



Film Studies

A Level

Film Studies

F631 Section B

Study Guide 2: Early Cinema

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F631 SECTION B

STUDY GUIDE 2: EARLY CINEMA STUDY GUIDE

The aim of this study guide is to give you a range of activities and materials to work through in order to ensure that you cover all areas of the topic.

The Early Cinema period as defined in OCR's Film Studies specification ranges from 1895 - 1915 - which corresponds with many established views on cinema history. The topic contains three areas:

- The films of the Lumière Brothers
- Early genre films
- The development of the American film industry

For each of these areas it is vital that you develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of production, distribution and exhibition. That way you will ensure that you develop an holistic understanding of the period and prepare fully for the exam. In addition to this, it's also very important to be able to filter your notes by being able to identify **sociological** events, **economic** events and **technological** events. For a fuller description of what this means and might look like, see p.10 of the OCR Film Studies specification.

GETTING STARTED

There are a small number of relatively recent documentaries available on Early Cinema - some of which you may be able to access on YouTube, others of which can be bought on DVD.

Before viewing any of the documentaries, get ready to make notes by constructing something like the table below.

In working out what to make notes on, keep the following questions in mind.

Who? What? Why? When? How? - this should enable you to make a lot of well organised notes to enable you to rapidly get to grips with the topic.

This approach, or something similar which works best for you, should enable you to make detailed notes across all of the important areas of the topic and provide you with an at-a-glance revision guide later on. Also, making notes in this way will make you think about whether an event, for example, is a sociological or economic one - or a *mixture of both*.

Programme name and episode			
	Production	Distribution	Exhibition
Sociological context			
Economic context			
Technological context			

To begin getting familiar with the topic overall and with the films of the Lumière Brothers in particular, a good documentary is 'Paul Merton's Weird and Wonderful World of Early Cinema' - details of which can be found here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00rs132>

At the time of writing, this documentary was also available on YouTube at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkylE-XTuh0>

It's also quite possible that your teacher will have this documentary (it's not currently available to buy on DVD or digitally).

Another documentary which is so available on YouTube at the time of writing is the three part series 'The Birth of Hollywood', details of which can be found here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011k4vx>

It is the first episode which contains much important information the three strands of the Early Cinema topic, a link to that first episode is below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvsceSsa7zM>

As with the previous documentary, it's also possible that your teacher will have this documentary (it's not currently available to buy on DVD or digitally).

In terms of making notes, you should take the same approach as the previous documentary.

The final documentary that you might be able to access is episode 1 of 'The Story of Film'. This documentary series was originally broadcast on Channel 4 and is currently available to buy on DVD. Details of the series can be found here:

<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-story-of-film-an-odyssey>

Watching one or more of these documentaries will give you good platform to work from for the next stage of work to further develop the precision of your knowledge and understanding of the topic.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

As with the previous work on the documentaries, you need a rigorous system for capturing information.

In reading through the web links and / or book articles detailed below, take the same approach to note-taking:

Who? What? Why? When? How? - this should enable you to making a lot of well organised notes to enable you to rapidly get to grips with the topic.

Programme name and episode			
	Production	Distribution	Exhibition
Sociological context			
Economic context			
Technological context			

1. THE LUMIÈRE BROTHERS - PRODUCTION / DISTRIBUTION / EXHIBITION / CONSUMPTION

Read through the following and make notes:

(This activity could be an individual one, a pair or small group activity where students share notes and make presentation to teach other)

Web resources

http://www.earlycinema.com/pioneers/lumiere_bio.html

<http://www.filmsite.org/pre20sintro2.html>

<http://www.csa.com/discoveryguides/film/review.pdf>

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/edison_mutoscope.cfm

Book resources

Cinema: The Whole Story Philip Kemp (editor, 2011) pp14-25

The Story Of Film Mark Cousins (2011) pp20-34

2. EARLY GENRE FILMS - PRODUCTION / DISTRIBUTION / EXHIBITION / CONSUMPTION

Read through the following and make notes:

(This activity could be an individual one, a pair or small group activity where students share notes and make presentation to teach other)

Web resources

<http://www.filmsite.org/westernfilms.html>

<http://www.filmsite.org/crimefilms.html>

<http://www.filmsite.org/pre20sintro2.html>

<http://drnorth.wordpress.com/2010/06/10/a-trip-to-the-moon-le-voyage-dans-la-lune/>

<http://cinewiki.wikispaces.com/The+Great+Train+Robbery>

<http://filmabinitio.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/1903-great-train-robbery-edwin-s-porter.html>

Book resources

Cinema: The Whole Story Philip Kemp (editor, 2011) pp14-31, 62-63

The Story Of Film Mark Cousins (2011) pp34-60

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY

Read through the following and make notes:

(This activity could be an individual one, a pair or small group activity where students share notes and make presentation to teach other)

Web resources

<http://scheong.wordpress.com/2011/05/31/hooray-for-hollywood-a-brief-history-of-the-american-film-industry/>

<http://cinephilefix.wordpress.com/2010/04/09/film-history-the-story-of-hollywood/>

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/topic.cfm?topicID=11>

Book resources

The Story Of Film Mark Cousins (2011) pp34-60

An introduction to film studies Jill Nelmes (2007) pp4-7

IT'S A WRAP

Two final activities to consolidate the knowledge and understanding you will have developed from the previous activities.

Whilst at the time of writing this documentary is bordering on being 20 year old, *A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies*, remains an unsurpassed achievement in documenting the history of American cinema. It is available to purchase on DVD.

For the requirements of studying the topic, Part 1 (of 3 parts) will give an accomplished overview and will serve as a good complement to the other documentaries and reading materials.

The same approach to note taking could be employed here as was suggested previously.

The final activity (which should be seen as essential) is to read back through all of your notes and mark them up with tags such as 'Lumière', 'Early genre' and 'American cinema' to help you to organise your learning.

To give us feedback on, or ideas about the OCR resources you have used, email resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk

OCR Resources: the small print

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Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

