

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

FILM STUDIES

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Film Studies

H410

For first teaching in 2017

H410/02 Summer 2025 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

In the summer 2023 series there was a noticeable improvement in the quantity and quality of student responses and overall, in this summer series - as was the case in 2024 - that higher standard of work has been maintained. The availability of a number of past exam papers and mark schemes means that centres and their candidates have a substantial and growing body of assessment materials to practise the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in public assessment. While this series has witnessed a maintenance of the previous two series' improved standards, there of course remain opportunities for further improvement. The commentaries to each of the questions below are designed to help centres to drive performance in their own cohorts. The question commentaries highlight what the features of the most effective responses were in combination with a reflection on the component parts of each of the questions and what examiners were looking for in candidates' responses.

All sections of the paper require detailed knowledge of the films studied which needs to be frequent and explicit in candidate responses. It is important that centres continue to approach teaching the films and using learning and assessment opportunities for their candidates which develop the skills needed to respond effectively. Candidates need to be able to discuss sequences and/or key characters from the films and be able to focus on either of these, depending on what questions they are answering. Clear and consistent focus on the question chosen remains of the highest importance and candidates need to be guided and supported to understand the different constituent parts of the questions across all three sections. They should be cautioned against attempting a generic response to questions, as this will inevitably lead to aspects of the set question not being addressed in their responses. Centres need to continue to guide candidates away from writing descriptive accounts of film studied in examinations as this will not secure marks in the higher bands. Besides such guidance, candidates need frequent opportunities to practise and develop the academic skills needed to construct effective responses to the type of questions they will face on this paper.

Legibility of handwriting remains a concern among the team of examiners. Centres are advised to consider carefully how they can best support their students to make sure that they are in a position to most effectively present their ideas in response to the questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• demonstrated good or better knowledge and understanding of the films studied, specifically: the narrative, key characters, the genre(s) in which the film can be situated, key creative personnel and organisation involved in the film's production; these details are important in their own right and can be incredibly useful for helping to construct analytical writing in response to some questions and generating counter-points which can effectively challenge the terms of the questions - such as was possible with Question 1, for example • demonstrated good or better knowledge and understanding of the micro-elements of film form and this was applied in the service of answering the question chosen • addressed all parts of the questions chosen and applied the material they had learnt to fit the demands of the questions, consistently - paragraph by paragraph - engaging with the question set frequently throughout their answers • were able to support points with evidence from the chosen films and in so doing construct a clear line of argument through their responses.	• relied on describing elements of the narratives of the films studied rather than applying knowledge and understanding to analyse films and issues presented • were not able to fully engage with the entirety of the question; this was particularly evident in Question 1 and Question 3 (Grierson and Pennebaker's approaches) • wrote relatively brief responses which were not able to access the whole of the question chosen • ran out of time on the final response • offered generalised responses about the films overall which were not specific enough on the demands of particular questions - mostly evident in Section C, but also Section B to an extent • attempted to use material which would have been well suited to questions from previous papers but had not been sufficiently adapted in the light of the questions presented on this paper - the ability to adapt quickly to circumstances is a fundamental exam skill and of course one which is much needed in wider life. Where responses are generalised, this always presents a barrier to accessing the upper part of Level 3 and above for both AOs.

Section A overview

Regardless of which question candidates answered in this section, most had clear knowledge and understanding of the films studied. A large majority of candidates were able to offer direct textual evidence from the chosen films to address the issue in the question, and in many answers there was substantial quantity and much quality of textual examples driving analysis and demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the films. A minority were able to substantiate this textual evidence by recalling details from a range of sequences or scenes from the chosen films. Knowledge of the micro-elements of film form was generally good in response to these questions.

Question 1*

You have studied **one** British film and **one** US film from the lists.

British	US
<i>Pride</i> (2014). Directed by Matthew Warchus. UK	<i>Guardians of the Galaxy</i> (2014). Directed by James Gunn. USA
<i>Gone Too Far</i> (2013). Directed by Destiny Ekaragha. UK	<i>The Hunger Games</i> (2012). Directed by Gary Ross. USA
<i>Ex-Machina</i> (2014). Directed by Alex Garland. UK	<i>Star Wars: The Force Awakens</i> (2015). Directed by J.J. Abrams. USA
<i>The Angel's Share</i> (2012). Directed by Ken Loach. UK	<i>The Dark Knight Rises</i> (2012). Directed by Christopher Nolan. USA
<i>We Need to Talk About Kevin</i> (2011). Directed by Lynne Ramsay. UK	<i>Zootopia</i> (2016). Directed by Rich Moore, Jared Bush, Byron Howard. USA
<i>Skyfall</i> (2012). Directed by Sam Mendes. UK	<i>Jurassic World</i> (2015). Directed by Colin Trevorrow. USA

EITHER

- 1* How far do digital production or digital exhibition technologies help to shape spectator response to a film?

You must include examples from **one British film** and **one US film** you have studied.

[35]

Further to the Section A overview commentary, all those points manifested themselves in responses to Question 1.

Candidates could very clearly demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the films and film form and offer some meaningful points about the impact that digital production tools and/or digital exhibition could bring to shaping the spectator response. Depending on the chosen films from each of the two set film lists impacted the different types of points candidates could make.

Some candidates focused on aspects of production such as IMAX or CGI/VFX, others related examples to aspects of exhibition and the impact on spectator response. For example, many candidates who had studied *The Dark Knight Rises* discussed the impact of filming for IMAX screens and the enhanced effect on spectator response of sequences such as the aeroplane sequence towards the start and the stadium scene later in the film. Similar style points were made about *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Considering UK films, some candidates discussed the role in VFX in enhancing the realism of sequences in *Pride* and others discussed the centrality to financial success of screening on digital cinema screens.

Some students focused on the 'spectator response' aspect without adequately referring to the factor that would be impacting on that response - in the terms of this question, digital production and/or digital exhibition. Candidates who misunderstood the parameters of the question produced responses which could not adequately engage with the full range of the question, which was reflected in the marks awarded.

Question 2*

2* To what extent do the conventions of narrative structure affect how different social and cultural groups are represented?

You must include examples from **one British film** and **one US film** you have studied.

[35]

An open and flexible approach was taken by examiners as to what could be construed about the conventions of narrative structure. What was essential for an effective answer to this question was some explicit focus on elements of narrative structure matched to analysis of social and cultural groups within the films studied.

Candidates who were able to articulate ideas about narrative structure were in a strong position to develop effective answers. This was most successfully done through the application of relevant theories, with the theories of Propp, Todorov, Campbell and Field being used effectively in answer to this question.

The most successful responses to this question used theoretical ideas and applied them to social and cultural groups such as gender (*The Dark Knight Rises*, *Zootopia*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*) or social classes (*The Angel's Share*, *The Dark Knight Rises*). Additionally, many candidates very ably discussed the representation of sexuality in *Pride*.

The least effective responses generally lacked a coherent focus on aspects of narrative structure and/or on social and cultural groups - as opposed to individual characters.

Exemplar 1

2	Ex_Machina (2014) by Alex Garland and The Dark Knight Rises (2012) by Christopher Nolan both represent social and cultural groups. EX-Machina shines the light on inventors and A.I.'s status as a conscious being while The Dark Knight Rises shows terrorism from both sides. A topic both films share are the separation between the rich and poor as well as women as a group in society. The effectiveness of these representations is in part due to the narrative structure conventions the films follow. Both Ex_Machina and The Dark Knight Rises follow the traditional narrative cycle to an extent. There is equilibrium with EX-Machina's bag opening and ending as the film starts out with an a star-struck Caleb admiring the beauty of Nathan's home and the beauty around it. As a skilled program programmer who lives as nothing more than a cog in the machine, he is excited to be entering the world of the most talented in his field. The mellow and classy piano score playing in the entrance of the house makes it, and the opportunity Nathan has provided, seem grand. The film ends in a similar manner but now with the Ava taking the place of someone filled with awe at their new life opportunities. She
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~~pass~~ passes through the same room, hears the same song, admires the same scenery and leaves in the same vehicle Caleb entered in. Unlike ~~a~~ Caleb, she is excited to live a normal human life. This could show the desire of those in society who have nothing yearning for a 'normal' life, and those that do have everything they could need ~~seek~~ seeking more. The Dark Knight Rises' representation of groups through narrative structure is less ~~cent~~ centred around equilibrium and more the ~~peak~~ rise and peak of the conflict. Communist or Marxist ideologies are held by the main villains in the film and these ~~are~~ ideologies are the main ~~source~~ source of conflict in the film. Before Bane's act of terrorism in the stadium, Gotham's society seemed stable despite the divide between the rich and poor. It was only after he "handed the power to the people" that there was uprising. During the film's peak the question ~~is~~ of if the ^{oppressed} ~~oppressed~~ were in the right to join in with the ~~acts~~ attacks on their oppressors is brought to a head when it results in everyone in Gotham, rich or poor, being in danger.

While the narrative structure of these films does play a part in the representation of social and cultural groups, the characters in the way they are written, performed, dressed and cast could be argued to be a bigger contributor to this.

		The representation of the elite is done well through the characters in both films. In the modern age, the most powerful people in the world are those in charge of more innovation. Technology in companies like Google and Apple have power over the a large portion of the global population and it is clear that Nathan was inspired by this with his search engine engine engine engine and data collecting. The character of Nathan seems to suggest that these tech giants are morally bankrupt with the way he uses Caleb and his sentient robots. The film makes many references to him being godlike from the film's title deriving from 'Deus ex machina' or 'god from the machine'. Caleb's quote suggesting Ava's creation is 'the history of gods' and Nathan's obsession with the quote. Caleb represents the consumers of this technology; the common people in society. He is an office worker living in an apartment with nothing remarkable about him and Nathan uses this to his advantage. The characters in the Dark Knight Rises also represent the elite with Bruce Wayne and Miranda. Bruce Wayne has his charity for orphaned children yet he still lives in a large house and owns advanced technology unavailable to the general public. He profits from the poor's suffering just as much as other wealthy people. Miranda represents the manipulative and dishonest nature of business people.
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with her deceitful performance as an ~~innocent~~ ^{innocent} bystander until it is revealed she had the power all along. ~~This is a~~ While this twist is a strong narrative device, it would not have been as successful if Miranda did not play the role she initially does.

Women are also represented in both films with heavy influence from the male gaze. Catwoman in *The Dark Knight Rises* is sexualised in a manner that appeals to the ~~intended~~ ^{intended} male audience expected of a sci-fi film. She wears a full latex suit that displays all of the curves on her body, ~~still~~ impractical stiletto heels and catlike imagery with her name ~~as~~ and ~~ear~~ cat ear ~~silhouette~~ ^{silhouette} caused by the goggles on her head. As a character, her story is resolved once she falls for Batman with her being cast to the side only to act as a prize for Batman for saving Gotham in the ending where he is travelling Europe with her. In *Ex Machina*, the female presenting ~~a~~ robots are also sexualised, though this is more to fit into the narrative than to attract male viewers. Kyoko fits the stereotypical Japanese maid archetype with her lack of ~~expt~~ ^{expt} English and subservient nature. She was created to fit ~~for~~ ^{for} Nathan's fantasy and to the point

where she believes that a man would only interact with her for sex or to watch her dance for his own entertainment. Ava, while less sexualised by Nathan with her bald head and circuits on show, still sexualises herself in order to get what she wants. She was also made to fit Caleb's pornography preferences and ~~was~~ engineered to have sex. This fits with the idea of the male gaze and that in society a woman must appeal to men to ~~get~~ be respected, like how Ava ~~not~~ only had the opportunity to be free because Caleb wanted to be with her on the outside.

Overall, both films ~~can~~ use narrative structure conventions to represent social and cultural groups to ~~a certain~~ different extents. The characters could be argued to be more important to this, however they would not be able to portray these groups without the film's narrative, especially in the Dark Knight Rises' case with Miranda.

This exemplar demonstrates some of the features of the most successful responses in Section A. In this instance, a strong, clear focus on social and cultural groups intermingled with discussion of narrative structure. This answer used aspects of narrative structure to construct a very well-focused response on the representations of social and cultural groups.

Section B overview

The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of their chosen documentary and make sustained connections to relevant theoretical elements as determined by the question. Regardless of the question chosen, most candidates were able to articulate theoretical concepts relating to documentary films, deriving from the work of Nichols, Pennebaker and Grierson mainly (the latter two being required to answer Question 3).

Question 3*

You have studied **one** documentary film from the list.

Documentary
<i>Stories We Tell</i> (2013). Directed by Sarah Polley
<i>Searching For Sugarman</i> (2012). Directed by Malik Bendjelloul
<i>5 Broken Cameras</i> (2011). Directed by Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi
<i>The Act Of Killing</i> (2012). Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer
<i>Man On Wire</i> (2008). Directed by James Marsh
<i>Citizenfour</i> (2014). Directed by Laura Poitras

EITHER

3* 'Documentary films should represent reality accurately.'

Referring to the theories of Grierson and Pennebaker, discuss this view in relation to examples from the documentary film you have studied. **[35]**

Most candidates who attempted this question had clear knowledge and understanding of their chosen film and so were clearly able to explore and analyse examples of the chosen film with reference to a range of micro-elements of film form. Most candidates were able to discuss specific elements of the theories of Grierson and Pennebaker and apply these to the documentary they had studied.

The most effective responses were often characterised by an ability to interlace the ideas of Grierson and Pennebaker directly to each of the examples from their documentary. This would often take the form of using examples of sequences and exploring how they demonstrated the significance of Grierson or Pennebaker in relation to the construction of reality. This was the clearest way to demonstrate the depth of candidate understanding of these theories.

The least effective responses were the ones who completely or largely did not refer to the theories of Grierson and Pennebaker. Without this there was not much left of the question to frame an answer around. There were not very many of such responses.

Be specific, be on task consistently

Some candidates used theoretical ideas to 'top and tail' their responses and in between offered examples of their documentary. Such responses did demonstrate knowledge and understanding of both film and theories, but there was often a lack of coherence evident in this approach.

Question 4*

- 4*** Discuss how the documentary film you have studied uses cinematography (including lighting) to help construct the spectator's understanding of the film. **[35]**

Most candidates who attempted this question had clear knowledge and understanding of their chosen film and as such were clearly able to explore and analyse examples of cinematography and how it was used within the documentary studied.

The most effective responses were characterised by discussion of specific examples from the chosen film, such as the use of Super 8 in *Stories We Tell*, and the interviews featured in *Searching for Sugarman* and *Citizenfour*. The number and variety of examples also helped to enrich and develop the discussions being presented in responses. Reference to other stylistic influences such as film noir with regard to *The Act of Killing* helped to develop some candidates' answers.

The least effective responses were ones where candidates discussed cinematography and the film without being able to identify different cinematographic approaches or reflect on the constructed nature of all documentaries (at least to some extent). Such responses were characterised by presenting a generalised view of the film and its subject matter without analysing specific examples in detail.

Section C overview

Overall, effective responses are marked out by the ability to address the elements of analysing the chosen films in line with the theme, offering meaningful comparisons between them and an explicit focus on the issue in the question. While addressing the chosen theme is an integral part of the question, and so needs to be part of the response, this should not be at the expense of the other aspects of the question. While supporting evidence from sequences discussing specific aspects of micro-elements of film form is necessary to develop points, this textual analysis should not detract from dealing with the issue presented in the question. In this year's questions this was the role of mise-en-scène in shaping spectator response and the potential for oppositional readings to the films studied.

Answers which choose to focus on offering a general textual analysis applied to the chosen theme will be credited for the relevant knowledge and understanding demonstrated, but such answers will not be able to access the upper mark bands. Candidates must address and answer the question chosen, this is an overarching fundamental issue in completing examined work

Overall, the mise-en-scène question (Questions 5, 7, 9) was answered more successfully than the filmmakers' values question (Questions 6, 8, 10), with greater precision and focus being brought to the majority of the mise-en-scène answers.

Assessment for learning



While it was clear that candidates knew the films they had studied and could present relevant material from the chosen films, it was not always clear how that material directly engaged with the terms of the question. Without that clear and consistent engagement with the question chosen, this will limit candidates' ability to reach the higher mark bands on this paper. Analysis of specific areas of mise-en-scène was essential to access the higher mark bands for Q5/7/9. A focus on aspects of mise-en-scène such as costume and set/location would have provided a simple yet effective framework for a successful response to these questions. A similar specific approach should be applied to each of micro-element of film language.

Question 5*

You have studied films from **one** of the themes:

- Family and Home
- Outsiders
- Conflict.

If you have studied films from the theme of **Family and Home**, answer Question 5 **or** Question 6.

If you have studied films from the theme of **Outsiders**, answer Question 7 **or** Question 8.

If you have studied films from the theme of **Conflict**, answer Question 9 **or** Question 10.

You have studied **three** films from your chosen theme: one film from the **US Independent** list, one film from the **Non-US English Language** list and one film from the **Non-European Non-English Language** list.

US Independent	Non-US English Language	Non-European Non-English Language
<i>Moonrise Kingdom</i> (2012). Directed by Wes Anderson. USA	<i>Room</i> (2015). Directed by Lenny Abrahamson. Canada/ Ireland	<i>A Separation</i> (2011). Directed by Asghar Farhadi. Iran
<i>The Tree of Life</i> (2011). Directed by Terrence Malick. USA	<i>Animal Kingdom</i> (2010). Directed by David Michod. Australia	<i>Our Little Sister</i> (2015). Directed by Hirokazu Koreeda. Japan

EITHER

- 5*** Discuss how the films you have studied use mise-en-scène to shape the spectator's understanding of family and home.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Question 5, 7 and 9 were more popular than the other question and most candidates who answered this could engage with the impact of mise-en-scène on spectator understanding meaningfully. The most effective responses to this question were characterised by being able to identify specific aspects of mise-en-scène and then analyse the impact of that aspect across each of the three films. An example would be the impact of location in shaping spectator understanding, whether that was the interior location in *Room* or the exterior locations featured in *The Battle of Algiers*. Additionally, a focus on costume, such as in *The Piano* or *The Babadook*, was another straightforward way to help candidates to orient themselves and effectively respond to the question.

The least effective responses to the question were characterised by a limited ability to meaningfully distinguish between different aspects of mise-en-scène and apply this to discussion of relevant sequences. As a result, candidates were unable to analyse the films in the depth needed to reach the higher mark bands.

Be specific, avoid generalised answers

There were a significant number of candidates who offered generalised responses which partially addressed mise-en-scène, but only among other features of film language. While the impact of mise-en-scène cannot be divorced from other micro-elements, responses which focused on a variety of aspects of film language with no clear focus on mise-en-scène could not achieve the same marks as candidates who were more rigorous in their approach and applied their learning to the requirements of the question.

Candidates should be prepared to give focused answers with core examples from each film studied from each area of the micro-elements of film form. This can be developed through questions/quizzes and practised through in-class assessments on specific areas of film language. For example, 10 mark questions from Paper 1 can be retrofitted to assess aspects of film language in the Paper 2 set films.

Question 6*

6* 'Individual spectators may interpret a film in ways that might clash with the beliefs and values of the filmmaker.'

Discuss this claim in relation to the films you have studied.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Most candidates who answered this question (Question 6, 8, 10) did have secure knowledge and understanding of the chosen films; many could offer comparisons between the three films to some extent. A common limitation to responses to these questions was on how an individual spectator might respond differently to what the filmmakers intended.

The most effective responses to this question could articulate what they understood to be how the filmmakers wished the film to be perceived, very often by linking to Hall's reception theory and the concept of the preferred reading. Candidates could then apply the concept of the oppositional reading to posit a potential spectator response which was at odds with the filmmakers' values and beliefs. This approach worked well with interrogations of the attitude towards war in *The Hurt Locker* and similarly the attitudes towards the use of armed resistance to occupation and colonialism as evident in *The Battle of Algiers*.

The less effective responses to this question were ones which were unable to meaningfully engage with what an oppositional reading to the film may consist of, whether this was expressed in theoretical terms or not. Where candidates struggled to identify how the films might be interpreted in a way that differed from the filmmakers' values and beliefs, they were then largely unable to move beyond descriptive accounts of events of the films, limiting their engagement with the full demands of the question.

Question 7*

You have studied **three** films from your chosen theme: one film from the **US Independent** list, one film from the **Non-US English Language** list and one film from the **Non-European Non-English Language** list.

US Independent	Non-US English Language	Non-European Non-English Language
<i>A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night</i> (2014). Directed by Ana Lily Amirpour. USA	<i>The Babadook</i> (2014). Directed by Jennifer Kent. Australia	<i>Yojimbo (The Bodyguard)</i> (1961). Directed by Akira Kurosawa. Japan
<i>Elephant</i> (2003). Directed by Gus Van Sant. USA	<i>The Piano</i> (1993). Directed by Jane Campion. New Zealand	<i>Y Tu Mama Tambien</i> (2001). Directed by Alfonso Cuarón. Mexico

EITHER

7* Discuss how the films you have studied use mise-en-scène to shape the spectator's understanding of outsiders.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Question 5, 7 and 9 were more popular than the other question and most candidates who answered this could engage with the impact of mise-en-scène on spectator understanding meaningfully. The most effective responses to this question were characterised by being able to identify specific aspects of mise-en-scène and then analyse the impact of that aspect across each of the three films. An example would be the impact of location in shaping spectator understanding, whether that was the interior location in *Room* or the exterior locations featured in *The Battle of Algiers*. Additionally, a focus on costume, such as in *The Piano* or *The Babadook*, was another straightforward way to help candidates to orient themselves and effectively respond to the question.

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Question 8*

- 8* 'Individual spectators may interpret a film in ways that might clash with the beliefs and values of the filmmaker.'

Discuss this claim in relation to the films you have studied.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Most candidates who answered this question (Question 6, 8, 10) did have secure knowledge and understanding of the chosen films; many could offer comparisons between the three films to some extent. A common limitation to responses to these questions was on how an individual spectator might respond differently to what the filmmakers intended.

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The less effective responses to this question were ones which were unable to meaningfully engage with what an oppositional reading to the film may consist of, whether this was expressed in theoretical terms or not. Where candidates struggled to identify how the films might be interpreted in a way that differed from the filmmakers' values and beliefs, they were then largely unable to move beyond descriptive accounts of events of the films, limiting their engagement with the full demands of the question.

Question 9*

You have studied **three** films from your chosen theme: one film from the **US Independent** list, one film from the **Non-US English Language** list and one film from the **Non-European Non-English Language** list.

US Independent	Non-US English Language	Non-European Non-English Language
<i>The Hurt Locker</i> (2008). Directed by Kathryn Bigelow. USA	<i>District 9</i> (2009). Directed by Neil Blomkamp. South Africa	<i>Battle of Algiers</i> (1965). Directed by Gilo Pontecorvo. Algeria
<i>Whiplash</i> (2015). Directed by Damien Chazelle. USA	<i>Mad Max</i> (1979). Directed by George Miller. Australia	<i>The Grandmaster</i> (2013). Directed by Wong Kar-Wai. China

EITHER

- 9* Discuss how the films you have studied use mise-en-scène to shape the spectator's understanding of conflict.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Question 5, 7 and 9 was more popular than the other question and most candidates who answered this could engage with the impact of mise-en-scène on spectator understanding meaningfully. The most effective responses to this question were characterised by being able to identify specific aspects of mise-en-scène and then analyse the impact of that aspect across each of the three films. An example would be the impact of location in shaping spectator understanding, whether that was the interior location in *Room* or the exterior locations featured in *The Battle of Algiers*. Additionally, a focus on costume, such as in *The Piano* or *The Babadook*, was another straightforward way to help candidates to orient themselves and effectively respond to the question.

The least effective responses to the question were characterised by a limited ability to meaningfully distinguish between different aspects of mise-en-scène and apply this to discussion of relevant sequences. As a result, candidates were unable to analyse the films in the depth needed to reach the higher mark bands.

Exemplar 2

9		In this essay, I will discuss how the films; <i>Whiplash</i> , <i>District 9</i> , and <i>Battle of Algiers</i> used mise-en-scene to shape the spectator's understanding of conflict.
		Starting of with <i>Whiplash</i> , I think this film shows more of a mental ^{verbal} conflict. We can see this in a few sequences such as the the the the family dinner scene. There is low-key lighting that brings the mood and atmosphere down - creating the spectator to feel as if something ^{something} is about to happen. The props and setting suggest they are in the dining room having
		dinner - which is a trope of conflict within families. This makes it feel more natural as it may be relatable to some the spectators.

		In Dist District 9, the conflict seems to be racial - between the humans and prawns. This conflict creates binary opposition (Claude Levi Strauss' theory). We can see this in the scene where MNU are to evicting the prawns. The use of props (guns, armour and heavy machinery) give the sense that they don't trust the prawns. The setting that this scene takes place in is almost slum-like - with houses built from scrap metal, tons of human litter as well as the cramped space. We can see that there is racial conflict. The costume of the prawns are are based of a bug - people tend to kill bugs so there is implied meaning that the prawns are are just like bugs to humans.
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This exemplar demonstrates some aspects of less successful responses in this series. The response discusses representations of social and cultural groups with a focus on aspects of mise-en-scène but lacks the depth of analysis required to achieve the higher mark bands. More consideration of the examples mentioned, such as the props in *District 9* mentioned would have helped to develop more analytical points which explain not just what we see but how these aspects affect the spectator response.

Be specific, avoid generalised answers

There were a significant number of candidates who offered generalised responses which partially addressed mise-en-scène, but only among other features of film language. While the impact of mise-en-scène cannot be divorced from other micro-elements, responses which focused on a variety of aspects of film language with no clear focus on mise-en-scène could not achieve the same marks as candidates who were more rigorous in their approach and applied their learning to the requirements of the question.

Candidates should be prepared to give focused answers with core examples from each film studied from each area of the micro-elements of film form. This can be developed through questions/quizzes and practised through in-class assessments on specific areas of film language. For example, 10 mark questions from Paper 1 can be retrofitted to assess aspects of film language in the Paper 2 set films.

Question 10*

10* 'Individual spectators may interpret a film in ways that might clash with the beliefs and values of the filmmaker.'

Discuss this claim in relation to the films you have studied.

You must draw comparisons between the **three** films you have studied in your answer.

[35]

Most candidates who answered this question (Question 6, 8, 10) did have secure knowledge and understanding of the chosen films; many could offer comparisons between the three films to some extent. A common limitation to responses to these questions was on how an individual spectator might respond differently to what the filmmakers intended.

The most effective responses to this question could articulate what they understood to be how the filmmakers wished the film to be perceived, very often by linking to Hall's reception theory and the concept of the preferred reading. Candidates could then apply the concept of the oppositional reading to posit a potential spectator response which was at odds with the filmmakers' values and beliefs. This approach worked well with interrogations of the attitude towards war in *The Hurt Locker* and similarly the attitudes towards the use of armed resistance to occupation and colonialism as evident in *The Battle of Algiers*.

The less effective responses to this question were ones which were unable to meaningfully engage with what an oppositional reading to the film may consist of, whether this was expressed in theoretical terms or not. Where candidates struggled to identify how the films might be interpreted in a way that differed from the filmmakers' values and beliefs, they were then largely unable to move beyond descriptive accounts of events of the films, limiting their engagement with the full demands of the question.

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