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91251



Draw a cross through the box (X) if you have NOT written in this booklet

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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 2 Media Studies 2023

91251 Demonstrate understanding of an aspect of a media genre

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 of the four statements 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 2–10 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in any cross-hatched area (DO NOT WRITE). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

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

Low Achievement

TOTAL 03

Page 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Choose ONE **media genre**.

Write an essay discussing the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of the statements below, in relation to an aspect of your chosen media genre.

STATEMENTS (Choose ONE)

1. There is always more than one reason a media genre has to change.
2. Media producers must be creative when recycling genre tropes*.
3. A media genre must appeal to audience tastes to remain profitable.
4. A media genre is successful when it satisfies audience expectations.

*trope a common or overused storytelling device

Media genre:

Select your statement: ▼

PLANNING

B *I* U |  ▼ |  ▼ |  

Heathers (1989) dir. Michael Lehmann
Jawbreaker (1995) dir. Darren Stein
Mean Girls (2004) dir. Mark Waters

ESSAY

Type your essay in the space below. You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 750–800 words. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.)

Make sure you **respond only to your chosen statement** *throughout* your essay, and support your discussion with **evidence** from a range of media texts and / or other sources, which may include your own production experience.

B *I* U | |

Heathers (1989) directed by Michael Lehmann, Jawbreaker (1995) directed by Darren Stein, and Mean Girls (2004) directed by Mark Waters, are all staples of the teen dark comedy genre. These films feature satirical depictions of high school, and a similar selection of cliches and genre tropes. The success of these three films show us how it is not particularly necessary for Media Producers to be creative when recycling genre tropes.

Heathers (1989) dir. Michael Lehmann stars Winona Ryder as the protagonist, Veronica Sawyer, an ordinary girl in her senior year of high school who falls into trouble when she becomes entangled with a trio of popular girls known as the Heathers. Her, along with her shady and obsessive boyfriend, J.D, commit a series of murders which ultimately leads to J.D planting a bomb in the boiler room of their school. The appeal of Heathers comes from the absurdity of upper-middle class high school students killing each other because of petty drama.

Jawbreaker (1995) dir. Darren Stein revolves around a trio of popular girls who accidentally kill one of their best friends during a kidnapping prank. They then go on an escapade to cover up the murder, and in the process of doing so, end up transforming one of their high school's unpopular nerdy students, Rose, into a fashionable and snarky queen bee known as "Fern".

Mean Girls (2004) dir. Mark Waters stars Lindsay Lohan as Cady Heron, a girl who moves to an American public school after being homeschooled her entire life. She becomes involved with the school's trio of popular girls, known as "The Plastics". Initially, she joins the plastics as a spy to expose them, but as the film progresses she, as her friend Janis Ian states in a fit of rage, 'becomes Plastic herself.'

All three of these films are cult classics within the genre, despite being incredibly similar to one another in their plot lines, tropes, and even recycling specific iconic scenes. For example, Mean Girls recreates a scene from Jawbreaker where the main trio are walking through the school hallway in slow motion, panning down to reveal their fashionable clothes, setting them apart from the rest of the school. The most significant recycled genre trope within these films however, is the main trio of girls and the dynamic between them and the protagonist that is indoctrinated into their group. In Heathers, the trio consists of Heather McNamara, Heather Duke, and Heather Chandler. In Jawbreaker, it's (name), (name) and Courtney Shane. And in Mean girls, it's Karen Smith, Gretchen Weiners, and Regina George. All of these trios have a leader, a jealous sidekick, and a ditzy blonde. The protagonists in each film, Veronica, Rose, and Cady, also follow a similar archetype of nerd-turned-popular.

The lack of originality and creativity within these three films hasn't been a setback for their successes, with both Heathers and Mean Girls receiving Broadway musical adaptations, and Jawbreaker receiving critical acclaim.

In fact, their repetitiveness and predictability is one of the reasons they are so beloved in the modern day. It gives the audience a sense of comfort when they know exactly what to expect, and a sense of nostalgia for something they've seen before. The success of Heathers, Jawbreaker, and Mean girls, show us that a film doesn't have to be original or creative with how it uses tropes of its genre, it simply has to be entertaining.

566 WORDS / 800 RECOMMENDED



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Achievement

Subject: Media Studies

Standard: 91251

Total score: 03

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
1 (2)	A3	The candidate provided just enough description of how a trope is recycled through three films, Heathers, Jawbreaker, and Mean Girls within the teen dark comedies genre, in response to statement 2: "Media producers must be creative when recycling genre tropes". The statement is addressed with specific description and some supporting evidence throughout. The candidate does well to challenge the statement and uses the three films to show how creative recycling was not needed. To gain an A4 grade, more detailed supporting evidence addressing the statement was needed.