

A Level Film Studies – Transition pack / baseline assessment

One of the key skills in A Level Film Studies is the ability to analyse texts for film language: this includes camera shots/angles, movement and editing; **mise-en-scene** & sound (A useful, very detailed guide can be found here: <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>). As a baseline test you will be analysing the opening scene from *La Cité des Enfants Perdus* (*The City of Lost Children*) (1995, Jeunet & Caro): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POxn5z-8Tb8>

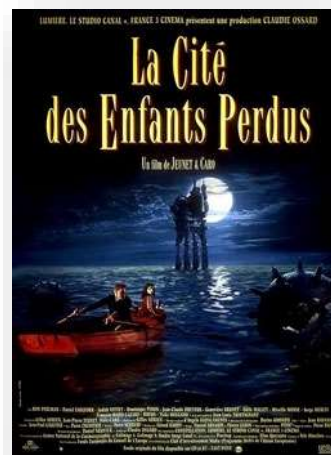
Baseline Task 1: Analyse the sequence

Watch the sequence 3 times and take notes on:

- Use of camera angles/shots and movement (use the sheet to help you)
- Use of mise-en-scene (see link above)
- Use of sound/music
- The way in which these impact the audience

Write up your notes as a formal essay – this should take you 45-50 minutes. You should aim to write about 750 words. Make sure to P-E-E and try to use media terms throughout. You may use screen captures to help support your points. This video may help:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BeJNd6O0CMs>



Baseline task 2:

Another main element of Film Studies is planning and producing films. For Controlled Assessment you will be set a brief to create a film extract from a list of genres for a particular audience (will be other things you must include too).

Your second task is **to create a scene from a thriller/mystery film**:

- It should last roughly 2 minutes
- It should include a variety of shots and be edited together
- It should include suitable music (unless you are purposefully using silence) – using copyrighted music for this test is acceptable
- You can use other people to make the film (e.g. as camera operators, actors etc.) but the final film should be your own work (not group work)
- You can use proper cameras (if you have access to one), but phone video is fine.
- Most Windows computers have Windows Movie Maker, most Apple computers have iMovie – both of these are fine to use. If you have neither of these, this page has links to freeware movie editing programmes (<http://www.techradar.com/news/software/applications/the-best-free-video-editor-1330136>). I recommend Capcut as easy to use (and free).
- Your video can be submitted via email (if small enough to attach), Onedrive link, via memory stick or you could upload it to youtube and send me the link
- **If anyone has problems completing this task (e.g. no access to equipment) please email me (mjillibrand@wigstonmat.org) as soon as possible and I will try to help you out**

Cinematography help sheet

Close ups are used to show facial expressions (emotion), or to focus on important details. Can be used to show **action codes** (e.g. a gun which will be important later)

Medium shots – these are the most commonly used shots. We naturally see the world in medium. Can see most of the body, but still see facial expressions.

Long shots – focuses on the setting rather than the subject. VLS is often used as the opening shot in a scene, setting the scene. This is known as an **establishing shot**.

EXAMPLES OF SHOT SIZES AND FRAMINGS



BIG CLOSE-UP
B.C.U.



TWO SHOT
(COULD BE CU/
MCU/MS)



CLOSE-UP
C.U.



OVER THE
SHOULDER
SHOT



MEDIUM
CLOSE-UP
M.C.U.



INTERVIEWEE
IS FRAMED TO
ONE SIDE AND
'OFF CAMERA'
TOWARDS
INTERVIEWER



MEDIUM
SHOT;
M.S.



MOVING
SUBJECT- IS
FRAMED WITH
SPACE TO WALK
INTO



MEDIUM
LONG SHOT
M.L.S.



HIGH ANGLE
(LOOKING
DOWN)



LONG SHOT
L.S.



LOW ANGLE
(LOOKING UP)



VERY LONG
SHOT
V.L.S.



TILTED
FRAME

Over the shoulder shot – used to imply conversation between person A and person B. Often followed by the reverse version (over the opposite person's shoulder). This is known as **shot/reverse shot**.

High angle shots are used to imply height, or to either give the audience a sense of superiority, or make the subject look inferior.

Low angle shot – the opposite of high angle, makes the subject look superior/heroic. Often used in comics to make hero characters look powerful, or in music TV to make artists look more iconic.

Camera movement:

- **Tracking:** when the camera moves left to right, or forward to backwards, as if on a track (in the old days, actual train tracks would have been built)
- **Panning:** when the camera swivels on a fixed axis (like a tripod)
- **Craning:** when the camera is mounted on a crane, to enable very long high angle shots, or birds eye views.
- **Zooming:** when the camera stays still, but the lens moves closer to an object – creates a different depth of field (focus) to a track.

Editing:

- **Cut:** the basic transition. Shot B replaces shot A. We as audiences are used to lots of fast cuts to create pace (e.g. in a car chase), and don't even notice them most of the time. This is known as invisible editing.
- **Fade:** Where shot A fades to black, and then Shot B fades in from black. Implies a passing of time.
- **Dissolve:** Where Shot B fades directly through Shot A (if you pause it, you will see a mixture of both) – implies a change of time or place.