form-specific engagement** — because the outcome of the 2015 Melbourne Cup is public record, the narrative cannot construct suspense out of surprise, so it relies instead on what the cinema form controls: image scale, sound level and continuous duration. For other forms the same move looks different — in a serialised television narrative, an unresolved question placed at each episode boundary is a construction choice appropriate to episodic release; in a podcast narrative, carrying the whole world of the story on sound codes alone is a construction choice appropriate to an audio form.

Common errors: naming the form and then retelling the narrative; describing a construction choice without ever saying what makes it **appropriate to the form**, which is the mark most often lost on this item shape; naming a **genre** (“sports drama”) where a **media form** is required; offering a code with no link to the form at all; and writing about what the narrative is about rather than about how it is constructed.

Q2. Command term — discuss: present a clear, considered and balanced account that identifies the issues involved. Six marks requires the two named processes — **selection** and **omission** — each evidenced at a specific point in the narrative, and the meaning each produces. Selection and omission are construction processes, not a plot summary.

Model response (Media narrative: Ride Like a Girl, 2019, Rachel Griffiths):

The representation analysed: Michelle Payne as a competitor.

What is selected. The film repeatedly selects moments in which Payne’s problem is a **decision made by someone with power over her**, not a limitation in her riding: owners and connections wanting a different jockey on the horse, the doubt of people inside the industry, the repeated need to be given the ride at all. Casting and acting work with that selection — Teresa Palmer plays her persistence flat and unglamorous rather than as prodigy, so the audience’s attention is not drawn to exceptional talent but to the obstacles placed in front of an ordinary competence. The meaning this produces is that the barrier is **institutional**: it lives in the decisions of the sport, not in the rider.

What is omitted. The film gives the audience no sequence in which Payne is shown to be physically incapable of the ride, and no scene in which a doubter's concern about strength is dramatised as reasonable. That omission is doing as much work as anything selected. Because the audience is never given a moment where the sceptics might be right, scepticism has nowhere to live in the narrative except as prejudice, and the audience is positioned to read every subsequent doubt as unfounded before it is voiced.

How the two work together on meaning. Selection supplies the evidence for a reading; omission removes the evidence for the competing one. Together they close off the alternative interpretation that the resistance Payne met was a defensible professional judgement, and they leave the audience with a single available meaning: that she was kept out of rides for reasons that had nothing to do with whether she could ride. **The balance the command term asks for** is worth stating honestly: this is an effective construction, and it is also a construction — a different selection of the same events, one that included the commercial risk carried by owners, would have produced a more ambivalent representation of the same person.

Common errors: retelling what happens instead of naming what was chosen and what was left out; treating omission as “things the film forgot” rather than as a construction process; offering a **theme** (“determination”) where a representation is required; naming selection and omission without evidencing either at a specific point; and treating **emphasis** as the third construction process — the study design's triad is selection, omission and construction, and emphasis is something discussed within construction.

Q3. Command term — analyse: identify components and the significance of the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications. Seven marks — the heaviest Section A item on the paper. The distinction the stem demands is the one examiners most often see collapsed: **views and values attach to the context of production, not to the era the narrative depicts.**

Model response (Media narrative: Ride Like a Girl, 2019; representation analysed: Stevie Payne — a different representation from Question 2):

Pinning the two contexts. The narrative **depicts** the Australian racing industry across roughly the 1990s to 2015 — a world of stables, owners and race meetings. It was **produced** in Australia in 2019 as a mainstream family feature for general cinema audiences, directed by Rachel Griffiths in her feature directorial debut and released nationally on 26 September 2019. Every judgement below attaches to the second of those contexts.

The construction. Michelle's brother Stevie Payne, who has Down syndrome, appears **as himself**, and that casting decision is the representation's primary construction choice — a decision made in a production office in the late 2010s, not a feature of the era depicted. What is selected is Stevie at work: the strapper of the winning horse, holding defined responsibilities in a professional operation. What is omitted is the storyline the audience has been conditioned by earlier films to expect — there is no arc in which his disability is the obstacle the narrative must resolve, and no sequence that positions him as the object of the family's sacrifice. The narrative convention of **point of view** works with the casting: the film's alignment places him inside the working world of the stable rather than observing it from outside, so his competence is presented as unremarkable and requires no explanation.

The view and value, and which context they belong to. This construction **challenges** the dominant view that people with intellectual disability are recipients of care rather than colleagues, and it **reflects** a value of inclusion that had become explicit in Australian public life by 2019 — the value that participation is a right rather than a concession.

Here is where the distinction matters. It would be a mistake to say the film “challenges the views of the racing industry of the 1990s”. The film makes no argument about how a stable in 1998 would have regarded Stevie Payne. What it does is assume that a 2019 Australian audience will accept his professional competence as ordinary and will need no scene persuading them of it — and that assumption is only safe to make in 2019. The verdict therefore describes the film's **production context**, not its **depicted** one.

Drawing out the implication. The same is true of the film's confidence elsewhere: it can end on the public record of the 2015 Melbourne Cup — Payne rode Prince of Penzance, a 100-to-one chance, to victory on 3 November 2015 to become the first female jockey to win the race, and used her post-race interview to call the sport chauvinistic and to tell those who had wanted her replaced to get stuffed — and expect that moment to be received as vindication rather than as controversy. A film built from the same events in 1998 could not have assumed that reception. **The general**

principle the analysis establishes is this: a narrative set in the past tells you about the values of the people who made it, and a representation's reflect-or-challenge verdict is always an argument about the year it was produced.

Sources: Rachel Griffiths' feature directorial debut, Australian release 26 September 2019 — *Screen Daily*, "Ride Like a Girl: Review", 2019 — <https://www.screendaily.com/ride-like-a-girl-review/5143185.article>. Michelle Payne's 2015 Melbourne Cup win on Prince of Penzance (100-1) and her post-race remarks — *BBC Sport*, "Melbourne Cup 2015: Michelle Payne wins on Prince of Penzance", 3 November 2015 — <https://www.bbc.com/sport/horse-racing/34702040>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: attaching the verdict to the **depicted** era ("this challenges the sexist views of the 1990s"), which is the error the stem is built to catch; offering a **theme** in place of a representation; naming "society" with no time, place or group; reusing the Question 2 representation, which the anti-recycling instruction forbids; and describing the production context in a separate final paragraph rather than running it causally through the analysis.

Q4. Command term — develop (production idea): generate an original idea that answers the stimulus and record it precisely in the boxes. Four marks = four boxes, each specific enough that another person could act on it. Note that the fourth box asks for **equipment or media technologies**, not style.

Model response:

Proforma box	Model response
Media form	Moving image — a short-form documentary series made for vertical delivery
Title and idea	<i>Steam Under Your Fingernails</i> — a four-part series, 3–4 minutes per episode, following one 19-year-old first-year volunteer as she learns a single task: oiling and inspecting the motion gear on a locomotive before a run. In each episode she is taught by a volunteer who has done the task for thirty years, and each episode ends with her attempting it alone
Target audience	16- to 22-year-olds living within an hour of the line, in or entering trades, engineering and hospitality; phone-first viewers who have never visited the Railway
Equipment or media technologies required	One mirrorless camera with a wide lens for hand-level work in the confined space under the locomotive; two lavalier microphones plus a shotgun microphone on a short boom for dialogue over an idling engine; a small LED panel with a diffuser for the unlit inspection pit; a non-linear editing application with a vertical 9:16 sequence preset and automatic captioning

Common errors: the 2025 examiners' complaint — proposing a product that **advertises the client's plan itself** ("a video explaining that the Railway needs volunteers") instead of a product that does what the plan wants done; boxes filled with generalities ("a video about the railway", "young people", "a camera"); an audience that is not the audience the stimulus specifies; a form chosen from outside the listed menu; and listing equipment with no link to a demand the idea actually creates.

Q5. Command term — describe: provide characteristics, features and qualities accurately. Four marks = two tasks, each named specifically, each placed in the correct stage, and each with a reason the task **belongs** to that stage. Stage drift is the single most reliably penalised error in this area of study.

Model response:

Pre-production task — a location and safety recce of the locomotive shed, producing a shot list and a risk assessment. I would walk the shed and the inspection pit with the mentor volunteer, photograph every position I intend to shoot from, measure the working clearance under the locomotive, note where the power outlets and the fire exits are, and convert all of it into a numbered shot list and a written risk assessment signed off by the Railway's safety officer. **Why this stage:** the recce determines what can physically be filmed and therefore what the shot list can promise. It has to happen before a crew, a volunteer and a locomotive are committed to a date, because its whole purpose is to prevent a shoot day being spent discovering that a shot is impossible. Doing it later would mean planning against assumptions instead of measurements.

Post-production task — a dialogue and atmosphere pass in the audio edit. I would clean and level the mentor's lavalier track, remove clothing rustle and handling noise, and build a separate atmosphere bed of shed tone so that the ambience is continuous under cuts that jump between camera positions. **Why this stage:** it can only be done once the footage and the recorded sound exist, and it is a **refinement of captured material**, not a new capture. Sound continuity across an edit is created by the edit; there is no way to record it in advance.

Common errors: naming tasks that belong to a different stage than the one claimed — the most common being gathering audience feedback and calling it post-production when the feedback is gathered after release; giving tasks so general that they could sit in any stage ("plan the video", "fix the sound"); stating the stage without a reason the task **belongs** there; and offering two tasks from the same stage.

Q6. Command term — explain: give a detailed account of how and why, making relationships between things evident. Six marks requires a **chain:** named distribution decisions → how each reaches the specified audience → how each shapes the way that audience **consumes** the product. Distribution is a stage of the media production process, and the mark is lost if the answer stops at "post it online".

Model response:

The audience determines the distribution, not the other way round. The Railway's audience is 16- to 22-year-olds within an hour of the line, in or entering trades and hospitality, who use short-form video and have never visited the Railway. Every decision below follows from that.

Decision 1 — vertical, captioned, on short-form video platforms as the primary channel, with the Railway's own site as an archive rather than a destination. The audience will not travel to a website they have no reason to know exists, so the product has to be delivered where they already are. Captions are not an accessibility afterthought here: this audience watches in transit and on breaks, frequently with the sound off, so a captioned vertical cut is the version most of them will actually consume. **The consumption effect:** the production will be watched in short, interrupted, sound-off conditions, which is why the series is built as four self-contained 3–4 minute episodes rather than one fifteen-minute film — the distribution decision and the structural decision are the same decision.

Decision 2 — a weekly release across four weeks rather than all four episodes at once. A weekly drop gives the account four separate opportunities to be surfaced by a recommendation feed and gives viewers a reason to return, whereas a single release competes with itself. **The consumption effect:** the audience consumes the production as a **serial** with a gap between episodes, which lets the trainee's progress register as time passing rather than as a montage — the same content read differently because of how it arrives.

Decision 3 — seeding through accounts the audience already follows: the local TAFE and trade-school pages, apprenticeship group accounts, and the social accounts of local sporting clubs, timed to the enrolment and mid-year intake period. Reaching this audience through an institution they already trust attaches an implicit endorsement to the product before a frame is watched. **The consumption effect:** context of consumption changes reading — the same episode arriving via a trade school's account is read as a legitimate skills pathway, while the same episode arriving as an advertisement in a feed is read as a request for free labour.

Decision 4 — one destination at the end of each episode: a single sign-up page with a date, a time and a name to ask for, not a general "get involved" page. Distribution ends where the audience acts, and a general landing page converts a viewer into nothing. **The consumption effect:** it defines the product's consumption as complete only when the viewer has somewhere specific to go.

Common errors: answering “I would put it on social media” with no channel, timing, format or reason; treating distribution as a technical afterthought rather than a stage that shapes the product; describing reach without ever addressing **consumption**, which the stem explicitly requires; and drifting into gathering audience feedback, which is a different stage and a different question.

Q7. Command term — describe: provide characteristics, features and qualities accurately. Four marks = the use named precisely, the mechanism explained, and dated evidence. “Individuals” is the third category in the key knowledge alongside institutions and governments, and it is not a synonym for “audiences in general”.

Model response: One way individuals use media for their own purposes is to **represent themselves in public rather than be represented by a media institution** — to publish a first-person account of their own life, work and community, so that what the public sees is not assembled about them by a newsroom that is not part of that community. What makes this a distinct **use** of media rather than consumption is that the individual is producing and publishing; what makes it individual rather than institutional is that the person speaking has not been selected as a spokesperson, and the account given is their own.

The practice is documented, dated and long-running. *IndigenousX* has, since **15 March 2012**, handed its account to a different Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person **every week** — artists, academics, authors, health workers and activists among them — each speaking in their own voice about their own work, with the host’s accompanying column published weekly in *Guardian Australia*. Founded by Gamilaroi man Luke Pearson, it has since grown from a rotating social media account into an Aboriginal-owned independent media organisation publishing on its own site.

The structural point is where the fourth mark sits. The platform is organised, but the **use** being described is the host’s: each week the media capacity — reach, audience, a column in a national masthead — is handed to one person, who then decides what to do with it. That is the study design’s third category working exactly as it is written: not an institution deciding how a group is represented, and not a government communicating, but individuals using media for a purpose of their own.

Source: IndigenousX — <https://indigenoux.com.au/>; and SBS NITV, “IndigenousX celebrates 5 years of amplifying Indigenous voices online” — <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/indigenoux-celebrates-5-years-of-amplifying-indigenous-voices-online/q5kqw34p7>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: answering about **audiences or institutions** when the stem names individuals; describing an individual **consuming** media (watching, scrolling, subscribing) as a “use”; giving a platform’s behaviour rather than a person’s; naming the organisation that runs a platform and calling that individual use; no date or named platform; and treating an individual posting once as equivalent to an individual using media for a purpose.

Q8. Command term — discuss: present a clear, considered and balanced argument that identifies the issues and shows the strengths and weaknesses of a position. Five marks. Note precisely what the stem asks: not “give an example of influence”, but **how good is the evidence** for one such claim. The claim, the evidence and the fit between them must all be assessed.

Model response:

The claim. It is widely claimed that **financial influencers** — people who publish investing and money advice on social media, commonly called “finfluencers” — influence the financial behaviour of young Australians. This is a claim about **behaviour**, not merely about what young people see, and it is therefore the strongest kind of influence claim available, which is exactly why the evidence for it has to be examined rather than assumed.

The evidence offered, and its strengths. The evidence is a national regulator’s own survey data, cited by ASIC when it issued Information Sheet 269 on **21 March 2022**: the ASIC Young People and Money survey found that **33 per cent of 18- to 21-year-olds followed at least one financial influencer on social media**, and that **64 per cent of young people reported changing at least one of their financial behaviours as a result of following a financial influencer**. ASIC’s more recent Moneysmart research, released with its enforcement update of **24 April 2026**, found **63 per cent of Australians aged 18–28 rely on social media for financial information**, with **56 per cent** saying

they somewhat or completely trust financial information on social media and **52 per cent** saying the same of finfluencers. This evidence is **Australian, dated, quantified, contemporary and repeated across five years** — not anecdote, not a single viral case, and not a decades-old laboratory study. It has also been acted on: ASIC issued warning notices to **18** finfluencers on **12 June 2025**, and on 24 April 2026 issued four more and opened reviews of three licensees supervising 15 finfluencers, alongside 16 other regulators.

The weaknesses, which are where the marks are. The headline figure is **self-report**, and people are unreliable witnesses to what influenced them: a respondent is being asked to name a cause, not to record an observation. The survey is also **cross-sectional** — there is no measurement of the same people before and after, and no comparison group of non-followers — so it cannot separate influence from **selection**: young people already interested in money are the ones who choose to follow finfluencers, which means the arrow can run the other way. “Changed at least one financial behaviour” is an **undefined threshold** that bundles opening a savings account with buying a speculative asset, so the 64 per cent measures breadth, not magnitude and not harm. The trust figures measure stated trust, not conduct. And the enforcement action, although it is the most visible part of the case, is evidence that a regulator finds the claim serious enough to act on — which is not the same as evidence that the claim is true.

The position. The evidence establishes **exposure, trust and self-attributed behaviour change at population scale** among young Australians, which is a real finding and enough to justify a regulatory response. It does not establish **causation**, the **size** of any effect, or that the effect is **harmful** rather than neutral or beneficial. Saying precisely how far the numbers reach is the whole task, because the popular version of this claim quietly promotes an association into a cause.

Sources: ASIC media release 22-054MR, “ASIC issues information for social media influencers and licensees”, 21 March 2022 (Young People and Money survey figures; INFO 269) — <https://www.asic.gov.au/about-asic/news-centre/find-a-media-release/2022-releases/22-054mr-asic-issues-information-for-social-media-influencers-and-licensees/>. ASIC, “ASIC cracks down on unlawful finfluencers in global push against misconduct”, 12 June 2025 — <https://www.asic.gov.au/about-asic/news-centre/news-items/asic-cracks-down-on-unlawful-finfluencers-in-global-push-against-misconduct/>. ASIC media release 26-081MR, “ASIC continues finfluencer crackdown alongside global regulators”, 24 April 2026 (Moneysmart research; warning notices; licensee reviews) — <https://www.asic.gov.au/about-asic/news-centre/find-a-media-release/2026-releases/26-081mr-asic-continues-finfluencer-crackdown-alongside-global-regulators/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: describing the example at length and never assessing the evidence, which is what the stem asks; offering a **theory** as though a theory were evidence; using stale standbys (a 1938 radio broadcast, a 1990s road-safety campaign) where “contemporary” is required; treating personal anecdote as evidence; quoting a survey percentage as though a self-reported association were a measured cause; and concluding “so the media does influence people” without saying **which** claim the evidence actually reaches.

Q9. Command term — discuss: present a clear, considered and balanced argument identifying the issue and showing points for and against. Five marks, with an explicit second demand — the response must say why the issue is **ethical** rather than **legal**. Distinguish the two rails; do not merge them.

Model response:

The issue: consent and permanence for a person with no bargaining power. When an Australian media organisation names, films or photographs a private individual who is not a public figure — a bystander at a crash, a relative arriving at a hospital, a person recorded in a public street — that person ordinarily has no experience of publication, no advocate, no ability to negotiate what is used, and no way to withdraw once the material is distributed and re-shared. The benefit of publishing is assessed by the publisher and accrues to it. The cost sits entirely with the subject, and in a searchable, re-shareable environment it does not expire: an image published in one news cycle remains attached to that person’s name indefinitely.

The argument on the other side, which the command term requires. There are cases where publishing identifiable private individuals is exactly what serves the public — a person who witnessed an event, a patient whose treatment demonstrates a systemic failure, a resident whose street floods. A rule against ever identifying private individuals would make much accountability journalism impossible, and consent obtained under distress is not obviously more

ethical than a considered editorial judgement. The genuine ethical question is therefore not “identify or not” but **who decides, on what test, and with what capacity for the subject to say no.**

Why this is an ethical issue and not a legal one. The conduct described can be entirely lawful. There is no general Australian law preventing a media organisation from photographing or naming a person in a public place, and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) contains an exemption for acts of media organisations in the course of journalism where the organisation is publicly committed to observing published privacy standards. The constraint that actually operates here is **professional** rather than statutory: the **MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics** asks journalists to respect private grief and personal privacy, and gives them the right to resist compulsion to intrude. That instrument binds **members** and carries reputational, not legal, force — which is precisely what makes this an ethical issue: a practice can be lawful, defensible in court, and still wrong by the standards the profession sets for itself.

Common errors: offering a **legal** issue (defamation, contempt of court, copyright) where an ethical one is asked; answering “the media is biased”, which is a complaint rather than an issue with an identifiable subject and cost; describing a regulator’s powers instead of the issue; presenting one side only when the command term asks for points for and against; and citing a non-Australian privacy instrument, which cannot be credited on an Australian question.

Q10. Command term — explain: give a detailed account of how and why, making the relationships between things evident. Six marks. Note the sub-concept the stem isolates: what is **produced** in other countries — not distribution, not availability, not data. Answering a different sub-concept is the fastest way to lose this question, and misidentifying a **local** institution as globalised is the second fastest.

Model response (institution: Netflix): A globalised media institution produces, distributes and monetises media across national borders on infrastructure it owns, rather than licensing its products into territories through local partners. Netflix qualifies; an Australian commercial free-to-air network does not, however large it is domestically. Such institutions have changed what gets **made** in national industries in several linked ways.

They have become a commissioner in national production markets. Netflix funds productions made by local crews, with local casts and settings, as originals for its own service. *Territory*, a six-part series created by Ben Davies and Timothy Lee and produced by Ronde and Easy Tiger, was commissioned by Netflix ANZ and shot over two months of the 2023 dry season at Tipperary Station and in Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory and at Mallala in South Australia, with more than 200 cast and crew — the biggest production ever filmed in the NT. **The mechanism, not the example, is the answer:** a national industry that previously made products for domestic broadcasters now also makes products for a commissioner whose recoupment is global, which changes who a producer pitches to and what a producer can get funded.

They have changed the specification of what is made. Because a commission has to work in every market at once, the product is developed against different requirements: stories legible without local cultural knowledge, episode counts and running times that suit on-demand viewing rather than a broadcast schedule, and a first-episode hook engineered for an interface where the alternative is one click away. *Territory* was built to that specification and it worked — released globally on **24 October 2024**, it reached number two on Netflix’s Global Top 10 English television list, the top ten in 74 countries and number one in 11 of them. A local story is still made locally, but it is shaped to travel.

They have changed what national industries invest in. A global commissioner brings production budgets that a domestic broadcaster’s advertising base cannot match, which raises the scale of what a country can make and simultaneously concentrates it: crews, facilities and above-the-line talent move towards the institution that is buying, and the kinds of production it does not buy become harder to finance.

They have changed who owns the result, and who decides whether more of it is made. Where a domestic broadcaster commissions, the producer commonly retains rights and sells them on. Where a global streaming institution commissions an original, it typically takes worldwide rights, so the national industry gains the production spend but not the long-term asset — and not the renewal decision either. On **20 February 2025** Netflix confirmed there would be no second series of *Territory*, four months after a launch that had put it in the top ten in 74 markets. Whatever the reasoning, the point for this question is where the decision sat: whether an Australian industry keeps making a successful Australian product is settled by a commissioner weighing it against a worldwide slate, not by the industry that made it or the market that watched it. **This is the causal chain the question is asking for:** the

institution's global distribution model determines its commissioning model, which determines what is funded, how it is specified, who owns it and how long it goes on being made.

Sources: Mediaweek, "How new Netflix original Territory is taking outback Australia to the rest of the world", 25 October 2024 — <https://www.mediaweek.com.au/how-new-netflix-original-territory-is-taking-outback-australia-to-the-rest-of-the-world/>; and IF Magazine, "Time over for Territory as big budget series not renewed at Netflix", 20 February 2025 — <https://if.com.au/time-over-for-territory-as-big-budget-series-not-renewed-at-netflix/>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Common errors: naming a **local** institution as globalised (a commercial Australian network, the ABC) — the confusion the 2025 examiners named outright, with Channel 7 offered as globalised and Disney+, which operates in more than 150 countries, offered as not; answering about **distribution** or about what audiences can **watch**, when the stem isolates what is **produced**; **listing** practices without explaining the mechanism connecting them; treating "globalised" as a synonym for "large"; and writing about the regulation of these institutions instead of their effect on production.

Section B — solutions

Q1. Command term — analyse: identify components and the significance of the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications. Fifteen marks, with three bullet requirements that must all be met — including the third, which is the hardest: the second sequence's meaning must be shown to **depend** on the first's.

Model response (Media narrative: Nomadland, 2020, Chloé Zhao):

Sequence 1 — the departure from Empire. Boundaries: from the opening title card stating that on 31 January 2011 US Gypsum closed its plant at Empire, Nevada after 88 years, and that by July the Empire postcode had been discontinued, through Fern clearing the last of her belongings out of storage, to the van pulling out of the emptied town.

Sequence 2 — the return to Empire. Boundaries: from Fern's arrival back at the town near the end of the narrative, through her walk into the abandoned house and past the shuttered plant, to the van leaving for the last time.

The codes at work in both. Camera: the film's approach, developed with cinematographer Joshua James Richards, is consistently wide, level and held — Fern and the van are given a small portion of a frame dominated by flat, open ground, and set-ups are allowed to run rather than cutting in to her face for reaction. **Sound:** the soundtrack across both sequences is dominated by wind, engine and small handled objects, with Ludovico Einaudi's sparse solo piano entering intermittently and withdrawing again; there is no scored cue instructing the audience how to feel at either departure. **Mise en scene:** the same physical vocabulary recurs — a stripped interior, a packed van, a landscape with nothing built on it. **Acting:** Frances McDormand plays both sequences in an unraised register, and the surrounding cast in the film includes people from the nomadic community appearing as themselves, which holds the performance style close to observation rather than drama.

The narrative conventions the codes construct. Setting is the first, and it is constructed as an agent rather than a backdrop: the wide framing insists that the emptied town is the larger fact and Fern the smaller one, so place is what has changed and the character is what must respond. **Structuring of time** is the second: the narrative is built as a return, so that the same location is presented twice at opposite ends of the story. **Character arc** is the third, and it is carried almost entirely by the other two — Fern is not given a speech announcing what she has become; the audience is given the same place twice and asked to measure the difference. **Point of view** is the fourth: alignment stays with Fern throughout, so both visits are experienced as hers.

How codes and conventions work together, sequence by sequence. In Sequence 1 the camera's insistence on scale and the sound design's refusal to editorialise combine to construct setting as cause. The title card has already supplied an economic mechanism — a plant closes, a town's postcode is discontinued — and the codes make that mechanism visible rather than stated: Fern is small in the frame because the thing acting on her is larger than she is. The convention of setting is therefore not decorated by the codes but **built** by them, and the narrative's causal premise (the town ended, so she goes) is established before dialogue does any work.

In Sequence 2 the identical code choices produce the **opposite** meaning. The framing is again wide and level, the sound again withholds instruction, the mise en scene again offers a stripped interior. But because the audience has

seen this configuration before, and knows what it meant, the sameness becomes the information: nothing about the place has changed, so everything that has changed is in the person crossing it. The wide frame that once measured Fern against a force acting on her now measures her against a place that no longer has any hold. The absence of a musical cue, which in Sequence 1 read as withheld comfort, reads in Sequence 2 as something closer to sufficiency.

Why the second sequence depends on the first. This is the relationship the third bullet asks for, and it is structural rather than incidental. The return sequence contains no new codes and introduces no new convention; it is constructed almost entirely out of repetition. It can therefore only mean anything because the first sequence taught the audience to read this exact combination of camera, sound, mise en scene and setting in a particular way. **As a result**, the character arc is delivered without ever being narrated: the film establishes a code-and-convention grammar in Sequence 1 and then, in Sequence 2, changes one variable — the person — while holding everything else constant, so the audience performs the comparison itself. Departure that was **consequence** becomes departure that is **choice**, and the difference is produced by the structuring of time acting on a repeated setting, not by anything either sequence says.

Source: BFI, “Chloé Zhao on *Nomadland* and the road to rediscovery”, *Sight and Sound* interview — <https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/interviews/chloe-zhao-nomadland-american-western-road-rediscovery>. Accurate as at July 2026.

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** two sequences from **clearly different points** in the narrative, each with stated boundaries; at least two codes and at least two **narrative** conventions, correctly classified; codes and conventions analysed as **constructing each other** rather than listed in parallel; the dependency of the second sequence on the first argued structurally, not asserted; specialised media language precise and sustained; all three bullet requirements met.
- **Mid (7–11):** two sequences identified but one loosely bounded, or both drawn from the same phase of the narrative; codes and conventions named and applied, but treated as two separate lists rather than as interacting; the dependency between sequences stated but not demonstrated; a genre convention may slip in among the narrative conventions; media language present but not sustained.
- **Low (1–6):** **retells** the narrative or writes about it as a whole (“throughout the film...”); codes offered as conventions, or genre conventions offered where narrative conventions are required; one sequence only, or no bounded sequence at all; no interaction shown; the third bullet ignored.

Common errors: whole-narrative generality instead of two bounded sequences — the error both live reports single out on this question shape; offering **genre** conventions (the road movie, the western) where **narrative** conventions are demanded — the accepted list includes character, character arc, cause and effect, setting, point of view, structuring of time and multiple storylines; naming codes and conventions in separate paragraphs so they never interact; choosing two sequences from adjacent scenes and so having no development to analyse; and treating the third bullet as a concluding sentence rather than as the argument the response is built around.

Q2. Command term — analyse: break the issues into their components and show how they relate, using named Australian instruments and dated evidence. Fifteen marks. The comments are a **springboard**, not the substance — engage them directly, then go well beyond them. The stem requires **additional examples and/or evidence**, so a response confined to the stimulus cannot reach the top band.

Model response:

The three comments between them state the whole problem: **Comment 1** demands an outright ban, **Comment 2** predicts that a ban would only relocate the advertising beyond Australian reach, and **Comment 3** points at the question underneath both — who writes the rules. Analysing them requires separating three issues the comments run together: what Australia has actually chosen to regulate, what its instruments can physically reach, and who holds the pen.

Comment 1 describes a road Australia has already declined to take, and the declining is the issue. Begin with the scale, because Comment 1 asserts it where the regulator has measured it. ACMA’s report *Gambling advertising in Australia: placement and spending*, published in **October 2023**, found that in the twelve months from **May 2022 to April 2023** more than **one million gambling advertisements** aired on metropolitan and regional free-to-air television

and metropolitan radio, and that **\$238.63 million** was spent on gambling advertising across free-to-air television, metropolitan radio and online, **68 per cent** of it on free-to-air television. That is a regulator's own count, and it is the number against which any policy answer has to be read.

The policy answer came in **May 2026**, when the Australian Government released its response and did not adopt the blanket ban that a parliamentary inquiry had recommended to it in 2023. It also **declined to create a new national gambling regulator**, leaving enforcement with the **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)**. What it adopted instead were placement and volume controls: a ban on wagering advertising during live sport on television between **6.00 am and 8.30 pm**, a cap of **three wagering advertisements per hour per channel** within those hours, a ban on gambling advertising **at sports venues and on players' and officials' uniforms**, and a ban on **celebrity endorsement and odds promotion**. The ***Interactive Gambling Amendment (Gambling Reform) Bill 2026*** was introduced into Parliament on **2 July 2026**, with the reforms to commence on **1 January 2027**.

The analytical point is not that the Government was wrong. It is that the distance between the ban that was asked for and the cap that was legislated is itself the first issue in regulating media in Australia: the revenue stream being regulated is the revenue stream that funds the broadcasters and the sporting codes whose cooperation any workable regulation requires — and ACMA's own figures show where that revenue sits, with more than two-thirds of the spend on the free-to-air television the reforms most constrain. Regulation of media content is never only a question of what would reduce harm; it is a question of which interests must be accommodated, and free-to-air broadcasting and professional sport are among the most heavily represented interests in Australian communications policy. Comment 1 treats regulation as a decision. It is a negotiation, and the shape of the 2026 package is the shape of that negotiation.

Comment 2 is right about the mechanism and wrong about Australia's reach — and the correction is where the real challenge lies. Australia did not leave these rules on television. Since **30 March 2018** the **commercial television and commercial radio codes of practice** — written by the industry bodies and registered by ACMA — have restricted gambling advertising and odds promotion during live sport between **5.00 am and 8.30 pm**, running from five minutes before the scheduled start of play until five minutes after play ends, including during breaks: the “siren to siren” model. Six months later the ***Broadcasting Services (Online Content Service Provider Rules) 2018***, a legislative instrument **made by ACMA itself** and in force from **28 September 2018**, extended the same restriction to live sport **streamed over the internet**. Note that the two halves of one policy sit in two different kinds of instrument — an industry code on broadcast, an ACMA-made rule online — which becomes the point under Comment 3. So the claim that Australian rules stop at the television set is factually wrong, and a response that repeats it uncritically has restated the comment rather than analysed it.

What Comment 2 does correctly identify is **jurisdiction**. Australian rules bind Australian licensees, Australian broadcasters and services provided to Australians; they do not bind an offshore operator with no Australian licence and no local presence. The ***Interactive Gambling Act 2001*** (Cth) prohibits the provision of certain gambling services to Australians, but enforcing a prohibition against an entity outside the jurisdiction is slow, and ACMA's practical response has been **disruption** — requesting that internet service providers block access to illegal sites — rather than penalty. This is the standing structural problem of Australian media regulation in the platform era, and it is the same problem the online safety framework meets: the ***Online Safety Act 2021*** (Cth), in force since **23 January 2022**, gives the eSafety Commissioner removal powers over material hosted anywhere, and the ***Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024*** (Cth), which received assent on **10 December 2024** and took effect on **10 December 2025**, obliges age-restricted platforms to take reasonable steps to keep Australians under 16 from holding accounts. Both are drafted to reach offshore entities; both ultimately depend on those entities choosing compliance over exit.

The regulation of audiences, not only of media. The stem names audiences as well as media, and gambling is the clearest Australian case of both being regulated at once. **BetStop, the National Self-Exclusion Register**, launched on **21 August 2023**, allows an individual to exclude themselves from every licensed Australian online and telephone wagering service for a minimum of three months up to a lifetime, and bars licensed operators from marketing to registered people. This is regulation applied to the **audience's access** rather than to the **media content**, and the trade-off is worth analysing: an audience-side instrument only reaches audiences who identify themselves as at risk and act on it, whereas a content-side instrument reaches everyone but requires the state to override commercial speech. Australia now runs both, which is why the same person can be lawfully excluded from every licensed operator and still see three wagering advertisements an hour.

Comment 3 names the tier problem, and it is more precise than the comment allows. Australian media regulation is not one thing, and gambling advertising sits across all three tiers simultaneously:

- **Statutory:** the **online** live-sport restriction, in the *Broadcasting Services (Online Content Service Provider Rules) 2018* — a legislative instrument ACMA made itself under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (Cth) — and, from **1 January 2027**, the placement and volume caps carried by the 2026 Bill once enacted.
- **Co-regulatory:** the **broadcast** live-sport restriction, which is not an ACMA rule at all. It sits in the commercial television and commercial radio **codes of practice**, drafted by the industry bodies and registered by ACMA, which backstops them: it can impose its own standard if an industry rule fails, and can make compliance with a code a condition of a broadcaster's licence after a breach.
- **Self-regulatory:** the **content** of the advertisements themselves, governed by the **AANA Wagering Advertising Code** (introduced in 2016) and adjudicated by **Ad Standards**, whose Community Panel publishes determinations carrying reputational and contractual force but no legal penalty.

Comment 3 is therefore right that industry writes a great deal of what it lives by, and more precisely so than it realises: the content rules for gambling advertising are written by the advertisers' own association, and the placement rules on broadcast television and radio are written by the broadcasters' own. It is wrong that audiences “only find out afterwards”: complaints to Ad Standards and to ACMA are open to any member of the public. The genuine issue is not access to the process but the **shape** of it. A complaint-driven, individual, retrospective instrument removes one advertisement after adjudication; the harm the reforms are aimed at is **cumulative and population-level** — the volume of exposure a child accumulates across a football season, which is what ACMA's million-advertisement count measures. **The mismatch between the shape of the instrument and the shape of the harm is the deepest challenge in this area**, and it is exactly why the 2026 reforms moved to volume and placement caps: rules that operate without anyone having to complain.

Position. Regulating media and audiences in Australia is difficult for three distinguishable reasons, and conflating them is the commonest failure in answers on this topic. First, **political economy**: the revenue being regulated funds the institutions whose cooperation regulation requires, which is why a demand for a ban produced a cap. Second, **jurisdiction**: Australian instruments bind Australian entities, and much of the contemporary landscape is populated by entities that are not. Third, **instrument design**: complaint-driven content codes are retrospective and individual, while the harms claimed are cumulative and collective. The 2026 package is best read as a serious answer to the third problem that concedes the first and does little about the second — a coherent choice rather than a failure of nerve, but one that leaves Comment 2's prediction answerable only by regulating **platforms** rather than **advertisements**.

Sources: ACMA, Gambling advertising in Australia: placement and spending, *October 2023* (Nielsen Ad Intel data, May 2022 – April 2023) — <https://www.acma.gov.au/publications/2023-10/report/gambling-advertising-australia-placement-and-spending>. ACMA, “Gambling ads during live sport on broadcast TV and radio” — <https://www.acma.gov.au/gambling-ads-during-live-sport-broadcast-tv-and-radio>. Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, “Gambling Reforms 2026” — <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications/media-gambling-laws-regulation/gambling/gambling-reforms-2026>. DLA Piper, “Australia's new gambling advertising reforms: key takeaways”, 2026 — <https://www.dlapiper.com/en-us/insights/blogs/mse-today/2026/australias-new-gambling-advertising-reforms>. Department of Infrastructure et al., “BetStop — the National Self-Exclusion Register” — <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications/media-gambling-laws-regulation/gambling/betstop-national-self-exclusion-register>. AANA, “Wagering Advertising Code” — <https://aana.com.au/self-regulation/codes-guidelines/wagering-code/>; Ad Standards, “Wagering advertising” — <https://adstandards.com.au/issues/wagering-advertising/>. eSafety Commissioner, “Statement on the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024” — <https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/esafety-statement-on-the-online-safety-amendment-social-media-minimum-age-act-2024>. All accurate as at July 2026.

Band descriptors (Section B, out of 15):

- **High (12–15):** engages the comments directly and by number as a **springboard**, then moves well beyond them; analyses issues and challenges as **relationships** (political economy, jurisdiction, instrument design) rather than as a list; names Australian **laws, bodies, codes and dates** accurately and uses them as evidence rather than decoration; distinguishes **statutory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory** instruments correctly; addresses the regulation of **audiences** as well as of media, as the stem requires; supplies substantial additional evidence beyond the stimulus; specialised media language precise and sustained; reaches a defended position.
- **Mid (7–11):** the comments engaged but partly restated; two or three named Australian instruments, with some dates missing or imprecise; challenges identified but asserted rather than analysed; the regulatory tiers blurred

(self-regulation described as law, or ACMA credited with writing the advertising content rules); audiences addressed only implicitly; some additional evidence, thinly developed.

- **Low (1–6): restates the comments** and adds opinion; general talk about “the internet” or “the government should do something”; **no Australian instrument named**, or **non-Australian** instruments offered, which cannot be credited; regulation confused with the government’s **use** of media; no dates, bodies or cases; the audience-regulation element of the stem ignored entirely.

Common errors: restating the three comments in order and calling it analysis; agreeing with Comment 2 that Australian rules stop at broadcast television, when the online live-sport rules have applied since 28 September 2018; describing the AANA Wagering Advertising Code as a **law**, or attributing it to ACMA; treating the live-sport placement rules on broadcast television and radio as ACMA-made law when they sit in industry codes that ACMA only registers — the online rules are the ACMA-made instrument, not the broadcast ones; confusing regulation **of** the media with the government’s **use** of the media; offering an overseas regulator, which earns nothing on an Australian regulation question; writing about gambling harm as a social problem without ever analysing an instrument; and ignoring the audience half of the stem, which is where BetStop and the minimum-age framework belong.

End of Practice Exam 6 solutions