

GCE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report**
**Journalism in the Media and
Communications Industry**

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's section on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCE JOURNALISM

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

The GCE Journalism specification builds on many of the core journalistic skills developed at GCSE level. Candidates are encouraged to engage critically in a much wider range of journalistic topics and debates and to inform their work with an increased degree of independent study, analysis and research. Candidates are given the opportunity to enhance their practical journalistic skill in a more diverse and interactive cross-platform context, adapting their research, writing and presentation skills to a variety of different formats and audiences.

Assessment Unit AS 1 Journalism in Print

Overview

This unit enables candidates to apply the specification's key media concepts to print journalism. The assessment offers candidates the opportunity to analyse a variety of unseen stimuli representing different formats and story types in the field of print journalism. The examination for this unit assesses how candidates apply their print journalism writing skills under time pressure in a range of tasks and scenarios including hard news, subediting and PR. This unit is externally assessed through a two hour examination paper.

Supervising Examiner Comments

This year's examination paper proved accessible to all levels and prompted a wide variety of responses in Sections A and B. The majority of candidates were able to complete all of the tasks and demonstrate their strengths and skills in one or both sections of the paper. While some candidates performed well in the written tasks in Section A, others responded better in Section B, and it was relatively uncommon to see candidates answer well in both sections of the examination paper.

Section A

- Q1** This question was handled well by most candidates, and prompted possibly the strongest response of the entire paper. The majority of candidates provided a competent discussion of the content, language and style of the pieces, although in some cases the analysis of the different pieces' angles and newspaper ownership was only satisfactory. In terms of the nature of the publications (quality newspaper/ local newspaper), some candidates appeared not to have read the question stems and erroneously described article 2 as a quality newspaper piece. Despite this, there was less evidence of digression in answers this year, with fewer candidates branching out into a generic discussions of newspaper types. As digressive or generic material is not rewarded, most candidates made the wise decision to ground all of their discussion in the pieces themselves.
- Q2 (a)** This stimulus question provoked a wide variety of responses. Although many candidates wrote satisfactory stories with content that was legally sound, many appeared to struggle with this news writing task. Some responses failed to strike a suitable angle in their introduction and many failed to adequately prioritise content, relying on the structure of the stimulus and in some cases simply lifting

the stimulus word for word. An increase in candidates who did not adhere to the word count was also noticed this year. Succinct writing to tight word limits is a core journalistic skill and is taken seriously in the mark scheme, therefore candidates should be advised to closely adhere to given word limits. There was a slight improvement this year in the use of journalistic phrasing and the punctuating of quotations, which was encouraging to see. However, spelling errors continued to detract from candidates' responses.

(b) This short news-writing task was handled better than Question 2(a). A variety of angles were chosen (e.g. the funding angle, or the fact that the money prevented possible closure of the football club), all of which were deemed valid; and some strong answers very effectively selected and prioritized the information given. Headlines mostly reflected the chosen angles, but some contained errors: candidates should be reminded of the importance of grammatically-correct, informative and coherent headlines in journalism. Weaker responses included those which closely repeated the wording of the stimulus, relied heavily on the structure of the stimulus, or used unedited quotations which were too long. As in Question 2(a), some candidates failed to adhere to the word count.

Q3 This question was generally answered quite well. Although very few candidates managed to spot all ten spelling errors, the vast majority were able to complete all of the tasks competently. The majority of candidates selected a suitable photograph and wrote appropriate headlines and captions, many capturing the style of a local newspaper. In a few instances, candidates wrote captions which bore little or no relation to the photo selection. While the mark scheme has a hierarchy for the photo selections, the examining team rewarded those candidates who demonstrated, through the caption, why their photo selection was both pertinent and effective.

Section B

All three question options were attempted, with Question 5 on Contempt of Court proving the most popular. The most successful responses sustained a clear focus on the key terms of the question and provided relevant examples. Most candidates demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding and used up-to-date examples, and were duly rewarded. However, the examining team would like to see more analysis and an awareness of different perspectives in candidates' responses. Those answers that contained a thoughtful discussion or debate and an awareness of different perspectives were highly rewarded.

Q4 This question was attempted by relatively few candidates, however several of the candidates that attempted it handled it very well. Some of the most successful responses identified a variety of challenges that have faced newspapers in the recent past, and offered a nuanced discussion on how well various newspapers have adapted, providing relevant and thoughtful examples to substantiate their arguments. This question prompted some real engagement with wider issues such as the role and purpose of print journalism, which was very pleasing to see.

Q5 This question was attempted by many candidates, with varying degrees of success. The vast majority of candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of Contempt of Court, however this could only take them so far. The best responses combined secure knowledge and understanding with analysis of why the law is relevant and important to print journalists. Top responses introduced an array of examples dating from recent years, which were fully and cogently explained and integrated into their argument. It was encouraging to see many more original examples being provided this year. However, weaker candidates showed an over-reliance on past mark schemes.

- Q6** This question saw a fairly wide range of responses but was perhaps the least well-answered of the three essay questions. Successful answers combined a wide range of examples of different newspapers with a strong discussion comparing their different target audiences, style and content. Weaker responses listed newspapers and target audiences but failed to offer a satisfactory discussion or provide any comparative analysis.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit AS 2 Print Portfolio

Overview

This unit introduces candidates to the skills of print journalism, focusing on both written and photojournalism. It enables candidates to develop and apply knowledge and understanding of a variety of formats and story types. Candidates must produce their own print portfolio in a local real world context. This unit is internally assessed. We supply specific instructions on the structure, content and size of the print portfolio in the assessment materials.

Principal Moderator Comments

The standard of work completed in all centres continues to show engaged and enthusiastic teaching and learning. The majority of centres demonstrated an accurate and consistent application of the mark scheme offering specific detailed summative comments which were useful to the moderation team in giving insight into how the marks were awarded. Please note that generalised, overly positive annotations should be avoided. Good practice includes drawing attention to any limitations in candidates' work.

More centres are becoming confident in awarding the full range of marks although a few centres continue to exercise leniency. Centres should be mindful that Band 4 folders do not necessarily receive full marks for every element of work submitted. Review of Agreement Trial exemplars should help to illustrate how top candidates may not always offer a consistently perfect performance across all of the assessment objectives. Full marks should be reserved only for flawless work and should not automatically be given to a centre's top candidate/s.

All centres completed administrative elements diligently.

This unit allows candidates to showcase their knowledge and understanding of print journalistic concepts in a local or regional context. It was pleasing to see that candidates seemed to be becoming more confident in their understanding of a target audience and produced some very strong, newsworthy local/regional pieces.

Statement of Intentions

Some candidates continue to confuse ethics and legalities and use generic statements to fulfil this requirement. Completing statements retrospectively still seems to be standard practice and thus issues with QWC and tense confusion remain a problem. Centres are urged to remind candidates to be mindful of this.

Log Books

The level of planning and research gathering continues to impress the moderation team. Rigorous and purposeful research and planning was in evidence across many centres, allowing many candidates to access the higher mark bands for this aspect of their portfolio.

However, it should be noted that for AO2 (Planning and Research and Audience and Style) QWC is an essential criterion and logbooks with lapses in QWC – which is a core journalistic skill – cannot be awarded full marks.

Portfolio Pieces

Many centres are showing excellent formatting ability in the portfolio pieces. Technical adeptness was noted by the moderation team as a significant improvement among all centres. Candidates continue to show autonomy in choosing issues that interest them which generally resulted in some professional publications. A few candidates however departed from the journalistic principles of objectivity and balance, elements that need to be strongly enforced. Confusion between the conventions of a feature article and a topical news story continue to be an issue and centres are urged to clarify the characteristics of each. Candidates should be discouraged from using news stories that already exist and should be encouraged to find their own stories. If a pre-existing event is going to be used, it is imperative that unique primary source material is used. Movies or books as stimulus for writing a review should be used with caution as it is difficult to forge a strong local or regional link. Editorials were often undermined by the use of the personal pronoun betraying a misunderstanding of the purpose and conventions of newspaper editorials (or leaders) which are meant to express the newspaper's view, not the journalist's. Many candidates are producing some excellent photo montages with more adventurous themes explored.

In several cases, candidates inserted their own personal opinions into news stories, features and other aspects of the portfolio. Centres are strongly reminded that the only appropriate place in this portfolio for a journalist's opinion is the review.

Centres are again reminded that a magazine format is an option which may better suit some candidates' interests. However, any candidates choosing the magazine option should be encouraged to thoroughly investigate the appropriate magazine conventions before embarking on their portfolio.

Evaluations

A range of marks were awarded here, with the stronger evaluations addressing weaknesses as well as strengths. More candidates are becoming very adept at evaluating their own work and all should attempt to refer back to the aims and objectives from their Statement of Intentions to better inform their evaluation.

Chief Examiner's Report

Assessment Unit A2 1

Cross-Platform Journalism and Digital Interactivity

Overview

This unit enables candidates to extend their study of the specification's key media concepts to online and broadcast journalism. It includes additional and more advanced analysis of ideology, representation and values. The examination for this unit assesses how candidates apply their online, print and broadcast journalism skills under time pressure. It requires them to respond to news scenarios and writing-based tasks. To do this, they need to consider strategies that would apply in a real, cross-platform newsroom. This unit is externally assessed through a two hour examination paper.

Supervising Examiner Comments

Once again the A2 paper catered for a range of learning styles and abilities, with candidates demonstrating their skills across a range of tasks. Section A attracted a wide range of responses with many candidates producing appropriate news pieces which demonstrated journalistic skills including adherence to word limits. Responses in Section B showed an improvement on last year, with more evidence of discussion and analysis in the essay questions.

Section A

- Q1 (a) (i)** A wide range of marks was awarded for this question. The content was generally handled well and the word count adhered to. Some engaging articles and suitable headlines were produced, with stronger candidates proving capable of editing and crafting the material into an appropriate and engaging online article. Weaker responses tended to rely heavily on the stimulus, and a surprising number of articles were very repetitive, with candidates clearly struggling to select and prioritise source material. Disappointingly, a number of candidates replicated the wording and structure of the stimulus.
- (ii)** The majority of candidates demonstrated a strong sense of news value and a reasonably good awareness of the format of a news flash. Despite the short word limit, most candidates were able to include the main points of the story and prioritise them in an appropriate manner. Generally, a clear awareness of the target audience was shown through the fact that many candidates prioritised the point that the zoo patrons were in no danger. Weaker responses replicated the phrasing of the stimulus and in some cases, used an inappropriate style of language.
- (b)** A wide variety of responses was seen in this radio news package task. Stronger responses demonstrated secure selection and prioritisation of material, opening their scripts with the news that the chimpanzee had been safely captured. Some of the cues were very fluently written, leading to confident and engaging scripts. While it was clear that many candidates were confident in using the conventions of radio news packages, a surprisingly large number of candidates did not use the script format at all. Weaker responses also tended to show an insecure selection and prioritisation, relying heavily on the stimulus and in some cases simply writing out a narrative. A number of scripts proved very repetitive, repeating similar information across various sources, and thus demonstrating a poor ability to select.

(c) This task gives candidates an opportunity to explain their decision-making process and recognise flaws in their artefacts (that cannot be amended because of the time-constraints imposed by the examination structure). The question continues to prove very difficult for some candidates. While the strongest responses provided a methodical and thorough interrogation of why decisions had been taken and why elements had been included or omitted from their pieces, most fell short of this. Many candidates made generic comments about online or radio news but did not back this up with specific examples from their own work. The examining team found it very difficult to award marks for evaluation when many responses were very descriptive.

Q2 This selection and prioritisation task tests vital journalistic skills and the examining team were very pleased with how candidates rose to the challenge. Many candidates successfully chose the lead story (story 8) to start their bulletin and the vast majority of candidates selected from this and other suitable stories for their bulletin. A variety of combinations was offered to which the examining team were open. Sound selection and prioritisation was in many cases enhanced by crafting and editing, allowing candidates to access the top mark band. Weaker responses failed to adhere to the tight word count, or failed to edit the copy and simply used the wording of the stimulus.

Section B

All three essay questions were attempted and proved accessible, with Question 3 and Question 5 the most popular. It was clear that candidates had learned relevant information and it was pleasing to note that examples tended to be more relevant and more fully developed than in previous years. The strongest responses were those which responded to the invitation of the question to 'discuss' and offered counter-arguments and a range of perspectives.

Q3 This essay prompted discussion about the role and function of journalism in society (the fourth estate) and the examining team were pleased to note some very strong, evaluative and analytical responses. However, many responses, after a cursory explanation of the 'fourth estate', failed to adequately develop this theme. Some of the weaker responses lapsed into digression about other areas of journalism including ethics and media law. Unfortunately, only a minority of candidates proved able to use relevant examples to inform a balanced, analytical discussion.

Q4 A minority of candidates attempted this question but those who did performed extremely well, showing a clear awareness of the differing functions of journalism and PR, and offering a nuanced discussion full of insightful and perceptive knowledge and understanding.

Q5 This question prompted a wide range of responses. As with Question 3, many candidates, after explaining the basic differences between commercial broadcasters and the BBC, struggled to develop the discussion. Many failed to engage with the theme of 'news output', and several answers were characterized by confusion and failed to provide adequate or relevant examples. However others were able to provide generally relevant examples, which were duly rewarded.

Principal Moderator's Report

Assessment Unit A2 2

Online Print and Broadcast Feature Portfolio

Overview

This unit enables candidates to extend their skills to both online print and broadcasting. It requires an increased depth of analysis and research. Candidates must produce a case study and a cross-platform feature portfolio with both written and audio or audiovisual outcomes. This unit is internally assessed. We supply specific instructions on the structure, content and size of the case study and cross-platform feature portfolio in the assessment materials.

Principal Moderator Comments

This unit offers candidates a practical opportunity to produce a cross-platform feature portfolio. The portfolio should contain both written and audio or video work which enables the candidate to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of an interactive digital landscape. Their own research and practical work will highlight their skill in print and broadcast journalism.

Some excellent work continues to be produced with the standard of work once again highlighting an engaged and enthusiastic range of quality teaching and learning at A2. Most centres demonstrated accurate and consistent marking accompanied by detailed summative comments which were helpful during the moderation process in aiding an understanding of how the mark scheme has been used.

More centres are submitting hard copies of their features (to accompany their digital copy) which are carefully annotated; this is considered excellent practice as it is clear to see how the mark scheme had been awarded.

Please remind candidates to schedule the filming and editing into their planning. Many candidates find this onerous and rush this key aspect of their work.

All centres completed administrative elements diligently; the on-line system has proved invaluable in ensuring this.

Cross-Platform Research Case Study

It was very encouraging to see the autonomy evident in different centres as a diverse range of interesting national and international stories were sampled.

More centres are becoming confident in adapting their chosen theme to a regional and local angle, which is needed in order to fulfil the rubric of the tasks.

It is pleasing to see that more candidates are identifying the actual broadcast pieces and on-line articles they are using for analysis with time of broadcast/date clearly stated. Centres should remind candidates that this should be clearly indicated on the case study and should not be counted in the overall word count.

Language, Representation, Ownership and Audience – these four key concepts should be compared and contrasted throughout the case study and a balanced treatment across the platforms is required. More centres are becoming adept at encouraging their candidates to spend equal time on both which is encouraging to see. Centres should be mindful that full marks cannot be awarded if the word count has been exceeded or if there is imbalanced treatment across the platforms.

Centres should again note that an inclusion in the Statement of Intentions about the case-study requirements is unnecessary. This is an obsolete point considering it is an actual requirement to fulfil the task.

Portfolio

(i) Online Feature

The conventions of using source material in a feature continues to present problems for some candidates. Access to higher grades remains impossible without thoroughly researched primary source material.

Candidates are becoming very confident in the creation of voxpops and the quality of the voxpops sampled was mostly excellent. The better and more appealing pieces continue to come from candidates who took to the streets and filmed. Centres who encouraged their candidates to film a variety of people across age ranges and gender and who used a variety of questions to garner different opinions were, once again, the most successful. It would be helpful if centres encouraged their candidates to ask questions which invite a diverse range of views.

The 100 word statement is an opportunity for candidates to be specific. Some centres are still relying on overly generalised assertions which cannot access top marks. To gain top marks the statement needs to address the candidates' individual pieces rather than simply making generic statements about Facebook and Twitter.

(ii) 3 minute Package

Quite a few centres are opting for the broadcast option and in some cases this has accounted for stronger standards of work. The aesthetic appeal was more obvious and there was a stronger sense of purpose in the crafting of the product. A wide and varied range of local issues were presented in this packaged format and it served as an excellent medium for some very confident candidates. The better work came from genuine interviews which weren't scripted and footage taken by the candidate from the local area which added authenticity to the product. Some confusion still exists regarding the conventions of packaged material with a few centres using bulletin formats to address this requirement. Attendance at support events may help alleviate this confusion.

The radio package is also quite popular. As in the previous series, these were, on the whole, both appealing and interesting in terms of content, but some still tended to lack the auditory qualities that are so important to radio when attempting to engage a radio audience. An improvement has been noted, but if possible, candidates should be encouraged to listen carefully to packaged radio material to help improve their awareness of the necessary conventions.

Planning and Research

The candidates who performed best were those candidates who demonstrated extensive research across all the pieces in their digital portfolio. The log book sample should consist of ten pages that showcases the range of research undertaken and should equally reflect the three main tasks. The best Log Books this year were again those used as a working document, demonstrating thought processes and justifications for decisions made by the candidate. Unlike AS, no guidance is offered on how many pages should be used for each piece therefore any purposeful and judicious reasoning in evidence was rewarded here.

Evaluation

Candidates showed a promising ability to identify and acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of their own work. The better candidates offered perceptive and insightful reflections on how to improve. This is an opportunity for candidates to explain what could have gone better if certain obstacles were removed – i.e. sources unavailable etc. – and so should be encouraged to honestly reflect on the work they have produced. This aspect of the portfolio continues to improve.

Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

- **Specification Support Officer: Nola Fitzsimons**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2235, email: nfitzsimons@ccea.org.uk)
- **Officer with Subject Responsibility: Ingrid Arthurs**
(telephone: (028) 9026 1200, extension: 2398, email: iarthurs@ccea.org.uk)



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