

AS LEVEL

Candidate Style Answers

FILM STUDIES

H010

For first teaching in 2017

H010/01 Elements of film

Version 1

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Introduction

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers. Whilst a senior examiner has provided a possible level for each Assessment Objective when marking these answers, in a live series the mark a response would get depends on the whole process of standardisation, which considers the big picture of the year's scripts. Therefore the level awarded here should be considered to be only an estimation of what would be awarded. How levels and marks correspond to grade boundaries depends on the Awarding process that happens after all/most of the scripts are marked and depends on a number of factors, including candidate performance across the board. Details of this process can be found here: <http://ocr.org.uk/Images/142042-marking-and-grading-assuring-ocr-s-accuracy.pdf>

The sample assessment material used in this resource is here: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/316671-unit-h010-01-elements-of-film-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

SECTION A QUESTION 1

SECTION A – Film Form in US Cinema from 1930 to 1990

Answer Question 1 **and** Question 2.

You should have studied **one** US film from the 1930–1960 list and **one** US film from the 1961–1990 list below. Questions **1–4** require you to write about the US films you have studied.

1930 –1960	1961–1990
<i>Citizen Kane</i> (1941). Directed by Orson Welles. USA	<i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i> (1968). Directed by Stanley Kubrick. USA
<i>Singin' in the Rain</i> (1952). Directed by Gene Kelly/Stanley Donen. USA	<i>Raging Bull</i> (1980). Directed by Martin Scorsese. USA
<i>Stagecoach</i> (1939). Directed by John Ford. USA	<i>E.T.</i> (1982). Directed by Steven Spielberg. USA
<i>Vertigo</i> (1958). Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. USA	<i>Do the Right Thing</i> (1989). Directed by Spike Lee. USA
<i>Double Indemnity</i> (1944). Directed by Billy Wilder. USA	<i>The Conversation</i> (1974). Directed by Frances Ford Coppola. USA
<i>All that Heaven Allows</i> (1955). Directed by Douglas Sirk. USA	<i>West Side Story</i> (1961). Directed by Jerome Robbins–Robert Wise. USA

With reference to a **sequence** from the film made between **1961–1990** which you have studied, explain how mise-en-scène can convey a film's messages and values.

[5]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 4 marks

Raging Bull features a protagonist in Jake LaMotta who wishes to control the world around him and bend everyone to his will. The film depicts Jake as permanently angry – because of his inability to achieve the level of control he desires. In terms of looking at how aspects of mise-en-scène help to convey such a message, the final scene showing Jake getting ready for a performance in his new role as nightclub entertainer is relevant. The location – a dark, dingy changing room in an unglamorous nightclub is one sign of how Jake has not made it to the status and place he aspired to as a younger man. Jake's now considerable physical size (at this point, he is much heavier than in his boxing days) is another sign of his loss of control, he is unable to control the size and shape of his body as he once could, as we have seen earlier in the film. Robert De Niro spent a lot of time eating and eating to get his body right for the out-of-shape Jake – a sign of how interested he and director Scorsese were in seeking to achieve realism in the performance and the film. LaMotta has put on so much weight, he no longer has clothes which adequately fit him. The film ends with LaMotta doing some boxing practice to hype himself up for his show – and as he goes through his physical routine, we are given a very clear sense of how Jake has lost control – of himself, his destiny and everything else that has mattered to him.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the film – able to express a sense of what the overall messages and values of the film are and make relevant connections to the examples chosen from the film. The candidate makes points about different aspects of mise-en-scène – the location, costume and how De Niro's body shape and size is included as part of this mise-en-scène. The candidate is able to offer some reflections on the meaning of the film constructed.

Even better if: the candidate could have tried to forge connections between the character and spatial location together with the time

and era in which the film's events are set – for example in terms of costume, a consideration of how LaMotta was dressed, and whether this attire was fashionable for the time would have been beneficial.

Mark awarded 4/5 – clearly fits the criteria for Level 3 – comprehensive knowledge and understanding.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 answer, 3 marks

Raging Bull features a main character in Jake LaMotta who is always angry and suspicious. Mise-en-scène conveys messages in the final scene showing Jake getting ready in his new role as nightclub entertainer. The location – a small changing room in a nightclub – is one sign of how Jake has not made it. LaMotta has put on so much weight, his clothes don't fit him. The film ends with LaMotta doing some boxing practice moves but his size now shows that he is no longer the man he was.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has an adequate knowledge and understanding of the film – able to express some points pertaining to mise-en-scène, without being able to use the kinds of terminology to be expected at the next level.

Even better if: the candidate could have focused their response on more specific areas of mise-en-scène and made explicit use of micro-element terminology, in order to develop clearer discussion of messages and values.

Mark awarded 3/5 – Level 2 – adequate knowledge and understanding, using mostly relevant examples.

QUESTION 2

With reference to a **sequence** from the film made between **1930–1960** which you have studied, explain how shot selection can convey a film's messages and values.

[5]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 answer, 4 marks

Like Raging Bull, Citizen Kane features a protagonist in Charles Foster Kane who is alienated from the world around him and who seeks to control as much of that world as he can. Later in the film and in Kane's life story, Kane and his wife are on the downward slope of their marriage – just prior to her leaving Kane. One of the stand out technical features of Citizen Kane is the depth of field achieved by the cinematographer Toland and director Welles. A great example of this is to be found when Kane and his wife are having an argument in what appears to be some kind of great hall in Kane's mansion. The room appears to be huge, like something from an English stately home, and Kane's wife is placed in the near foreground on the bottom left third of the shot. Diametrically opposite, in the top right third and on the other side of the room is Kane. The impressive depth of field achieved enables both characters to stay in focus properly. The result is a shot which amplifies the gulf that has now opened up between Kane and his wife, giving a physical sense to the emotional gulf between them. Elsewhere at this point of the film, we get shots which make the Kane mansion look like it is full of an endless series of doors, watching this is a little like being in a hall of mirrors – where it is hard to tell what is real. The shot selection in combination with the theatrical production design helps to visually state how alone Kane is, and how the confusion in his own mind is played out visually in the look and visual feel of the Kane mansion.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the film – able to express a sense of what the overall messages and values of the film are and make relevant connections to the examples chosen from the film. The candidate makes points about different aspects of shot selection and aspects of frame composition. The answer is focused on a very specific moment from the film, which is subjected to close analysis – exploring frame composition with explicit reference to the rule of thirds. Additionally, depth of field is discussed with reference to emotional status between the two characters present. The answer offers clear connections between what the audience is presented with and the meanings available within the wider context of the film's narrative at this point.

Even better if: the candidate could have looked to explore the lighting style used within the shots referred to and considered how these enhanced some of the points made about the characters and the nature of the location itself.

Mark awarded 4/5 – clearly fits the criteria for Level 3 – comprehensive knowledge and understanding.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 answer, 2 marks

Later on in Citizen Kane, Kane and his wife are arguing shortly before she leaves him. One of the big technical features of Citizen Kane is the depth of field. A great example of this is to be found when Kane and his wife are having an argument. The depth of field achieved enables both characters to stay in focus properly. The shot shows the gap that has now opened up between Kane and his wife, a visual sign of the distance between them.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has an adequate knowledge and understanding of the film – focusing intently on depth of field, but unable to address any other elements of frame composition or shot selection. However, the candidate is able to offer some credible analysis from this one point.

Even better if: the candidate could have looked at either more elements from the shot discussed and/or extended the analysis to look at other aspects of shot selection in this sequence – the example used is ultimately too narrowly framed here.

Mark awarded 2/5 – fits the criteria for Level 2 – adequate knowledge and understanding.

QUESTION 4

With reference to the **two** films you have studied, compare how sound and editing are used to construct meanings for the spectator. You must refer to examples from **one** film **1930–1960** and examples from **one** film from **1961–1990** in your answer.

[25]

Exemplar 1 – Level 3 (AO1) and Level 5 (AO2) answer, 22 marks

Both *Raging Bull* and *Citizen Kane* feature protagonists who are somewhat lost in the worlds they inhabit and desperately crave to control the world around them. In *Raging Bull*, Jake LaMotta seeks to do that with his fists, while Kane in *Citizen Kane* seeks to do it with his money. Both protagonists seek advancement and material rewards, and most of all they want to be loved, but their actions drive the people closest to them away. Put simply, both protagonists have a sense of alienation from the world around them. Their desire to be the centre of their universe whilst also being distanced from the people in their lives is brought to life with two short scenes from each film. The scenes I will be exploring are the fight between LaMotta and Janiro in *Raging Bull* and Kane's campaign speech when running for Governor. Both of these scenes occur roughly half way through each film – at the crucial mid-points in the narratives, where the spectator should get a glimpse of how the narrative will ultimately be resolved.

Throughout *Raging Bull*, LaMotta is tormented by a sense of inadequacy – this is vividly expressed in the scene where he ends up assaulting both his wife and his brother because of a mistaken sense that the brother and wife are having an affair. Jake has expressed that he doesn't trust anyone's motives where his wife is concerned, so when his wife casually remarks about a fighter being good looking, this greatly irritates Jake and rifles up his insecurities.

When Jake has the opportunity to fight this boxer – Janiro – he takes out his fury on him. The diegetic sounds are of great importance in inviting spectator response. The dominant sound sources in the scene are the repeated sounds of the blows from LaMotta landing on Janiro, the general noise of the crowd, punctuated by screams from some in the crowd as LaMotta breaks Janiro's nose. During this scene, the camera keeps close to the two boxers, so these sounds are all dominant in this environment – it is like there is nothing in the world at this point for LaMotta and the lack of non-diegetic music stops the spectator being able to distance themselves from the fight – you are held close in there hearing it and feeling it like Jake does. The relatively swift cutting from shot to shot keeps the spectator's concentration on the fight at all times – while we can hear the crowd, the editing only cuts away towards the end to reveal one spectator say 'He ain't pretty no more' – the only line of dialogue in the scene sums up that, at this point, for a while, Jake has achieved what he wanted to.

Similarly, in *Citizen Kane*, at the mid section of the film, where Kane is running for state Governor, the scene where Kane is addressing an election rally, the visual and aural focus is on Kane. For the majority of this scene, Kane's is the only voice we hear, as he addresses his crowd, telling them how great he is and will be and how he will destroy his political opponent. Though the hall is packed, Kane is virtually the only thing the spectator can hear, except for a few moments of applause from the crowd in parts of his speech. Given Kane's sense of inferiority and outsider status driven by his upbringing and separation from his family and beloved Rosebud at a young age, at this point he has seemingly achieved what he wants – to be loved by the masses.

At the beginning of the scene, there is a long take, allowing time for the camera to sweep the full length of the hall before ending at the front of the hall to look upwards to Kane. Then, as the speech progresses, the film intercuts between shots of Kane and his wife and son – the expression on his wife's face doesn't speak of confidence in her husband's political talents, an ominous portent of the downfalls to come.

Both of these scenes draw on the principles of montage editing – carefully stitching together the sequence of the shots to hold us in the moment and perhaps repulse us in the case of *Raging Bull*. In *Citizen Kane*, the sequencing of the shots as the film cuts back and forth between Kane and his wife and child works to undercut Kane's message and sense of bravado – creating the uneasy feeling that things won't be as simple and as great as Kane seeks to portray in his speech.

Both of these scenes give the spectator a clear sense of progressing the narrative and use micro-elements to state and reinforce key messages about both films' protagonists and show the spectator a glimpse of the downfalls which wait in store for both of them.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the chosen films, offering a detailed analysis of examples from both films. The candidate analyses both sound and editing from the chosen examples and is able to offer points which are technically accurate and which discuss what these signifiers might connote. The analysis of micro-elements is consistently linked to the macro, big picture sense of what the films are about. The response also directly compares aspects of the editing style used in both films, whilst opening up contrasting connotations. There is a wide range of technical vocabulary used accurately and with relevance to the focus of the answer.

Even better if: the response could be improved with some consideration of additional viewpoints – the candidate is able to offer clear readings of the film, but the answer would be better with some further reference to different interpretations of the examples used.

Mark awarded 22/25 (AO1 4/5, AO2 18/20) – clearly fits the criteria for Level 3 (AO1) and 5 (AO2) – comprehensive analysis of relevant examples.

Exemplar 2 – Level 2 (AO1) and Level 3 (AO2), 11 marks

Both Raging Bull and Citizen Kane have main characters who want to control the world around them. In Raging Bull, Jake LaMotta seeks to do that with his fists, while Kane in Citizen Kane seeks to do it with his money. The scenes I will be exploring are the fight between LaMotta and Janiro in Raging Bull and Kane's campaign speech when running for Governor. Both of these scenes take place about half way through each film.

In Raging Bull, LaMotta fears that his wife is having affairs and will leave him – I know this from the scene where he becomes convinced that the brother and wife are having an affair.

When Jake gets the chance to fight the boxer Janiro, who his wife Vickie said was good looking, he takes out his fury on him. The sounds are of great importance in my understanding of the scene. We hear sounds of the blows from LaMotta landing on Janiro, the noise of the crowd and the sound as LaMotta breaks Janiro's nose emphasising the violence of the scene. During this scene, the camera keeps close to the two boxers, so these sounds are all dominant in this. The cutting from shot to shot keeps focus on the fight at all times.

Similarly, in Citizen Kane, in the middle of the film, where Kane is trying to be a politician, the scene where Kane is making a political speech, the focus is on Kane. We only hear Kane in this scene, as he addresses his crowd, telling them how great he is and how he will destroy his political opponent. All the diegetic sounds focus on Kane emphasising his importance. At the beginning of the scene, there is a long take, allowing time for the camera to move the full length of the hall before stopping at the front of the hall to look upwards to Kane.

Both of these scenes give me a very good understanding of the narrative through use of micro-elements in the films.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a clear knowledge and understanding of the chosen films, offering some adequate analysis of examples from both films. The candidate predominantly analyses sound – which is well handled, but leaves a gap in the response. Some good starting points are offered, but these could be more fully developed.

Even better if: greater coherence could be achieved through more direct comparison and an explicit discussion of editing.

The response could also look to make connections between micro-element analysis and macro-level messages and values. More frequent reference to examples from the relevant micro-elements would have further enhanced the response.

Mark awarded 11/25 (AO1 2/5, AO2 9/20) – an adequate analysis of relevant examples from the films, with some gaps between what the question required and what has been answered.

SECTION B QUESTION 5

SECTION B – Comparative Contextual Study

Answer **either** Question 5 **or** Question 6.

You should have studied **one** of the themes in the table below. For your chosen theme, you should have studied **one** film from the US Independent list and **one** film from the Non-US English Language list. Questions **5–6** require you to write about the two films you have studied.

Theme	US Independent	Non US English Language
<i>Family and Home</i>	<i>Moonrise Kingdom</i> (2012). Directed by Wes Anderson. USA, 12 <i>The Tree of Life</i> (2011). Directed by Terrance Malick. USA, 12	<i>Room</i> (2015). Directed by Lenny Abrahamson. Canadian/Irish, 15 <i>Animal Kingdom</i> (2010). Directed by David Michôd. Australia
<i>Outsiders</i>	<i>A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night</i> (2014). Directed by Ana Lily Amirpour. USA <i>Elephant</i> (2003). Directed by Gus Van Sant. USA, 15	<i>The Babadook</i> (2014). Directed by Jennifer Kent. Australia/Canada <i>The Piano</i> (1993). Directed by Jane Campion. New Zealand/Australia/France
<i>Conflict</i>	<i>Hurt Locker</i> (2008). Directed by Kathryn Bigelow. USA <i>Whiplash</i> (2014). Directed by Damien Chazelle. USA	<i>District 9</i> (2009). Directed by Neill Blomkamp. South Africa/USA/New Zealand/Canada <i>Mad Max</i> (1979). Directed by George Miller. Australia

With reference to examples from the **two** films you have studied from your chosen theme, compare the ways in which films can reflect their social and cultural context.

[35]

Exemplar 1 – Level 5 (AO1) and Level 5 (AO2), 33 marks

I will be exploring how the social and cultural contexts of *The Hurt Locker* and *District 9* are reflected in the films and looking to compare the similarities and differences. While both films deal with intensely political issues, I think that *District 9* tackles these political issues more overtly as a central part of the film's narrative whilst *The Hurt Locker* doesn't open up a debate about the morality of the American presence in Iraq, but of course the film's narrative is tightly linked to the morality of this action.

The narrative of *District 9* is geared around how humans should and do treat a group of alien 'invaders' who have taken up long term residence on the outskirts of Johannesburg, South Africa. Following the arrival of the aliens in the sky over Johannesburg, they are eventually housed in an area on the outskirts of the city – the District 9 of the film's title. This clearly echoes the segregation of the population in apartheid-era South Africa, where non-white citizens had to

live in designated townships such as Soweto – whose full name is South West Township – an equally impersonal name as District 9. With the close overlap between the segregation between humans and non-humans in the film and the segregation of people in real life South Africa, the political context is front and centre of the film's narrative. From this, the treatment of the aliens by the humans offers a very close reflection of the social and cultural context of South Africa in the apartheid era.

The narrative of *The Hurt Locker* is structured around the countdown to the end of Bravo Company's tour of duty in Iraq. The film picks up at the point where Bravo Company have 30 days remaining – which is the point where American soldiers have historically began to describe themselves as 'short'. The first key event in the film ends with the death of bomb disposal technician Sergeant Thompson – so the audience get a very clear and early demonstration of the risks that the troops placed in such positions face on a daily basis. The audience is positioned to see this representation of the world through American eyes - as all of the events of the film position Bravo Company at the centre of everything, meaning the film reflects a very specific social context. With the early death of Sergeant Thompson – played by Guy Pearce, who is one of the biggest name actors in the film, the audience very quickly learn that no-one is safe.

When the brash and arrogant Sergeant James joins Bravo Company to replace Thompson, and is very quickly placed in a life or death situation trying to defuse a car bomb, the audience would be right to feel somewhat nervous, especially given James seems to have a lack of concern for his own safety – taking off his safety helmet, throwing a smoke bomb which stops the soldiers protecting him to be able to offer protective cover and putting down his radio – so breaking means of communicating with his team. With the foreknowledge of the horrible death of Thompson – the audience holds its breath, but James survives and defuses the bomb successfully. The film focuses on the social context of the dangers experienced by American soldiers during the conflict. What this sequence of the film does do is highlight the risks that these soldiers face and their bravery in doing so – offering the message that Americans soldiers are brave and seeking to do 'the right thing'. These are good guys in a bad situation, trying to help the Iraqi people. There is no questioning of the moral rightness of the American presence and mission in Iraq meaning the film presents limited reflection on the wider social and cultural contexts. This clearly contrasts with the ways in which the messages and values of *District 9* are shaped by the context of apartheid-era South Africa. This demonstrates the differing ways in which social and cultural contexts can be reflected within film.

As part of the initial scene-setting in *District 9*, the film presents the audience with an overview of the aliens' lifestyle in District 9. The aliens are presented as lawless drunks – destroying property and staggering around – causing a social nuisance for their human neighbours. The film's protagonist, Wikus, who is introducing the audience to the lives of the aliens, makes a remark about how this is part of the aliens' normal cultural practice and how they don't realise the impact that their actions have for their human neighbours. This is one of the main points where the film overtly and directly invites comparisons between the representation of the aliens and their social conditions to the social and cultural contexts of real world non-white South Africans in the apartheid era – where the non-white population were treated by the white minority as a problem which had to be managed in order to enable the continuity of apartheid in South Africa. The laughable nature of Wikus' condescending description of the cultural lives of the aliens highlights the types of discriminatory attitudes which were part of official government policy in apartheid South Africa. The portrayal of both sides of the conflict in *District 9* allows it to reflect the social and cultural context of South Africa more fully than the representation of the Iraq conflict in *The Hurt Locker* which is mostly focused on the American soldiers.

Ultimately, Bravo Company's tour is completed, and we see James transported back to America and back to his girlfriend and son. In one scene close to the end of the film, we see James on a shopping trip to the supermarket. Whilst trying to find breakfast cereals, we are presented with James in medium long shot, looking confused at the range of choice available. This is the moment which drives what comes next – James' decision to return to Iraq, which is the closing moment of the film. While the film, from James' perspective, ends on an upbeat note – he is back doing what he does best – in terms of looking at the social and cultural contexts of the film, this reflects an America where its young men feel disengaged and out of sync at home, and their sense of home and purpose is only found in fighting wars thousands of miles from home. Both films consider, in different ways, the impact of conflict in relation to their social and cultural conflicts.

In *District 9*, the whole approach to the alien invaders/guest (or perhaps refugees) has been to keep them separate from the human population and to find ways of widening the physical separation between humans and aliens – such as the move to deceive the aliens and remove them to a concentration camp (invoking another part of South African history as this was a technique the British used in the wars with the Boers at the turn of the nineteenth century). So, it is massively ironic that the film's third act twist sees Wikus complete his mutation into one of the derided 'prawns' – the derogatory term used to describe the aliens throughout the film. It is through an accident that Wikus begins the process of mutation from human to 'prawn', but what this does reflect is that the desire to control and separate will be challenged in a range of ways – deliberate or otherwise. Just as apartheid in real life South Africa has been overcome and the country's flag

now shows the merging of different cultural traditions together, this coming together is hinted at with Wikus' complete physical transformation whilst retaining his personality – as we ultimately learn by the present he sent to his girlfriend.

So, to summarise, both films offer a reflection of social and cultural contexts, whilst they do so in different ways, I have tried to demonstrate how they do this through the way the films' narratives are structured and through aspects of the use of micro-elements.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the chosen films. The candidate clearly has excellent contextual knowledge of South Africa, being able to sustain a relevant range of points about apartheid-era South Africa. Contextual knowledge is evident with regards the Iraq war, demonstrating some understanding of the moral dimension to the justness of the war. The candidate clearly states their perspective on how the films reflect social and cultural contexts in very different ways and this argument is reinforced via the examples from the films provided. Overall, the candidate offers a very comprehensive response with some direct comparison between the two films. The discussion of examples enables the candidate to express their thorough knowledge of subject terminology.

Even better if: some higher frequency in the use of technical terminology could be achieved.

Mark awarded 33/35 (AO1 14/15, AO2 19/20) – clearly fits the criteria for Level 5 – comprehensive analysis of relevant examples, excellent response at this level.

Exemplar 2 – Level 3 (AO1) and Level 3 (AO2), 18 marks

I will be exploring how the social and cultural contexts of *The Hurt Locker* and *District 9* are reflected in the films and looking to compare the similarities and differences between the two films.

The story of *District 9* is geared around how humans treat a group of alien 'invaders' who have appeared in Johannesburg, South Africa. The aliens are given an area on the outskirts of the city – District 9 to live in, to get them away from the human population. This is like the way that people of different ethnicities couldn't live in the same areas in the apartheid time.

The story of *The Hurt Locker* is about the end of Bravo Company's rotation in Iraq. The first key event in the film ends with the death of bomb defuser Sergeant Thompson, this shows the audience the risks the troops face. With Thompson's death the audience very quickly learn any of the characters could die – like in *Game of Thrones*.

When Sergeant James joins Bravo Company to replace Thompson, and he is quickly placed in a life or death situation with trying to stop a car bomb, you feel worried for him. He takes off his safety helmet, and throws a smoke bomb which stops the soldiers protecting him being able to offer protective cover and puts down his radio – so he can't talk to his team. But, through his coolness and skill at working under pressure, he stops the bomb from going off. This helps the audience understand the social context of the experience of the Iraq war for the soldiers.

The aliens in *District 9* are presented as drunks who break stuff and fall around. The film's hero, Wikus, says something about how this drinking and breaking stuff is part of the aliens' normal cultural practice and how they don't realise the impact that their actions have for their human neighbours. Here the film is addressing the social and cultural contexts of real world non-white South Africans in the apartheid era – where the non-white population were treated like cattle by the white minority to be moved around. Wikus' description of alien cultural lives shows the types of discriminatory attitudes in apartheid South Africa. This shows how *District 9* reflects the social context, unlike *The Hurt Locker* which doesn't really tell us about why the war happened.

Both films reflect social and cultural contexts, but they do this in different ways through both the films' narratives and their use of micro-elements.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has some good knowledge and understanding of the chosen films. The candidate clearly has adequate contextual knowledge of South Africa. The candidate identifies some of the ways in which the films reflect their social cultural contexts, though they offer more about District 9 and South Africa than they do about The Hurt Locker and Iraq on this point. Overall, the candidate offers an adequate response with some adequate comparison between the two films.

Even better if: much higher frequency in the use of technical terminology needs be realised in order to help sustain the response and demonstrate higher level knowledge and understanding. More reference to relevant examples from the chosen films, and more direct comparison would be beneficial.

Mark awarded 18/35 (AO1 8/15, AO2 10/20) – fits the criteria for Level 3 – adequate knowledge and understanding and adequate analysis of relevant examples.

Section C QUESTION 8

SECTION C – European Film: Non-English Language

Answer **either** Question 7 **or** Question 8.

You should have studied **one** European film from the list below. Questions 7–8 require you to write about the European film you have studied.

European Film
<i>The Lives of Others</i> (2006). Directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Germany
<i>Son of Saul</i> (2015). Directed by László Nemes. Hungary
<i>A Prophet</i> (2009). Directed by Jacques Audiard. France/Italy
<i>The Great Beauty</i> (2013). Directed by Paolo Sorrentino. Italy/France
<i>Ida</i> (2013). Directed by Pawel Pawlikowski. Poland/Denmark/France/UK
<i>Let the Right One In</i> (2008). Directed by Thomas Alfredson. Sweden

Discuss how narrative is used to construct representations of society using examples from the **European** film you have studied.

[35]

Exemplar 1 – Level 5 (AO1) and Level 5 (AO2), 34 marks

The film I am going to be writing about is Jacques Audiard's 'A Prophet'. This film features the protagonist Malik, a young criminal who is sent to adult prison for the first time for having committed a violent assault. Genre-wise, this film is a crime/gangster film and in many ways the narrative is a very typical one for this genre. My research has shown me that there are two main types of narratives in crime films – the rise to power narrative and the one last job narrative. A Prophet features the rise to power narrative – the protagonist Malik enters prison with almost literally nothing – a cigarette and a crumpled Euro note.

In my answer, I am going to show that the structure of the narrative and the characters of the film help to construct a representation of a French society which is heavily divided on ethnic and religious grounds.

The rise to power narrative usually features a young person – often a boy – who enters into a life of crime, eventually rising to the top of the organisation he is a part of. This is true of films such as Goodfellas and The Godfather, which are long held as classics of the genre. In this film, Malik is admitted to adult prison with very little idea of who or what he is, and he learns how to navigate the world of prison with his forced alliance with the Corsican gang led by Cesar, before Malik learns enough to make his own alliances with others to spread his wings and grow his own business empire as the film unfolds.

Upon Malik's admission to prison, as part of the procedures for new inmates, Malik is quizzed by a prison officer about which block he wants to be housed in, the Muslim block or the non-Muslim block. This is one of the early signs of serious social division that the film goes on to regularly portray throughout the film. Although he is of Arab heritage, he declines to go in to the Muslim block where there are others of his ethnicity. He is also asked if he has special dietary requirements – especially around whether he eats pork or not, as this is a forbidden food for Muslims. He initially looks confused by the question but says no, no special dietary requirements. Visually, he is wearing a plain white t-shirt – with no clear connection to his ethnic background, seemingly unfazed by religious matters, and with the plain white t-shirt, Malik is a blank slate who knows nothing of the world around him and the tensions it contains. We quickly learn that he has no real family – he has become distanced from them somehow during his childhood. All of this occurs in what would correspond to the 'lock in' phase of the narrative – Malik is now literally locked into prison and he has a limited understanding of the forces swirling around him – in prison, and by extension, in society more generally.

This uncertain and confused young man is easy prey for the wily, old gang boss, Cesar, who is on the lookout for someone to carry out a murder. Cesar and his gang coerce Malik into murdering Reyeb, who is a criminal enemy of Cesar's gang outside of prison. The nature of his coercion and what Malik has to do to get to be alone with Reyeb to get the opportunity to kill him, and the graphic nature of the murder itself are all big lessons for Malik about the pecking order in prison and what he is going to need to do in order to survive in prison to make it through his sentence. Malik is going to have to be violent, and he is going to have to learn to kill again and again to survive the prison system.

With the successful murder of Reyeb, Malik works his way into Cesar's gang – not that they ever like or trust him: he becomes their servant – running errands and making drinks for them. In this way, Malik takes up a role familiar to people from ethnic minorities and outsiders of all sorts. Cesar's gang members never miss an opportunity to remind Malik of his lesser status (in their eyes at least – lesser because he is an Arab and therefore different ethnically to the Corsicans).

While Cesar and the Corsican gang continue to look down on Malik, Malik is making contacts with others in the prison to start his own criminal business reaching outside prison, and unknown to the Corsican gang, he has learnt their language, enabling him to understand much more about them and their operations than they imagined. This cleverness by Malik reaches its conclusion in the film's main culmination, where Malik knocks Cesar off his perch as the 'daddy' of the prison. Where once Cesar and his gang ruled the prison exercise yard, it is now Malik and his gang. This is well shown by how Cesar attempts to summon Malik back to his 'perch' but Malik refuses. As Cesar then approaches Malik, Malik gets two of his gang members to physically show Cesar that he has overstepped the mark and keep him well clear of Malik. This gives a clear visual sense that the pecking order has changed – it is very much now Malik and his gang who control the relationships between the prisoners.

Gradually over the course of the film, the master (Cesar) has become displaced by Malik the apprentice. In assembling his own gang, he has learnt from the Corsicans the value of a shared sense of identity – it is prisoners who are mainly from the Muslim block who have become the foot soldiers in Malik's new gang. This shows that the Muslim prisoners have realised that in order to combat the discrimination they face in prison and outside of it, they need to co-operate with each other to resist the other gangs inside and outside prison. In this way, the film very capably shows a French society which is heavily divided by ethnicity and religion and that the consequences of such division is more and more conflict.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has a very clear knowledge and understanding of the chosen film – this becomes evident from the range of examples chosen from the film and from the contextual links to French society which populate the essay. The candidate expertly draws on elements of narrative structure – with regular, explicit discussion of items such as the 'lock in' and the 'main culmination'. Additionally, there is clear understanding of the typical narrative paths for films of the genre, supported with the ability and confidence to label the film as being of the 'rise to power' narrative type and explain with brief reference to other films why this is so. The main body of the response is taken up with the candidate exploring Malik's journey through prison life and documenting some of the steps he took to supplant Cesar. The candidate's ability to demonstrate understanding of the film's narrative with analysis from

examples and moments such as the way Cesar is despatched, plus links to a wider, real world context engineer an excellent response, which demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and analysis in a very well sustained and sophisticated response. There is thoughtful reference to the ways in which the narrative engages with representational issues in relation to ethnicity and religious identity.

Even better if: some higher frequency in the use of technical terminology could be achieved.

Mark awarded 34/35 (AO1 14/15, AO2 20/20) – clearly fits the criteria for Level 5 – comprehensive analysis of relevant examples, excellent response at this level.

Exemplar 2 – Level 3 (AO1) and Level 3 (AO2), 16 marks

The film I am going to be writing about is Jacques Audiard's 'A Prophet'. This film features the main character of Malik who is sent to adult prison for the first time. The narrative of the film shows Malik's rise to power from being an isolated outsider with nothing to being powerful within the prison. In my answer, I am going to show that the structure of the narrative helps to portray a clear sense of French society as badly segregated.

When Malik is sent to prison, as part of the procedures for new inmates, Malik is asked by a prison officer if he wants to be housed in the Muslim block or the non-Muslim block. This is one of the early signs of serious social division. Although he is of Arab heritage, he declines to go in to the Muslim block where there are others of his ethnicity. We quickly learn that he has no real family – he is quite lonely, with no friends inside the jail.

Cesar persuades Malik into murdering Reyeb. By doing this, Malik gets some protection from being picked on, like having his trainers robbed. Malik works his way into Cesar's gang – not that they ever like or trust him: he becomes their servant. Cesar's gang look down on Malik due to his Arab heritage and do not see him as an equal, showing the segregated nature of French society.

While Cesar and the Corsican gang continue to look down on Malik, Malik is making contacts with others in the prison to start his own business, and he has learnt Corsican, so he can understand much more about the Corsican gang. This cleverness by Malik reaches its conclusion in the film's main culmination, where Malik topples Cesar by having two of his own gang members beat Cesar up. Things have changed – it is now Malik and his gang which control the relationships between the prisoners. Most of Malik's followers are Muslim showing the film's themes of divisions in relation to ethnicity and religion, and suggesting that the Muslim characters feel they have to stick together for protection.

Examiner commentary

What went well: the candidate has an adequate knowledge and understanding of the chosen film. The candidate draws on some elements of narrative structure, though does not make frequent use of the key terms associated with this. The candidate's ability to demonstrate understanding of the film's narrative results in an adequate response, with adequate demonstration of critical approaches.

Even better if: a greater focus on representation – of ethnic groups, of prison life – could be achieved through further discussion of relevant examples. More consistent and explicit demonstration of knowledge of narrative terminology would help to produce a more sophisticated response.

Mark awarded 16/35 (AO1 7/15, AO2 9/20) – adequate knowledge and understanding and adequate analysis.



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