

FILM

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 14	15 - 29	30 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 79	80 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 67	68 - 80	81 - 100

Production portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 40	41 - 50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 21	22 - 28	29 - 34	35 - 41	42 - 50

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall the work tended to migrate toward the center of the marks range in this exam session, at both the HL and SL level. While it was distressing to see fewer really excellent examples of student work, it was gratifying not to see much of the really tentative and unprepared work of some of the past sessions. It appears that experience with the course prepares both instructor and students or, in other words, a culture of film practice is built up and passed on in centers where the program has been on-going for a few years.

The weakest work continues to be from centers where too little time has been spent on the skills of practical production. In terms of time allotted, theoretical and analytical work should be balanced by an equal amount of practical work.

Time spent on the evaluation continues to be problematic. Many projects cite start times in February or March, when the project could easily have been conceived and developed earlier. Although it would not be advisable for students to work too much on this evaluation in year one, when they need experience practicing and experimenting with writing, directing, camera, editing and sound skills, they can continue to develop these skills in year two while still beginning early to prepare for this final evaluation.

Often students choose the trivial and mundane when it comes to the creation of their films. Even though the written commentaries continue to complain about the time limit, students continue to spend the first third of their films featuring a character getting ready in the morning, which reveals neither character nor conflict. Far too many students create films shot entirely at school which severely limits the kinds of stories that can be told. An overall lack of ambition is evident throughout the films from this exam session. It is always somewhat bewildering to recognize that although students have been no doubt studying the great classics of film history, when it comes to making their own they choose to emulate the very worst kinds of contemporary films.

One very positive thing this session was that no films were cited for the use of copyright material. It seems that overall there is an understanding from the new language in the guide that the ban on copyright material is not a legal issue (although it has obvious legal significance) but a creative issue. The real matter of importance is that all materials featured in the production originate with the student - or at least with the student's involvement in their creation.

On that note, examiners do notice certain loops of music from programs like garage band occurring again and again in student productions. While this is not ruled out in terms of practice, it does represent a lack of creativity - particularly in the role of the sound designer/sound editor.

In addition instructions about content and treatment of possible subjects for the evaluation were followed during this exam session. If students have problems with the restrictions, it is useful to view them in an institutional context and not as (incorrectly) censorship. All real world work situations have similar restrictions, though they might vary somewhat between working for Disney or working for Universal - for example, and the possibilities for being creative while adhering to the guidelines is still infinite.

Although written support for the production has also improved, some centers continue to submit incomplete materials - whether it be lack of evidence and support overall, a failure to deal with the creation of the trailer at the Higher Level, or incomplete observation of the formal requirements, it is unfortunate that an otherwise competent production is presented with a rushed or incomplete commentary. Rationales are still frequently misunderstood to be simply a synopsis of the work.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A - Planning and Research

This criterion continues to be the hardest on students. At both HL and SL levels, the student should produce not just a picture of the production process and a clear explanation of their production role, but also present evidence that supports and clarifies their claims about the production. Sometimes this evidence is missing entirely, and at other times “evidence” is represented simply by pictures of the student at work - photos that show nothing that could not be assumed by the existence of the film itself.

There are two problems. One is that students continue to be unclear in their support of a single role. They often seem to want to take credit for multiple jobs, without precisely detailing the work in the role they have chosen to be evaluated in. The portfolio commentary must focus on the production role the student has chosen. No matter how many roles the student wants to take on, he/she can only be evaluated in one and so he/she is doing him/herself a great disservice if this is not acknowledged and documented correctly. The best portfolios include evidence (whether screen captures, plans and documents, set photos, or other materials) that have been chosen with great imagination and clear focus to demonstrate the student’s creative choices in their role. The inclusion of production document excerpts is a necessity, not a choice, and Criterion A suffers terribly in this regard.

Criterion B – Reflection and Evaluation

The most common problem at the Higher Level is that students completely fail to discuss the planning for and creation of the trailer in the body of the commentary. This results in a significant marks reduction in an otherwise satisfactory portfolio, and should be avoided at all costs. (The inclusion of the rationale for the trailer is not in itself enough to satisfy the descriptors in the Criteria.) Beyond this, at both SL and HL levels, there is a problem with the phrase “a satisfactory artistic and logistical analysis of relevant production processes, with good critical evaluation of the project as a whole.” Frequently, while logistical analysis has been dealt with thoroughly, artistic analysis is missing or incomplete. Furthermore, there is frequently no critical evaluation of the project beyond a statement like, “we learned a lot about film and are happy with our work.” This says very little, particularly when what is intended is a

clear-eyed analysis of finished work that cites both the positive and negative elements contained therein. The best portfolios feature critical analyses of the entire production coupled with astute comments on the student's chosen production role.

Criterion C [Professional and Technical Skills]

Criterion C is not as strong as it could be, particularly because it also relies to some extent on the accompanying documentation. As mentioned earlier, students must choose a single role and document their work thoroughly. Students who have worked in multiple roles, or created the film entirely by themselves, must use intelligence in choosing the role that is best suited for evaluation.

Criterion D [Effective use of film language]

This Criterion is usually the strongest of the five. Students seem to have access to better equipment and are learning how to use it, although it is still somewhat amazing to realize how many students still have to struggle with poor equipment in very small quantities. When groups of students have to share a single tripod then the work from an entire center suffers.

Criterion E – Originality and Creativity

Criterion E saw a marked improvement as students seem to have resigned themselves to the need for original material in all aspects. Students should be encouraged to look for subjects from their own lives and not to try to copy feature film techniques without adequate resources.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Students should be exposed to a greater variety of short films. Since too many students misapply what they have learned about feature-length films to their much shorter practical work, the final product tends to feel like an unfinished longer piece rather than a short in its own right. A short film is more like a poem than a novel, and the curriculum should help students to recognize this fact. Students absolutely must be shown a greater variety of trailers and teachers must talk about trailers as vigorously as they talk about films. The production portfolio must never be the first time out for a student in a given production role.

Shorter film assignments where students learn the craft of the role must precede this final assessment or students will stumble and make mistakes that might easily have been avoided with more experience.

Emphasize the fact that this is an assessment with specific prerequisites, not simply a film. In their Portfolio commentary candidates frequently complain about conditions of the assessment especially the restriction on length. Candidates must recognise that they have to plan a 6-7 minute film at HL or a 4-5 minute film at SL [and at HL and individual trailer to

showcase the film]. This must be undertaken within the specific role that they have chosen. A ten-minute cut that they feel is superior is irrelevant. The film must be planned from the start to run seven minutes. Discussing the criteria and re-visiting them with the students, highlighting all the descriptors, will help them see this as an assessment and not just “my I.B. Film.”

Teachers need to take a firmer hand in terms of groups breaking apart at the last minute and individuals joining a production late, only to find no way to make a meaningful contribution. Students should also be encouraged to spend time researching their chosen role, studying the masters of the field. This will also alleviate one of the main problems in Criterion A, where a student claims they did not have anything to do on their role until the appropriate production phase arrived; there is always research and planning to be done – always!

Candidates may only present themselves in **ONE** role for assessment. The specific role must be made clear throughout the written supporting material. Teachers must pay very close attention to the requirements for completing the cover sheets, and should not underestimate the importance of their comments in assisting the moderator.

Candidates need to be carefully guided in selecting the role for which they choose to be assessed in their production, and in constructing their portfolio to make it clear how they have fulfilled this role.

Further comments

The technical aspects of submitting on DVD have largely been resolved this session.

Remember that examiners in North America and Japan still use an NTSC standard while examiners in Europe and most of Asia use PAL. Most DVD burning programs can output the appropriate signal, although simply creating a region 0 DVD will ensure that the examiner can at least watch the film on a computer.

The best choice from an examiner’s perspective is to put all the films from one center onto a single DVD, with clear navigation options.

Most sites are including the production slates at the beginning of each film and this should be happening in all schools as stated in the handbook of procedures. Few teachers use the box on the cover sheet effectively; the ones who do made it much easier to validate the marks awarded as the rationale for a given mark was made quite evident. This should be regular practice for everyone.

Teachers are reminded that most of the cover sheets are double-sided.

Independent study

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Many candidates wrote scripts in a clear and engaging voice that demonstrated both the film knowledge required and the ability to communicate that knowledge. Strong scripts included those that had the student as a “neutral” voice - one that let the well chosen visuals and thoughtful commentary “do the talking”, or active voice - where the narrator took a role in the visuals, acting as interviewer, becoming part of the action.

A good number of schools are clearly encouraging student discussion in cinematic terms. The candidates from these schools demonstrated a high level of knowledge in both film theory and history. Moreover these candidates understood the documentary format and how it can be used to communicate meaning. The best scripts were set up by a strong, clear rationale and made good use of a wide variety of fully annotated sources (including texts, articles, interviews, web sites, and the source films).

Many scripts showed a high level of creativity, appreciation of a wide variety of films and an understanding of film as art. Some candidates were able to combine clear examples of technical, historical and thematic knowledge with insightful analysis and interpretive comments.

The area of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates.

Again this year many candidates had difficulty choosing a topic that encouraged a discussion of a film history or theory. Weaker scripts were often prefaced by a rationale that was limiting

in scope. Some candidates chose topics that did not allow an examination of a culture unfamiliar to their own and many scripts used limited sources – usually relying solely on fan web sites, open source sites such as Wikipedia, and DVD special features.

There were frequent instances of actors, directors, and imaginary characters acting as host or narrators in the scripts. The guide clearly states that the student author **MUST** act as host, narrator or voice over and any lines attributed to celebrities, critics, etc. must be clearly sourced. The list of sources must be annotated.

Some candidates made good use of the narrator segments by incorporating aspects of design or genre related to the films being discussed. When handled well this added to the overall engagement with the script. Some candidates however, developed narrator sequences that were overly complicated or off topic, resulting in a lack of engagement with the audience. Over developed or superfluous narrator sequences can also detract from the scope and depth of argument of the script.

Some candidates did not submit the required number of pages, some failed to refer to the required number of films, or at the Higher Level, failed to make comparisons between the referred films. There were frequent instances of scripts using an incorrect font or style or including large gaps, duplications, oversize thumbnails or other methods of padding scripts.

Many scripts did not reflect the kind of knowledge and understanding one might reasonably expect of a serious student of film. The weakest scripts were comprised mostly of celebrity anecdotes from DVD promotional material, retellings of plot, and unsupported opinions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers and candidates must read the Film Guide, paying particular attention to the formal requirements, the intent of international mindedness, and the requirement to use the language of cinema.
- Candidates should format their scripts using a standard two-column set-up, video on the left, audio on the right. Only one side of each page should be used.
- Teachers should introduce and illustrate the concept of “culture unfamiliar to their own”.
- Candidates need to understand what makes a topic relevant to film theory/history.
- Teachers must be aware that films studied for the Presentation Component should not be included in the Independent Study component.

- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of documentary films, paying particular attention to elements of structure and style – how the visual and audio elements work together to present information and engage the audience.
- Teachers should use the IB support materials, particularly sample scripts available on the OCC and through the teacher support material which is available alongside the guide on the OCC.

Film presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

Areas of the programme which proved difficult for candidates

Although there seemed to be a general improvement over previous sessions in this session's Presentations there are areas where improvement is essential. The principal elements of the Presentation, to analyse a specific film extract had several problems. Many candidates concentrated on analysing the whole film making only brief references to the extract. Students frequently concentrated on character analysis, plot development or literary elements rather than how meaning is constructed in filmic terms.

There were fewer instances where candidates describe their extract rather than analyse it but this remains an issue. Whilst many descriptions are detailed this only constitutes what they see or hear rather than how or why specific techniques are used to represent elements such as major themes, ideas and character.

Another issue is regarding basic preparation and organisation. Too many candidates are not achieving their full potential as they are finishing their presentation significantly well short of the time allowed. At SL some candidates are finishing in less than six minutes whilst at HL some are finishing in less than ten minutes. The timing of the Presentation itself commences

after the candidate has given School and Candidate numbers. Too much time is also often wasted by candidates providing unnecessary detail such as lists of characters and actors or a summary of the plot.

Although it is possible to follow the extract through shot by shot this is rarely the most efficient or effective method. It is better to identify key elements in the extract and explore how the meaning is constructed. Many candidates, even if they do not follow shot by shot simply jump from thought to unrelated thought. Occasionally this is a result of nerves but more commonly because their notes are not coherently organised.

Some candidates find it difficult to meet the challenge of finding complex meanings in their chosen extracts. There is a tendency to rely too heavily on simple analysis such as “black shadows signify something “bad” or “high angle camera shows power”.

Of more concern is that a small but significant number of candidates are not fulfilling the requirements as set out in the Programme. Some candidates present a detailed analysis of the extract but nothing more. At SL Candidates must address the film’s genre, the place of the extract within the film as a whole, its place in a broader socio-cultural context and perceived directorial intent. In addition at HL candidates must refer to responses from audiences, reviewers, critics and scholars at the time of release and/or subsequently.

The areas of the programme in which the candidates appeared well prepared. Levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

In spite of the issues elaborated above, more candidates are trying to integrate a detailed analysis of the extract in relation to the film as a whole as opposed to presenting a shot by shot description. It is clear that most candidates are engaging enthusiastically with their chosen film. At their best candidates were able to fully integrate a thorough and perceptive insight into the themes, issues and socio-cultural contexts of their films with a close, detailed analysis of their chosen extract.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates overall

This session’s candidates showed improvement in many areas. Whilst some candidates are still reciting lists of awards to indicate how films were received, many more are, at HL incorporating brief quotations from critics or scholars.

More candidates are organising their Presentations effectively and are preparing more fully. Although it is clear that candidates are using well prepared notes as aides memoire it must be emphasised that candidates are not allowed to read their Presentation verbatim form a

prepared script. Candidates who do read their Presentations are penalised. It would be better if teachers prevented candidates from commencing their presentation if a prepared script is about to be used.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The Film Programme must be read fully and carefully before setting out to prepare candidates for the Presentation.
- Too few candidates create truly coherent Presentations. Candidates must therefore be given ample opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination pieces.
- Candidates should be given ample opportunity to rehearse practice Presentations from films other than those set for the examination.
- Teachers should help their candidates be selective in what they say so that they can work effectively within the time frame to present all elements of the Presentation.
- Candidates must be given practice in timing for their presentations. Too many are either too long or too short.
- Teachers must check the sound levels before commencing recording and also the sound levels of the Presentations sent to be examined. Some Presentations have been inaudible.
- Once recordings have been started they must not be paused or stopped and restarted. Should a candidate wish to watch the extract through before the presentation this must be done before the recording of the Presentation begins.
- All recordings on CD must be able to be accessed with a conventional domestic CD player. Presentations on files such as Mpeg, Quick Time or Media Player are not acceptable.
- Teachers must not allow candidates to read their presentations. Brief notes are acceptable. Teachers should check a candidate's notes before commencing the recording.
- Recordings must be made in a private, quiet place: not, for instance in an open classroom. Make sure, as far as possible that the candidate will not be interrupted by outside noise. Some candidates were disturbed by loud school announcements on a tannoy system.

- Teachers must not intervene during the candidate's presentation apart from stating, "You have X minutes left. Do you have anything more to say?" Teachers may not prompt candidates by referring to specific areas that they think that the candidate has not fully explored. Anything that is said in response to an inappropriate intervention by the teacher cannot be rewarded.

N.B. Please note that from May 2009 onwards no Presentations will be accepted on audio cassette. All Presentations will have to be presented on CD, readable on a domestic CD player.