

Film Analysis Final

PART I: Create-Your-Own Viewing Guide

At this point in the class, you should be much more acquainted with looking at a film critically, and noticing certain things that a director does to affect the viewer. The aim of a viewing guide is to force the viewer to look critically and thoughtfully at what is on the screen. Your first task for this final is to create *your own viewing guide*.

First step: TAKE NOTES

What do you take notes on? Take notes on things you notice: mise en scene (composition), music, camera movement, editing, colors used, etc. I find it best to take notes by first noting **what the scene is**, then **what it is I notice**, and then finally (after viewing the film and re-watching the scenes) **why I noticed it/what I think it means** (what the director's point is).

Second step: CRAFTING QUESTIONS

After you complete your note taking, you are ready to create your viewing guide. Your viewing guide should be **around 20 questions** that **point to** and **ask about** specific scenes, characters, camerawork, music, editing, lighting, etc. These are **not plot questions!** Appropriate questions to ask are questions like "why did the director make this choice?" and "what effect does this choice have on the viewer?"

Look and study the viewing guides I have created and given you—they are a great model.

- Use charts, fill-ins, questions, scene breakdowns, etc.
- Ask questions that guide someone to break down scenes or the film
- Ask questions that refer to why a director made a certain choice or how it affects the audience
- Address a variety of film concepts (not just one—I don't want 20 questions all related to lighting). Focus on lighting, editing, camera angles, sound, camera movement, etc. **USE YOUR FILM TERMS.**

Step Three: FORMATTING

The viewing guide should be easy to read/follow, typed, and have appropriate grammar. The questions should be chronological, and you should include the following at the start:

- Name: _____
- Name of Film (year released)
- Directed by
- List major characters

The construction of this viewing guide should attempt to show your knowledge in analyzing this film. If you simply ask plot questions or make simple charts, this will not get accomplished. The guide should demonstrate a healthy knowledge of film and this film in particular.

PART II ON OTHER SIDE

PART II: Scene Study

Choose one scene in the film to analyze thoroughly. Essentially, you are answering questions from your viewing guide!

What makes a good response?

- Topic sentence that gives an overview of what will be discussed.
- Supporting examples (2-3 examples are sufficient) and complete explanations that include context (references what is happening in the work), and analysis (what it means/filmmaker's purpose).
- Concluding sentence that sums up the entire response.

Other things to consider:

- **Organization:** Beware of having a topic sentence that is too broad like the following:
 - **Too broad:** The director shows many different feelings...
 - **More specific:** The director shows sadness and guilt through lighting and camera angles.
- **Ideas:** Make sure to avoid summarizing the film. This is **not a plot summary**, it is an **analysis**. Focus on how a filmmaker gets his/her point across, and why s/he makes that choice.
- **Word Choice:** Use the word **film** rather than **movie**. It is more academic and formal.
- **Voice:** Avoid personal pronouns like "I," and be careful not to get into "review territory." An **analysis is not a review**, so whether you like the film or not is irrelevant. Writing things like "the director did a great job" or "I really liked this film" are not objective analyses.
- **Conventions:** Write in the **present tense**, just like when writing about literature. *Example:*
 - **Wrong:** The use of high and low angles was used before the father launched himself. The camera had a high angle that symbolizes the father was weak and insignificant.
 - **Right:** The use of high and low angles are used before the father launches himself. The director uses a high angle which symbolizes the father being weak and insignificant.

Here's a full example using the parlor scene from **Psycho**:

In the parlor scene of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, there are numerous techniques employed by the director to foreshadow later events and reveal Norman's mental state. First, each character is lit differently. Marion is in high-key lighting, sitting directly next to a lamp. The soft glow of the warm light gives the viewer a sense of safety, and reveals her relative innocence and purity (despite the fact that she has run away with \$40,000). Norman, on the other hand, is in low-key lighting, away from the light, half in darkness. This lighting gives the viewer a subtle sense of menace, and also foreshadows Norman's split personality. Secondly, Hitchcock places stuffed birds within the mise en scene; only in the shots and angles with Norman. Norman is an amateur taxidermist, but the birds also have a deeper, symbolic meaning. The birds that are shown—a swooping owl, a raven—are dark, mysterious birds. They are predators, or creatures of the night, always watching, much like Mother is always watching Norman. Finally, things take a dark turn when Marion mentions putting Mother "someplace." Norman's reaction is indignant and he gets quite angry. The parlor scene has no music underscored until this moment. A slow, quiet, building violin sound can be heard as Norman starts his rant on a "madhouse," which not only makes the viewer feel uneasy, but clues the viewer into the madness of Norman Bates.

Create your own Viewing Guide Rubric/Grading READING				
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.				
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).				
	Proficient w/ Distinction	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Below Proficient
	10	8	6	4
Quality of Questions & Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All questions force thinking, referring to director choices or effect on audience (how and why) Always provide context of scene/film in question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most questions force thinking, and usually refer to director choices or effect on audience Usually provides context of scene/film in question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some questions force thinking, and usually refer to director choices or effect on audience Sometimes provides context of scene/film in question 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are very surface level or only cover plot Rarely provides context
	10	8	6	4
Variety of Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address a wide variety of film concepts Many different kinds of questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address somewhat of a variety of film concepts A few different kinds of questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address a few different film concepts, but generally lacks variety Most questions are too similar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address only 1-2 different film concepts Questions are too similar
WRITING				
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				
	10	8	6	4
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All are clear and easily understandable Covers entire film, chronologically All questions display appropriate grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most questions are clear and easy to understand Key points of the film are covered, and usually in chronological order Most questions display appropriate grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some questions are clear and easy to understand, many are difficult to understand Only 2-3 scenes are covered; sometimes in chronological order Some questions display appropriate grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are unclear or difficult to understand Not in chronological order Questions rarely display appropriate grammar
	5	4	3	2 1
Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typed, easy to read/follow Includes name of film, director, characters (with brief description) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typed and mostly easy to read/follow Includes name of film director, and characters 	Typed, but does not include characters or space for answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handwritten or difficult to read/follow Only has questions and no other information

Scene Study WRITING				
Organization/Structure (CCSS ELA Lit.W.11-12 1.B) 1. All parts of the essay are logically sequenced 2. Clear and logical transitions are evident 3. All parts of the essay are logically connected to the main idea/thesis/claim				
	10	8	6	4
Organization is outstanding. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs are effective. Integration of quotes/evidence are seamless and natural.	Organization is appropriate. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs are appropriate. Occasional chopiness or awkwardness in quote/evidence integration.	Organization is weak. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs are weak. Quote integration not evident.	Organization is lacking. Transitions between ideas and paragraphs are lacking.	
Mechanics/Syntax/grammar (CCSS ELA Lit.W.11-12 1.C) Conventions: the standard rules of punctuation, capitalization, spelling and grammar				

5	4	3	2 1 0
The writing is error free.	Grammar and punctuation errors are few. The reader is not distracted by the errors	There are a number of distracting grammar and punctuation errors that confuse the reader.	Frequent errors make it incomprehensible.
Word Choice/Voice/Tone (CCSS ELA Lit.W.11-12 1.D) Uses appropriate vocabulary for the content and audience.			
10	8	6	4
Words are specific and accurate. Necessary film vocabulary and terminology is evident and correctly used to increase understanding throughout the piece. Maintains use of formal language, and avoids any use of slang.	Words are specific and accurate. Necessary film vocabulary and terminology is evident and regularly used correctly to increase understanding. Usually uses formal language and mostly avoids slang.	Most words are specific and accurate. Necessary film vocabulary and terminology is partially evident yet is not correctly used. Often too informal in choice of words.	Word choice is inappropriate for the piece. Necessary film vocabulary and terminology is not evident. Uses slang and informal language throughout.
READING AND WRITING			
Commentary/Analysis (CCSS ELA Lit.W.11-12.1B), (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL/RI.11-12.1), (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL/RI.11-12.2), (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL/RI.11-12.3)			
10	8	6	4
The commentary and analysis clearly explains the significance of the evidence and how it supports the thesis/topic. Commentary shows interpretation or insight that the reader sees in the evidence. Commentary elaboration is appropriate to the writing task Demonstrates complete understanding of film and is able to articulate that knowledge.	The commentary and analysis discusses the evidence and its significance or how it supports the thesis/topic, but does so less clearly/strongly. Commentary shows some interpretation or insight that the reader sees in the evidence. Commentary elaboration is appropriate to the writing task Demonstrates adequate understanding of film and is able to articulate that knowledge.	The commentary and analysis relates loosely to the evidence. Commentary may paraphrase the evidence without adding much interpretation/ explanation. Commentary elaboration shows some connection between evidence and thesis/topic, but it is incomplete or underdeveloped Demonstrates incomplete or unclear understanding of film or has difficulty articulating some of that knowledge.	The commentary and analysis is unrelated to the evidence. It may be related to the central question or deviate off-topic. Commentary shows limited elaboration of the connection between the evidence and the thesis/topic Demonstrates little or no understanding of film or is unable to articulate that knowledge to others.
Content/Evidence/Support (CCSS ELA Lit.W.11-12.1B), (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1) Evidence is relevant, significant, and specific.			
10	8	6	4
The text provides convincing and relevant data/evidence to support the thesis/claim.	The text provides sufficient and relevant data/evidence to support the thesis/claim.	The text provides some relevant data/evidence to support the thesis/claim	The text provides limited data/evidence in an attempt to support the thesis/claim.

TOTAL GRADE

Reading Score:	____/40	Writing Score:	____/60
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