



# FILM STUDIES

## NAME:

Film Studies is an exciting subject that develops your analytical, critical and creative thinking skills. A Level Film Studies requires you to explore films in depth, apply academic theories, compare different filmmaking approaches and develop sophisticated written arguments.

This transition booklet is designed to support your move into A Level Film Studies by building the key skills and knowledge you will need for success. It will introduce you to essential ideas, encourage you to explore films more deeply, and help you begin thinking analytically and creatively about cinema. By completing the activities, you will develop confidence in applying theory, discussing filmmaking techniques, and expressing your opinions clearly in writing, ensuring you are well prepared for the demands of the course in September.

- Introduces key skills and knowledge for A Level Film Studies
- Encourages deeper, more analytical engagement with film
- Builds understanding of film theory and techniques
- Develops confidence in written and creative responses

## WHAT IS A LEVEL FILM STUDIES?

A Level Film Studies explores film as an art form, cultural product and industry.

You will study:

- How films create meaning
- Film language and aesthetics
- Film industries
- Film spectatorship and audience response
- Film movements and contexts
- British, American and global cinema
- Independent and mainstream filmmaking
- Film theories and critical approaches

You will also create your own short film or screenplay as part of the non-examined assessment (NEA).



## ACTIVITY 1: FILM VIEWING JOURNAL

Watch at least two films from the list below.

- Captain Fantastic (2016)
- Pan's Labyrinth (2006)
- La La Land (2016)
- Vertigo (1958)
- Amy (2015)
- Memento (2000)

For each film complete the following:

1. Briefly summarise the plot (100 words).
2. Identify the genre.
3. Describe one memorable scene.
4. Explain how cinematography, editing or sound contributed to that scene.
5. Give the film a rating out of 10 and justify your opinion.

**FILM TITLE:**.....

**GENRE:**.....

**RATING:**.....

**FILM TITLE:**.....

**GENRE:**.....

**RATING:**.....

## ACTIVITY 2: DIRECTOR RESEARCH

Choose a director from the list below

- Alfred Hitchcock
- Christopher Nolan
- Asif Kapadia
- Damien Chazelle
- Shane Meadows
- Guillermo del Toro
- Ridley Scott

Create a profile including:

- Biography
- Career highlights
- Three key films
- Visual style
- Recurring themes
- Why audiences enjoy their work



HAVE YOU INCLUDED  
THE DIRECTOR'S FULL  
NAME?

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED  
THEIR MOST  
IMPORTANT FILMS OR  
WORKS?

HAVE YOU DESCRIBED  
THEIR STYLE OR  
TRADEMARKS?

HAVE YOU EXPLAINED  
THEIR INFLUENCE ON  
OTHERS?

### ACTIVITY 3: REPRESENTATION IN FILM

Representation is a major area of Film Studies.

Choose ONE film and focus on ONE of the following:

Examples:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Social class
- Disability

Who is represented?

How are they shown?

What stereotypes can you identify?

FILM: \_\_\_\_\_

Are these representations positive, negative or mixed?

What impact might this have on audiences?

### STUART HALL - RE-PRESENTING

Stuart Hall argues that media does not simply reflect reality, but re-presents it by constructing meaning. Media texts shape how we see people, events, and groups through selective choices, and these representations influence audience understanding and beliefs.

- Media constructs reality: The media doesn't show the truth—it creates a version of reality.
- Representation = meaning: The way something is shown influences how audiences understand it.
- Selective portrayal: Media producers choose what to include and what to leave out.
- Can reinforce or challenge stereotypes: Representations can either support dominant ideas or question them.
- Different readings: Audiences may interpret representations in different ways depending on their background.
- Links to power: Those who control media have influence over how groups and issues are represented.



### LAURA MULVEY - MALE GAZE

Laura Mulvey argues that media, particularly film, positions audiences to view the world through a male perspective (the "male gaze"). Female characters are often presented as objects of visual pleasure, while audiences are encouraged to identify with male characters who drive the action.

- Audience positioning / Male gaze: Media often presents women from a heterosexual male viewpoint, focusing on appearance and attractiveness. Viewers are encouraged to adopt the perspective of the male character.
- Objectification: Female characters are shown as objects to be looked at, rather than active agents in the story.
- Visual pleasure: Camera angles, shots, and editing are used to create pleasure for the viewer, often at the expense of female representation.
- Influence on attitudes: These representations can shape how audiences see gender roles in real life.



### ACTIVITY 4: CREATIVE FILMMAKING CHALLENGE

Create a storyboard for a short film lasting 2–3 minutes.

Your film must include:

- A protagonist
- A conflict/problem
- A resolution

For each frame include:

- Sketch
- Shot type
- Brief description - Including notes on dialogue, sound, camera movement and lighting

Shot number	Sketch	Type of shot	Dialogue – Sound – Camera Movement - Lighting	Timing

Shot number	Sketch	Type of shot	Dialogue – Sound – Camera Movement - Lighting	Timing

**HAVE YOU INCLUDED DIALOGUE OR SOUND WHERE NEEDED?**

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IN EACH FRAME?**

**HAVE YOU SEQUENCED YOUR SHOTS IN A CLEAR ORDER?**

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT TIMING FOR EACH SHOT?**

Shot number	Sketch	Type of shot	Dialogue – Sound – Camera Movement - Lighting	Timing

**HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CAMERA MOVEMENT?**

**HAVE YOU ADDED BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ACTION?**

**HAVE YOU INCLUDED SHOT NUMBERS?**

**HAVE YOU ENSURED YOUR STORYBOARD IS NEAT AND ORGANISED?**

## ACTIVITY 5: FILM TERMINOLOGY

Film Studies uses specialist terminology. Research and define the following terms:

Term	Definition
Mise-en-scène	
Cinematography	
Shot-Reverse-Shot	
Close up (CU)	
Continuity Editing	
Cross cut	
Establishing shot	
Diegetic Sound	
Non-Diegetic Sound	
High key lighting	
Low Key Lighting	
Ideology	
Mise-en-scene	
Narrative	
Non-linear narrative	
Auteur	
Bias	

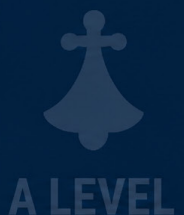


**PARK HALL**  
SIXTH FORM

GCSE

**STEPPING  
UP** .....

FROM GCSE TO A LEVEL



A LEVEL