

## Welcome to Film Studies!

Now that you've decided to study Film at A level, you'll need to do a bit of preparation. This pack contains a programme of information sheets, activities and resources to prepare you to start your A level in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE throughout the rest of the summer term and over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.

### **The resources include:**

- Key pre-knowledge topics that are required for you to be successful in your course with activities associated with the topics, which test your key knowledge and understanding of the building blocks required to be successful in this subject.
- Suggested reading and associated websites where you can research the topics you will be exploring in your A level course.
- Suggested visits and activities over the summer holidays including places of interest that will generate enthusiasm and engagement.

# Pre-knowledge topics

## 1. Watch some films

Did you ever think that watching films would legitimately be an essential part of your subject knowledge? Well, now it is.

Take the opportunity over the summer to watch a range of different films.

Watch a(n):

- American Film from 1930-1990, e.g. a Hitchcock film
- American Film from 1961-1990, e.g. Blade Runner (1982)
- British Film since 1995, e.g. Shaun of the Dead

Fancy a challenge?

Watch a:

- Global Film (with sub-titles)
- Documentary film
- Silent Film

**Apply relevant strategies to watch in an effective way but aim to:**

- watch in a dark room;
- watch on the biggest screen you can;
- NOT have your phone nearby;
- watch the whole film in one go;
- avoid snacking and
- not talk to someone else.

**Evaluate your reaction as a viewer:**

Each time you watch a film, make a note of the film title, the director, year of release and a few sentences on your general reaction to it. Keep this as a note on your phone, a word document or in a little notebook.

## 2. Film Criticism

**Watch how others criticise film.**

Use YouTube to find some 'visual essays' or film criticism channels. Watch a few examples. Use this playlist link if you're not sure where to start:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9HivyjAKlc&list=PLeNerb9lxe3k kt\\_ZDy44k65O\\_Rb6vR3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9HivyjAKlc&list=PLeNerb9lxe3k kt_ZDy44k65O_Rb6vR3)

**Appreciate how critical analysis can alter the effect of a film.**

Watch at least 3 visual essays and then afterwards make a note of the essay title, the name of the channel or creator and a few sentences about your reaction to the video/what you learned.

### Evaluate how film criticism has different aspects.

Make a playlist on YouTube or write down a list of the different videos or channels you've come across/watched, but group them in terms of what the channel focuses on.

## 3. The Language of Film

### Camera shots and angles

Use the sheets on the following pages to learn/revise the names of different camera shots and angles. Use the sheets below to help you with this. Try to consider the effect of these shots/angles.

#### Camera Shots

Example image	Shot name	Shot description	Dramatic Effect?
	Extreme long shot	The camera is at its furthest distance from the subject, emphasising the background. You can see the whole person or object and they will often be quite small.	
	Long shot	Shot which shows all or most of a fairly large subject (for example, a person) and usually much of the surroundings.	
	Medium long shot	In the case of a standing actor, the lower frame line cuts off their feet and ankles.	
	Medium shot	In such a shot the subject or actor and its setting occupy roughly equal areas in the frame. In the case of the standing actor, the lower frame passes through the waist. There is space for hand gestures to be seen.	
	Medium close-up	The setting can still be seen. The lower frame line passes through the chest of the actor; usually just the head and shoulders can be seen.	
	Close-up	A shot that shows a fairly small part of the scene, such as a character's face, in great detail so that it is the dominant object in the screen.	

	Big close-up	These focus attention on a person's feelings or reactions, and are sometimes used in interviews to show people in a state of emotional excitement, grief or joy. This usually is seen through a shot of forehead to chin or in the case of an object, taking up almost all of the screen.	
	Extreme close-up	When the screen is taken up by an image made of nothing but the image. You usually cannot see the background. This is often done to subject's faces when showing reactions or when highlighting detail.	

### Camera Angles

Example image	Shot name	Shot description	Dramatic Effect?
	Over the shoulder shot	The camera literally looks over someone or something's shoulder at another person, object or landscape. The shoulder being looked over is often in the shot.	
	Low angle	The camera is not at the 'regular' eye level and looks slightly up at the subject or person.	
	High angle	An angle where the camera is placed slightly above the subject or person.	
	Canted	An angle that is at an 'odd' angle to the position of the viewer so that it make the object, subject or people look as if it is tilted.	
	Bird's Eye	Named as it represents the angle from which a bird would view the object or person, essentially, from a very high angle looking down on someone or something.	

	Worm's Eye	So-called as it matches the apparent perspective of a worm. Is essentially a 'very low' shot that looks up at someone or something.	
	Eye level	The conventional angle for a camera to be placed and describes the 'flat' angle that the camera show where the subject or person is centred in the shot, so that the eyes, or centre of the object match our level in the middle of the screen.	

**Example shots/angles**

Number the shots/ angles from 1 to 15 and try to match the image with the camera shot or angle above.



## 4. Critical Theory

### Understand what a critical theory is

Read the information below with some examples of critical theories that can be applied to film. They're just an outline or an introduction and we will spend a lot longer studying these in detail across the film course. To get started however, read and learn about each and maybe even watch a video or two on YouTube to help get an introduction to them.

#### Introduction to Critical Theories

##### **Auteur**

This is the film theory, the one most associated with Film Studies. This is the theory of the director as the author. It is an incredibly popular theory and has given rise to the cult of the director.

Your Preparation: Look out for films by a particular director and watch a variety of films by them. What are the similarities in their style?

##### **Spectatorship**

The theory of the audience and their relationship with the film. Exploring how messages/meanings are received.

Your Preparation: look up Active and Passive readings. How do they work?

##### **Narrative Theory**

A film's creation of the story/narrative can be explored through these theories.

Your Preparation: Explore how Todorov, Propp, Barthes and Levi-Strauss crafted narrative theories to explain stories.

##### **Marxist**

The theories of Karl Marx can be applied to films to explore how commerce and commodification are represented and in conflict.

Your Preparation: What are commodification, alienation, universal equivalent and any other terms you find.

##### **Feminist approaches**

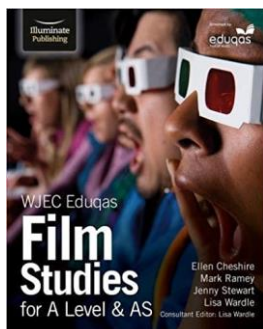
From the 1970s onwards feminist approaches to film have provided a powerful way of deconstructing a male dominated art form.

Your Preparation: Look up Laura Mulvey's theory of the 'male gaze'. What does it mean? How does it work?

## Apply critical theory

Evaluate how a film of your choice can be analysed and 'explained' through application of a critical theory of your choice.

## Essential Textbook (required for Sept 2021)



**WJEC Eduqas Film Studies for A Level & AS Student Book**  
ISBN-13 : 978-1911208440

**Recommended for Year 2**

**WJEC Eduqas Film Studies for A Level & AS Revision Guide (Illuminate) ISBN-13 : 978-1912820351**

## Suggested Reading and Research

### General

What is Context? <http://www.davidbordwell.net/essays/doing.php>

Political Context <http://documents.routledgeinteractive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780765635976/01%20A%20Guide%20for%20the%20Political%20Analysis%20of%20Movies.pdf>

Technological context

<https://memeburn.com/2013/02/9-tech-innovations-that-changed-the-film-industry-through-the-ages/>

<http://www.mpa.org/technology-and-innovation>

Detailed explanation of representation:

<http://www.mediaknowall.com/gcse/keyconcepts/gcse/keycon.php?pageID=represent>

Some interesting approaches to representation:

<http://lessonbucket.com/vce-media/unit-1/representation/representations-in-film/>

On the issues of lack of diversity in Hollywood:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/jan/18/hollywoods-race-problem-film-industry-actors-of-colour>

How the representation of women is improving. An article in the NY times:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/movies/fall-arts-preview-representation-of-female-characters-in-movies-is-improving.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/movies/fall-arts-preview-representation-of-female-characters-in-movies-is-improving.html?_r=0)

<http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/gender-representation>

Great overview of representation of ethnicity:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zwpq39q/revision>

Overviews of representation of age:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zx6qsg8/revision>

[http://www.mediaknowall.com/as\\_alevel/alevkeyconcepts/alevelkeycon.php?pageID=age](http://www.mediaknowall.com/as_alevel/alevkeyconcepts/alevelkeycon.php?pageID=age)

Very useful article from The Guardian including clips:

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/jul/04/what-films-best-portray-old-age56>

A useful PDF:

The Shot and Mise-en-Scene. Use of colour in storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXgFcNUWqX0>

Aesthetics/Colour Palettes

<http://mymodernmet.com/cinema-palettes/>

# The Film Studies Channels

## **Reviews and Criticism**

Channels with reviews and opinions presented with intelligence and wit.

**Movies with Mikey** - Available on the Filmjoy channel. Mike Neumann reviews films with depth and insight.

**Every Frame a Painting** - Tony Zhou deconstructs modern classics from the editor's point of view.

**Kermode and Mayo** - British film critic Mark Kermode's witty criticism.

**Lindsay Ellis** - Smart film criticism and theory with a focus on the new.

## **Mixed Movie Channels**

These channels contain all sorts of cinema related info, from top 10s to archive footage, reviews, easter eggs and much more.

**BFI (British Film Institute)**  
**British Pathe**

These two channels contain an immense amount of British film. Luckily they collate it all into handy playlists.

## **Film-Making Tips**

A series of channels filled with tutorials and information designed to help people making films without a lot of funding.

**Ralndance**  
**Film Courage**  
**Film Riot**  
**Filmmaker IQ**

**Nerdwriter** - High level criticism of film. And other things.

**Movies I Love (and so can you)** - Long form reviews with an emphasis on positivity.

**Film-Drunk Love** - Video essays about film form and themes.

**What the Flick** - No holds barred movie reviews and interviews.

**The Directors Series (on Vimeo)**: Head to Vimeo to see this growing catalogue of classic director analysis.

**Red Letter Media, Cineflix, Screen Junkies, Collider Videos**

Honest trailers, top 10s, reviews, best of, movie fights, 8-Bit Cinema and more on this selection of mixed media channels. It's easy to lose hours following link after link. Keep a notepad handy for remembering all the films you fancy watching.

## **Short Film Collection Websites**

Video sites like Vimeo and YouTube contain a huge amount of short films but finding the best is difficult. Try using these sites...

**Filmshortage.com**  
**FILMSshort on YouTube**

**Future Shorts on YouTube**  
**shortoftheweek.com**

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## Suggested visits and activities

1. Watch films – at home, at a friend's, with family. Try films from different genres/ directors/ ages, etc. Try to be as varied as you can.
2. Try to visit different types of cinemas to see how they affect your viewing experience. Consider what is on offer for you at these different types of venues.
  - An art-house cinema, such as South-Hill park in Bracknell;
  - A 3D or 4D cinema experience, such as Showcase in Winnersh or Cineworld, Bracknell.
3. Familiarise yourself with the BFI website. Have a look at the online archives whilst looking at the different opportunities that they offer young people. If you are planning on going to London, see if there is anything happening at the centre and book in to a screening/ talk, etc.
4. If you fancy a whole day out, visit the Warner Brother's Studio tour in London. Become immersed in the world of *Harry Potter*.