

Examiners' Report/ Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2020

BTEC Level 3 Nationals in Creative Digital
Media Production

Unit 5: Specialist Subject Investigation
(31672H)



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A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade (Distinction, Merit and Pass). The grade awarded for each unit contributes proportionately to the overall qualification grade and each unit should always be viewed in the context of its impact on the whole qualification.

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When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark should be for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

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Each test we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each test, because then it would not take into account that a test might be slightly easier or more difficult than any other.

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Unit 5: Specialist Subject Investigation (31672H).

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	9	19	32	45

Introduction

Unit 5: Specialist Subject Investigation is mandatory for the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Creative Digital Media Production. Learners are provided with a Set Task Brief (Part A) five weeks before the assessment period directing them to conduct research into a specialist subject topic. They are required to focus on a contemporary specialist media issue or debate detailed in the Set Task Brief and use this as a starting point to undertake investigations into it using a range of primary and secondary research methods and techniques. This preparatory stage includes 12 hours independent preparation and 6 hours undertaken in monitored conditions.

The assessment period includes the preparatory stage prior to a two hour period of supervised assessment where learners will respond to the activities and stimulus material provided in part B.

There are two assessment opportunities each year and May 2018 was the first external assessment opportunity for this unit. The January 2020 stimulus material required learners to research conduct research into the impact of violent content in media products within a particular media sector.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Learners responded well to the focus of the stimulus material; responses indicated that learners engaged with the topic and were able to access a wide range of relevant research sources. However, many learners chose to conduct research into the topic as it related to the games sector, even though their main area of study may have been related to a different media sector. This may have been because learners felt that they had a general knowledge or interest in the topic as it related to games, but this resulted in a number of responses relying on unsupported opinions, which may have disadvantaged those learners.

Most learners responded effectively to question 1 which required them to use the research to respond to a statement relating to the topic, but responses to questions 2 to 5 often lacked detail or, for questions 3 to 5, were unsupported by references to the research undertaken.

Primary research conducted by learners was generally purposeful and relevant, but in many cases lacked consideration of the validity of the information being obtained, e.g. reference to suitability of sample sizes and demographics. Higher performing learners demonstrated a clear purpose and focus to the research they had undertaken.

Individual Questions

The following section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of learner responses and a brief commentary of why the responses gained the marks they did. This section should be considered with the live external assessment and corresponding mark scheme.

Activity 1

Analyse the significance of the depiction of violence within a specific media sector with reference to the issues/debates mentioned in the statement:

“Violence depicted in media products is increasing and becoming more graphic. It could be argued that exposure to this violence makes young people more likely to commit violent acts”.

You should refer to the research carried out in the stimulus material and/or your own research, making reference to the validity of the sources used.

For this activity, higher performing learners focused clearly on the statement, referring not only to the stimulus material, but to their own research findings, to support a well-reasoned response.

Less developed responses often simply summarised the information which had been provided in the stimulus material, and identified key themes within it, but provided little in terms of interpretation of the data or discussion of the media debates. Some learners summarized their own findings, but without relating them to the statement, which led to them then duplicating this in their response to Activity 3.

The higher performing learners typically presented a detailed and specific response to the statement with points well supported by reference to the stimulus material and/or their own research, demonstrating a clear understanding of the relationship between the research and the statement. Learners at this level would also typically make judgements about the validity of data, e.g. that it was outdated, or was from a reputable source, though these often still lacked in depth consideration, e.g. “the source of the information is from the NHS website, which is a well-respected organisation so the facts must be accurate”.

The following response gained 13 marks out of 15. It clearly discusses the significance of the topic and refers to different elements of the stimulus material and the learner's own research to develop arguments to directly respond to the statement provided. Reference is made to the validity of some of the materials, though this is not always detailed or well expressed.

(15)
In this question, I will be debating whether violence in film and television causes young people to commit violent acts.

A report released by the NHS stated that a small study was carried out which analysed the brain activity and automatic nervous response of boys aged 14 to 17 years old whilst they were watching videos that contained aggression. The results found "that sweating and brain response to moderate ~~violence~~ aggression reduced over time, but response to milder scenes did not change as much" - (NHS.UK/news). This implies that by watching violent content often, it can desensitize the viewer which in turn leads them to think violence is normal and make them more

likely to carry it out themselves. This point is valid due to it being released by the NHS which is an organisation that must release facts that have been thoroughly researched to the public. Additionally, this study claiming that teenagers can become desensitised is supported by my primary research where I released a survey and some of the questions showed violent images which were to be rated out of 5 depending on how shocking the participants found them. For the majority of the violent images, the participants ~~rated them~~ a (at 73%) rated them a $\frac{3}{5}$, meaning that they did not feel affected. This shows that audiences have become desensitised to violence due to it consistently being shown in television and films, hence, making people perceive violence as normal.

In contrast to this point, a report states that "therapists use desensitization techniques to help people deal with problems like phobias."* This suggests that violence displaying attributes like blood and gore can help people get over their phobia of such things by making themselves become desensitised to it. Although the use of therapists can make this point valid, it is not

completely because it is not from a well trusted source. ~~the~~ * (Howstuffy works.com). In this instance, violence in film and television is having a positive impact on peoples lives.

Many different cases have displayed that violence in film and television can lead to violent 'copy cat' behaviour in young people. This is where someone who has watched a film ~~and~~ has decided to recreate the events in real life. For example, 'The Sun' released a report about how a show called 'Dexter' inspired ~~17~~ 17 year old Andrew Conley to strangle ~~his~~ "his" 10-year old brother, and ~~then~~ dump ~~the~~ the body in the park. A few weeks after the killing he told his girlfriend that he wanted to be like the 'TV murderer' - (The Sun). This incident shows that violence in film and television can plant ideas in young people's minds and cause them to recreate similar violence in their own lives. This is further supported by the stimulus which reports ~~that~~ ^{that} "the National Institute of Mental Health stated that children seeing violence on television may be more likely to behave aggressively to other

(Total for Activity 1 = 15 marks)

Question
Number

1

people" - (Stimulus: 1982).

In conclusion, although violence in film and television can be useful for helping phobias and is a source of entertainment, it is shown by research that it can plant a seed of violence in the viewer's subconscious and can lead to aggressive tendencies such as anti-social behaviour and ^{allow} physical violence to be more prominent.

The following response gained 5 marks out of 15. The response summarises some primary and secondary research conducted by the learner and relates the findings to the statement provided. Though the response demonstrates some understanding of the topic, it provides little interpretation of these findings and does not effectively develop or support the arguments relating to graphic content desensitizing the audience and leading to antisocial behaviour. The response does not make reference to the validity of the sources as required by the activity.

Activity 1)

I think that violent video games don't make people more aggressive but desensitise them to violence in real life, from my own investigation in to this topic out of the twenty people how filled out my question air Sayed that 78.7% say that video don't make people more violent and 21.3 were unsure, this shows that the major majority say that there are no found links between violence and violent games but there are links to increase antisocial behavior though desensitise, here is a quote from the Science direct media violence page "meta-analyses show that media-violence viewing is consistently is associated with higher levels of antisocial behavior, ranging from trivial to the serous with many consequently outcomes between", this links to 'Violence depicted in media products is increasing and becoming more graphic. It could be argued that exposure to this violence makes young people more likely to commit violent acts.' Seeing as the more graphic video game art and realistic will desensitise the player to violent acts making it more like you not notes violent behavior due to them seeing it as normal.

Activity 2

Justify the choice of primary research that you used to investigate the key areas of the set task topic within a specific media sector.

For this activity, less developed responses typically

- Identified the types of research conducted without either;
 - Explaining the reasons why they selected specific research methods, or;
 - Linking the research to the set task topic.
- Research was typically limited to a questionnaire and interviews/focus group.
- A lack of explanation of the reasons for the choices and how these linked to the topic prevented learners from being awarded marks in the higher grade bands.
- Learners often included information more relevant to activity 3, i.e. relating to the research findings which should be strongly discouraged as it is not rewardable for this Activity.

More developed responses included a wider variety of research types, including screenings or participation in game play prior to focus groups, and evaluated in detail the reasons for choosing them. The rationale given for the choice often included information re. the validity of the research and, even though this was not specifically required by the question, it was rewarded as part of the rationale for the choice.

The following response gained 13 marks out of 15. It clearly identifies that primary research has been undertaken purposefully and demonstrates how this links to the topic. The response also provides a clearly justified rationale, evaluating the reasons for the choices and referring to the validity of results generated by the methods used.

To investigate whether there is a correlation between violence in film and TV to the increase in real life violence; I carried out various forms of Primary and Secondary Research. Both of these gave me a helpful variety of quantitative and qualitative data.

Beginning with Primary Research, this is the process of you carrying out your own formulated, independent research, for this investigation I conducted a questionnaire and focus group. A questionnaire / survey is an ~~effective~~ effective method of research because it is: quick and cheap, accessible, easy to summarise as it's quantitative and you can tailor the questions to reach your ultimatum. For me personally, the survey helped me discover what people perceive to be a showing of violence. The top response was shooting and killing which allows me to infer if this is visible to a child, it would be very inappropriate for their mental health. I was also able to learn how people feel when watching violence with a more detailed and experimental question. I got my respondents to watch two clips sourced from movies, both violent, but one non-fiction and the other one

fiction. This allowed me to gather a mix of contrasting opinions. For the fiction movie, 'Kill Bill' by Quentin Tarantino, my respondents felt uncomfortable, shocked and queasy. In contrast to Hack Saw Rize, a war film based off true events, people felt tense, empathetic and thought it was eye opening. This data, because it is not numerical is classed as qualitative because it is more detailed and can be used for justifications. In this booklet, you will find I used this data to define what people consider 'acceptable' violence, linking it to the other question about, 'If you are/were a parent, would you allow your children to watch graphic content.' This was crucial information which helped me form a balanced conclusion.

The negatives of a survey is that the reliability of them can be questioned. This is because they are open to bias questioning, because the respondents are anonymous they may not answer truthfully and there was not enough of a large scale sample size. However, I feel that for your own needs, a survey is effective if you trust your methodology.

Another type of Primary Research I conducted was a Focus Group. This is where you gather a sample of people for an in-depth discussion into a topic area.

This provides you with qualitative data such as quotes which assisted me personally ~~with~~ with backing up my arguments, with fellow opinions. The down-sides to this is that again the validity could be questioned because I did not have a large enough sample size and all the respondents were peers investigating the same subject. It is also quite a time consuming process but this didn't effect me.

One final method of research I carried out was secondary research. This is where you search the internet and archives in order to find statistical, worded, visual information from other sources which are considered more reliable than yourself. For the purpose of this investigation I found out how media violence has impacted society, producers and business. I also discovered some case studies to back up my finding such as the Star City arena brawl in Birmingham. The benefits of secondary research is that it's quick and easy to gather, qualitative and quantitative data and it is more valid than your own. However, the negatives one is that the research isn't dedicated to my study like my survey was. The internet can also not always be verified therefore the information you're sourcing could be invalid or outdated.

(Total for Activity 2 = 15 marks)

The following response gained 4 marks out of 15. The response describes the nature of the primary research used and basic explanation is given relating to the benefits of the method chosen. Simplistic reference is made to the choice of media sector but there are no links made between the choice of research and its relationship to the topic.

I chose to do a questionnaire as my primary research as it allows for many people to be able to answer it and it was easy to get results from. The reason this was easy to use as the way to collect my answers was to share it around people in large groups this allowed the process to be quick and simple. The questionnaire is biased towards videogames as the people that completed the questionnaire were people who played videogames. The questionnaire results allowed me to create a table showing of all the results easily I used this table to create a fancy diagram.

Activity 3

Explain the conclusions you have drawn from your research and evaluate how these support and/or challenge the findings of the stimulus material. You should make reference to your research sources to support your conclusions.

For this activity, less developed responses typically;

- Summarised learner findings with a brief conclusion but this was often skewed by the limited nature of the research undertaken, e.g. “all three young people interviewed agreed that playing games did not make them commit violent acts”.
- The research was clearly related to topic within the stimulus material but learners at this level did not typically comment how their own findings supported or challenged the findings of the stimulus material; if any comments of this kind were made they were limited to simple generic statements such as “my findings disagree with the stimulus material that games make people commit violent acts”.

Higher performing learners provided detailed information of the information collected, including both quantitative and qualitative research. Learners at this level referred to both primary and secondary sources in detail. They drew clear and logical conclusions from this research and made frequent, direct and logical comparisons between their conclusions and those of the stimulus material. The most developed responses often included citations within their responses or, where they did not, made detailed reference to the specific element of research that supported their conclusions.

The following response gained 14 marks out of 15. The response uses quotes and statistics drawn from the learner’s own research to develop effective chains of reasoning. While it does make relevant comments relating to how the learner research supports/challenges the findings of the stimulus material, these would have benefitted from more in depth justifications.

The stimulus material provided presents a multitude of information on not just video games, but movies, tv shows, books and social media, and paints them in an overall graphic and violent light. It

also provides multiple sources that state that the violence is too intense and has a negative effect on people who experience it. However, having conducted my own research in response to the stimulus, I have drawn a multitude of conclusions that may actually differ to the information presented in the stimulus material. First of all, the American Psychological Association stated in 2015 that 'Research demonstrates a consistent relation between violent video game use and heightened aggressive behaviour'. On top of this data being obviously, severely outdated, my own research into the subject demonstrates nothing of the sort, however there are a few facts and statistics that some people may use to support this theory. First of all, it's certainly true that video games that are inherently violent make up a huge part of the market, with Shooter games having been over a quarter of the total video games sales in 2017, 25.9% specifically as stated on video games infographics on Videogames.procon.org. While this is not an academic site, the statistics do tend to match with the typical knowledge of popular games, as games such as Call of Duty and Fortnite, which are shooters, are some of the most popular in the world. It is also true that over time, the number of children playing video games has only increased, the percentage of US gamers among the general +13 population having gone from 58% in 2013 to 66% in 2018 (once again from Videogames.procon.org). However, neither of these statistics demonstrate that violence in games affects people negatively. Another piece of evidence I extracted from Videogames.procon.org actually provides a graph that illustrates that from 1998 to 2015, while video game sales went up, violence and crime offences went down. This is conclusive evidence that video games do not cause violent crimes, and if anything, possibly decrease it. I also carried out some primary research that would support and explain why this has happened over the years. Kyle (18) stated that violent video games are 'a way to vent' and take out your anger on, with other such as David (17) agreeing, and stating that 'I'm much less likely to kill someone if I can do it in a video game'. Now as morbid as that may seem, it actually draws us to the conclusion that the reason the advancement of video games has helped decrease the levels of crime in young adults and children is because it gives them an alternative method to exert their aggression. Video games provide a virtual world where the player can, for the most part, do whatever they feel like. This means that they are able to express any negative feelings they may possess that day into a virtual setting where there is no real consequence to their actions, which is a much better alternative to behaving violently and aggressively in the real world. In short, we can draw the conclusion that this if anything, violent video games are not *causing* violent behaviours in young people, they are helping them get *rid* of these feelings because they take place somewhere where there are no consequences to their actions. However, having drawn the conclusion that video games help get rid of violent behaviours, there is the question of where do the feelings come from in the first place. Well, everyone has aggressive feelings some of the time, but some of the participants of my primary research focus groups actually had something to say about that. Jack (18) suggested the idea that "it's the parent's fault if the children are too violent, because they've been exposed to too much of it". David (17) agreed, stating: "Surely it's real life violence that causes people to be violence, like people being beaten by their parents, people who have had a bad upbringing". While these are simply the opinions of young people who may be biased towards games, it's clear that the opinion that some parents are to blame is not just one shared by the young adults themselves, as Common-Sense Media believed that "Children who are exposed to multiple risk factors, including substance abuse, aggression and conflict at home, and also consume violent media are more likely to behave aggressively". While not exactly an academic article, given that these opinions match those of young people I have interviewed personally, I am more encouraged to believe that these opinions are valid and reliable, and hold truth within them. Overall, the stimulus material states that the use of violent video games leads to violent behaviour, and while there are some sources to suggest that violent video games may have *some* contribution to aggressive behaviour in young people, from the research I have conducted, I have concluded that the

qualitative data gathered in the stimulus material is incorrect, and that violent video games are much better at resolving violent feelings rather than causing them. I also conclude that the violent behaviours and/or feelings that many people associate with video games are actually caused by real life issues, such as a large amount of exposure to problems with parents, or general violence in the real world.

The following response gained 4 marks out of 15. The response documents the findings of the learner's own research. The response includes basic comments about how research supports the conclusions of the stimulus material but the reasoning behind the arguments put forward is limited, leading to superficial conclusions.

The conclusions that I got from my research is that 53% of the 12 people I asked played video games with a rating of 18 and that 30% of people had video games with an age rating of 16. This tell us that more people play older video games. Which has violence in it.

There was 46% of the 12 people that have more than 40 video games that contain violence with 23% of people that had 0 to 10 games that had violence in it. This tells us that more people play video games that have violence in them this means that violence is on the increase.

The conclusion of my evidence is that they support the stimulus material as it suggests that violent video games are increasing in popularity causing more violence to appear but as the questionnaire is biased towards the videogames this might cause the conclusion to be wrong as there isn't a mix of views from people who don't play videogames.

Activity 4

What changes would you anticipate in the production of future media products in your specific media sector in response to the research findings? You should refer to your own research and/or the stimulus material.

For this activity, less developed responses often began the response with phrase like "In my opinion..." and went on to give a suggestion that could be logically derived from the stimulus material, but without developed chains of reasoning to support this. A typical example would contain statement such as "In my opinion PEGI ratings need to be more strictly enforced to stop children playing violent games".

More developed responses used specific and diverse elements from both their own research and the stimulus material to support a logical argument for the changes they suggested. For example, rather than just using past performance to predict future changes, they would draw upon research from a number of sources, often including their own secondary research, to provide a detailed argument supporting their conclusions.

The following response gained 8 marks out of 10. The response makes sustained reference to research sources to develop clear, and mostly effective chains of reasoning.

In response to my findings, I believe that violent films may begin to only be distributed on ~~and~~ DVDs or online streaming services because of the conflicting opinions violent films create when shown in cinemas. For example, the film 'Blue Story' "had been withdrawn from Vue cinemas following an incident of a violent clash at a Vue cinema in Star City, Birmingham which ~~saw~~ saw youths brandishing machetes and police officers injured".* This violent event created a moral panic as to whether films like this should be shown in the cinema, hence, why it would be more controlled if the videos were only on Dvd or online. *~~(Heart.co.uk)~~

Another prediction to future television and film content is that ~~films~~ they will become more violent. ~~this in my survey~~ In my focus group one of my participants stated that "Violence is only going to become more graphic because people quickly become desensitised to it. Therefore, the video content will need to become

increasingly more violent in order for people to still be affected." This is further supported by the stimulus material which states that in 2013 "the American Academy of Pediatrics found that violence in films has more than doubled since 1950". ~~More~~ This is a valid source because it was carried out by qualified health experts. By having supporting primary research and stimulus data, it makes this prediction of increasing violence in television and film more reliable.

The following response gained 2 marks out of 10. Although the response relates to the topic of the stimulus material, the suggestions are not supported by appropriate reference to research sources.

The changes that I would suggest to make when they create new games is to not have as much graphic violence as they do now. And to make games that are 18 harder for people to buy as the research that I concluded that 7 out of 12 people had 18 years old games.

The changes that I would anticipate that games would change are the amount of realism that is in the violence so the fights would have a graphic feeling to it rather than a realism look to it this would reduce the amount of violent thoughts.

Activity 5

Explain what further research could be conducted into this topic and how this would help to gain a greater understanding of the impact on young people of the depiction of violence in your specific media sector.

For this activity, less developed responses typically described a number of additional research activities, often referring to what they themselves could have done differently, e.g. "I could have given out more questionnaires to a wider range of ages". Where they referred to professional research, responses lacked specific suggestions for research, e.g. "More people should be interviewed to get a wider range of opinions".

The best performing learners made logical arguments which follow on from their previous responses to support the reason for further research into specific areas of the topic.

The following response gained 9 marks out of 10. The response provides effectively supported recommendations for future research, justified by the use of consistent reference to the learners own relevant research but would benefit from more detailed discussion of the specific nature of the proposed research.

further research into case studies revolving around the psychological and biological studies on how violent videos ~~make~~ impact young people would provide a more accurate results on the real reasons behind violent crimes. It is evident in my secondary research that young children respond more sensitively to violence than adults. At Guizzo Marche Central in Montreal "dozens of children were left in tears after a terrifying horror film" was accidentally played. The scene shown to them displayed a woman drowning her child. This violent act left the children terrified which implies that over the years something changes psychologically in a child's ~~brain~~ so that when they are older they can watch similar violent scenes without crying. Therefore, further research into the psychology behind it would prove as more valid evidence rather than my own speculations on what causes this mental change within a person. (heart.co.uk)

Another area that further research could be conducted would be regarding how much violent

television and film content do young people consume yearly ~~and~~, has the consumption increased over the years and ~~the~~ how this correlates with the ~~rising~~ rise or fall in violent crimes. This data should be researched in bulk so that the statistics are accurate and show how people from different areas and socio-economic groups respond to violent media. This research will be able to show whether violence in film and television affects everyone similarly or if people in certain areas ~~to~~ respond more aggressively than others. If this is the case then it ~~was~~ could suggest that it isn't necessarily violent videos that make people aggressive, but rather their upbringing and the environmental factors that surround them.

The following response gained 3 marks out of 10. The response provides relevant but superficial suggestions for further research without providing an appropriate rationale in support of these suggestions.

Further research I could have done was to find out all the numbers on what people are getting so aggressive and for looking at how many hours they are spending on the media to be affected by the violence. Also I could have found out about the different things that 16 – 19 are doing to get aggressive, see how much time they have off of the media during a day or a week, look at what the main effect is and how it is affecting them in the media and everyday things. I could have looked at what ways 16 – 19 year olds are doing to relax and take the aggressive out of them because the balance between people getting aggressive is different for different people. Another thing to help me gain more understanding with this research would be to see how many people are getting the different types of aggressiveness for the different ages like for the 16 year olds it could be a little amount of people getting angry and for the 19 year olds it could be a lot of people getting angry and the media and getting aggressive.

Summary

Based on responses seen in this session, centres and learners are offered the following advice.

Learners should:

- Carefully consider their choice of specialist sector prior to undertaking research.
- Respond clearly and specifically to the statement given in Activity 1.
- Where required by the question ensure that their responses show consideration of the validity of their own research, methods and techniques, and/or those used in the stimulus material, e.g. whether information is current, appropriateness of samples sizes and demographics, etc.
- Clearly identify the specific purpose and focus of their own research in Activity 2.
- Clearly identify the research methods and sources they have used, and discuss these in detail in Activity 2, justifying the selection of each source/method and its relationship/relevance to the topic.
- Make clear comparisons between their own research and the stimulus material in Activity 3 and specifically discuss how their own research supports/challenges the findings of the stimulus material.
- Clearly justify all conclusions made with logical chains of reasoning and reference to the research undertaken, particularly within Activities 3, 4 and 5.

Learners should avoid:

- Relying heavily on their own opinions and prior knowledge rather than research.
- Discussing the findings of their own research within the response to Activity 2, these should be discussed as part of Activity 3.

