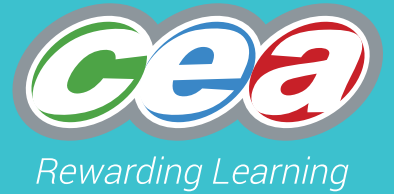


GCSE



**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](http://www.ccea.org.uk).



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# GCSE JOURNALISM

## Principal Moderator's Report

### Subject Overview

This revised specification for GCSE Journalism reflects many of the core skills that are present in the world of print, online and broadcast journalism. Candidates are given opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the codes and conventions of journalism, including the legal, moral and ethical issues that are central to journalism and, research, write and present their own stories for a range of different news platforms. In this revised specification, candidates must also write a film review and develop their technical competence by presenting journalistic artefacts in written and audio/visual form.

## Assessment Unit 1      Cross-Platform Research Portfolio

### Overview

Task 1: Research, Log Book, local print news story, Evaluation

Task 2: Research, Log Book, regional/national online story, Evaluation

This unit introduces candidates to the skills of print and online news journalism by completing two controlled assessment tasks. In Task 1, candidates research, write and present an original print news story for a local newspaper of their choice. They capture their own original photograph to accompany the story and design the page the story features on. In Task 2, candidates research, write and present an online news story for a regional or national news website of their choice. They must capture public opinion in response to their story in recorded vox pops and/or interview excerpts, which can be audio or audiovisual.

### Principal Moderator Comments

The new specification has increased candidates' opportunity to demonstrate a range of journalistic skills. This unit is similar to Unit 2 from the legacy specification but now requires two different stories (rather than two versions of one story) to be researched and presented along with the production of an original photograph and recorded vox pops. The folders submitted this year indicated a high level of engagement on behalf of both candidates and teachers although the requirement to produce evaluations at the end of each task presented some challenges in applying the mark scheme.

The new specification required the investigation of two separate stories for Task 1 and Task 2. All centres complied with this aspect of the rubric. Stories chosen were mostly suitable and engaging. Primary and secondary material was gathered and used effectively by most candidates to develop the most newsworthy aspects of the stories. In many of the folders sampled some very well-crafted pieces were in evidence with some very promising writing skills emerging. Samples illustrated mainly appropriate QWC with articles showing that audience and purpose had been key considerations. Where this was not the case it was indicated by annotation and marks awarded. Most candidates in Task 1 chose a suitable local angle for their story and captured an original photograph which enhanced the article. Candidates who chose a feature story for Task 1 tended to be distracted by the regional/national focus rather than concentrating on the local aspect.

In Task 2 a small number of candidates did not appropriately reference their vox pops for their online article. Many candidates used formatting conventions effectively throughout, demonstrating knowledge of requirements for each platform (print/online). Across the centres, most candidates developed an effective question for the vox pops, which allowed respondents an opportunity to fully articulate opinions. It should be remembered that the total montage of vox pops/interview excerpts must be a maximum of 60 seconds long and must reflect the opinions of at least four people. The requirement is that vox pops/interview excerpts need to be answers and/or reactions to one key question. A variety of different questions was included in the folders submitted by some centres and this should be avoided for future series. When some candidates exceeded the 60 seconds time limit or asked more than one question, this was often not accurately reflected in the marks awarded.

## **Log Book**

Some very detailed Log Books were submitted. It is vital that there is a clear divide in the Log Book, where both Task 1 (Local Print) and Task 2 (Online Regional/National) research material, analysis and evaluations have been included. Log Books must not include draft versions of the final article. It should be noted that while candidates can work on drafts of stories chosen, any feedback given can only be on general terms and not given specifically to individual pupils or on specific problems.

It was clear that teachers encouraged independent research and some original ideas for the stories were in evidence. While it is expected that there should be evidence that more than one story has been considered, candidates should ensure that they have allowed enough time to give sufficient attention to the research and work on details of the actual story chosen.

Log Books illustrating detailed analysis of primary and secondary research secured access to higher marks. Research need only be included in a Log Book if it is actively being used to inform the article written. Many candidates included print outs of research with no interaction at all. If research is mentioned in the final article this should be referenced in the Log Book with the source identified. Perceptive judgements regarding whether or not material should be used or omitted would secure higher marks in AO3. Many candidates offered simple comments regarding the inclusion/omission of material (Level 1). To attain marks in Levels 3 and 4 candidates must include clear comments explaining the significance, relevance and viability of the information in terms of how this information will enhance the story for the target readership.

Candidates should also explicitly include the process and analysis of the development of the final question to be asked for the vox pop, including how the 60 seconds will be prioritised. If a candidate conducts a personal survey, more marks can be secured when the results are effectively used within the article thus emphasising primary research. There was some good development of the research material that demonstrated a clear grasp of an effective news story with reasoned judgements evident in the selection of quotations for the articles.

## **Evaluations**

Evaluations should adhere to the 400 word count. Many candidates included irrelevant material. Centres are advised to refer to the exemplification on the GCSE Journalism website. Lenient marking was particularly evident in the Evaluations.

Teacher annotation almost always highlighted candidate achievement and was helpful to the moderation process. Frequently, candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the conventions and practices. However, many evaluations tended to be descriptive of the process. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid generic statements such as "I picked this topic because I enjoyed it" or "I found it hard to meet the 400 word limit". While process



can be mentioned, the primary purpose in this controlled assessment element is on the evaluation of the final outcome. In order to achieve marks at the higher levels, explanations need to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the process and outcome. To secure marks in AO1 candidates should be encouraged to showcase their knowledge of the terminology associated with the conventions and practices of Journalism. For example, when discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their final articles they should consider characteristics such as the standfirst, headline, inverted pyramid, pull quotes and how these were used to influence the reader. For higher marks in AO3, explanations regarding the effects on process and outcome should be sufficiently detailed to clearly demonstrate reasoned judgements. Evaluation guidance is available on the Journalism website.

## Assessment Unit 2      Radio and Review Portfolio

### Overview

Task 1: Radio news script, annotated booklet, Evaluation

Task 2: Research, press pack, film review, Evaluation

This unit introduces candidates to radio and review writing by completing two controlled assessment tasks. In Task 1, candidates write a radio bulletin or package script (this will alternate throughout the lifetime of the specification) in response to news material we provide in a pre-release stimulus booklet. In Task 2, candidates write a review for a film they have chosen according to a brief we provide. They must write the review for an audience and publication format that we specify. We release both tasks' stimulus booklets in September of the academic year of assessment.

### Principal Moderator Comments

The new specification has given candidates the opportunity to engage in subjective writing for the first time with the introduction of a new film review task. This unit is otherwise similar to Unit 3 from the legacy specification, retaining the radio scripting task based on a provided stimulus. Candidates evidently engaged well in the new film reviewing task, including the production of a press pack.

### Radio Script

In a majority of portfolios, candidates used appropriate and creative formatting conventions such as links, transitions and appropriately selected audio clips. Scripts on the whole were well-crafted and showed a keen awareness of audience and purpose. QWC on the whole was marked accurately. It is advised that centres encourage candidates to capitalise the main script column as per radio script style as noted in the radio stimulus exemplar. It is advised that the running total and word count should be accurately recorded on scripts. Candidates should also ensure that information being delivered by the news reader should not run alongside the audio clip. On some occasions, scripts were too short for a 3 minute bulletin; the recommendation is 480 - 540 words.

### Stimulus Material

Appropriately constructed scripts were built upon secure prioritisation and selection of the stimulus material. In the stimulus material candidates demonstrated evidence of thorough preparation and a conscious attempt to sift and plan prior to the crafting of the script. Errors were identified and accurately changed by a majority of candidates. Some candidates indicated errors without correction, thus affecting the mark awarded.

It was noted that judgements were at times illustrated only in tabular form. Centres should encourage candidates to annotate each story in the booklet with evaluative statements regarding the news values and reasons for their inclusion or omission in the final script. Candidates need only provide additional research for the 4-5 stories chosen for the script, evaluating why this material is newsworthy and how it will enhance the script for the target readership. Centres should also encourage candidates to highlight any additional secondary research material that was used to enhance the final script.

Annotation and highlighting of stimulus material with perceptive judgements about prioritisation in the script structure would have secured higher marks. Candidates who achieved marks in Level 4 demonstrated the ability to successfully select elements of the story chosen, evaluating why these particular elements suited the angle, audience and platform. A few centres did not submit the full marked up copy of the Stimulus Booklet, just submitting the 4 or 5 stories that the candidates were including. This meant that the correction of errors across the full booklet could not be assessed nor could AO2 (selection and prioritisation of material) be fully considered.

## **Film Review**

With regards to the Film Review, marks awarded for this assessment objective were considered to be largely accurate. Candidates demonstrated a keen awareness of audience and purpose, formatting their review to suit their target audience and appeared to enjoy the task. On the whole, material that was selected reflected the most newsworthy and engaging aspects of the film chosen. Centres should encourage the study of the role of a critic prior to completion of this task. Some candidates wrongly formatted their review, presenting it as a front page with a masthead. The Youth Section of a paper would be contained within the newspaper, rather than on the front page. In the review, while there was evidence of crafting from many candidates, it should be noted that the language used in the review should not be overly reliant on language used in the candidate's press pack. To demonstrate crafting there should be evidence that the candidate has produced their own, original review.

## **Press Pack**

In the Press Pack, centres' marks were aptly awarded for secondary research for AO2. Press packs included a wide range of relevant material associated with the particular film chosen. The genres selected this year provided candidates with the opportunity to select films which ensured effective engagement. Centres are being asked to note that the Press Pack should not contain a completed synopsis or any comprehensive prose that the candidate has produced in advance of the controlled assessment writing sitting. The Press Pack should only include key points which can be used to inform the writing under controlled assessment conditions. Referencing of all secondary research sources in the Press Pack is a requirement. Candidates who achieved marks in Level 4 were those who successfully included their own, personal opinions rather than relying on those from critics. In order to achieve higher marks for AO3 in the Press Pack, it is advised that centres encourage candidates to explicitly note their reasoned judgements and newsworthiness of material selected, using highlighting and annotation (as they would for the stimulus booklet in the Radio Script task).

## **Evaluations**

Marking was judged to be generous in the assessment of the evaluation in the majority of centres. Candidates demonstrated knowledge of a range of relevant conventions and practices for this platform and this was marked accordingly. However, candidates tended to emphasise a descriptive explanation of the process rather than explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the outcome. Candidates could give consideration to how effective their

final piece is in terms of its impact on the specified target audience in reference to: language choices, headline, formatting & presentational devices, image chosen and structure. On the whole QWC was marked accurately. Please note that evaluations should adhere to the 400 word count.

It would be advisable that in the future, centres link annotation comments to each assessment objective. It would be helpful to have the two tasks for Unit 2 (the Radio Script material and the Film Review material) submitted in two separate folders (e.g. Manila folders, poly pockets, project folders etc...) adhering to the centre's rank order.

All administration was completed competently.

All centres are encouraged to attend agreement trials in the autumn to view a range of level exemplars and to help with the continued standardisation of marking for next year.

## Chief Examiner's Report

### Assessment Unit 3 Industry, Theory and Practice

#### Overview

In this unit, candidates apply their knowledge and skills in an online examination environment. Candidates wear headphones and sit the examination on computer, typing their answers into the digital interface. The online environment can feature a variety of different types of new stimulus, including both audio and audiovisual material. It also features phased release material in the Newsroom section.

The online examination has **two parts**.

Part 1, which lasts 1 hour 30 minutes, draws on candidates' knowledge of the journalism industry, including law, ethics, regulation and cross-platform conventions. It includes both short structured questions and also questions requiring extended writing and analysis of a range of conventions and writing styles. Candidates also tackle practical journalistic tasks associated with editing, sub-editing and public relations (PR).

Part 2, which follows a supervised 15 minute screen break, lasts for 30 minutes. Candidates receive a pre-release news stimulus before the examination, we issue these in February. They are expected to familiarise themselves with this stimulus before the examination and will have access to a clean copy of it when the examination begins. Candidates must use this stimulus, along with further information provided during the examination, to write a news story.

#### Supervising Examiner Comments

Overall, the teachers and candidates who prepared for this series of external assessment should be commended for the effort and commitment invested. The following comments are made with a view to assisting in the preparation of future series.

The Examining Team reported that candidates seemed to have adapted very well to the new examination platform and assessment format. There were very few instances of candidates failing to respond to questions. In the Summer 2018 Chief Examiner Report, it was noted that instances of poor Quality of Written Communication (QWC) were high and it was advised that candidates should be made aware of the demand of accurate QWC even though the spell check function is not available to candidates during the examination. I am pleased to report that, in the main, there was an improvement in the QWC this series. The Examining Team appreciate that 'typos' will occur as candidates are operating under examination conditions. It is also recognised by the Examining Team that a key component

of the examination is for candidates to work under precise and challenging time conditions (to reflect the time pressures incumbent on professional journalists) and so candidates are to be commended for the level of accuracy that was achieved under these circumstances. Notwithstanding, spelling, punctuation and grammar errors that cannot be attributed to ‘typos’ were still present and these were taken into consideration when the award of marks was made to the responses in which QWC was an assessable aspect.

Section A assesses knowledge and understanding of core journalistic principles on ‘Law, Industry and Cross-Platform Conventions’. This is a new section for this specification and candidates should be made aware that responses should be as brief and as precise as possible in order to secure the available marks.

The other new section, Section D, was also approached admirably and a range of marks was awarded to this task. While some candidates had clearly made good use of the pre-release material, there were indications that many were unwilling to deviate from a prepared response in order to consider the information released within the examination setting; or, perhaps more surprisingly for this hard news task, candidates presented information in a magazine style more appropriate for an award competition (akin to Question 6 in the legacy specification).

The remaining sections have strong roots in the legacy examination style and focus. For this reason it was disappointing to note that, for example, press release formatting conventions were omitted in a large number of responses, the understanding of the purpose of a press release was not always secure and that the language of sources were analysed for Question 12.

- Q1** This question on the Freedom of Information Act was quite successful, with the majority of candidates correctly identifying the correct year.
- Q2** There were many incorrect guesses offered for this question, including aspects of OFCOM’s Broadcasting Code.
- Q3** Disappointingly, the majority of candidates were unable to secure a mark for this question despite ‘citizen journalism’ being clearly identified as a Learning Outcome in the Specification.
- Q4** A number of interesting and creditworthy examples were offered by candidates. Others erroneously offered definitions or their own views on why protecting sources is important. Candidates would be well-advised to take note of the directive of the question which asked for ‘an example’.
- Q5** Most candidates were able to secure 2 or 3 of the marks available for this question.
- Q6** This question specifically used the term ‘cross-platform journalist’ but there was a widespread misinterpretation of this key journalistic term. The Examining Team awarded marks for sub-categories of platform on this occasion but it was expected that candidates would have been able to recognise this term given that it features in the title of both Unit 3 and Unit 1 of the qualification.
- Q7** The Examining Team reported a variety of incorrect responses to this straightforward question. Candidates should be advised that one-mark questions are unlikely to require anything more than a one or two-word response.
- Q8** Overall, candidates seemed to struggle with this identification task of a news website’s technical conventions. Centres are advised to make use of the support material available on the CCEA website.

- Q9** Previous Chief Examiner Reports for the legacy specification expressed disappointment that many candidates offered headlines when caption-writing was being assessed. In this series which asked for a headline, ironically a large number of candidates offered a caption. Candidates would be well advised to read the instructions for each task carefully as, obviously, not answering the question asked is self-penalising. However, those who did offer a headline as required, generally impressed the Examining Team with their creativity. In most of these cases, full marks were only withheld for spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors.
- Q10** Composing a Press Release was an ever-present task in the legacy specification. Comments made in previous Chief Examiner Reports remain useful for centres preparing candidates for this revised specification. The responses seen this series reflect the same weaknesses that were commented on in the legacy series, namely: a lack of appropriate formatting elements; adhering rigidly to the sequence and wording of the stimulus material; significantly exceeding the word limit; adopting an inappropriate voice (e.g. 'Hi guys, why not help us out?'). Those who did include formatting elements (e.g. date, headline, notes to editors, ends, contact details) were rewarded – though it was confusing to see 'Embargoed until --/--/--' for a fundraising event for which the client hoped to raise awareness.
- Q11** Unlike the legacy specification, candidates can now receive some credit even if their choice of story did not meet the criteria for having the best news value. Most candidates did, however, correctly identify the three stories with the best news value which was very pleasing to see. Loss of marks in this question centred on two main elements: offering generalised reasons for the selection (e.g. regurgitation of Harcup and O'Neill's categories); and offering visual presentational devices for a lunchtime news bulletin on a Northern Ireland radio broadcast. Candidates who performed well in this question offered insightful reasons for the selection, identified key sources for interview or soundbites and were cognisant of the aural platform.
- Q12** The most successful responses for this question presented apt examples and analysed the reasons for the angle adopted and language choices in a comparative way. Centres are reminded that the language devices present in source quotations are not creditworthy examples of journalistic language and candidates should be advised not to comment on the alliteration or puns used in quotations – while candidates are not penalised for this approach nor can they receive credit.
- Comments on 'the broadsheet article' showed a lack of attention to the task given and references to font size, columns, etc., are not worthy of credit.
- Q13** There were some tremendous articles produced by candidates for this Section D task. Candidates who were awarded a mark in the top band fluently incorporated the most significant details of the pre-release and phased materials (most notably the eventual victor of the election) and prioritised these details in an effective manner. These candidates also recognised that this was a hard news article and adopted a voice and tone that matched the audience and central concern of the task.

Unsuccessful responses tended to adhere to the pre-release material in terms of chronology and phrasing and/or adopted an inappropriate voice for the format and news issue (e.g. 'Well, we all want to know who's gonna win – the father of two or the mother of one'). Candidates should capitalise on the opportunity to engage in research of the pre-release topic as this may increase confidence in writing about the selected issue prior to examination day. The pre-release material also affords candidates the option to identify critical aspects and to roughly prioritise (or indeed to eliminate information) that is likely to be prominent in the examination task.

## Contact details

The following information provides contact details for key staff members:

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