

Eduqas GCSE FILM Studies: COMPONENT 1-3 KEY ELEMENTS KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Film Studies Key Elements Knowledge Organiser

Shots:

Establishing shot - a shot usually involving a distant framing that shows the spatial relations among the important figures, objects and setting in a scene.

Close-up (& variations) - a framing in which the scale of the object shown is relatively large; most commonly a person's head seen from the neck up, or an object of a comparable size that fills most of the screen.

Medium shot - a framing in which the scale of the object shown is between a close up and a long shot. On a person this would usually be from the waist up.

Long shot - a framing in which the scale of the object shown is small, a standing figure would appear nearly the height of the screen.

Aerial shot - a moving shot from above looking down.

Point of view - a shot taken with the camera placed approximately where the character's eyes would be, showing what the character would see; usually cut in before or after a shot of the character looking.

Two-shot - two figures within the frame.

Angles:

High angle - shot from above making the subject look powerless.

Low angle - shot from below making the subject look powerful.

Eye level - shot from a neutral angle

Canted angle / Dutch angle - off centre and unbalanced.

What is cinematography?

Cinematography is the art of photography and camerawork in film-making. A cinematographer is the man/woman responsible for the lighting / camera choices in a film. They are accountable to the DOP—Director of Photography—who is in charge of all the cinematographers working on the project.

How to describe the cinematography in a film:

You should be able to discuss the angle, shot, framing and movements of all camera choices made as well as the lighting choices. Below is a correct example:

Identified Techniques:

- Eye level angle
- mid shot
- Static (no movement)
- Centrally/tightly framed
- Natural soft lighting

How to turn your observations into a sentence:

'The cinematographer has used a static, eye level, mid shot that is tightly framed with natural, soft lighting. This shot suggests / connotes / is significant because...'

Lighting:

"Hard" light - creates sharp shadows (Chiaroscuro/Low Key)

"Soft" light - creates less of a contrast between light and dark. (High Key)

Frontal lighting - eliminates shadows

Side lighting - shadow from the side

Back lighting - silhouettes (or eliminates shadows when used with other lights)

Under lighting - shadow from below

Top lighting - shadow from above

Three point lighting - key light, fill light and back light used to illuminate the subject to create depth.

Movements:

Pan - a camera movement with the camera body turning to the right or left. On screen it produces horizontal movements.

Practical extension - a camera movement in which the camera is kept at an equal distance to the subject.

Crane - a change in framing accomplished by having the camera above the ground & moving through the air in any direction.

Tilt - a camera movement with the camera body swivelling upward or downward on a stationary support. It produces a mobile framing that scans the space vertically.

Tracking - a mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally.

Dolly - a camera support with wheels, used in making tracking shots.

Zoom/reverse zoom - a close up rapidly from a long shot to a close up, and vice versa. The mobile frame does not alter the aspects or positions of the objects filmed.

Steadicam - a gyroscopically balanced body rig patented by Steadicam which a camera can be attached to generate smooth hand-held shots.

Hand-held - the use of the camera operator's body as a camera support, either holding it by hand or using a harness.

Framing:

Rule of Thirds - a photography technique used to help with framing / composition of shots.

Framing - the use of the edges of the film frame to select and to compose what will be visible onscreen.

Centrally framed - the object is in the centre of the screen.

Tightly framed - there is no/little room around the object. It fills the screen.



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Transitions:

- Straight Cut** - In film making, the joining of two strips of film together with a splice. 2. In the finished film, an instantaneous change from one framing to another.
- Fade-in** - a dark screen that gradually brightens as a shot appears. **Fade-out** - a shot gradually darkens as the screen goes black. Occasionally fade-outs brighten to pure white or to a colour.
- Wipe** - a transition between shots in which a line passes across the screen, eliminating the first shot as it goes and replaces it with the next one.
- Dissolve** - a transition between two shots during which the first image gradually disappears while the second image gradually appears
- Match cut** - creates a cut between two shots that show graphically similar images.
- Cutaway / Motivated Cut** - a specific cut that creates dramatic irony by drawing the audience's attention to something particular within the scene.
- Crosscutting** - where the editor alternates between two different narratives.
- Jump Cut** - an abrupt transition from one scene to another.


Editing Pace:

- Fast pace** - if there are frequent cuts - with each shot lasting for a minimal amount of time - then the editing pace is fast.
 - Slow pace** - if there are infrequent cuts - with each shot lasting between 3-10 seconds - then the editing pace is slow.
- Top tip:** count how many transitions take place in ten seconds to gauge the editing pace.

What is editing?

Film editing is technical part of the post-production process of filmmaking. The **film editor** works with the raw footage, selecting shots and combining them into sequences which create a finished motion picture. Film editing is often referred to as the "invisible art" because when it is well-practiced, the viewer can become so engaged that he or she is not aware of the editor's work.

How to describe the editing in a film:
You should be able to discuss the pace, transitions, visual effects and montage / continuity features (as appropriate) . Below is a correct example:



Identified Techniques:

- Straight cuts
- Slow pace
- Eyeline match
- Shot / reverse shot
- The Kuleshov Effect

How to turn your observations into a sentence:

'The editor has used a series of slow paced straight cuts in this tension sequence. There are continuity editing techniques, like an eyeline match and reverse shots, to create realism alongside the Kuleshov effect to help convey the character's fear of the policeman...'

Continuity Editing:

This is a style of editing that requires the director to try to make the film as realistic as possible. This means the film is trying to recreate what the world around us is and trying to make it easier on the audience to comprehend and understand the action happening on screen. If continuity editing is done well, then the audience forget the editor's role as the film's narrative flows smoothly. Below are some features of continuity editing to create realism:

Eyeline Match / 180 Degree Rule / Match on Action / Establishing Shots / POV Shots / Diegetic Sound / Shot and Reverse Shots.

Montage Editing:

The Kuleshov Effect - The Kuleshov effect is a film editing (montage) effect demonstrated by Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov in the 1910s and 1920s. It is a mental phenomenon by which viewers derive more meaning from the interaction of two sequential shots than from a single shot in isolation.



Montage Editing - is a technique in film editing in which a series of short shots are edited into a sequence to condense space, time, and information.



Thinking Point:

To what extent does the editor have a role in the construction of the film's narrative?



Visual Effects:

- Superimposition** - the exposure of more than one image on the same film strip.
- CGI (computer generated imagery)** - is the application of computer graphics to create or contribute to images in film.
- Post-Production** - work done on a film or recording after filming or recording has taken place.

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Sound Techniques:

Synchronous sound - sound that is matched temporally with the movements occurring in the images, as when dialogue corresponds to lip movements.

Asynchronous sound - sound that is not matched temporally with the movements occurring in the image.

Ambient sound - natural sounds that occur in the scene's setting.

Dialogue - speech.

Voiceover - narration in a film not accompanied by a synchronised image of the speaker forming the words.

Direct address - when characters speak directly to the camera i.e. the audience.

Sound bridges - any sound/s that continue from one shot to another. Sound bridges help create a smooth transition from one shot to another, to reduce the disruptive tendencies of editing. In this way the sound is said to be enhancing the continuity of the film.

Motif - a 'theme' or associated sound with a place or character.

Hyper real / Pleonastic - exaggerated sounds.

ADR (automated dialogue replacement) - dubbing dialogue in post-production.

Foley - sound created by a Foley artist in post-production.

Vococentrism - The privilege of the voice over all other sonic elements.

What is film sound?

Sound is a vital film making component. The sound editor is in charge of choosing the right sound effects, dialogue, ADR, Foley effects, and music — as well as assembling all the pieces into the film's final cut. Once all the elements are in place, the next step is mixing and blending levels.

How to describe sound in a film:

You should be able to discuss the music, sound techniques and diegetic / non diegetic elements from a film clip.



Identified Techniques:

- Diegetic / Ambient rain drops.
- Associative, up-tempo music.
- Sound bridge between two scenes.
- Synchronous sound.
- Foley footsteps.

How to turn your observations into a sentence:

'The sound designer has used a sound bridge to blend two scenes together. There are layers of diegetic sounds—ambient rain fall, singing etc.—alongside non-diegetic, associative music played in parallel to the characters' movements...'



Boom Operator

A **boom operator** is an assistant of the production sound mixer. The principal responsibility of the boom operator is microphone placement, usually using a boom pole with a microphone attached to the end (called a boom mic). Their aim being to hold the microphone as close to the actors or action as possible without allowing the microphone or boom pole to enter the camera's frame

Thinking Point:

Watch a key scene from a film you are studying twice: once with the sound off and once with the sound on. What difference does the sound make?



ADR

Diegetic or Non Diegetic?

Diegetic - any sound that has an onscreen source belonging to the action.

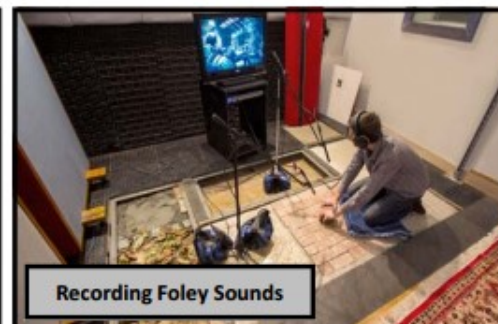
Non-diegetic - any sound that does not have an onscreen source & characters do NOT hear it e.g. some voiceovers, music.

Music:

Associative - is a style of music that evokes emotional and physical reactions using melody and rhythm.

Parallel - sound that complements the image track. Sound & image seem to reflect each other.

Contrapuntal - sound that does not complement or fit with the image track.



Recording Foley Sounds

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Mise-en-scène:

Setting - anywhere the film's action takes place.



Props - anything movable or portable on a stage or a set, distinct from the actors, scenery, costumes, and electrical equipment.



Hair / Make up – the way a character is presented physically.



Costume - a set of clothes in a style typical of a particular country or historical period.



What is mise-en-scène?

is an expression used to describe the design aspects of a theatre or film production, which essentially means "visual theme" or "telling a story"—both in visually artful ways through storyboarding, cinematography and stage design, and in poetically artful ways through direction. It is also commonly used to refer to multiple single scenes within the film to represent the film. *Mise-en-scène* has been called film criticism's "grand undefined term".

How to describe the mise-en-scène of a film:

You should describe the overall style of mise-en-scene (using adjectives) and then identify the settings / props / hair & make up / costumes used and the effect these have on character and story.



Identified Techniques:

- ← The mise-en-scene is expressive.
- ← Setting: car garage.
- ← Props: car.
- ← Hair / make up: stylised and retro.
- ← Costume: vibrant jump suits

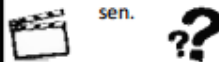
How to turn your observations into a sentence:

'The mise-en-scene in the dream sequence is expressive. The expressive mise-en-scene helps to show how far Danny's ideal vision is from his reality. His costume—the only T-Bird dressed in black—connotes his superiority as it juxtaposes with the simplistic white setting...'

Thinking Point:

In a film you are studying, how many mise-en-scène changes are made?

Mise-en-scène is pronounced mee-zon-sen.



What you should ask about the mise-en-scène:

- How far does mise-en-scène try to convey realism?
- How do settings contribute to the themes and issues a film raises?
- How do props contribute to character and/or narrative development in the films you've studied?
- How can costume and make-up convey character?
- How do the aspects of mise-en-scène help to generate spectator responses?

Describing mise-en-scène:

Before breaking down the mise-en-scène into its four categories, you should describe the overall style of the mise-en-scene using adjectives. Below are some ways you could describe a film's mise-en-scène:

Naturalistic - if described as naturalistic, the film's mise-en-scène would be realistic and relatable.

Expressive - if described as expressive, the film's mise-en-scène would be theatrical and unrealistic.

Simplistic - if described as simplistic, the film's mise-en-scène would be simple and ordinary.

Cluttered - if described as cluttered, the film's mise-en-scène would be very busy with a lot to take in.

Who is responsible for the mise-en-scène?

In essence, everybody who works on a film is, in part, responsible for the look of the film. Below are a list of people who have a more explicit visual role in film making:

Key make-up artist - The key makeup artist is the department head that answers directly to the director and production designer. They are responsible for planning makeup designs for all leading and supporting cast. Their department includes all cosmetic makeup, body makeup and if special effects are involved, the key make-up artist will consult with a special effects makeup team to create all prosthetics and SFX makeup in a production.

Location Scout - Does much of the actual research, footwork and photography to document location possibilities. Often the location manager will do some scouting himself, as well as the assistant location manager.

Costume Designer - the costume designer is responsible for all the clothing and costumes worn by all the actors that appear on screen. They are also responsible for designing, planning, and organizing the construction of the garments down to the fabric, colours, and sizes. The costume designer works closely with the director to understand and interpret "character", and counsels with the production designer to achieve an overall tone of the film. In large productions, the costume designer will usually have one or more assistant costume designers.

Propmaker - the propmaker, as the name implies, builds the props that are used for the film. In US jurisdictions, propmakers are carpenters who build props and sets, and are often technicians skilled in wood and metalwork.

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Three Act Structure:

Act 1 - the beginning of the screenplay. In Act 1 the screenwriter setups the themes and settings whilst introducing the protagonist (good guy). Act 1 should create a problem for the protagonist and establish the antagonist (bad guy).

Plot Point 1: The Inciting Incident - this turns the story in a new direction. It is the cause of drama and changes the protagonist's world, leaving him/her with a journey to take. The inciting incident sets up raises the stakes for the protagonist and propels the film into Act 2.

Act 2 - is at least ½ the entire story. This is where the protagonist struggle to achieve the solution to the problem created by the inciting incident. There are further complications shown through cycles of struggles and complications called reversals

Plot Point 2 - the "climactic turning point". The protagonist's quest reaches critical mass and a possible solution is presented. This should feature the biggest cliff-hanger: will the protagonist win or lose?

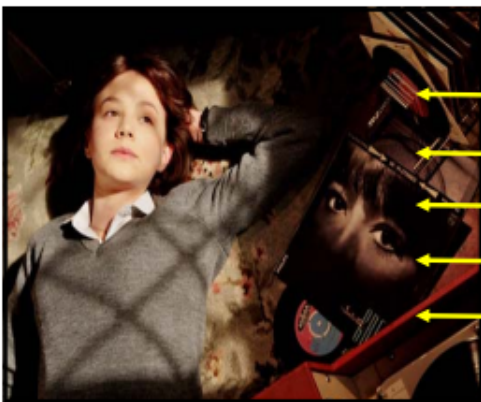
Act 3 - Where the protagonist achieves his mission. The conflict or problem is resolved. The final crisis (or "rising action") plays out to climax; then to resolution resulting in narrative closure.

What is narrative?

A narrative is a retelling of something that happened (a story). The narrative is not the story itself, but rather the *telling* of the story. While a story just is a sequence of events, a narrative recounts those events, perhaps leaving some occurrences out because they are from some perspective insignificant, and perhaps emphasizing others. In a series of events, a car crash takes a split second. A narrative account, however, might be almost entirely about the crash itself and the few seconds leading up to it.

How to describe the narrative of a film:

You should be able to identify the narrative structure(s) used in a film, narrative devices and how far it follows the three act structure. You should then analyse why these choices have been made / the effect they have on the audience and the representation of themes / issues.



Identified Techniques:

- Chronological / linear narrative.
- Metafictive voice over narration.
- Enigma code: what is David's job?
- Binary oppositions: Jenny and Helen.
- Inciting incident: Jenny meets David

How to turn your observations into a sentence:

"An Education conforms to a three act structure. During Act 1 the audience are introduced to Jenny's problem: she has overbearing parents who have exceptionally high expectations of her academic achievements yet she yearns for a more creative, expressive lifestyle. The inciting incident that breaks into Act 2 is due to her chance meeting with David..."

Narrative Devices:

Cause and Effect - use to create realism in films. The belief that all actions have consequences and these consequences should be shown in order for a film to be believable / the narrative to make sense.

Ellipsis - purposefully missing out information / skipping over information in a film script.

Withholding and Releasing - a balancing act of keeping an audience intrigued enough to carry on watching and not giving too much away.

Enigma Codes - questions the audience have due to the correct use of withholding information.

Binary Oppositions - contrasts—physical or emotional—that create drama in a film.

Narrative Structures:

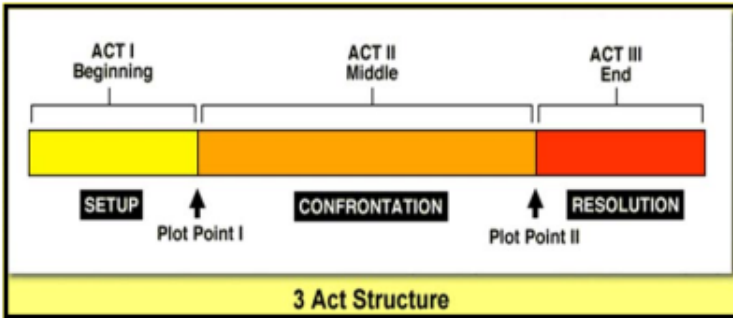
Chronological / Linear - this is where the film's action happens in the order that it took place.

Dual Narrative - this is where the film's action is split between two different narrative perspectives.

Multi Narrative - this is where the film's action is split between more than two different narrative perspectives.

Meta-Fictive Narrative - this is where the film's action is framed by a narrator or other framing devices - 'a story within a story'.

Fragmented Narrative - this is where the film's action is purposefully non-linear. The audience here have to work out the correct order of events as the film play outs.



Narrative, story or plot?

Story - a story is a series of events,

Plot -when plotting a story, a screenwriter decides how to arrange the story in the most effective way in order to get his/her desired reaction from the audience. This could mean leaving things out (ellipsis), changing the order of events, expanding events, shortening events etc.

Narrative - this is the word we use to describe the combination of story and plot as delivered by the screenwriter.

Thinking Point:

A film can combine more than one of the narrative structures above. For example, a film can be both chronological and dual or fragmented and multi.

Out of the films you're studying, which uses more than one narrative structure?

