

Textual Analysis Student Handout

The Task: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how meaning is constructed in film through a written analysis of a prescribed film text, based on a chosen extract (lasting no more than five minutes) from that film.

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
- Film elements

Film Elements: For this assessment task, “film elements” may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cinematography (such as color, composition, exposure, framing, focus scale, movement, shot type, and so on)
- Critical response and reception
- Editing (such as continuity, cut, dissolve, match, montage, pace, transition, and so on)
- Filmmakers’ influences, intentions and vision
- Genre, codes and conventions
- Mise-en-scène (such as acting and figure behavior, art direction, costume and make-up, décor, lighting, set and setting, space, and so on)
- Motifs, symbols and themes
- Narrative structure
- Sound (such as dialogue, sound editing, sound effects and Foley, soundtrack and music or score, diegetic and non-diegetic, and so on)

What You Submit for Assessment:

- a. A written textual analysis (1,750 words maximum) and a list of all sources used.

Formatting Your Work:

- Begin by stating which film elements you are going to discuss.
- You may use carefully selected and relevant illustrations (including screen-shots, visuals or diagrams), and these must be labeled.
- Adopt a formal, academic register. This may be written in the first person and may reflect personal opinion and reaction, where appropriate.
- Make sure your work is clear and legible when it is presented in a digital, on-screen format.

- Use a common page size (A4 or US letter) and type your work in a legible sans serif 12-point font.
- State the number of words you have used at the end of the textual analysis.

Academic Honesty:

All sources must be acknowledged following the protocol of the referencing style chosen by your school. If you use work, ideas or images belonging to another person, this source must be acknowledged as an in-text citation.

What the Examiner is Looking For:

1. Cultural Context: 6 marks

For assessment, you need to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context of the film text
- support your understanding of the cultural context with research from relevant sources.

2. Film Elements and Film Terminology: 12 marks

For assessment, you need to:

- demonstrate an understanding of how the extract makes use of film elements to convey meaning in the chosen film.
- support your observations with relevant film vocabulary.

3. Relationships Within the Film Text: 6 marks

For assessment, you need to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which the cultural context of the film and a selection of the identified film elements relate to each other, as well as to the chosen film text as a whole (this might also feasibly include, where appropriate, relationships to other film texts).

This is a condensed overview of the textual analysis assessment task and may not contain all of the necessary requirements for success in this task. For full details of the task, please refer to the DP Film guide (2017).