

FILM

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 13	14 – 29	30 – 42	43 – 54	55 – 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

The work seems to be getting stronger overall, and teacher experience and teacher training seem to be resulting in a culture of film practice that is built up in centres where the teacher is confident about the course and where candidates have had the example of other candidate's work to stimulate them.

There are still many projects in which the candidates cite a remarkably short production time for an assessment which is worth 50% of the candidate's mark. Often the weakest work

seems to be from centers where too little time has been spent on the skills of practical production and in which candidates are still inexperienced in technical work when they begin this assessment.

The idea that all materials featured in the films - sound work both diegetic and non-diegetic, and images - must be candidate-created seems to be understood, and there have been very few issues with copyright violation in this session. Instructions about content and treatment in the films were also followed.

The written component tends to suffer when candidates are unaware of the requirements of the criteria. At both SL and HL levels, some work is submitted without graphic or pictorial evidence, while at HL candidates occasionally forget to discuss the trailer throughout the commentary - though this is clearly required by criteria A and B.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A – Planning and Research

At both higher and standard levels, this criterion is often the hardest on the candidate. There should be a clear picture of the production process and a clear explanation of their production role supported by evidence that clarifies their claims about the production. Sometimes this evidence is missing entirely, and at other times “evidence” is represented simply by pictures of the candidate at work - photos that show nothing that could not be assumed by the existence of the film itself. The inclusion of production document excerpts is a necessity, not a choice. At higher level, the most common problem is the failure to show “planning of production and documentation has all been clearly integrated with the production of the individual film trailer.”

Criterion B – Reflection and Evaluation

At both higher and standard levels, and similar to criterion A, the most common problem with Criterion B is the failure to present well-selected evidence to support the candidate’s work in their chosen role. (Sometimes, especially when the film was made by an individual, there is a problem with a candidate not clearly choosing a single role and supporting that role alone. It is important that candidates understand that they must choose and support only a single role.) Otherwise, the most common problem with this criterion is the failure to present “a critical evaluation of the project as a whole.” This requirement is frequently disregarded entirely. Again, at higher level, sometimes the candidate fails to discuss the trailer.

Criterion C - Professional and Technical Skills

If candidates have not had enough experience working in the various roles, this criterion becomes problematic. As with Criterion B, if a candidate has worked in multiple roles or created the film by themselves, they must use intelligence in choosing the role to be evaluated. This criterion is supported to some extent by written documentation, and a weak commentary may affect the mark here.

Criterion D - Effective use of Film Language

Except in cases where candidates have not had enough experience working on practical production, this criterion tends to be where their strongest performance is shown. The most important factors for this criterion are sufficient time devoted to the final film and trailer themselves, and the opportunity for production experience in the class before coming to this assessment.

Criterion E - Originality and Creativity

Candidates should be encouraged to work from their own background. While borrowing music and images for their work is no longer common, the candidates still frequently mimic the weakest film genre materials when they could produce much more affecting work by making films about themselves and what they know.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should understand that making the film for the IA is an assessment with specific criteria, which should be shared with them. Sometimes they fail to recognize that the restrictions (e.g. 4-5 minute film at SL or a 6-7 minute film at HL) are part of the assessment. If their film could have been better at 10 minutes, it should have been planned more efficiently.

Besides lots of experience making short films and acquiring the skills for the various roles that can be evaluated, candidates should be exposed to a large number of short films - both those created by candidates like themselves and those created by professional film-makers. The short film has very different narrative demands and candidates need experience viewing them and making them. In addition, candidates at the higher level must see trailers and analyze them.

Further comments

There were problems with a number of centres this session where materials were sent in various video compression formats designed for the internet. Teachers should be certain that they have sent a DVD that plays on a standard DVD player - and the DVD should be burned with region code set to 0. As always, the DVD should be burned on the best equipment and tested on the worst equipment available. It is important to check materials before sending them.

Independent study

Component grade boundaries

Higher 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

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

Most candidates demonstrated an ability to discuss topics in film language and use cinematic terms. The strongest candidates also phrased their research topic in terms of film history and film theory, and displayed both breadth and depth of knowledge. As well they were able to use the format of the documentary script effectively.

Candidate engagement with the topic was obvious in the strongest work, and was demonstrated in a number of ways. Among other qualities, candidate interest in their chosen topic usually lead to a clear understanding of the film theory or history topic, which lead to films being well-chosen and topics were appropriately focused. The best work showed an ability to blend research, analysis, and interpretation in the format of the two column script - one that demonstrated balance between the audio and video columns.

There is far less reliance on complicated and distracting narrator sequences than there once was, and it seems both teacher training and available samples of work have helped clarify expectations in this regard.

The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

The most common problem was a topic that was not phrased in the form of a 'Film History or Film Theory' topic. Candidates that chose a Film History topic were more likely to understand the scope of their question - although those candidates who clearly understood what film theory is and who referenced their theoretical approach also did well. Frequently, however, the candidate began discussing an element of film practice without any understanding of why they were discussing it; this lead to a meandering and unfocused script. The two most common 'unstated theories' were the 'Auteur Theory' and 'Formalism.' In many of these cases, the candidate would begin comparing film directors, or start looking at qualities like the use of colour, camerawork, or narrative without really appreciating what the theoretical basis for this approach was.

The weakest candidates showed little familiarity with either film language or film analysis technique, and therefore explored their topic in the most general terms. In the weakest cases, candidates simply focused on plot, character, and re-telling the story of the film, turning the exercise into a simple comparison of narrative structure.

There tended to be an over-reliance on internet resources in many scripts, especially among the weaker candidates. Many are not grasping the wide field of available resources that exist. There were still a number of scripts without an annotated list of sources.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers should give candidates many opportunities to explore and discuss film theory and history so that this element of the evaluation can be clearly dealt with in the candidate's rationale and in the script of the Independent Study itself.
- Candidates exposed to a wide variety of film genres, styles, and eras from diverse countries and cultures have a much easier time with this assignment.
- Candidates should have a clear understanding of 'a culture unfamiliar to their own' and keep the concept in mind when choosing a topic for their independent study.
- The teacher should model the use of diverse sources when discussing film - books, DVD resources, documentaries, newspaper sources, and the internet - so that the candidate's response to 'research' is not to type in a search string at Google.
- Assignments in class should include annotated lists of sources so that this skill is developed.
- Candidates should do some assignments which required the use of the two-column documentary script. As well, documentary films should be screened to some extent so that candidates begin to understand the form. Documentaries about film are particularly helpful in this regard.

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

Area of special concern

Of particular concern is the number of candidates who are clearly reading their entire presentation. Where this is apparent these presentations are forwarded as suspected malpractice. Teachers who are supervising the recording must ensure that the candidates are not going to use a full “script”.

Areas of the programme which proved difficult for candidates

There was only a small entry for this session and there appears to have been little improvement overall. Too much time was again wasted with many candidates considering merely listing awards, actors’ and characters’ names as an integral part of analysis or a substitute for discussing the socio-cultural context. Very often this was due to a lack of careful preparation and lack of detail. It was quite common for weaker candidates to attribute critical responses to “some people” or “some critics” without proper referencing. Whilst stronger candidates undertook careful and appropriate research, weaker candidates relied far too heavily upon one or two websites such as IMDB and Wikipedia and then presented additional lists or plot summaries that did not fulfil the requirements of the presentation. Many of the presentations became descriptions of themes and character studies without analyzing how these are explored in filmic terms.

A significant number of the candidates failed to focus their presentation on an interpretation of the chosen extract and found problems with analysing and interpreting meaning. There was a tendency to describe or discuss the whole film. In some cases this was a common fault of all candidates from the same centre. The better candidates coped competently with how film creates meaning and discussed this in appropriate film language. However, weaker candidates made general observations about film language, for example shot type, framing, lighting or editing without discussing the intended effects of specific choices made by the director or cinematographer. Some candidates seem to be challenged by the requirement to provide a “detailed, evaluative interpretation” of the extract. Too many presentations also contained traditional literary analysis of characters and theme. While this contributes to the overall understanding of the film it does not show an understanding of how meaning is constructed in filmic terms. Candidates should be encouraged to use film language at all times when discussing film in class.

A number of candidates ignored specific section entirely, for instance in making no references to socio-cultural context or at HL references to “responses from audiences and reviewers, critics or scholars at the time of [the film’s] original release and/or subsequently.” It was common with weaker candidates to attribute comments to “some people” or “some critics” without citing specific individuals or publications.

The timing of the presentations has become more of a problem with too many candidates not using their full time allowed effectively. Many HL candidates are offering presentations at fewer than ten minutes and at SL fewer than six.

Some candidates select scenes that do not offer sufficient scope for analysis.

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

Most candidates have a genuine sense of engagement with the films chosen. Some seemed reasonably well prepared in the use of basic film language and terminology although few were able to use this knowledge as part of an in-depth analysis. Too often the presentations became a mere listing of shot types and very simple reference to what they might suggest. Some of the better candidates were able to understand and explore theoretical approaches to their analysis in an impressive manner. Many weaker candidates struggled to use even the most rudimentary film language and did not move beyond simple plot description and describing what is seen and heard on screen but without analysis. The better candidates showed good awareness of their film's place in cinema history and were generally articulate and organised. In places the actual understanding of how film communicates through the different micro-elements was inconsistent.

Candidates often did well when describing and analysing mise-en-scene and competently addressed cinematography but did less well when analysing editing and/or sound.

Some candidates still limit their sociocultural context and “responses” to lists of awards and box office receipts.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

In spite of difficulties shown during this session, the significant strength of some of the candidates was their good understanding of the underlying themes of the films that they had studied. Some had clearly handled their research and preparation well. The principal weakness was candidates ignoring significant sections that they are required to cover such as the socio-cultural context. All too often this was either ignored entirely or given the most perfunctory of treatments. Far too many of the candidates are coming to their recording of their presentation ill-prepared. Too many candidates in this session were finishing their presentation in significantly less time than allowed. The timing of the Presentation commences after the candidate has given the centre and candidate numbers and has identified the film that they are going to address.

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 meaning is constructed. Even if they do not simply describe the extract shot by shot too many candidates show lack of planning and preparation by jumping from thought to unrelated thought. Occasionally this may be as a result of nerves but more commonly because their presentation has not been fully prepared. At their best, however, candidates are able to coherently 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.

Some candidates fail to offer a persuasive rationale for selecting their sequence. Many simply stated that it was “a turning point” and moved on.

The best candidates offered presentations that reflected genuine personal engagement supported by clear knowledge and understanding.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The current Film guide must be read fully and carefully.
- Candidates should be shown the criteria, the subject reports and the current guide so that they are fully aware of what is required of them.
- It should be made clear to candidates that they must make best use of their time allotted. Ten minutes at SL and fifteen at HL.
- Candidates must be given ample opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination piece. Many candidates appear to be undertaking this task for the very first time in the actual assessment.
- Candidates should be given opportunities to rehearse recording presentations on films other than those set for the assessment. Such practice will enable candidates to plan and organise their examination pieces effectively and eliminate issues regarding the timing of their presentations.
- Teachers must check that the sound levels on the CDs to be sent to the examiner are sufficient to be heard. Some presentations for this session were inaudible. **All recordings must be able to be played on a domestic CD player. Presentations on files such as Mpeg or Quick Time are not acceptable.**
- Once recordings have 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 recording begins.
- **Teachers must not allow candidates to read their presentations.** Brief notes are acceptable but teachers should check these before commencing recording. Should it be suspected that a candidate is reading their presentation this will be considered to be a possible case of malpractice.
- Recordings must be made in a private, quiet place. Make sure as far as possible that the candidates will not be interrupted by outside noise such as loud tannoy announcements.
- Teachers must not intervene during the candidates' presentations. Teachers may not prompt candidates. Anything said in response to an inappropriate intervention by the teacher will not be rewarded.
- In regard to film selections at a centre level, teachers should be encouraged to choose both well-known and lesser-known films from the list. In addition, candidates should be encouraged to choose a variety of different extracts from the chosen film.

- Teachers need to be very sure they review the purpose of the film presentation with candidates. The main focus of the presentation is a close analysis of the selected extract, using this close analysis to discuss aspects of the film as a whole. They should try to cover every cinematic aspect of the sequence.
- Candidates should consistently be given practice with films other than those listed for the assessment to try to link the analysis of cinematic features of a film extract to the stated themes and/or director's intent, or even socio-cultural aspects or genre. This gives presentations a clear focus and allows for very specific and unique analysis.
- Candidates, through their specific analysis, should try to say something unique and original. Too many presentations rely on the same internet databases, select the "easy" film to analyse (i.e. the well known) and end up producing work that is unoriginal.
- Teachers should dissuade their candidates from offering redundant material in their presentations. Narrative summaries and lists of actors, characters and technicians waste valuable time.