



GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**FILM STUDIES
GCSE**

SUMMER 2022

Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at:
<https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?!=en>

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
COMPONENT 1	1
COMPONENT 2	5
COMPONENT 3	10

FILM STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 1 – KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN US FILM

General Comments

Overall, this year centres should be commended for how well candidates have been prepared for what was effectively the first full first session of the new specification. In the main most candidates were able to access the full range of questions. They largely responded with the appropriate levels of knowledge both in terms of the theoretical requirements and detailed knowledge of the films themselves.

There were very few rubric infringements where candidates tackled a section or question with reference to the wrong film. Some centres pre-empted the examination of the revised timeline, for which a general rubric error allowance was made. We would remind centres that the revised timeline is for first teaching this year and the old timeline will be examined again in 2023.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank those teachers involved in Film Studies for their efforts to mitigate the impact of the Covid pandemic. Their hard work was apparent in the way that we were able to assess what felt like a normal cohort on candidate entries.

Comments on individual questions/sections

1. (a) Identify one use of editing from the film you have studied. [1]

This question proved problematic for a significant number of candidates. Whilst many were able to give a correct example of editing terminology their identification was not made specific to their chosen film. "Shot reverse shot" is an example of editing from any film to make an identification it must be specific "shot reverse shot when Miles and Becky talking in the doctor's office. Candidates should be reminded to be specific - generalised responses cannot be rewarded.

Additionally, guidance to candidates would be to carefully select the example in 1a since this question is often linked to 1b. Candidates are advised to read through the questions in each section in full before completing the first one.

(b) Briefly explain the effect created by this use of editing within the film. [4]

Relevant responses here were of a generally good standard. They were able to discuss the how and the why the particular editing technique had been used. Where candidates faltered was in a lack of detail in their explanation, repetition and failing to make direct links between the technique and the meaning created. Candidates should be encouraged to consider as to whether they have made 4 mark worthy points within their explanation. In a significant minority of scripts, it was concerning to see so many candidates and centres struggle with the concept of film editing. Centres need to be mindful that this is a key element of film form (if not the key element) and should be given equal treatment with the other aspects.

- (c) Explore how editing and/or camerawork are used to create meaning in at least one key sequence from the film you have studied. [10]**

The standard of response here tended to vary depending on how the candidates managed the choice “and/or” presented them with. The better responses either discussed a clear example of meaning made by both techniques or opted for a detailed response to just one. Candidates who could refer to specific sequences in detail from their chosen films in detail were inevitably served well by this question. Weaker candidates tended to provide lists of examples without engaging in an effective discussion of meaning. Many of the exemplary responses were able to deal with aspects such as positioning, ordering of shots and shot selection to a high degree, sometimes exceeding the expectations of GCSE.

- 2. (a) Identify one important prop in the film you have studied. [1]**

The response here was much more effective than in 1(a) as the nature of props seem to lend itself more naturally to specific identification. For example, we were much more likely to see the answer “Indy’s gun” (1 mark) rather than “Gun” (0 mark). Nevertheless, specific identification from within the chosen film is still the standard here.

- (b) Briefly explain why this prop is important. [4]**

The general quality of responses to this question was strong. With a variety of approaches rewarded from a props narrative significance to their symbolic meaning, most approaches proved mark worthy. Where candidates faltered was again in a lack of detail in their explanation, repetition and failing to make direct links between the technique and the meaning created. Candidates should be encouraged to consider as to whether they have made 4-mark worthy points within their explanation.

- (c) Discuss the use of costume and props in at least one key sequence from the film you have studied. [10]**

There was a greater range of responses to this question than 1 (c). This was an “and” rather than an “and/or” question. In order to access the higher levels of the mark scheme both aspect needed to feature in their answer. There was no necessity for an even balance, but both costume and props had to be discussed. The better answers referenced a range of props and costume within a well-prepared specific sequence from their chosen film; discussing both sequence specific meaning and meaning with the film overall. The most sophisticated answers were able to discuss how both aspects were used together to generate meaning. Where candidates struggled was when they only discussed either aspect or superficially discussed lists of examples from throughout the whole film. Candidates should be reminded that phrases like “the use of” indicates the intended meaning of their chosen examples.

3. **Compare how genre conventions are used in the two films you have studied. In your answer you may consider:**
- **Iconography including mise-en-scène**
 - **Characters and representations**
 - **Narrative and themes [20]**

Centres should be commended here for their use of the pre-examination guidance as most candidates had been prepared well to discuss codes and conventions and typicality.

It was pleasing again to see responses from the full range of the films on offer. Candidates who made a clear judgement as to their chosen film's genre from the offset and then went on to structure a response based on this fared well. This was true of the great majority of candidates enabling them to discuss how genre conventions were used within their chosen film. Many exemplary answers dealt well with one or more areas prompted by the bullet points. The most sophisticated responses were able to compare the genre conventions within their contextual era, some of these responses went beyond what we would expect at GCSE level. Where candidates were less strong here was through a lack of a clear comparison. They either chose disparate examples that did not readily lend themselves to comparison or merely considered each film in isolation. Candidates should be reminded that in this question that comparing their two chosen films is the key to success.

Section B: Key Developments in Film and Film Technology

This section generated responses across the full range of possible marks. Other than the need for candidates to practice responding to the content of the timeline the only other observation to be made is the time-honoured guidance to consider the question carefully. Some candidates responded to parts b) and c) with more than the 2 required studios and examiners can only accept their first 2 selections.

Section C: US Independent Film

5. **Discuss how far the specialist film writing has changed your thoughts about the film you have studied. Refer to at least one key sequence in your response. In your answer you may:**
- **identify the specialist writing you have studied**
 - **outline the ideas from the specialist writing you have studied**
 - **link these to at least one key sequence**
 - **refer to what you learnt from the specialist writing [15]**

The main issue this session with this question 5 was with candidates' ability to frame their response with the injunction to discuss how the specialist film writing had "changed their thoughts". Although the majority of responses were rewarded those that focussed on their view of the film 'before and after' studying the writing accessed the higher levels of the mark scheme much more readily. In studying the writing an agree or disagree approach to its ideas is a useful approach, but once in the examination candidates must be prepared to shape this approach to the needs of the question.

Nevertheless, it was pleasing to see not just the wide range of film choice here, but also the general level of engagement with the specialist film writing. The issue of candidates not referring to the writing in any way seems now to be confined to the very smallest number of weaker candidates. Still, it is good practice for candidates to state their chosen piece at the outset of the answer. Most candidates were able to engage on an informed and personal level with the chosen specialist film writing. The better responses were both varied and personal in their arguments and clearly backed this up with evidence from the film. Those candidates who were working from either of the 2 generic pieces did well when they maintained their focus on the film rather than going into too much detail about the examples the writer had given. Those candidates who discussed the writing specific to each film did well when they clearly matched aspects of the writing with aspects they could now recognise and understand in the film as a result of their studying the specialist writing. Responses that either discussed clear changes in opinion or little apparent influence or both because of the specialist writing were equally rewarded. This session all of the chosen pieces proved accessible to a range of candidates and responses.

As previously mentions it was pleasing to see that this session there was a dwindling minority of centres where candidates failed to recognise that this is where they had to discuss one of the nominated pieces of specialist film writing. If centres are in any doubt, they should consult the digital resources on the Eduqas website for further guidance.

Summary of key points

Credit and thanks are due to teacher's professionalism in preparing candidates in what has been at times very difficult conditions during their delivery of the content.

In conclusion:

- In question 1 and 2 (a) candidates should be clear as to the requirement of an identified example.
- Candidates need detailed sequence specific knowledge and examples of the key elements of film form.
- A good general understanding and appreciation of the films, particularly in terms of genre and context, is also important.
- In question 3 the ability to compare is as important as the content-based knowledge.
- A personal and informed response, guided by the approach set out in the question, to section C is recommended.
- In a very demanding component efficient planning and timing is essential.

FILM STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 2 - GLOBAL FILM: NARRATIVE, REPRESENTATION AND FILM STYLE

General Comments

- This was the first year of examinations after a period of hiatus due to Covid-19 and the exams followed a two-year period of disrupted teaching and learning because of the pandemic.
- As with previous examination series, candidates were expected to complete three questions in 90 minutes, with each question consisting of three or four stepped sub-questions.
- Candidates are expected to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and understanding of elements of film form and, as in previous years, each section also has a specific area of study that is assessed – narrative for section A, representation for section B and aesthetics for section C.
- The most successful films tended to be *District 9* for section A, *Tsotsi* for section B and *Attack the Block* for section C.
- It was extremely encouraging to see that the majority of candidates tackled all questions in the time available with very few incomplete scripts.
- There appeared to be a much better understanding of representation and aesthetics compared to previous years, which was pleasing to see.
- There were a few rubric infringements where candidates tackled a section or question with reference to the wrong film. Centres are asked to remind candidates to ensure the film analysed for each section is from the correct cluster.
- It was noted that some candidates had answered all parts of a question (a,b,c and d) in one. When this was the case, it was not clear where one answer finished and the next began and it was difficult to award because of this. Centres are asked to remind candidates that they should answer each question in turn and clearly label their answers with the corresponding question number.
- Similarly, candidates should aim to work through the sub-questions in order to allow them to build upon their former answers without repetition.
- Some centres appeared to have taught their candidates a 'set' answer, with all candidates giving an almost identical response. This was also commented on in 2019 and is not acceptable. Candidates should be engaging with the question at hand.
- Overall, the exam paper appeared to be received well, with candidates appearing to be well prepared and confident.

Comments on individual questions/sections

Question 1 (Section A – Narrative Focus)

All films in this section were covered across the centres however the most popular by far were *District 9* and *Slumdog Millionaire*.

The most successful answers focused on *District 9*.

1. a. What do you understand by the term ‘plot’?

Although a lower tariff question, this proved to be one of the most difficult for candidates to answer and it appeared that many candidates had not been taught the difference between plot and story. Whilst this was taken into account whilst marking, candidates should be aware of the differences between the two. The majority of students described the plot as the story or what happens in the film, and some described the entire plot of their chosen film. The best answers however focused on the fact that story is what happens in a film, who it happens to and where it happens, whilst the plot is more how, when, and why it happens.

b. Briefly describe a turning point in the plot of the film you have studied.

This question asked candidates to focus on their chosen film and describe a turning point in the plot. Any turning point was accepted, and many students were able to identify a point in the film where the plot took on a new direction. The lower ability candidates tended to describe the scene and what happened whilst the best answers discussed how or why their chosen scene was a turning point and how it affected the narrative/story/characters etc. There was no need for scene analysis here due to the number of marks available. An overview of the scene was sufficient.

c. Discuss how elements of film form create meaning during one key plot point in the film you have studied.

The question here asks candidates to analyse one key plot point. Some candidates analysed more than one point and whilst this was acceptable (especially for comparison to other moments in the film), analysing more than one scene often meant answers did not develop into as much detail and could therefore not reach the higher bands. The best answers here analysed one key scene in detail in order to explore how meaning was created whether that was the introduction of a character / theme etc. The best answers used subject specific language well and covered a variety of film form elements – suggesting what each meant, rather than just giving a list of examples used. The highest ability candidates also linked in narrative theory in their answers. Responses focusing on *District 9* were the most successful with those that chose to analyse the opening sequence the best answers. These answers tended to look at how Wikus and the aliens were first introduced to us, how the equilibrium was established and how this helped to set up themes and position the audience for later events. Responses that did not refer to any key sequences struggled to achieve higher than a band 3 and candidates that failed to use elements of film form in their analysis were also limited to the lower bands. A select few retold the story without analysis, which was reflected in the marks however the majority of candidates handled this question well and with confidence.

Question 2 (Section B – Representation)

All films were looked at across the centres. The most popular by far were *Tsotsi* and *Let the Right One In*.

The most successful answers were from *Tsotsi*.

This appeared to be the most successful question of the paper with the majority of candidates achieving well.

2. a. Identify one adult character in the film you have studied.

All candidates were able to identify an adult character. Marks were given for naming a character (e.g., Boston in *Tsotsi* or for clearly identifying a character without giving a name (e.g. the baby's father in *Tsotsi*). In the case of films such as *Tsotsi* members of Tsotsi's gang were accepted as either adults or children.

b. Briefly describe this character's appearance and behaviour.

Candidates were able to describe their chosen character. The best answers here described in detail the look and behaviour of the person in question whilst lower ability candidates tended to focus on one or the other. Higher ability candidates also linked their character to representation or themes covered in the film.

c. Describe how adult characters are represented in the film you have studied.

There were mixed responses to this question. Some candidates gave a general overview of how adults were represented without examples whilst others tended to describe several different adult candidates without indicating an overall representation. The best answers for this question briefly discussed the overall representation of adults in the film using a few examples to back up their points.

d. Explore how age is represented in one or two key sequences from the film you have studied.

This question allowed the candidates to really engage with the text and answers were often very good. There seemed to be much more understanding of representation this year, compared to previous years, which was pleasing to see, and many candidates were able to compare the way adults and young characters were shown to the audience. Some candidates (especially in the case of *Wadaja* discussed gender rather than age and others tended to do another film form analysis rather than answer the question at hand. Where candidates failed to look at a key sequence or lacked focus on the question answers were not awarded above a band 3.

Question 3

The most popular films in this section were *Attack the Block* and *Skyfall* with *Submarine* coming second.

The most successful answers focused on *Attack the Block*.

There were few to no entries looking at *My Brother the Devil* or *Brooklyn*.

3 a. Identify a location or setting in the film you have studied.

Almost all candidates were able to clearly identify a location or setting.

b. Briefly describe the mood or look of this location or setting.

Almost all candidates focused on the same setting or location they had identified in part a, which was pleasing to see. The majority of candidates were able to describe the location or setting well but, some failed to link it to the question and did not always discuss the look or mood created.

c. Briefly explore how the look or mood of the film makes you feel.

Again, this question was approached well with the majority of candidates describing the look or mood of the film well however, as in part b, some failed to link it to the question and did not say how the look or mood made them feel. The best answers here were led by film form which were used to back up how they felt when watching.

d. Explore how far the film you have studied has a distinct look or style throughout. Refer to at least one key sequence.

This question was handled well by candidates across the board. The best answers looked at how elements of film form combined to create a certain look or mood and discussed what this look or mood was and what it communicated to the audience, whether that be genre, themes, issues, or feelings. Lower ability candidates tended to repeat a film form analysis of the film and did not always link to the mood or look of the film and whether it was distinctive throughout. This was particularly the case for *Submarine*. Some of the best answers for this question came from *Attack the Block* and discussed the urban, gritty London environment, the realism and the hybrid sci-fi, action, crime genre. There seemed to be a much better understanding of aesthetics this year which was encouraging.

Summary of key points

- It has been so encouraging to see so many centres choosing Film Studies and candidates appeared to have been prepared well for the paper, with a much clearer understanding of some of the macro features of film.
- There was an encouraging level of confidence and sophistication amongst the higher ability candidates, and I look forward to this continuing.
- Candidates generally used their time well - a minority writing too much for the lower tariff questions which then left them short of time for the longer questions.
- There was sometimes a tendency to repeat answers from the shorter questions in the lengthier questions and this was reflected in the marks. Candidates should use the stepped questions as building blocks and build on their former answers as they move through each sub-question.
- Whilst most candidates appeared well prepared with key sequences they could discuss / analyse, some students did not look at key scenes and this limited the marks achievable in the higher tariff questions.
- Where key scenes were analysed, the use of film language was good, and examples given backed up points made therefore strengthening answers.
- Some centres appeared to have taught their candidates a 'set' answer, with all candidates giving an almost identical response. This is not acceptable, and candidates should be engaging with the question at hand.

FILM STUDIES

GCSE

Summer 2022

COMPONENT 3 - PRODUCTION

General Comments

There were a variety of highly creative pieces submitted and it was good to see that the challenges presented by the pandemic had not stifled the creativity of those keen to show what they had learned on the course. The screenplay and filmed extracts were the most popular choices, with a smaller number electing to produce storyboards (allowed for the 2022 entry only).

Comments on individual questions/sections

The screenplay option has now become firmly embedded and almost all candidates followed the format of professional screenplays with all of the relevant details included. The best examples strike the right balance between visual exposition and dialogue with the emphasis on the former. This allows candidates to show their knowledge and understanding of film storytelling devices as well as the codes and conventions of their chosen genre. Those with a 60/40 or 70/30 balance between visual exposition and dialogues found greater opportunities to demonstrate what they had learned.

The shooting script was probably the most variable aspect of the folders. Many now choose to use a standardised template which does not limit this component. Editing is one area where candidates struggle to show their understanding, with shot-duration which does not always replicate what we would expect in standard continuity editing. This may be something for centres to consider, with candidates looking at the shot duration of similar films from the same genre to consider what is standard. The best examples – when combined with the screenplay – would allow you to easily go out and produce the film in the exact way that the candidate had themselves visualised this.

As a new option, the storyboards were more varying in quality. The best examples included digital imagery and allowed candidates to convey careful consideration of camera and mise-en-scene. Some were dominated by found imagery, which did not always provide the opportunity for candidates to convey their understanding of film storytelling devices. The quality of the filmed extracts has improved steadily since the introduction of this option and many take advantage of more readily available software to generate work that is of a very high standard. Some used the pandemic as inspiration for their films and – much like Hollywood – were keen to tap into current world events to attract audiences. The advice given in previous years with regard to avoiding lengthy credit sequences and staying within the time limit have been taken on board and there were some great examples of just what can be achieved in terms of creating tension in such a short space of time.

The evaluative analysis provides further opportunity for learners to make the connection between their own work and the films they have studied. In the best examples, these really illustrate the thought process behind the production components – with sophisticated reference to similar films which explain how and why aspects of the films they have studied can be seen in their work.

This was one area where the word limit was not always adhered to. It is worth getting to consider how what they write draws upon the analytical skills developed through their studies. In some cases, candidates gave an account of what they did, rather than a critical analysis of the finished product.

Summary of key points

In terms of administration, I have mentioned in previous reports, teacher annotation is a key way to demonstrate to the moderation team how the assessment criteria has been applied. Centres who use comments drawn from the relevant mark band make it easier to establish the accuracy of assessment more readily. Those which are simply ticked with one-word comments such as 'great', are less useful. Some centres are using teacher feedback software and supplied evidence of internal standardisation, which again helped to make the approach to assessment very clear.

The uploading of work onto surpass was also carried out efficiently by most centres, though there was a significant number of late submissions this year which created significant extra administration for the moderation team. I would encourage all centres to ensure they have this done in a timely manner to avoid potential delays to grades being awarded.



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk