

Everyone's a Critic: Asking Meaningful Research Questions through Film

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Abstract

Everyone's a Critic is a long term research and writing unit designed for a high school English or ESOL class. Students will be introduced to a critical film vocabulary which will allow them to view and analyze films on an academic level. Furthermore, students will use their critical vocabulary to analyze a film of their choice in order to pose a meaningful research question. By critically analyzing a film of their choice, students will be able to avoid the common pitfalls of the writing process, namely asking questions that are too simple, too complicated, or simply uninteresting. Once equipped with a meaningful research question, students will set out to answer it with a formal research paper. In their research paper, students will answer their research question as well as tie their answer back to the film that inspired it. At the end of this process, students will present their findings alongside a clip from the film that inspired their research. Everyone's a Critic attempts to use film, a medium students are already familiar with, to teach and develop the skills of metacognition, research, writing, and public speaking.

Rationale:

It is no secret that there are many underperforming schools in Philadelphia. Scores on standardized testing lag behind the national average, many schools have low graduation rates, and every year seems to bring tumult as a host of schools are either closed or entered into "turn-around" programs. These issues can be attributed to many factors: socioeconomic status, lack of funding for key programs, difficulties in retaining talent, a focus on privatizing the education system, the list goes on. Regardless of the uphill battles we face, teachers in the School District of Philadelphia must meet these challenges head on every day in order to provide a meaningful education for our students, who each have a right to learn.

I teach English at a relatively small neighborhood high school in Kensington, Philadelphia. The school population is racially mixed, comprised of 70% Latino students, 25% African American students, and 5% listed as "other." 100% of students are designated "Economically Disadvantaged" by the district and qualify for free lunch. At my school, we pride ourselves on solid graduation rates, a unique culture, and a focus on the arts and humanities. While I like to think that we are a successful school, the problems that affect the school district as a whole affect my school as well. This unit will attempt to address several of the major problems students are facing in my school. Specifically, most students at my school read and write below or well below grade level. Additionally, when students are tasked with writing a research paper, they almost universally lack the historical context required in order to say something truly *meaningful*. Lastly, I am frequently dismayed with the way that students *think* when they approach the writing process. In an educational climate where the ability to pass a

standardized test has taken precedence over seemingly everything else, the vast majority of my students instinctually seek out simple questions with definitive or easy to find answers because they have been conditioned to focus on being “correct.” Furthermore, many students don’t know where to start when given freedom to write, which causes them to choose topics which are overly vague or overly specific. In the context of writing, this approach leads to poorly constructed arguments, a lack of focus, and under realized final drafts. In order for our students to succeed at the college level, the ability to put complex ideas into writing is absolutely essential.

The use of film in the classroom is often maligned as a lazy teaching practice by administrators, and is not always taken seriously by students, who are all too eager to shout “movie day!” as soon as they see the projector turned on. Certainly there is some truth to these sentiments, however film can also be one of the most beneficial ways to engage students’ critical thinking abilities because film is familiar, visual, and incorporates a multitude of different artistic forms (music, animation, etc.). This unit will equip students with a critical vocabulary for viewing films in a direct attempt to counteract the narrative that film is lazy as a teaching practice and simplistic as a learning tool. When given the tools necessary to truly analyze film and write academically, there is tremendous potential for new and exciting ideas to emerge in the classroom.

This unit will focus on using film analysis as a gateway into researching, writing, and formulating meaningful research questions. As stated above, freedom can often lead to a lack of focus when writing. For many students, simply choosing a topic to write about is a significant struggle, let alone formulating and researching a meaningful question about a topic. Film analysis can serve as a touchstone for students to generate and research ideas, form questions, and make meaningful connections to the world around them.

This unit will provide students with a careful balance of freedom and structure in order to encourage students to take initiative and ownership in their own learning while still providing them with the necessary guidelines to ensure that learning is *meaningful*. Too much structure in the writing process stifles student voice, hinders meaningful discussion, and worst of all creates resentment for writing in students. Too much freedom, as mentioned before, leads to equally negative outcomes. For our students to find the success we want for them at the college level, we need give them the freedom to find their voice as well as help them harness that voice once they’ve found it. Film is a fantastic means to achieve this end.

This unit addresses the following Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards for Language Arts education:

- **Standard - CC.1.2.11-12.G** - Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **Standard - CC.1.4.11-12.C** - Develop and analyze the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic; include graphics and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

- **Standard - CC.1.4.11-12.D** - Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create whole; use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text; provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information presented; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension.

The following resources were used to create this unit:

- Decherney, Peter. *Hollywood: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Katz, Ephraim. *The Film Encyclopedia*. 7th ed., Harper Collins, 2012.
- Dean, Ceri B., and Robert J. Marzano. *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Pearson Education, 2013.
- Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>
- Zydney, Janet Mannheimer, and Amy Grincewicz. "The Use of Video Cases in a Multimedia Learning Environment for Facilitating High School Students' Inquiry into a Problem from Varying Perspectives." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 20, no. 6, 2011.
- Mantzoukas, Stefanos. "Facilitating Research Students in Formulating Qualitative Research Questions." *Nurse Education Today* 28, no. 3, 2008.

Background:

In order to properly implement this unit in the classroom, there are several areas which teachers and students need to be familiarized with. The background information found below is the result of my participation in the TIP seminar as well as my own research. This information is by no means absolute and is able to be reinterpreted. For example I am choosing to focus on *mis en scene*, cinematography, and sound as the main pillars to form critical vocabulary, but these topics don't *have* to be the focus of the unit, it is merely my suggestion. The goal of this section is to establish context for students and teachers to use when viewing a film as well as researching and writing about a film.

Critical Vocabulary for Film

In order for students to approach a film academically, they need to be equipped with an academic vocabulary for interpreting film. Film vocabulary is vast and ever expanding, there are entire courses at the university level designed to simply equip students with a comprehensive critical vocabulary. Obviously then, it will be impossible to equip students with a truly comprehensive vocabulary in the high school setting. Because of this, this unit will focus on three main pillars for film vocabulary: *mis en scene*, cinematography, and sound. Under each pillar are specific vocabulary terms that students will be taught. Ideally, by teaching students critical vocabulary and setting an objective for them to meet when watching a film, students will learn how to view films through a critical lens.

Mis en Scene

Mis en Scene is a French term which literally translates to "the placing of the scene." The term is relatively elusive and difficult to pin down, but it essentially refers to

the aesthetic content of an individual scene.¹ There are a number of elements which make up the overall *mis en scene*, but for the purpose of this unit I will focus mainly on decor/costumes, lighting, and spacing within scenes.

In any given scene, it is entirely possible that more information is communicated in the decor and costumes on screen than by what is being said. Decor and costumes help to establish place, time, and mood on screen as well as create a sense of immersion.² Consider for a second the films *Blade Runner* and *Memento*. Both are detective/mystery films set in Los Angeles which feature noir elements. Despite these similarities, the films are overwhelmingly different, and anyone who has seen both films will probably find a comparison of them odd. This is largely due to the fact that *Blade Runner* is set in a futuristic dystopian Los Angeles whereas *Memento* is set in what appears to be a non-fictionalized contemporary Los Angeles. In *Blade Runner*, futuristic technology and smog fill every square inch of the screen to let viewers know that we are in a different world, and not a nice one. In *Memento*, the screen is filled with nondescript motel furniture and seedy back lots to show us the main characters blank mental state and familiarity with violence. Consider how much is communicated in the costumes of the lead characters as well. In *Blade Runner*, Deckard is disheveled but still wearing his police garb. This communicates his estrangement from the force while still letting us know that he is indeed a figure of authority. In *Memento*, Leonard is also quite disheveled and covered in tattoos. His appearance hints at his condition well before it is announced to the audience.

The lighting of a scene is incredibly important for communicating mood and tone. When discussing lighting as an aspect of *mis en scene*, there are several specific lighting styles which can be used to achieve drastically different effects. The most basic form of lighting used in narrative cinema is three point lighting (a visual representation of the scheme can be found in Appendix A fig. 1).³ As referenced by Prunes, Raine, and Litch on the Yale Film Analysis Database, "In order to model an actor's face (or another object) with a sense of depth, light from three directions is used... A backlight picks out the subject from its background, a bright key light highlights the object and a fill light from the opposite side ensures that the key light casts only faint shadows."⁴ Understanding this basic lighting scheme is essential to understanding the sometimes drastic effects produced by manipulating it. A common variation of the standard three point lighting scheme is high-key lighting. High-key lighting uses a fill light which matches or nearly matches the intensity of the key light in order to create a bright, shadowless, dream-like effect. This effect depicts whatever is in the foreground of the frame in high detail. Consider the use of high-key lighting in *The Wizard of Oz* as Dorothy enters the world of Oz. The lighting, coupled with a clever transition to color, produces a dreamlike effect and lets the viewer know that we are certainly not in Kansas anymore. Low-key lighting is essentially the opposite of high-key lighting. That is, it uses very low intensity fill light in order to create high contrasts between light and dark areas. This creates a highly stylized, ominous look as it tends to obscure parts of the principal subject of a given shot. Low-key lighting is heavily associated with the film

¹Katz, Ephraim. *The Film Encyclopedia*. 7th ed., Harper Collins, 2012.

² Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

³ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

⁴ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

noir genre, however it is not exclusive to this genre and can be used subtly as a means for characterizing characters or locations in any genre.⁵

Lastly, the spacing of a scene is key for providing depth, proportions, and atmosphere. The three aspects of spacing that will be discussed are deep space, shallow space, and off screen space. Deep space creates a large depth of field and places objects of significance near and distant from the camera. This style of spacing can be used to signify literal or metaphorical distance as well as proportion. Consider the shot of the train leaving the station in *Schindler's List*. Not only does the deep space imply that the train cars are plentiful (and thus many people will be killed) but also shows us that the people on this train will be traveling a great distance away from us, the audience. Shallow framing is more or less the opposite, and "[w]hile the resulting image loses realistic appeal, its flatness enhances its pictorial qualities."⁶ Consider the same train scene in *Schindler's List* where the camera pans into the window of a train car. We immediately get the sense of claustrophobia and can understand in a more personal way just how awful the conditions on these cars must have been. Finally there is off-screen space. The definition of off-screen space is fairly self-evident: it refers to space that exists outside of the shot being framed. Off-screen spacing is frequently used to build suspense, create a sense of dread, or establish a sense of unfamiliarity with a subject. Off-screen spacing can also be used to imply things that the director did not want to directly capture, so it is very important to consider when looking at film as a means of historiography. Thus we get a glimpse into what was considered too taboo to be shown during a given era.

Cinematography

Whereas *mis en scene* refers to the aesthetic content of a given shot, cinematography describes the way a shot is constructed. Cinematography refers to the overall composition of a shot.⁷ Like *Mis en Scene*, cinematography is a vast term which includes a multitude of aspects, but I will focus on framing, movement, and color.

The edges of any given shot make up the "frame" through which the audience sees what is on screen. While it is certainly true that there are ways of framing a shot which have an inherent aesthetic value, truly great films often use framing as a means to tell a story or relate a point of view on the subject at hand.⁸ Many directors adhere to the rule of thirds, which requires objects of focus to be placed at specific places on screen (shown in Appendix A fig. 2), while other directors place emphasis on symmetry and balance of frame. These framing techniques can produce drastically different results. While the rule of thirds often translates to a natural and balanced shot, an extremely symmetrical shot can communicate high levels of order or rigidity. An excellent example of the effects that extreme symmetry can produce on the mood of a film is *The Shining* directed by Stanley Kubrick (or really any of Kubrick's work). In addition to what appears within the frame of the screen, framing refers to the angle or vantage point of the camera. This is a subtle but powerful tool directors use to comment

⁵ Katz, Ephraim. *The Film Encyclopedia*. 7th ed., Harper Collins, 2012.

⁶ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctf.org/>

⁷ Cassidy, Kyle. "The basic rules of composition: in video production, your frame is your canvas--fill it with things that are useful to your story and arrange them in a way that is pleasing to the viewer." *Videomaker*, February 2017, 44+. *Academic OneFile*

⁸ Cassidy, Kyle. "The basic rules of composition: in video production, your frame is your canvas--fill it with things that are useful to your story and arrange them in a way that is pleasing to the viewer." *Videomaker*, February 2017, 44+. *Academic OneFile*

on their subject matter. The angle of the camera is typically straight on, low angle (looking upwards), or high angle (looking downwards). Low and high angles are extremely important to look for as methods of characterization in film. Characters filmed in a low angle may be seen as powerful, overbearing, controlling, or imposing. Characters filmed at a high angle may be seen as young, subordinate, fearful, etc.⁹ Of course, there are more possibilities than that. In the Martin Scorsese film *Silence*, which deals with pilgrims having their faith in Christianity tested, high angle shots are used frequently. This could be an aesthetic choice, but considering the movie's themes and the scenes filmed with this angle, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the high angle simulates God watching over his followers. The key thing for students to keep in mind when considering framing is that none of it is accidental.

Movement is one of the defining features of film as a medium. Without it, film would simply be photography. Movement on screen is what makes a film a film, and additionally the camera itself can, and often does, move. Camera movement ranges from simple to complex, but like framing it is often employed to amplify storytelling. The simplest form of camera movement comes in the form of pans, where the camera turns on an axis to the left or to the right. Pans can be used to remind the audience of proximity, whether near or far. Pans often can be used to remind the viewer that the events seen on screen are not happening in a vacuum. Lastly, the speed at which the camera pans is important to consider. A slow pan may build drama or suspense, whereas quick pans (whip pan) communicate urgency, tempo, chaos, etc.¹⁰ Many films choose to forgo a traditional camera support and instead have the camera operator themselves act as the support. This is referred to as handheld or steadycam. This technique has long been popular in avant-garde film making, but appears frequently in mainstream films as well. Modern developments have made this technique much easier by creating technology to keep the camera stable, however some directors prefer to accentuate the shakiness of the handheld camera in order to create an aesthetic or mood. *The Blair Witch Project*, while not being the first film to use handheld camera techniques, is well known because of its found footage aesthetic which takes an otherwise uneventful film about college kids getting lost on a hike into a genuinely tense experience. Tracking shots make use of steadycam composition in order to create "a mobile framing that travels through space forward, backward, or laterally."¹¹ Tracking shots build empathy and affinity towards characters or objects because rather than simply viewing someone move, the audience moves with the subject of the shot.

Another integral part of cinematography is the use of color. Color can be used, "to create aesthetic patterns and to establish character or emotion in narrative cinema."¹² While color can be analyzed in depth in order to draw conclusions about film, it is important to remember that there is not always a correlation between color and some type of deeper meaning. For example, in the film *Do the Right Thing*, Spike Lee uses vivid reds, oranges, and yellows, to build a sense of how hot and stuffy inner city neighborhoods can get in the summer time. Watching the film, you can almost feel the stifling heat that the characters are dealing with, which ultimately leads to the film's climax. In other words, color in this *Do the Right Thing* is heavily tied to themes and

⁹ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

¹⁰ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

¹¹ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

¹² Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

messages that the film imparts. For a counter example, we can look at the Japanese epic *Ran* directed by Akira Kurosawa. While there is certainly much debate about what the brilliant colors in this film *mean*, they serve a simple but effective purpose for the audience: they let us know who's who. The film tells an epic story which involves multiple characters, factions, and armies. The use of vivid colors to define each faction, or individual characters of high importance, makes a complicated story relatively easy to follow. Essentially, the use of color in the film *Ran* is simply a brilliant story telling device.

Sound

Sound plays an integral role in establishing the tone of a film as a whole, but also in shaping a given scene. Sound can be used in a number of ways to achieve a variety of different effects. While being fairly self-explanatory as a concept, I will detail non diegetic vs diegetic sound as well as off screen sound.

To fully analyze a film it is important to understand the difference between diegetic and non-diegetic sound. Put simply, diegetic sound is any sound that originates from a source within the film's "world." Essentially, any sound that a character within a given scene would actually hear if it were real life is called diegetic. A good example of this is the iconic cantina scenes from the *Star Wars* series where the band of aliens plays an ear wormy tune. We as the audience hear the music and it pairs nicely with the lively bar, but the patrons of said bar within the movie can also hear the music as they drink and discuss bounties. Conversely, non-diegetic sound refers to sound which would not be audible to characters in the film world. The simplest example of non-diegetic sound is the soundtrack of a film. Non-diegetic sound, especially when it's music, greatly impacts the mood of a scene. In horror films, the soundtrack lets us as the audience know whether a character is inching ever closer to their demise or if they have escaped certain doom, but the character can never know that. Non-diegetic sound does not solely refer to music though, it can also refer to voice over narration as is often seen in noir films. This allows a director to do many things such as simulate a dream sequence, recount memories, connect characters without physically placing them in the same space, etc.

Off-screen sound is a form of diegetic sound which originates "from a source assumed to be in the space of the scene but outside what is visible onscreen."¹³ Off-screen sound can serve to emphasize the importance of something within a given space without having the camera actually focused on that thing. In the film *Apocalypse Now* there is a character who never appears on screen but can be heard off screen screaming in agony during a battle scene. As the scene plays out, his screams dwindle and soften, until we hear an explosion and then no more screaming. Without showing us, the use of off-screen sound tells its own story within a scene and adds layers of complexity that are not possible through shot framing alone. Additionally, off-screen sounds can play with the audience's perception. For example in the film *Alien*, we hear noises that let us know the threat of the alien is in the room, but the sounds often seem to originate from multiple places. This builds our sense of confusion, dread, and danger. It is truly impressive how scary a film like *Alien* can be while dedicating such a small amount of screen time to the actual monster itself.

¹³ Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

Writing and Formulating Research Questions

In order to successfully complete this unit, students will need to be familiarized and practiced in their writing and formulation of research questions. This unit is designed to be used as a project to demonstrate mastery of these essential skills. Additionally this unit is designed to be applicable to multiple grade and ability levels. Considering this, I will not delve deeply into how to implement writing instruction in the classroom. I encourage teachers to implement the teaching of these skills in whatever way they see fit while supplementing that instruction with this unit. With that said there are several things about writing and formulating research questions which need to be made clear in order to successfully implement this unit.

Formulating Research Questions

The tricky thing about having students write a research paper is that the most important decisions they will make about their project come early on in the process. The single most important decision a student will make regarding almost any research questions is this: "what will I write about?" A student's answer to this question will either set them up for success or lead them towards dread. After all, a research paper is simply an answer to a research question. As written by Stefanos Mantzoukas, "The fuller and more coherent the answers of a study to the research question, the more plausible, integral and applicable the results will be. If the research question is too broad, too narrow, too simplistic or not sufficiently focused this would possibly yield trivial or insufficient results that lack direction or impact."¹⁴ Put simply, good questions will provide interesting and meaningful answers, while poorly constructed questions will almost always fall flat. There is no mathematical or scientific formula for asking good questions, but there are a few things to keep in mind, namely breadth, depth, and subjectivity.

First and foremost, students must understand the concept of breadth before setting out on their research. While students are often tempted to tackle large issues in order to say something meaningful, they should be wary to do so. As an example, many of my students last year were interested in writing about slavery due to the fact that they were studying it in their history class. Slavery is a great topic to start looking into, but many of the paper proposals I received were proposing "the history of slavery" as a topic. Slavery in some form has been a part of the human condition for as long as humans have existed, and to write a paper about its entire history would really require writing several volumes of heavy academic texts. A research question must be focused on a specific and realistic frame of time in order to be meaningful. In the case of my students writing about the history of slavery, many of them came to realize this on their own when they were several pages in and still busy talking about pre-Roman slavery. Those who stayed the course covered hundreds of years in single paragraphs, with results leading to frustration.

Equally important when asking a research question is depth. The research question, "was the battle of Waterloo a failure for Napoleon?" will yield a one word long answer. But the question, "why was the battle of Waterloo a failure for Napoleon?" gives space for interpretation and a chance to string multiple sources or ideas together. A

¹⁴ Mantzoukas, Stefanos. "Facilitating Research Students in Formulating Qualitative Research Questions." *Nurse Education Today* 28, no. 3, 2008.

research question must have depth. Simple questions yield simple answers, which leads to students learning how to write fluff rather than how to write. It should be made clear to students that questions that can be answered in a simple yes or no will probably not be very interesting to read or fun to write. Of course, a research paper should strive for objectivity, but that objectivity should come from the sources used to make an argument, not the question itself.

Finally, the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity must be understood by students. When researching and stringing sources together to back up ideas, it is absolutely essential for students to remain objective. Without an objective approach to research, there is no telling what type of information one will come across. While it is important to strive for objectivity when researching and writing a research paper, objectivity is actually the wrong thing to strive for when *asking* research questions. Questions which can be objectively answered will usually lead to papers which are only a few paragraphs, and will always lead to non-engaging papers. A good rule to keep in mind is that if the question can be answered by a relatively quick google search, it is not a question worth writing about. Rather, students should think and speak subjectively when formulating a research question and subsequently practice objective research and writing strategies to back up their ideas. To turn our students into creative thinkers and passionate writers, we need to allow them freedom of idea and expression, while also teaching them the discipline to bring those ideas to life.

Objectives:

This unit is designed for students in an 11th grade Language Arts class, however it can easily be modified and applied to a multitude of different content areas, objectives, and grade levels. The unit is designed to fit into a rotating A/B day schedule with 90 minute block periods, but can be modified in order to work under different schedules as well.

The objectives for this unit include:

- Establish a critical vocabulary for discussing and analyzing film academically
- Write film analyses while employing critical vocabulary to formulate an opinion
- Closely analyze a film in order to formulate research questions
- Analyze the connection between art and contemporary issues
- Research film/contemporary issues using multiple forms of media (books, databases, video etc)
- Present research in a formal setting while employing critical vocabulary

Strategies:

In this unit students will be required to engage in critical thinking, critical viewing, written analysis, and research strategies in order to synthesize meaningful research questions and subsequently record their findings. Students will be led through guided viewing and scaffolded instruction, but as the unit proceeds student independence will become a defining trait. In order to achieve this a number of instructional strategies will be employed. See the text below for a list of strategies, many of which have materials attached in Appendix B:

Critical Vocabulary

For the unit to be successful, it is essential to establish an academic vocabulary for students to use when analyzing/criticizing film. The specifics of the critical vocabulary are described at length above. Having this vocabulary not only allows students to view and discuss film through a critical lens, it also helps students think critically about how and why films display their subjects in order to ask more meaningful questions. A critical vocabulary should be established early on in the unit in order to maximize the benefits of the other strategies.

Jigsaw

Students will be paired or grouped in order to break down readings into small pieces. Students can be grouped on reading level, interest, or any factor that will aid their learning. Groups/pairings are given a section of a text or set of texts which they are responsible for reading and analyzing. After each group/pairing has had some time, all groups/pairs meet and present their findings to one another so that the overall gist of the reading(s) reaches the entire class.

Film/Clip Analysis

Film is a major pillar of this unit and will be used frequently throughout. At various times film clips will be used in order to spark discussion and lay out a model for critical film analysis. During the unit each student will be responsible for independently selecting a film to analyze and from which to develop a research question. As this unit is designed as a long term research paper, the use of film in other domains of the Language Arts curriculum (i.e. as a means for differentiating readings) is encouraged as it will further hone this skill.

Research Organizers

After analyzing film and developing a workable research question, students will use various online databases, films, and texts in order to formulate an answer. During this process, students will keep track of their research using a “research notecard” document in a word processor. A template for the individual notecard can be found in Appendix B (fig. 1) and is able to be modified to include different criteria.

Writers Workshops

Students will write and edit their research paper in a variety of group and independent settings. In order to facilitate student initiative and ownership over their projects, students will peer review and self-edit. Additionally, one on one conferences with the teacher should be used to check in on student progress and help with any specific troubleshooting needs.

Student Led Instruction

Students will present their research throughout the research process as well as their final papers upon completion. Students will also show at least one clip from whatever film inspired their project to be analyzed by the class using the established

critical vocabulary. Each student will have an opportunity to speak publicly and lead their own discussion.

Exit ticket

Students will complete small writing/discussion tasks prior to completing a lesson. The purpose of these tasks is to check for students understanding and allow for teacher reflection. If necessary, these exit tickets may be factored in as grades.

Classroom Activities

Lesson One: Establishing a Critical Vocabulary

Objectives: Students will describe the meaning of a given list of vocabulary terms related to film analysis and criticism in order to build a critical vocabulary for viewing film. Students will record vocabulary terms in their notebooks as well as draw on their own knowledge of films to provide an example for each term.

Materials and resources:

- Youtube: <https://youtube.com>
- MovieClips: <https://movieclips.com>
- Teacher created slide show/presentation with definitions and images/clips for each term.
- Critical Vocabulary Jigsaw Worksheet (Appendix B Fig. 2)
- Parental Permission Form (Appendix B Fig. 9)

Vocabulary Terms:

- Mis en Scene
- Lighting (high key, low key, three point)
- Spacing (deep space, shallow space, off screen space)
- Cinematography
- Framing (rule of thirds, symmetry, angles)
- Camera pan
- Tracking shot
- Handheld/steadycam
- Diegetic vs non-diegetic sound
- Off screen sound
- Soundtrack/score

Phase One: Explain to students that the purpose of this lesson is to set a foundational understanding for film analysis and that learning this critical vocabulary will not only make films more enjoyable but will also be essential for the unit. Prompt all students to take out a notebook and writing instrument. Finally, stress the idea that most students are already probably familiar with the ideas they will learn about, let students know that during the lesson they are encouraged to share examples of each vocabulary term that come to their mind.

Phase Two: Using your classroom display (projector, smart board, etc.) present your slideshow. Go through each term slowly, allowing time for students to copy/organize definitions into their notebooks. Be sure to go over each image or clip that appears on a given slide and provide a detailed explanation of why it is included. Encourage students to draw examples alongside their definitions. Before moving on to a new term, be sure to ask students if they can think of an example of their own for the term if one hasn't been volunteered already. Before moving on to phase three of the lesson, ensure that all students have copied down each definition in full. If a student missed a definition or wants clarification go back to the relevant slide.

Phase Three: After students have finished recording vocabulary terms in their notebooks, have them form (or organize them into) small groups. Two to three students per group is recommended but feel free to change these numbers according to class size/needs. Distribute the Critical vocabulary worksheet (attached in Appendix B figure 2) to each group as well as a specific term from the critical vocabulary to focus on and have them complete the worksheet fully. These worksheets can be collected as part of a participation grade if need be and the time allotted to complete them can be modified as needed. After time is up, have each group share their responses to the prompts about how they explained the term in a different way and an example of the term from a film they've seen.

Closing Activity: Have students take out a loose leaf or scrap sheet of paper and split it into three sections labeled "low" "medium" and "high." Have students place each term into the section that corresponds to their level of understanding of the specific term. On their way out of class make sure all students turn in their responses, as it is important to review their understanding of the terms before moving on to the next lesson. Additionally, pass out parental permission slips to students.

Lesson Two: Employing Critical Vocabulary

Objectives: Students will analyze teacher and self-selected film clips while employing critical film vocabulary in order to practice active viewing. Students will provide analysis of teacher selected film clip via written responses. In addition, students will use a computer or personal device to find a clip of their own which can be analyzed using the established critical vocabulary of the unit.

Materials and resources:

- Youtube: <https://youtube.com>
- MovieClips: <https://movieclips.com>
- Loose leaf paper and writing utensils
- Desktop or personal computers for students

- Close viewing practice sheet (Appendix B Fig. 3)

Phase One: Explain to students that this lesson will expand on the critical vocabulary that preceded it by giving students an opportunity to use that vocabulary in practice. Inform students that the lesson will start with a class wide viewing and analysis of a teacher selected clip, and end with students selecting and analyzing clips of their own choosing. Define and stress the concept of close viewing to students: a process of deliberately and thoughtfully watching, analyzing, and annotating a given portion of a film or even an entire film. Lastly, ask all students to take out a sheet of loose leaf paper (or a notebook) and a writing utensil in order to begin the next phase of the lesson.

Phase Two: Inform students that they are about to get a chance to practice close viewing as a group. Stress the importance of mastering close viewing in order to create a quality research paper in the future. Prior to showing the clip, explain to students that they are to pick out at least two things pertaining to their critical vocabulary within the clip as well as provide a short written answer on how the technique or term is used in the clip. Students should record these responses on loose leaf paper. Using your classroom display (projector, smart board, etc.) display a film clip (or multiple clips) of your choosing. Clips can be chosen based on critical merit, aesthetic value, or even personal preference, so long as they are able to be analyzed using the established critical vocabulary. As the clip plays, monitor student behavior and focus levels, provide redirections as needed. After the clip ends, provide students with the needed amount of time to finish recording their thoughts.

Phase Three: Once students have recorded their responses, ask all students to come to the white board and write down one film technique or term they noticed from the clip. After each student has written one of their responses on the board, call on several students to explain where they noticed the technique and how, if at all, it added to the scene for them personally. Before closing the discussion, ask if there are any students who noticed something from the clip that has not been brought up and allow any students who wanted to respond a chance to do so (time permitting).

Phase Four: Depending on your classroom resources/set-up, either distribute laptops to students or assign desktops. Distribute close viewing practice sheet and explain expectations to students. Allow students some time to access YouTube or movieclips in order to complete the assignment. If time permits, allow some students to share out their findings or even potentially show the clips they chose to analyze.

Closing Activity: On the white board, display the prompt "List three ways that the film techniques and styles discussed in class can add to the way a story is told. Do you personally believe that films can teach us about the so called real world?" Have students record their answer on a loose leaf sheet of paper or scrap paper. On their way out of class make sure all students turn in their responses. These responses can be used as participation grades and for teacher reflection.

Lesson Three: Introducing Research Paper and Brainstorming Research Question

Objectives: Students will describe the desired process and outcomes for their research paper in order to begin formulating a meaningful research question. Teacher will explain to students when, how, and why the research project will be conducted and allow for students to clarify any questions they may have. Additionally, students will receive resources and brainstorming time to gather ideas. Lastly, the teacher will distribute and explain the Close Viewing Analysis Organizer to students.

Materials and resources:

- Film Based Research Paper Assignment Sheet (Appendix B Fig. 4)
- Critical Viewing Analysis Organizer (Appendix B Fig. 5)
- Film Suggestion Sheet (Appendix B Fig. 6)

Phase One: Begin the lesson by displaying the prompt “list three films that you consider to be your favorites and why” and allow students time to record a response in their notebook, loose leaf, or a piece of scrap paper. After students have had sufficient time to record their thoughts, ask some students to share out their answers and ensure that they explain why they selected the films they did. Depending on time, allow students to engage one another in discussions about films that may come up during this phase of the lesson (because student tastes typically vary greatly, these discussions are likely to occur organically). The idea here is to get students thinking about films and discussing them in a critical context.

Phase Two: Explain to students that they will be taking the first steps towards completing a research paper beginning with this lesson, and that formulating a question for the research paper will require them to utilize the critical vocabulary they have learned thus far. Distribute the assignment sheet to students and go over each section. Allow students to ask any questions that may come up while discussing the assignment.

Phase Three: Have students form small groups of two to three students and distribute a film suggestion sheet to each group. Allow students some time to review the film suggestions and talk about what films they have in mind for developing a research question. If time permits allow students to share out films they may use as inspiration for their research paper.

Closing Activity: Distribute critical viewing analysis organizers to students and allow time for questions. Ask students to think about one of the films they selected at the beginning of the lesson. On a loose leaf or scrap sheet of paper have students write down at least one question they had while watching that film.

Lesson Four: Defining Research Questions and Seeking Answers

Objectives: Students will appraise their analysis of their selected film in order to produce a meaningful research question. Additionally, students will begin to expand on their question by utilizing a computer or library to begin researching.

Materials and resources:

- Critical Viewing Analysis Organizer (Appendix B Fig. 5) (Completed by students)
- Research Notecards (Appendix B Fig. 1)
- Desktop, personal computers, or library access for students

Phase One: Begin the lesson by asking students to take out their completed viewing analysis organizers. Once all students have their analysis organizers, organize students into groups of three to four students. Once grouped, instruct students to share with one another three possible research questions they came up with while completing the analysis organizer. Allow students to give one another feedback on what questions they find interesting, think would make for a good paper, or may be difficult to answer, etc. As students are wrapping up their discussions, inform them that today they will begin the research process to begin their paper, so they should start to decide what question they want to pose in their paper.

Phase Two: Depending on your classroom resources/set-up, either distribute laptops to students or assign desktops. If your school has a library with computer access and text resources, that would be an ideal place to conduct this portion of the lesson, if not the entire lesson. Inform students that they should use the internet or available text resources to begin searching for information about their specific research question. Remind students that this is merely the beginning phase of their research so they should only be looking for general background information to start. For each source or resource that a student feels will be valuable, they should fill out a research notecard to organize and keep track of that information. As students continue their research, they should begin to narrow their focus and hone in on specific ideas or concepts. (This lesson can be repeated depending on how much class time you would like to dedicate to research. It can be helpful to do a research day at the beginning, middle, and end of the allotted research time to allow for check-ins or impromptu conferences.)

Closing Activity: On a loose leaf sheet of paper or scrap paper, have students write down two things they accomplished towards their research paper during the lesson and two things that they need to accomplish next time they sit down to write or research.

Note: Because teaching writing and the writing process is done in a multitude of different ways in different classrooms, and because writing in and of itself is not the

main focus of this unit, it is entirely at the teacher's discretion how they choose to have students transform their research into a finished product. Outlining, writers workshops, peer reviewing etc. are all powerful tools to ensure quality writing and are recommended, but as stated above the writing portion of this unit is able to be conducted in whatever way an individual teacher sees fit.

Lesson Five: Presenting the Findings

Objectives: Students will apply their research findings and explain how film was used to create their research question in order to produce a formal presentation of their research paper. The teacher will facilitate the presentation process as well as evaluate student presentations. Overall the lesson will be student driven and utilize peer to peer instruction to wrap up the unit/project.

Materials and resources:

- Student presentation visual aids (power points, infographics, poster boards etc.)
- Presentation Rubric (Appendix B Fig. 7)
- Student Evaluative Feedback Slips (Appendix B Fig. 8)

Phase One: Begin the lesson by allowing students about ten minutes to go over their presentations and share any last minute slide shows with you. During this time, ensure that the room is set up for presentations: ensure that all necessary audio video is functioning, lighting is adequate, all students have shared the necessary materials, and the room is set up in whatever way you deem best for in class presentations (I heavily suggest setting up a desk at the back of the room from which to evaluate presentations). It is also helpful to write the names and order of presentations so that there are no surprises or last minute changes when the floor is handed over to students.

Phase Two: Distribute several student evaluative feedback slips to each student in the room and describe what information the feedback slips should include. Ask students that, when a presentation ends, they get up from their desk and directly hand them to the presenter being evaluated. Stress that these feedback forms are meant to be constructive criticism and that they will not count towards an individual presenters' grade.

Phase Three: Begin student presentations. This phase of the lesson should be almost entirely student driven, but facilitate as needed. Additionally, make sure that for the majority of each individual presentation you are at a desk filling out the presentation rubric and providing as much live feedback as possible in writing. After each individual presentation, have students return evaluation slips to the presenter and assist the next presenter in setting themselves up. (Note: depending on class size, this lesson may take more than one day of class time, adjust accordingly.)

Closing Activity: On a loose leaf or scrap sheet of paper, have students write down four things they learned from their peers' presentations as well as three films that they are interested in saying based on the presentations they saw.

Appendix A

Fig.1 (Three Point Lighting Scheme)

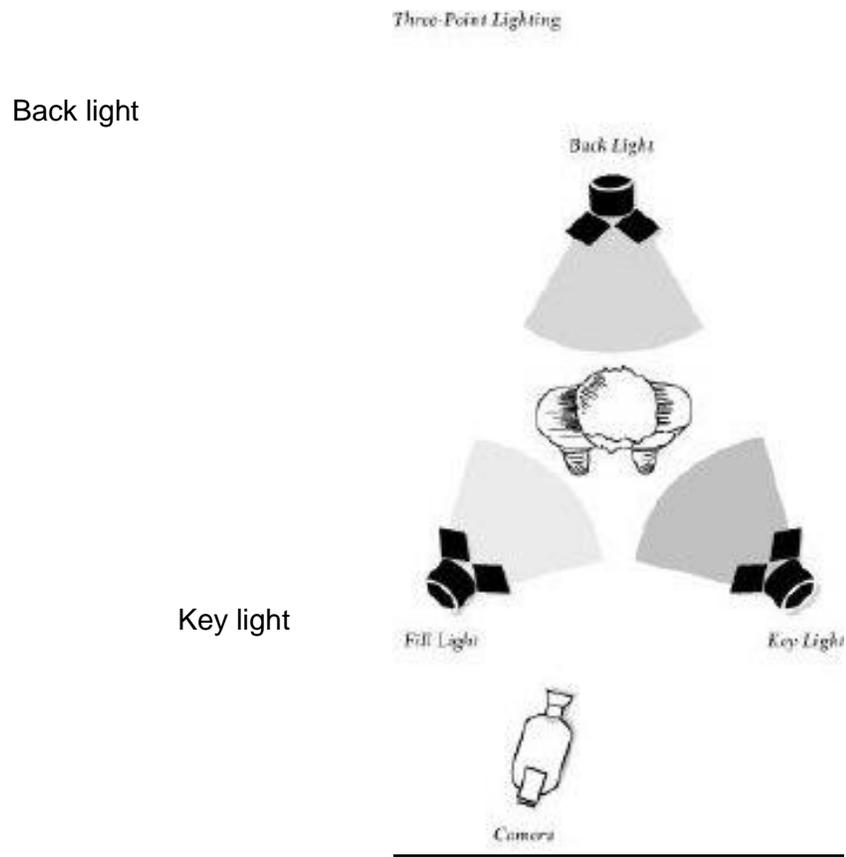


Fig. 2 (Rule of Thirds framing)- The rule of thirds divides the frame into a grid as seen below and states that objects of focus should only appear where lines intersect.

Appendix B

Fig 1. (Research Organizer 'Notecard')

URL/Publication/Book Title:
Article Title/Chapter Title:
Author(s):
Summary (in one paragraph, what is this source saying):
5 facts found in the source:

*Note: This basic table can be recreated in any word processor so that the more a student types in the box for a given criteria, the larger that box will become. I highly recommend having students reproduce this table (or whatever version you use) in a google doc so that their work is always saved and stored in the same place which is easily accessible for teachers. With that said, this table could easily be modified and printed out into a physical document.

Fig. 3 (Close Viewing Practice Sheet)

Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Close Viewing: Practice

Clip 1
Film Title/Director:
URL of clip:
What is one critical vocabulary term or technique you notice in this clip? Please provide detail on <u>how</u> the technique or term is used in the clip!
List anything else that stands out to you about the clip:

Clip 2
Film Title/Director:
URL of clip:
What is one critical vocabulary term or technique you notice in this clip? Please provide detail on <u>how</u> the technique or term is used in the clip!
List anything else that stands out to you about the clip:

Fig 4. (Film Based Research Paper Assignment Sheet) *(Note: all time frames, length/content requirements, and components of the assignment are entirely at your discretion, they can be lengthened, shortened, or manipulated as needed)

Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Film Based Research Paper: Assignment Sheet

Purpose: To independently identify, research, and attempt to answer an original research question focusing on a topic of your choice. **This research paper is designed to help establish skills that will be required for collegiate and/or post secondary vocational life.** The project will fully engage with your reading and writing skills as well as allow you to independently explore a research question which you will conceive and develop. Lastly, this project will offer you an opportunity to practice public speaking and **engaging with your peers on a formal level.**

Date: This research paper is designed to prepare you for posts secondary education, so it will span several weeks of class. There are multiple components separate from the research paper that will count towards your grade, see below for a list of the individual components. This means that there will be a handful of specific due dates for specific parts of the project throughout its duration. **Specific due dates will always be announced at least three classes in advance.**

Topic: The topic of your research question is very open ended. You will be tasked with choosing a film to analyze and develop research a question from. This question don't necessarily have to be *about* film, but it could be. It could also be about general questions you have regarding the films subject matter. For instance, when I was a kid I always used to wonder if it was possible for Luke Skywalker to be a good guy because he was a *rebel fighter*. In other words, I asked myself, can rebels be good guys, and if so, how? This is merely one example from my life, and I encourage you to explore your interests freely. Make sure that your topic is not something that has an objective answer, but at the same time, make sure you ask a question which isn't so subjective that you can't say something meaningful. **Your research question must receive approval from your teacher during a one on one conference.**

Length: The final draft of your paper should be between 6 and 8 pages double spaced. Size 12 Times New Roman font with standard margins is a **requirement.**

Components:

- Critical Viewing Analysis Organizer- This is a document you will fill out while watching the film you choose as inspiration for your paper. It will guide your thinking and give you an opportunity to brainstorm ideas while they are fresh in your head. You will use this document to develop your research question.
- Annotated Bibliography/Research Notecards- During the research process, you will come across and utilize many sources. For each source, you must fill out a research notecard which are available in class. As a final preparation before writing

the culminating essay, you will go back and assess the quality and usefulness of each source. You will turn in these assessments alongside your research paper.

- **Research Paper Outline-** Before drafting your research paper, you will outline your ideas and research into a concise document in order to ensure a focused, organized, and well thought out paper.
- **Research Paper-** The main component of this assignment. You will lay out your answers to your research question and back them up by citing your research. Essentially, you are trying to convince your audience that your answer solves all or part of your research question. In your research paper, you must spend several paragraphs relating your research back to the film which inspired it. Being a formal research paper, grammar, spelling, and form are expected to be proper.
- **Formal Presentation-** Your final task is to present your topic in a formal setting in front of your peers and teacher. You will prepare a presentation as well as a visual aide.

Fig 5. (Critical Viewing Analysis Organizer)

Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: _____

Critical Viewing Analysis Organizer

Directions: Complete all sections of the boxes below with as much detail as possible. Please note that there is a before, during, and after section of this assignment. It may be helpful to pause the film when writing or view the film multiple times.

Before: Please complete this section before viewing the film.

What film will you be analyzing?

List background information about the film (genre, year, director, actors etc.):

In one paragraph, please state why you chose to analyze this particular film:

What are your expectations for this film? Do you expect to enjoy it or find it interesting? Why or why not? What do you think the film will be about.

During: Please complete this section of the assignment while viewing the film, it may help to pause the film to write or watch the film twice to make sure you don't miss anything!

In this space, list anything you don't understand about the film, anything in the film that you have seen elsewhere (books, art, video games etc.), and anything from the film that you want to know more about:

In this space, list three characters from the film that stand out to you. Don't forget to list **why** these particular characters stand out and give details, don't just tell me you like a character because he/she is funny, tell me *why* are they funny? The more detail the better!

List two terms from our critical vocabulary list that stand out to you from the film. Additionally, state *why* they stand out and why you think the film maker uses them? How are they used to add to the film?

What do you think the themes of the film are, what message is the film trying to communicate? List three specific examples from the film that support your claims.

After: Complete this section of the assignment immediately after you have finished viewing the film, consider all of the predictions you made about the film as well as your notes while watching the film when providing answers in this section.

Rate the film on a scale of 1 (bad) to 5 (great). List three reasons why you rated the film the way you did.

What are some questions you are left wondering after the film? These questions could be plot related, production related, context related, character related, or really any type of question you'd really like an answer to?

What are five questions you could pose about this film (context, cultural significance, accuracy, philosophy/message, characters, etc.) that you think you could develop into meaningful research questions? Remember, a meaningful research question should not have a simple answer or an overly complex answer. It should not be too large of a question or too specific a question. **When thinking of a research question, I highly recommend relating the movie to the real world. For instance, *Get Out* is a horror film, but it is also a commentary on race. *Black Panther* is a super hero movie, but it comments on modern day perceptions of Africa and the need for an African presence in our world.**

Fig. 6 (Film Suggestion Sheet)

On this sheet of paper is a list of films that are historically, aesthetically, culturally, or philosophically significant. The films on this list should make for great research questions, however you are absolutely free to choose a film not included on this list.

Stand By Me (1986)	Get Out (2017)
Titanic (1997)	Fruitvale Station (2013)
Good Will Hunting (1997)	Dr. Strangelove (1964)
The Terminator (1984)	Silence (2016)
Black Panther (2017)	A Few Good Men (1992)
The Social Network (2010)	True Grit (2010)
Spirited Away (2001)	Kramer vs. Kramer (1979)
A Clockwork Orange (1971)	Philadelphia (1993)
Seven Samurai (1954)	Lincoln (2012)
Psycho (1960)	LBJ (2017)
Trainspotting (1996)	The Big Sleep (1946)
Citizen Kane (1941)	The Truman Show (1998)
Gladiator (2000)	8 Mile (2002)
One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest (1975)	Food Inc. (2008)
There Will Be Blood (2007)	Icarus (2017)
12 Angry Men (1957)	Jiro Dreams of Sushi (2011)
Saving Private Ryan (1998)	American History X (1998)
Schindler's List (1993)	He Got Game (1998)
Taxi Driver (1976)	Wasteland (2010)
Apocalypse Now (1979)	The Birth of a Nation (1915)
2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)	Shawshank Redemption (1994)
Blade Runner (1982)	City of God (2002)
GoodFellas (1990)	12 Years a Slave (2013)
Selma (2014)	To Sir, With Love (1967)
Malcolm X (1992)	Lion (2016)
Do the Right Thing (1989)	Requiem for a Dream (2000)
Natural Born Killers (1994)	Last of the Mohicans (1992)
Boyz n the Hood (1991)	West Side Story (1961)
The Deer Hunter (1978)	
Moonlight (2016)	
Easy Rider (1969)	
I, Robot (2004)	
Zootopia (2016)	
This is Spinal Tap (1984)	

These films are merely suggestions for potential films to choose, but they will all make for great research questions and eventually, research papers.

Fig. 7 (Presentation Rubric)

Criteria	0	4	6	8	10
Content (Score on this section gets multiplied by 2 on final grade)	Topic/research/ beliefs about topic or problem are wholly unclear or left intentionally vague	Topic/research/ beliefs about topic or problem are unclear or vague at times	Topic/research/ beliefs about topic are mentioned but not fully fleshed out, some important information/find ings are missing	Topic/research/ beliefs about topic are all explained and given specific mention during the presentation, beliefs are backed by research	Topic/research/ beliefs about topic are all fully explained and explored, all beliefs are backed up with research/facts
Engagement Techniques	No attempts to engage the audience were made	Student makes minimal attempts to engage their audience, energy is low	Student makes consistent attempts to engage their audience with moderate success, energy is acceptable	Student uses several specific techniques to engage their audience throughout their presentation, energy is good	Student keeps audience consistently engaged throughout presentation by utilizing specific techniques, energy is dynamic
Voice	Student speaks with little to no clarity, does not project voice, and rushes through speaking	Student speaks with clarity, lacks projection of voice, rushes through speaking, or both	Student speaks with clarity, projects voice at times, and actively attempts to control pace	Student speaks with high clarity, projects voice consistently, demonstrates good control of pace	Student speaks with high clarity, projects voice consistently, demonstrates a deliberate and calculated pace, uses pace to enhance engagement
Body Language	Student displays poor body language and/or remains completely static	Student makes minimal attempt to control body language, moves erratically or not much at all	Student makes consistent attempt to control body language, moves around with limited consistency	Student is in control of body language and uses it to emphasize presentation, movement is free and comfortable	Student displays high levels of control of body language, body language enhances engagement and emphasizes presentation, movement is free and comfortable
Eye contact	Student does not make eye contact	Student makes inconsistent eye contact, looks down or around the room frequently	Student makes a noticeable effort at keeping eye contact, eye contact is rarely broken	Student makes eye contact and consistently scans room	Student constantly scans room during presentation, occasionally using techniques to enhance engagement

Additional criteria on back

Additional Points:

Time Limit: -2 | -4

Distracting Habits: -2 | -4

Confidence: +1 | +2 | +3

Total Score:

Comments:

Fig. 8 (Student Evaluative Feedback Slips)

Name of speaker:
Speaker's topic:
3 things the speaker did well:
1 thing the speaker could improve:

Name of speaker:
Speaker's topic:
3 things the speaker did well:
1 thing the speaker could improve:

Name of speaker:
Speaker's topic:
3 things the speaker did well:
1 thing the speaker could improve:

Fig. 9 (Parental Permission Form)

Name: _____

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Your son or daughter is currently enrolled in my English class. As part of this class we will be viewing film in the classroom as well as using it as an academic resource to generate research questions to write college style research papers. In order to fully allow for student to take ownership of their learning, I allow them to choose any film they see fit as inspiration for their research. With that said, I don't want to give any student the go ahead to view content that their parents or guardians would not permit themselves. Some students may chose to view films which have been rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America, but without your permission I will not allow it.

Considering this I am requiring students to get a signed permission slip from you in order to analyze R rated films. If I do not receive a permission slip or you do not consent (which is absolutely your decision to make), your son or daughter will not be allowed to view R rated films. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to email me at EMAIL ADDRESS or call the school and ask for TEACHER.

Please circle whether you do or do not give permission for your child to view the R rated films we will study in class this year:

YES I give my child permission

NO I do not give my child permission

Signature: _____

Thank you,

Bibliography/Works Cited

- Decherney, Peter. *Hollywood: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

A straightforward yet detailed history of the film industry. The text covers from the birth of film all the way up to our modern era of digital distribution and serves as a great introduction or refresher to film for students and teachers alike. In addition to discussing changes within the film industry, Decherney also discusses technological advances while putting everything in its proper context. The text could serve as a great touchstone to stimulate research ideas.

- Katz, Ephraim. *The Film Encyclopedia*. 7th ed., Harper Collins, 2012.

An exhaustive encyclopedia covering all things film. The text is incredibly useful for researching film terminology and techniques as well as critical analysis of film. This encyclopedia is a fantastic resource for anyone seeking to change or add critical vocabulary terms.

- Dean, Ceri B., and Robert J. Marzano. *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. Pearson Education, 2013.

A classic text detailing instructional strategies which are thoroughly tested and proven as effective. Many of the activities and teacher created resources found in this unit are based on instructional strategies presented in this book. A must read for any teacher seeking to create engaging, varied, and rigorous lessons.

- Prunes, Mariano, Michael Raine, and Mary Litch. "Film Analysis." Yale Film Studies. August 27, 2002. <http://filmanalysis.yctl.org/>

An invaluable and incredibly organized online database of film terminology including images and film clips which serve as examples. The pairing of image/clip examples with textual explanations is exemplary for how film concepts should be presented to students. Any teacher seeking to teach this unit should familiarize themselves with the content on this site. An extremely helpful source for guiding content creation.

- Zydney, Janet Mannheimer, and Amy Grincewicz. "The Use of Video Cases in a Multimedia Learning Environment for Facilitating High School Students' Inquiry into a Problem from Varying Perspectives." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 20, no. 6, 2011.

Study of effectiveness of film as an academic resource in the classroom. While the article focuses on video in the science classroom, the theories and findings presented in it appear to be equally applicable to nearly any content area. Contains a do's and don'ts list of sorts as well as information about how to properly implement video clips into lessons.

- Mantzoukas, Stefanos. "Facilitating Research Students in Formulating Qualitative Research Questions." *Nurse Education Today* 28, no. 3, 2008.

Article which describes in full detail the typical problems that students often run into when formulating research questions. Additionally, the article provides a run down of what exactly a quality research question is and what it allows a paper to do. While the focus is on the field of nursing, its discussion of asking open ended questions which can be backed up with objective data points essentially sums up this units approach to formulating research questions.