

Film analysis - introduction

The purpose

The purpose of these videos is to present the most important terms that are used in the analysis of films. The discussion is oriented toward students of English at B level.

The focus of film analysis in English is to interpret the meaning of the film by analysing how cinematic techniques are used, and how they influence your understanding of the film. You do not need to know how these techniques are done technically.

A film is a story told with sound and images.

In the following, you are going to learn how to analyse films. In order to analyse a film you need to learn the appropriate terms and their meanings. For this purpose, we present the most important cinematic techniques and some examples.

The goal

The goal is to analyse the effect of a particular technique on your understanding of the film. In the exam you will be asked to use some of these terms. It is a good idea to learn the terms and practice using them when analysing films.

The videos are organised in three sections: **set, shot and plot.**

All sections start with a short introduction and afterwards the different terms are explained with some examples. You are going to find out how these cinematic techniques influence your experience and understanding of the film.

When you analyse the cinematic techniques you will focus on:

Picture: Framing, composition, camera movement and lighting

Sound: Diegetic sound, non-diegetic sound

Editing: Transitions, editing pace

When you analyse the plot you will focus on:

Character, structure and narrator

When you analyse cinematic techniques, it is difficult to focus on all the elements at the same time. **Try to focus on either picture or sound:**

- Switch off the sound and watch the pictures
- Shut your eyes and listen to the sound

Props or things play an important role as symbols of what the characters want or fear or of their inner conflicts. If a character is surrounded by shattered glass, it might say something about an inner state of frailty. A grown up character surrounded by dolls might try to hang on to a lost childhood.

It is important to pay attention to the setting of the different parts of the film. The setting can help you understand what goes on in the film.

Sometimes, the **setting may even drive the plot forwards**, for instance when a rainstorm forces the young couple inside the haunted house where horrible things will happen to them.

Think about how the director selected the best possible physical framing for the story, and about what the function of the location is.

The terms

Costume, Prop and Set Design are all relevant to this area of analysis.

Go to the playlist about "Set" if you want to learn more.