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NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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Level 2 Media Studies, 2014

91251 Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre

9.30 am Thursday 20 November 2014
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre.	Demonstrate in-depth understanding of an aspect of a media genre.	Demonstrate critical understanding of an aspect of a media genre.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should write an essay on ONE statement in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Merit

TOTAL

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The suggested maximum for your essay is 800 words (6–7 pages). The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Support your discussion with **detail** from at least TWO media texts and any other relevant sources.

Begin your essay here:

The candidate describes a specific media genre to be explored in the essay. Shows clear understanding of some defining elements of the genre.

Genre is a way of categorising media products such as films or TV shows by defining and associating them with other media products that share similarities and putting them into the same category/genre. This essay will be discussing the American domestic sitcom genre and how societal changes or advances influenced change in the sitcom. American domestic sitcom stands for American domestic situation comedy and it is where a group of people share the same environment in which is usually set in a family home. In the 1950s, this genre portrayed the ideal family type consisting of a money earning, working father, a domesticated, house making mother and their children children who are practically mirror images of their 'perfect' parents. However, as the years have gone on and society has advanced and changed in many different aspects of life, so has the genre and its composition of families has changed to show a lot more of a variety.

some links to societal aspects identified

The Great Depression and WWI were two of the main contributors to the establishment of the American domestic sitcoms family composition in the 1950s. The Great Depression caused mass unemployment and forced families to move in together so that they could afford to buy even just the most basic of necessities. But the end of the Great Depression brought great relief and a desire to start fresh and make their own families with their own homes. When men were sent to go off to fight in WWI, they came back having experienced much trauma and seeking comfort, love and stability. What better way to find that than to get married and start a family. These contributors were the beginnings of women and men getting married young so the woman can provide the man with all he needs.

unbalanced man.
often being on radio.

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*² in which was ~~entirely~~ and easy for viewer to emulate.

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and he can financially support his wife and children and keep his home. In 1954, ~~the first~~ "Father Knows Best" was first aired on television ^{and it} perfectly portrayed the 'ideal' family of the time. ^{*1} It consisted of Father Jim who was a real estate agent and manager of the General Insurance Company in Springfield and he was portrayed to be the soft, thoughtful father who would always be giving good advice to fix the problems that arose in the children's lives. The mother Margaret who was the "voice of reason" in the household and her job was to cook, clean and make sure everything and everyone was in order and they had three children. They lived in a nice suburb and a nice home and were considered to be a ^{nice} middle class family. The show became so popular in American pop culture ~~then~~ because of its idyllic representation of family that its episodes began to be written especially to promote certain things and in one episode called "24 hours in Tyant Land" it was used to promote ~~many~~ bonds, the comfortably created and exclusive family composition however couldn't last forever and as the years went by, Father Knows Best became a show of the past.

In the 1960s - 1970s the family composition on television life and in real life was changing. Many movements and protests for more freedom arose such as women's rights movement, civil rights movements and revolution in political, cultural and artistic aspects of life. The women's rights movements reached a great success and ended up changing the way that families were structured, how they lived and how they supported themselves. Women realized that they no longer wanted to devote their lives to getting married and starting a family as young as possible and spend the rest of their lives being a house mother. As one woman from the time put it "A woman doesn't expect much from life, she's there as a ~~body~~ ^{body} keeper - her husband or her children." Women's rights activists wanted to put a stop to this and get freedom which they did. The contraception pill was a huge step forward as it meant that ~~employees~~ there was more of an attraction for employers to hire women as they wouldn't have to suddenly take maternity leave. This meant that more ~~more~~ and more women could

mothers and wives could work and devote their lives to that. It was no longer the husband solely earning the income. Advances in the freedom of divorce legislation was also a huge contribution to the big families were structured. A law was passed that allowed men and women to file for divorce for reasons such as "irreconcilable differences" instead of having to prove that adultery or another crime had been committed in the marriage to divorce, less than a decade prior. This meant that divorce rates went up from 20% to 45% in 1975 and continued to rise steadily. Thus creating 'The Brady Bunch'. This family consisted of a working real estate agent, divorced mother Carol and ~~with~~ her three daughters who married Mark Brady, widowed architect Mark Brady, who had three sons. The two families blended together and became the Brady Bunch. A middle class family in a large, suburban, two-story home with their dog Tiger and housekeeper Alice who did all the work that not long before the show was made, Carol would have been doing herself. The director Sherman Schwartz said that he created the show after reading that 30% of United States parents have been remarried, therefore he had to create a relatable TV show with relatable characters and situations. Although these societal changes had huge impacts on the looks of an 'ideal' family, society has kept on changing and lead to an even vaster variety of family compositions.

From the 1980s laws against general discrimination and for equality were put in place. Discrimination against race, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation and more were fought for to be seen as equal. In 1980, democrats took a stance against sexual orientation in New York and this was one of the first big gay rights movements. From then until even now, progressions have been made. More American states began to outlaw discrimination against ~~sex~~ homosexuals, benefits were made available in some states for gay or lesbian ~~and their~~ employees and their partners, homosexuals were allowed to serve in the United States military, civil unions between gay and lesbian couples became legal in more and more states over the years and finally

in 2008, New York, Florida, Oregon and Arizona legalized marriages between couples of the same ~~sex~~ sex and since then more American states have been legalizing this new law. This is when Modern Family was created, in 2009. It consisted of what the directors named "modern families" and revolved around a man named Jay Pritchett and his ~~adult~~ two adult children that have families of their own. Due to general human acceptance and equality, Jay is married to a much younger woman called Gloria who has a son with ~~her~~ called Manny from a different man and Jay and her share an infant son. Jay's daughter is a stay-at-home mum who dominates the household and lives with her real estate agent husband who has self-proclaimed himself to be the "unlabeled" and her three children who cover all bases of being quite stereotypical: ditzy, ready and off beat 'modern children'. Jay's son Cameron is a lawyer and is married to his husband Mitchell and ~~they~~ together, after the law for gay couples to adopt was also passed in 2003, have an ~~adopted~~ adopted baby girl. There was some criticism by ~~some~~ critics that the characters Cameron and Mitchell didn't show enough public affection on the show so that was taken the episode "The First Kiss" was made and it certainly ~~got~~ gained a lot of praise from critics. An editor of the New York Times said "Any gay characters on TV shows, especially Cameron from Modern Family who has stereotypical gay traits of being limp wristed and having a high voice caricature would have been hatted about - and hatted about loudly, 10 years ago. But now it is to be expected on television and is seen as rather comedic which is loved even by homosexuals themselves. It's an odd kind of progress, but it's progress nonetheless."

From the family composition being what we would now think of as exclusive and basic with the father earning the money and the mother taking care of the house, her husband and her children to the family composition changing in terms of having double incomes and children from different parents creating step siblings or half siblings to what we have today. There is no family ideal anymore and the more diverse and different that family members are, the more creatively it is looked at.

and loved. But everyone is equal and deserves equal treatment as everybody else. Without the changes occurring in the family composition of the American domestic sitcom genre, it wouldn't have survived. As American society changed and American history advanced, so did the sitcom, and as long as the genre goes by, the society and television entertainment, will continue changing to fit the relatability of the people at the time.

This candidate demonstrates in-depth understanding of a specific change in a media genre and offers detailed evidence to back up their statements.

To reach Excellence the candidate needed to explore the implications of this change for society, the genre, the audience, or other media, or discussion of the complexity of the issue/change-offering different points of view or drawing conclusions about the impact of the change in some other way.