

DEVELOPING CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND FILM/ VISUAL LITERACY AT A LEVEL IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

INSET (29 September 2018) at Manchester Metropolitan
University

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This INSET was organised by the Film Languages and Media in Education (FLAME) at the Manchester Metropolitan University, and the Open World Research Initiative (OWRI)

[Cross-Language Dynamics: Reshaping Community](#)

This event is part of the ***New Approaches to Transmedia and Language Pedagogy Project***. You can find out more about this project by visiting the [website](#).



Cross-Language
Dynamics

OWRI





INTRODUCTION

Programme

1. INTRODUCTION
 2. DEVELOPING CRITICAL SKILLS WITH FILMS
 3. VISUAL LITERACY USING SHORT FILMS (I)
 4. SHORT FILM, CHARACTER JOURNEY & CRITICAL THINKING PRACTICAL
- APPLICATIONS, DEVELOPING YOUR OWN EXERCISES AND EXCHANGING IDEAS

ACTIVITY 1

Discuss which are the Key 21st
Century Skills and Competences

21st Century Skills

CREATIVITY

COLLABORATION/ TEAM WORK

COMMUNICATION

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS

CRITICAL THINKING

VISUAL LITERACY

DIGITAL COMPETENCE



2.27 Modern foreign languages

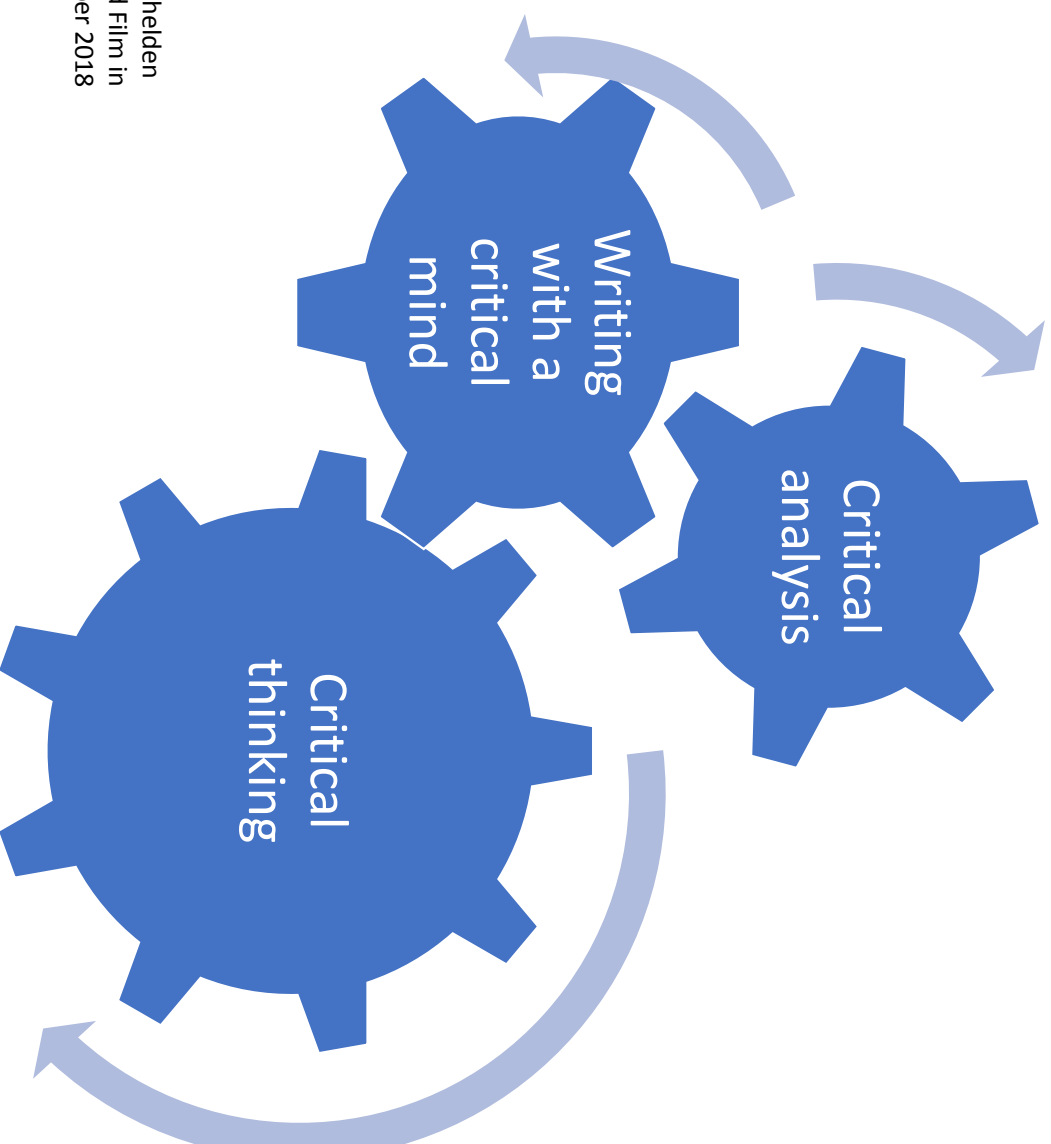
Objective	Requirements	AS	A	level
AO1	Understand and respond: in speech to spoken language including face-to-face interaction; in writing to spoken language drawn from a variety of sources	20%	20%	
AO2	Understand and respond: in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources; in writing to written language drawn from a variety of sources	30%	30%	
AO3	Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken and written forms, using a range of lexis and structure	30%	30%	
AO4 (AS)	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken	20%		
AO4 (A level)	Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond <u>critically</u> and <u>analytically</u> to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken	20%		
Up to 10% of the total marks for the specification may be used for responses in English as part of AO1 and AO2, including translation into English. Questions and rubrics must be written in the expected language of response				

A Level specification

- Integrated study (language, culture and society)
- To foster “a range of transferable skills including communication, **critical thinking**, research skills and creativity”.
- The answers to the film essay questions require “a **critical appreciation** of the concepts and issues and **analytical responses** to features such as the form and the technique of presentation, as appropriate to the work studied”.



DEVELOPING CRITICAL SKILLS WITH FILMS



ACTIVITY 2

- What guidance do students need to develop their critical thinking skills?
- What are the main barriers stopping them from being critical?

Examples of obstacles you may have encountered...

- Not enough reading
- Difficulty working with abstract concepts
- Limited writing skills
- Limited level of reasoning and argumentation
- Basic level of critical thinking
- Unable to apply knowledge (practical applications)
- Unable to learn autonomously (Adapted from Llanos Melussa, 2015: 21-23)

ACTIVITY 3

VERBS /PROCESSES ASSOCIATED WITH CRITICAL THINKING

(For example, questions for the Year 12 and Year 13 Essay exams -film or literature)

Critical thinking

Discuss	Compare	Interpret
Analyse	Deduce	Illustrate
Contrast	Evaluate	Justify
Consider	Criticize	

See academic keywords used in titles *Cottrell* (2005, 2011, 2017), *Critical Thinking Skills* (p. 162)

Bloom's Taxonomy

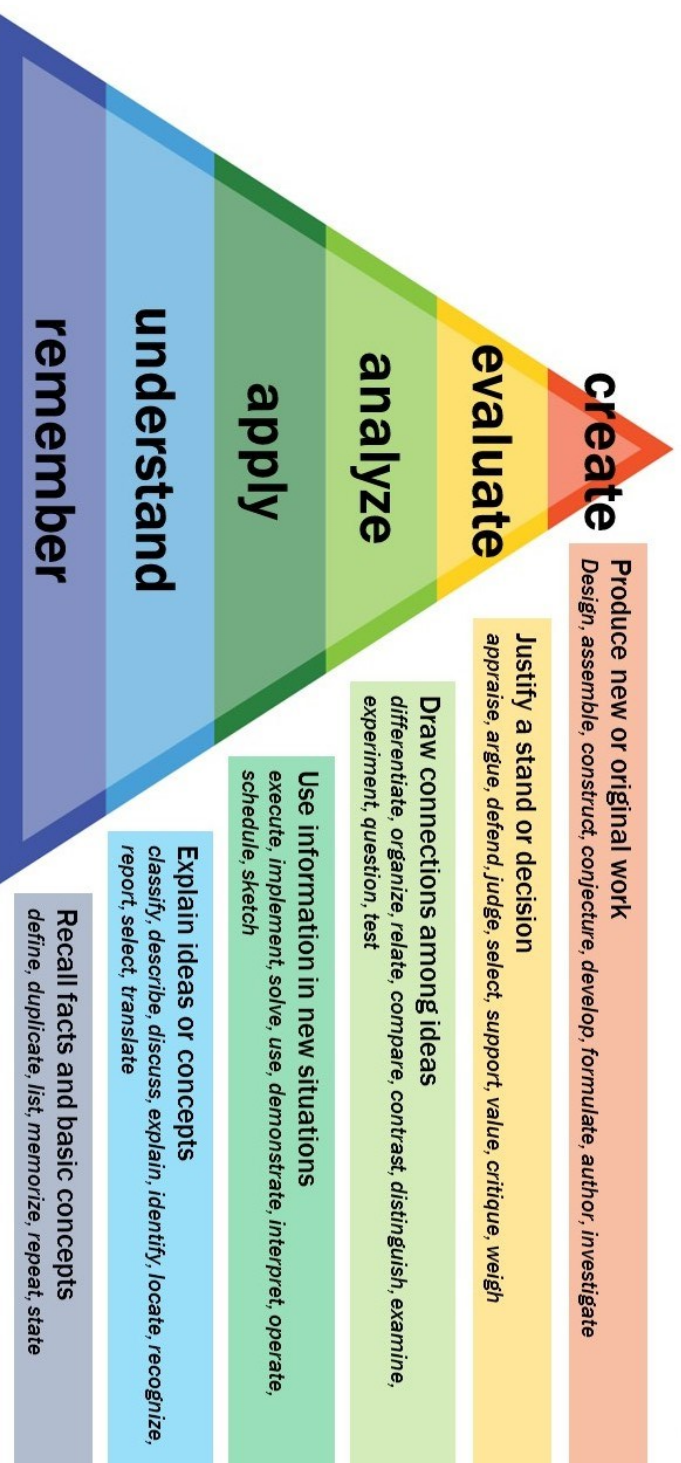


Image credit: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/59/Bloomtaxonomy-e1445435495371.jpg>

What is ‘critical thinking’?

Critical thinking means “not taking what you hear or read at face value, but using your critical faculties to weigh up the evidence, and considering the implications and conclusions of what the writer is saying.” (Northedge, 2005)

Critical thinking skills

- argumentation
- questioning
- deduction and induction
- intelligent criticism
- direct assertion
- drawing your own conclusions

Transition from secondary to Higher Education

Academic discourse is based on the following key principles:

- Debate: arguing different points of view.
- Scholarship: awareness of what else has been written, and citing it correctly.
- Argument: developing points in a logical sequence which leads to a conclusion.
- Criticism: looking at strengths and weaknesses.
- Analysis: taking the argument apart.
- Evidence: ensuring that the argument is backed by valid evidence.
- Objectivity: the writing should be detached and unemotional and without direct appeal to the reader.
- Precision: anything that does not assist the argument should be omitted.

Northedge, A. (2005). *The Good Study Guide*. Open University Press, Buckingham, UK.

Critical thinking as a process (I)

- *identifying other people's positions, arguments and conclusions;*
- *evaluating the evidences for alternative points of view;*
- *weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly;*
- *being able to read between the lines, seeing behind surfaces, and identifying false or unfair assumptions;*
- *recognising techniques used to make certain positions more appealing than others, such as false logic and persuasive devices;*

Stella Cottrell (2005, 2011, 2017), Critical Thinking Skills, p. 2

Critical thinking as a process (II)

- *reflecting on issues in a structured way, bringing logic and insight to bear;*
- *drawing conclusions about whether arguments are valid and justifiable, based on good evidence and sensible assumptions;*
- *synthesizing information: drawing together your judgements of the evidence, synthesizing these to form your own new positions;*
- *Presenting a point of view in a structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others.*

Stella Cottrell (2005, 2011, 2017), Critical Thinking Skills, p. 2

From critical thinking to building an argument

Denotation versus connotation

“Denoted message is the literal or explicit meaning”.

“Connoted message carried additional unstated, or latent, meanings and implications. These may be obvious to the reader in some cases, but are often concealed and may need to be teased out”.

Adapted from Cottrell (2005, 2011, 2017),
Critical Thinking Skills, p. 83

PEA writing:
Point
Evidence
Analysis

Descriptive Writing

- States what happened
- Gives the story so far
- States the order things in which things happened
- States options
- Gives the reasons for selecting each option
- Lists details
- Lists in any order
- States links between items
- Gives information

Adapted from Cottrell (2005, 2011, 2017), *Critical Thinking Skills*

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Critical Analytical Writing

- Identifies the significance
- Evaluates strengths and weaknesses
- Makes reasoned judgments
- Argues a case according to the evidence
- Shows why something is relevant or suitable
- Evaluates the relative significance of details
- Structures information in order of importance
- Shows the relevance of links between pieces of information
- Draws conclusions

Adapted from Cottrell (2005, 2011, 2017), *Critical Thinking Skills*



VISUAL LITERACY USING SHORT FILMS (I)

Film Literacy

“the level of understanding of a film, the ability to be conscious and curious in the choice of films; the competence to critically watch a film and to analyse its content, cinematography and technical aspects; and the ability to manipulate its language and technical resources in creative moving image production”. (British Film Institute, 2013: 8)

Visual/Film Analysis

- ‘Films are textual constructions, whose workings can and should be understood to allow for a deeper investigation of their meaning’ (Jordan and Allinson, 2005: 35)
- Watching film /short films is an active task



Image: El Laberinto del fauno (Guillermo del Toro)

Film analysis

L'analyse, quel qu'en soit l'objet – une partition musicale, la situation économique ou politique d'un pays, une œuvre littéraire, etc. –, suit un parcours en deux grands mouvements. Ainsi que l'indique la définition du *Dictionnaire culturel en langue française* ⁴ (« Opération intellectuelle consistant à découper un texte en ses éléments essentiels, afin d'en saisir les rapports et de donner un schéma de l'ensemble »), une première phase divise le tout en parties, une seconde reconstitue une globalité à partir des éléments isolés. L'analyse de film n'échappe pas à ce schéma général. Elle commence ainsi par dissocier, séparer, désassembler, découdre, prélever, détacher et nommer, autrement dit par décomposer l'objet en ses éléments constitutifs à la manière du chimiste qui, à partir de l'eau, isole l'hydrogène et l'oxygène. À cette phase de déconstruction, succédera une phase de reconstruction et de production d'un discours argumenté sur l'objet.

Goliot-Lété, A., & Vanoye, F. (2015).



El análisis fílmico busca “establecer conexiones entre lo que se expresa y el “como se expresa”, conexiones siempre coyunturales, hipótesis que necesitar ser comprobadas constantemente mediante la vuelta al texto (Goliot-Lété 2008: 25)

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Activity 4

Decrypting images

- What is going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/22/learning/40-intriguing-photos-to-make-students-think.html>

10 Intriguing Photographs to Teach Close Reading and Visual Thinking Skills

BY MICHAEL GONCHAR FEBRUARY 27, 2015 7:00 AM



<https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/02/27/10-intriguing-photographs-to-teach-close-reading-and-visual-thinking-skills/>

Multimodality as a tool to structure critical analysis

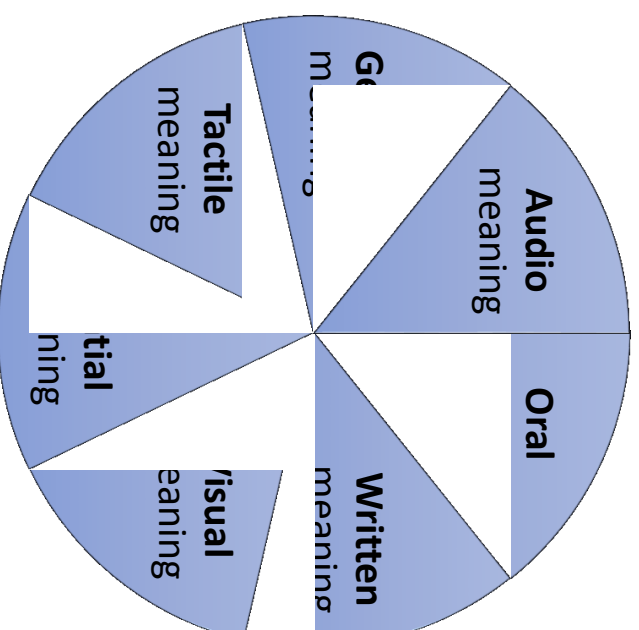


Figure 1: Modes of meaning in multimodal theory of representation and communication.

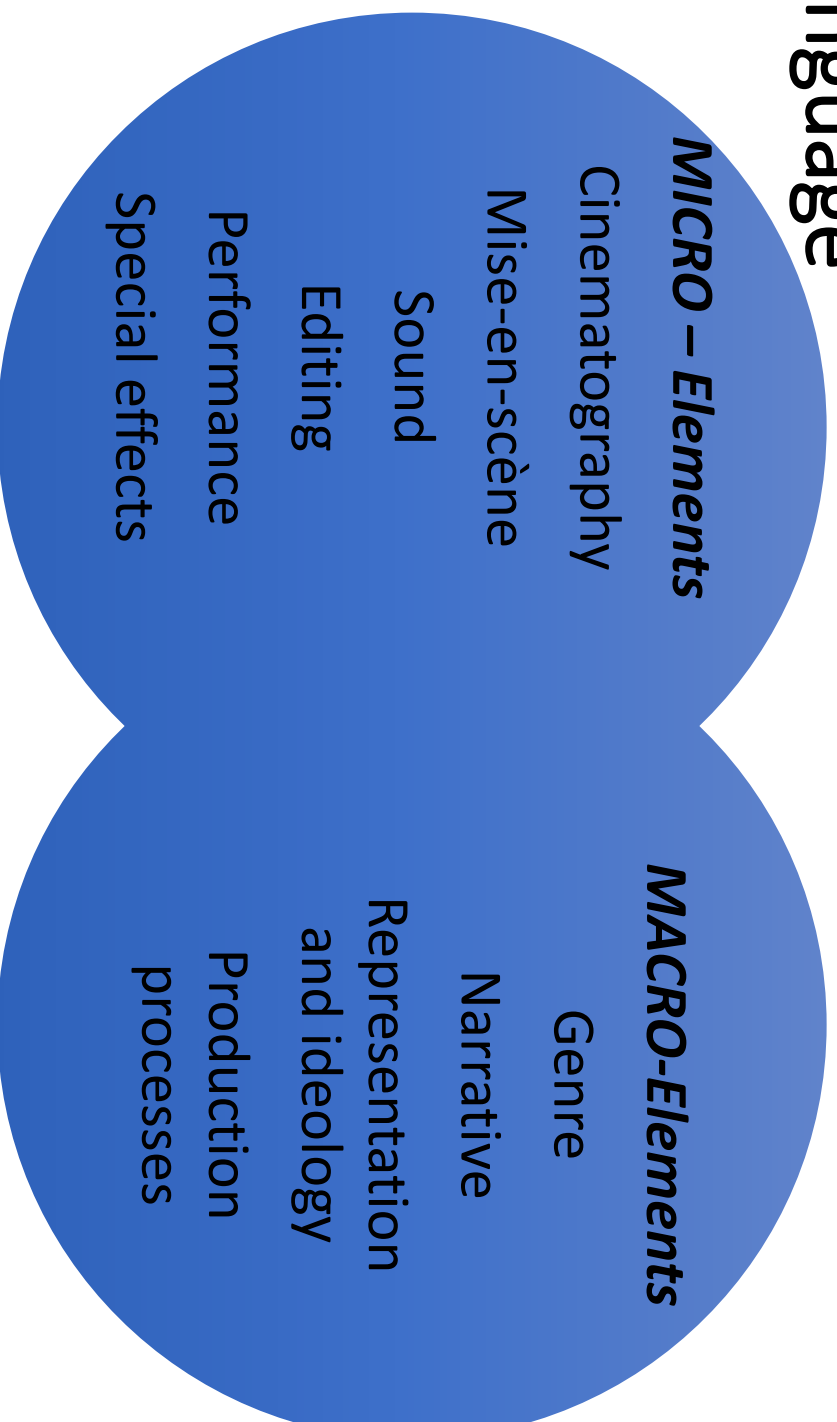
Source: Kalantzis, et al. (2016), p. 230.

Films as multimodal texts

Written meaning	Written texts, subtitles, etc.
Visual meaning	Still or moving Images, colour and lighting
Spatial meaning	Location (architecture, streetscape, cityscape and landscape) and positioning (interpersonal distance)
Gestual meaning	Body language, gestures, way of walking, clothing, hairstyle, etc.
Audio meaning	Music, sound and noises
Oral meaning	Dialogue, voice over, etc.

Source: Modes of meaning in multimodal theory of representation and communication. Source: Katalantzis et al., 2016: 232

MACRO and MICRO elements of film language



Macro-analysis

Genre	<p>Generic alignment (repetition, difference, and hybrid genres):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plots, character types, representations, stars, themes, and cinematic techniques. visual iconography (objects and settings) associated with a genre
Narrative	<p>Story, how it is told</p>
Representation and ideology	<p>The ways in which films can offer different representations of age, gender, culture, social class, ethnicity, etc. This includes the role of stereotypes – positive and negative – in representations</p>
Production processes	<p><u>Pre-production</u>: script, casting, art director's work (costume, set designed, aesthetic look, location, storyboards and special effects)</p> <p><u>Production</u>: the work of the director, the director of photography and other specialists (stunts, special effects, etc.).</p> <p><u>Post-production</u>: editing, sound and final elements of special effects.</p>

Micro-analysis



Cinematography

Cinematography refers to the visual aspects of a film: includes photographic elements (e.g. camera position, colour, lens, depth of focus).

For more practical examples and explanations:

<https://filmanalysis.coursepress.yale.edu>

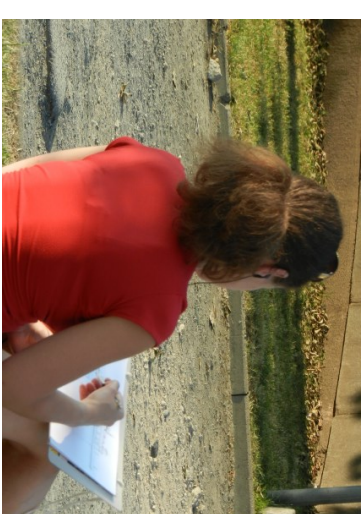
Basic camera shots (I)



Wide shot or establish shot



Long shot



Medium shot



Close-up

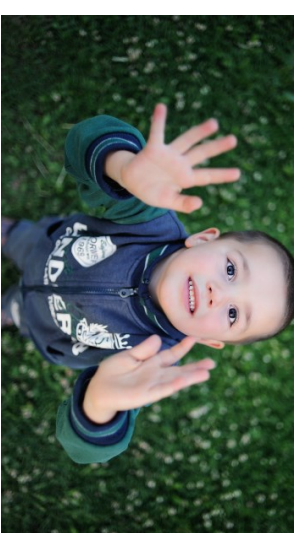


Extreme close-up

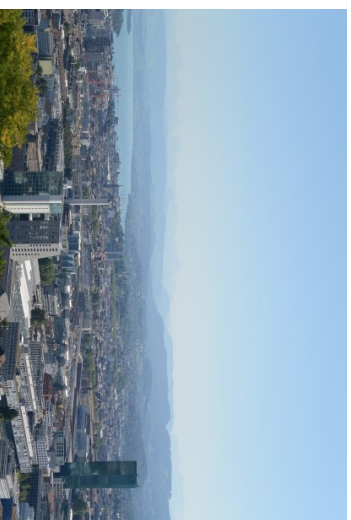
Basic camera shots (II)



Low angle shot



High angle shot



Bird's eye view



POV- Point of view

Mise-en-scène



Positioning of characters and objects within the frame



Lighting and colour



Facial expressions and body language



Costume, hair and make up



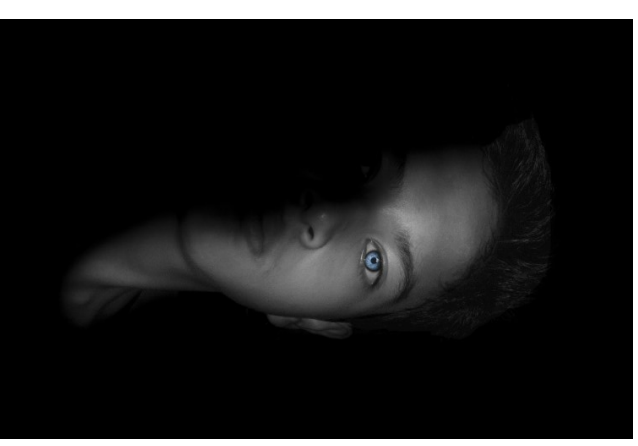
Setting and props

Lighting

High key lighting



Low key lighting



Sound

Diegetic sound



Non-diegetic sound



Editing

The editor

- <https://vimeo.com/90125079>

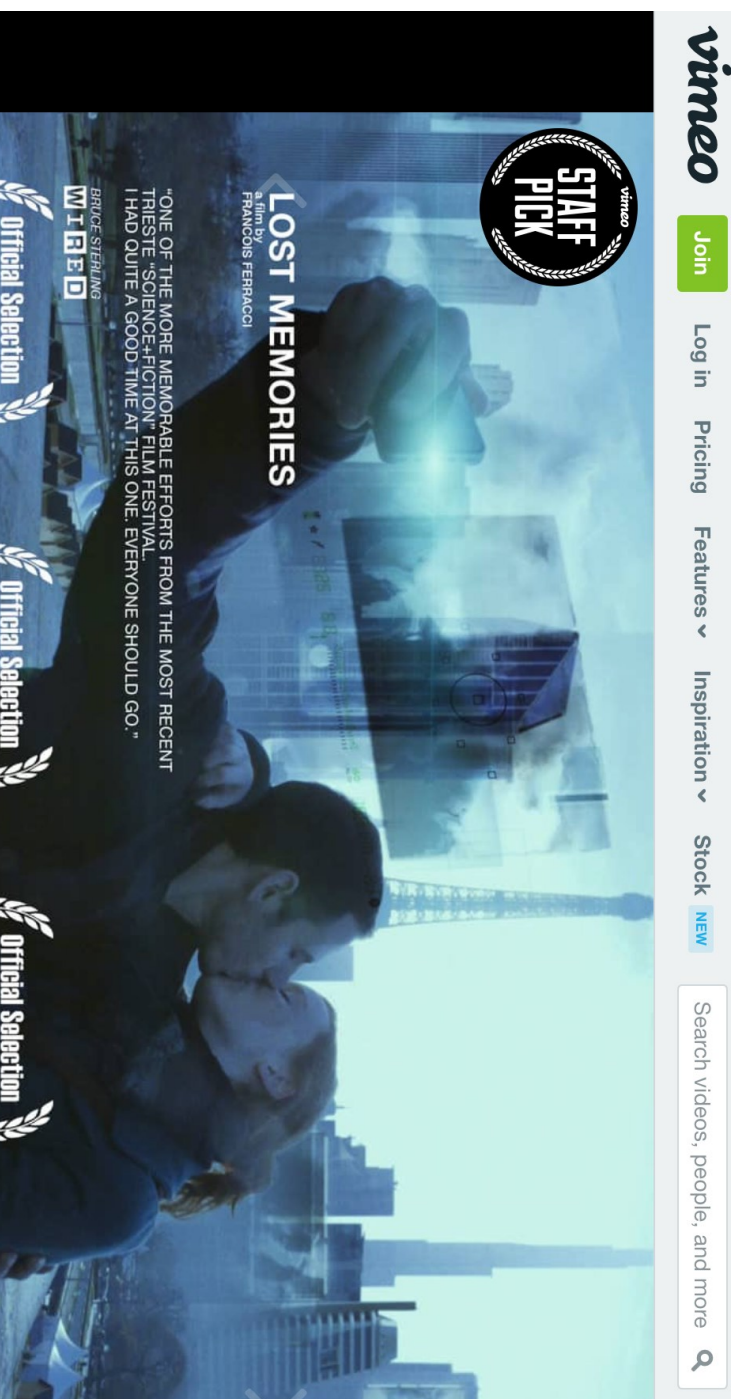


Source: Deutsche Fotothek [CC BY-SA 3.0 de
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/de/deed.en>)

Videos on editing

- Alfred Hitchcock on editing (Video in English with Spanish subtitles) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH2SF6_uh0IAdu0xU
- Types of editing <https://youtu.be/Cl-Adgu0xU>
- Types of transition https://youtu.be/m88C_zCunhE

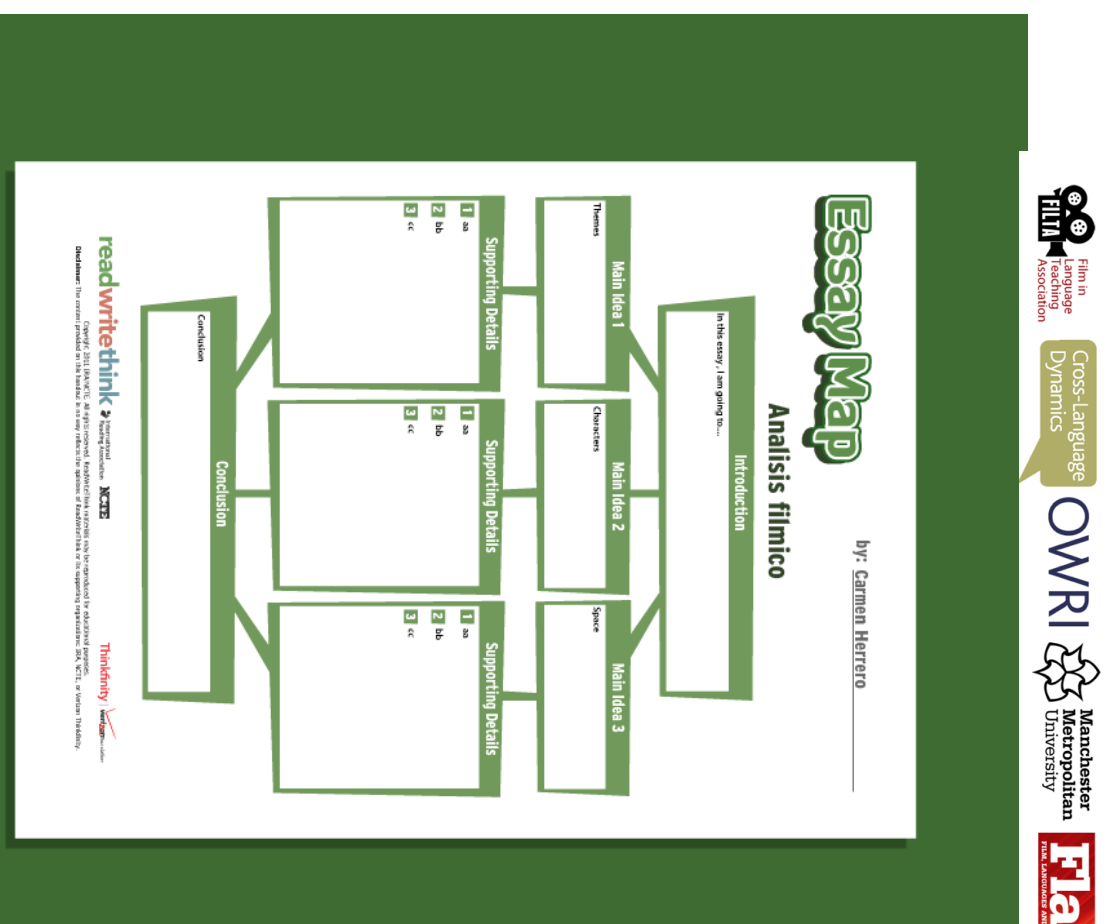
Activity 5: Film Analysis



<https://vimeo.com/49425975>

Tool for planning your essay

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resouces/interactives/essaymap/>



Websites references

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- Cross-Language Dynamics (OWRI)
<http://projects.alc.manchester.ac.uk/cross-language-dynamics/>
- FILTA (Film in Language Teaching Association): www.filta.org.uk
- FLAME (Film, Languages and Media in Education)- Manchester Metropolitan University: (<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/languages/flame/>
- FLAME – Projects <https://flameresearchcentre.wordpress.com>
- Transmedia in Education <http://transmediaineducation.com>

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