

IB Film 1 – Comparative Study

Students at SL and HL carry out research into a chosen area of **film focus**, identifying and comparing two films from within that area and presenting their discoveries as a recorded multimedia comparative study.

Each student submits the following for assessment.

- a. A recorded multimedia comparative study (10 minutes maximum).
- b. A list of all sources used.

TERMINOLOGY

Film focus

For this task, students select an area of **film focus** that interests and excites them from one of the following.

- Film movements (such as French New Wave, German expressionism, Third Cinema, and so on)
- Film genre and film style (such as film noir, romantic comedy, science fiction, Western, and so on)
- Film theory (such as auteur theory, feminism, Marxist film theory, and so on)

Cultural context

For this assessment task, **cultural context** involves consideration of some of the following factors, some of which may be blended (such as socio-economic factors).

- Economic
- Geographical
- Historical
- Institutional
- Political
- Social
- Technological

Preparation process

The early stages of this task require students to carry out research into film concepts, theories, practices and ideas that interest and excite them, and that will ensure maximum potential for meeting the needs of the assessment task criteria. From this research, they identify the **task components** for a recorded multimedia comparative study.

TERMINOLOGY

Task components

For this assessment task, each student identifies, selects and researches each of the following **task components**.

1. One area of **film focus** (from the list above).

2. Two films for comparison from within the chosen area of **film focus**, one of which originates from a contrasting time (historical) or space (geographical) to the personal context of the student, and the other film identified for comparison must arise from a contrasting **cultural context** to the first film. Students are required to select films they have not previously studied in depth. The selected films cannot come from the prescribed list of film texts provided for the textual analysis assessment task and, once selected, the films cannot be used by the student in any other assessment task for the DP film course or the extended essay.
3. A clearly defined topic for a recorded multimedia comparative study, which links both the selected films and the identified area of **film focus**. Each student should invest time in researching, developing and honing their topic (which in most cases is likely to be expressed in the form of a research question) to ensure it is clear, focused and concise, in order to provide them with the maximum potential for success in this task. The topic should seek to enrich the student's understanding of the chosen area of film focus and should avoid a plot-driven approach to comparison.

The assessment criteria for this task requires students to provide a strong justification for the choice of **task components** as part of the recorded multimedia comparative study. This includes the student's justification for how the films arise from contrasting **cultural contexts**.

Assessment process

In preparation for this task, students at SL and HL must have undertaken the activities outlined within the "[Contextualizing film](#)" section as part of the core syllabus. Students then undertake the following process for assessment.

Inquiry

- Each student carries out broad research, using both primary and secondary sources, in order to investigate possible areas of **film focus** and films for comparison from within the areas of **film focus**, using materials from a range of sources, including original films, critiques, publications and other media. Each student decides the selection of the **task components**, which includes a clearly defined topic for the comparative study (which in most cases is likely to be expressed in the form of a research question). Each student defines the **cultural context** of the selected films and justifies why these **task components** were chosen for the comparative study.
- Each student undergoes a process of comparing and contrasting their selected films (and carrying out further focused research into the **task components**) in order to deepen their understanding of each film. It is likely that the student will consider the ways in which film elements work together to convey meaning in their analysis of how the selected films compare and contrast.

Action

- Each student assembles their findings, developing a personal and critically reflective perspective, and identifies and gathers appropriate audio-visual material to support the study.

- As a result of the inquiry and action processes outlined above, each student prepares a recorded multimedia comparative study (10 minutes maximum) for submission, ensuring a balance between visual and spoken elements, while making clear reference to their sources as on-screen citations. The primary weight of evidence for the study should be selected from the two chosen films, which should be given equal consideration.

Reflection

- Students reflect on the learning undertaken in this task, and review and refine their comparative study ahead of submission.

Task details

The comparative study is a recorded multimedia presentation (10 minutes maximum) comprising sound and images. The selection and assembly of the material for submission is an important aspect of the task, and students should ensure that information is communicated clearly, logically and audibly in a visually appropriate manner.

In this task, the examiner is looking for evidence of the extent to which students are able to demonstrate an understanding of the following.

- The **task components** selected for the study (the area of **film focus**, two films and the topic), which should include the **cultural context** of the selected films and a justification of why these components were chosen for the comparative study. The work should be supported throughout with accurate and appropriate film vocabulary.
- The links that exist between the selected films, as well as the student's ability to identify connections, similarities and differences while relating these back to the chosen area of **film focus**. It is likely that the student will consider the ways in which film elements work together to convey meaning in their analysis of how the selected films compare and contrast. Students should ensure they give equal weight to both of the films selected for study in their analysis.
- How to effectively construct a comparative study in order to present the work undertaken clearly, logically and in a visually appropriate manner. The study should be supported by a suitable range of relevant sources.

Recorded commentary

The comparative study must contain a recording of the student's voice throughout, introducing the study and justifying the chosen topic and selected films, as well as providing the commentary for the main body of the work. This voiced commentary may be recorded numerous times until the student is happy with the material. Students may also, if they choose, use a pre-written script (which must be the student's own work) to be read, recorded and edited into the comparative study. They may also include breaks in their recorded commentary to enable other audio-visual material included in the study to be clearly heard, and likewise should reduce the volume of audio-visual material during the recorded commentary to ensure it is entirely audible.

Please note: The student must not appear on screen at any time in the comparative study.

Use of audio-visual material and copyright

On-screen text, keynote slides, still images, animations, audio recordings and carefully selected and relevant clips from the selected films are all permitted within the comparative study, where appropriate. The primary weight of audio-visual evidence must come from the two chosen films and the student's recorded voice. While the length of film clips a student can use is not dictated, the clip length should directly match the specific point being made by the student in the recorded commentary.

- Each student must use legal copies of their two chosen films in order to extract the video or audio content for editing into the comparative study. Once the final comparative study has been submitted for assessment to the IB, each student must ensure that the extracted media files are destroyed.
- Students must be aware that their work is solely for academic purposes and that they are not permitted to share or distribute any copyright-protected content used in the comparative study outside of the IB without the express written consent of the copyright holder(s).
- Students are required to clearly reference the two chosen films in the submitted list of sources.
- It is the responsibility of the student to obtain, extract and delete any copyright materials used for this task.

Black slate

The comparative study must begin with a 10-second black slate (included in the total time limit) that clearly states the chosen **task components** using on-screen text. The student's recorded commentary, which begins simultaneously with the black slate, should address the justification of these **task components**.

TASK COMPONENTS

- Area of film focus
- Titles of the two films for comparison
- The chosen topic

Preparing the work for submission

The comparative study should adopt a formal, academic register and may be delivered in the first person, as appropriate, presenting the student's personal opinion and perspective as a film student.

The finished comparative study will be submitted online. Students must ensure that their recorded voiceover is clear and audible, and that any text is legible when viewed on screen. Overcrowded or inaudible materials may result in examiners being unable to interpret and understand the intentions of the work, which will result in the examiner being unable to reward the full scope of the work. Where appropriate, students may use subtitles to facilitate understanding.

The comparative study must not be labeled with the student’s name in order to ensure anonymity in the marking process.

Examples of possible task components

The table below outlines some examples of possible **task components** that students could feasibly consider for this assessment task. These examples are for guidance only and are neither prescriptive nor restrictive.

Area of film focus	Film 1	Film 2	Possible topic for comparative study
Film movement: German expressionism	<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> (1920)	<i>Edward Scissorhands</i> (1990)	How and with what effect are specific film elements of German expressionism used within a chosen contemporary film?
Film movement: French New Wave	<i>Breathless</i> (1960)	<i>Badlands</i> (1973)	The influence of the French New Wave on New Hollywood’s use of innovative film elements in its representation of youth and violence.
Film genre and film style: Black comedy	<i>No. 3</i> (1997)	<i>The Big Lebowski</i> (1998)	To what extent do “black comedy” films differ according to cultural context?
Film theory: Soviet montage	<i>Battleship Potemkin</i> (1925)	<i>Koyaanisqatsi</i> (1982)	To what extent are specific features of Soviet montage theory faithfully employed in a contemporary experimental film?

Further examples of possible **task components** can be found in the [Film teacher support material](#).

Academic honesty and on-screen citation

All sources must be acknowledged following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by the school.

- If a student uses work, ideas or images belonging to another person in the comparative study, the student must acknowledge the source as an on-screen citation during the submitted multimedia study, either as a voiced reference as part of the recorded commentary or as on-screen text.
- Students must also submit a separate list of these sources using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner.
- A student's failure to appropriately acknowledge a source used in the recorded multimedia comparative study (as outlined in the "Use of audio-visual material and copyright" section), will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

Further information about citations can be found in the IB's [Effective citing and referencing](#) guide.

The role of the teacher

Teachers must ensure that their students are prepared for the demands of this task through the careful planning and delivery of the "[Contextualizing film](#)" core syllabus areas.

It is important for students to have exposure to a range of film movements, genres, styles and theories as part of the taught content of the DP film course in order to enable them to approach this assessment task with a broad foundation in the subject area. Teachers are reminded that films previously studied in depth may not be used by students for this assessment.

Teachers are required to meet with students at each stage of inquiry, action and reflection to discuss the progress made to date, and to verify the authenticity of the coursework being created by each student. The key outcomes of these one-to-one interactions, which might be formal meetings and/or informal discussions in the classroom, must be summarized by the teacher on the DP film *Coursework authentication form*, which is submitted to the IB as part of the upload of external assessment material.

The teacher should also:

- discuss each student's choice of **task components** (the area of **film focus**, two films and topic), encouraging them to engage with films that contrast with the student's own personal context in terms of time (historical) and space (geographical). It is important that the two selected films are authentically identified and chosen by the student and not by the teacher
- ensure that the two films chosen for comparison have not been studied by the student before and that they are not used by the student in any other assessment task for the DP film course or the extended essay
- ensure that students acknowledge all sources used and reference them as on-screen citations appropriately throughout the comparative study and include them in the separate list of sources

- assist students with setting up the necessary technical hardware and software to enable the recording of the student’s voiceover and facilitate the student’s assembly of their chosen visual and audio components
- give verbal or written feedback to **one** draft version of the recorded multimedia comparative study. Please note that the drafting and redrafting of the work in response to teacher feedback is not permitted
- encourage each student to reflect on their learning and experiences associated with this task.

Formal requirements of the task

Each student submits the following for assessment.

- A recorded multimedia comparative study (10 minutes maximum).
- A list of all sources used.

The procedure for submitting the assessment materials can be found in Diploma Programme *Assessment procedures*.

Students should be informed that where the submitted materials exceed the maximum time limit for the comparative study, examiners will only assess the work that falls within the prescribed limits. Materials that fall under the minimum time limit are likely to be self-penalising. Submitted work must not contain any appendices as these will not be read by examiners.

External assessment criteria—SL and HL

Summary

Comparative study (SL and HL)		Marks	Total
A	Task components	12	32
B	Comparing and contrasting	12	
C	Assembling the comparative study	8	

Criteria

A. Task components

Evidence: Recorded multimedia comparative study and sources.

- To what extent does the student provide a credible justification for the choice of **task components** (the area of film focus, two films and topic)?
- To what extent does the student demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the **task components** and the **cultural context** of the two selected films?
- To what extent does the student support their work with a suitable range of relevant sources?

Students who fail to select films from two contrasting **cultural contexts** will not achieve a mark above 3 in this criterion.

Mark	Descriptor	Possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–3	<p>This work is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides little or no justification for the choice of the task components. • The student demonstrates little or no knowledge and understanding of the identified task components and the cultural context of the selected films. 	<p>Basic</p> <p>Incomplete</p> <p>Ineffective</p> <p>Rudimentary</p> <p>Superficial</p>
4–6	<p>This work is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a justification for the choice of task components but this is underdeveloped. • The student demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the identified task components and the cultural context of the two selected films. 	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Reasonable</p> <p>Standard</p> <p>Sufficient</p> <p>Suitable</p>
7–9	<p>This work is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a coherent and logical justification for the choice of task components. • The student demonstrates a clear and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the identified task components and the cultural context of the two selected films. • The student references a suitable range of sources that 	<p>Competent</p> <p>Balanced</p> <p>Proficient</p> <p>Relevant</p> <p>Thoughtful</p>

	are appropriate and relevant to the work.	
10–12	<p>This work is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student provides a credible and persuasive justification for the choice of task components. • The student demonstrates an effective and highly appropriate knowledge and understanding of the identified task components and the cultural context of the two selected films. The student analyses the cultural context of the selected films and provides a credible and persuasive justification for the choice of task components. • The student references an effective range of sources that are highly appropriate, adding to the critical perspectives explored in the work. 	<p>Compelling Honed Insightful Mature Sophisticated</p>

B. Comparing and contrasting

Evidence: Recorded multimedia comparative study and sources.

- To what extent does the student compare and contrast the selected films, making links to the chosen topic?
- To what extent does the student support their comparative study with accurate film vocabulary?

Mark	Descriptor	Possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–3	<p>This work is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student lists ways in which the two films connect to each other and to the chosen topic, making superficial observations regarding similarities and differences that are inaccurate, irrelevant or incoherent. • The comparative study contains little or no accurate 	<p>Basic Incomplete Ineffective Rudimentary Superficial</p>

	film vocabulary.	
4–6	<p>This work is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student adequately outlines how the two films connect to each other and to the chosen topic, making accurate observations regarding similarities and differences, but this work is underdeveloped. • The student demonstrates some appropriate use of relevant film vocabulary. 	<p>Acceptable Reasonable Standard Sufficient Suitable</p>
7–9	<p>This work is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student successfully explains how the two films connect to each other and to the chosen topic, making accurate and relevant observations regarding similarities and differences. • The comparative study is well supported with appropriate and accurate film vocabulary. 	<p>Competent Balanced Proficient Relevant Thoughtful</p>
10–12	<p>This work is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student effectively analyses how the two films connect to each other and to the chosen topic, providing insightful, accurate and relevant observations regarding similarities and differences. • The comparative study is consistently and effectively supported with accurate film vocabulary. 	<p>Compelling Honed Insightful Mature Sophisticated</p>

C. Assembling the comparative study

Evidence: Recorded multimedia comparative study and sources.

- To what extent does the student assemble the comparative study in a clear, logical, audible and visually appropriate manner?
- To what extent does the student provide an equal treatment of the two films selected for study?

Mark	Descriptor	Possible characteristics
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.	
1–2	<p>This work is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comparative study is constructed with little or no consideration of how to logically convey information. The work is limited, both in terms of audibility and supporting visuals. The student focuses on one film in particular throughout the comparative study. 	<p>Basic</p> <p>Incomplete</p> <p>Ineffective</p> <p>Rudimentary</p> <p>Superficial</p>
3–4	<p>This work is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comparative study has been constructed with some attempt to logically convey information. It is audible and makes adequate use of supporting visuals. The student generally gives more consideration to one of the films in particular during the comparative study. 	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Reasonable</p> <p>Standard</p> <p>Sufficient</p> <p>Suitable</p>
5–6	<p>This work is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comparative study has been assembled to follow a clear and coherent structure. It conveys information audibly and with supporting visuals and examples that are mostly appropriate and meaningful, with some clear links to the topic being discussed. The student gives fairly balanced consideration to the two films throughout the comparative study. 	<p>Competent</p> <p>Balanced</p> <p>Proficient</p> <p>Relevant</p> <p>Thoughtful</p>
7–8	<p>This work is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The comparative study is logical and effectively organized, conveying information audibly and in a visually appropriate manner. It is substantiated by relevant and meaningful visuals and examples that are 	<p>Compelling</p> <p>Honed</p> <p>Insightful</p> <p>Mature</p>

	<p>effectively and explicitly linked to the topic being discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student gives equal consideration to the two films throughout the comparative study.	Sophisticated
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