

FILM

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-42	43-56	57-69	70-83	84-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-29	30-41	42-55	56-67	68-81	82-100

Introductory comments on the overall performance of this group of candidates

The third administration of examinations in the pilot Film course followed some significant changes in the syllabus, particularly at HL in the Production Portfolio. Once again, the results demonstrated that the course commands a full range of work from candidates, including work at the highest levels. The best-performing candidates demonstrated a mature and sincere ownership of the subject, together with an ability to express themselves with enthusiasm and conviction. The work of such candidates does credit to their schools and teachers, as well as endorsing the course and its assessment.

Inattention to details in both the syllabus and the examination procedures still gave rise to numerous unnecessary problems in candidates' work. A disappointing number of candidates seem to have compromised the quality of their work because of poor time management. Some work from candidates in all three assessment areas was submitted in unfinished or unpolished condition, suggesting lack of time or care, or both.

Independent study

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

The Independent Study requires candidates to produce a script for a short documentary film on a topic of film history or film theory for an audience of their peers. The topic must explore an aspect of film

that is unfamiliar to the candidate, and be illustrated through close reference to at least two (SL) or four (HL) films from at least two different countries. The script is to contain three components:

- rationale
- script
- sources

The areas of the course and assessments in which candidates' strengths were apparent

The best performing scripts had a clearly focused topic intimately rooted in film history/theory and open to an exploration using film discourse. These scripts fulfilled the promise of their rationale, using aptly chosen films, carefully selected and well described film clips, and well structured and supported arguments to connect the clips to the script's topic. These scripts did digress into plot summary or character description. They were organized into sections for each argument in support of the topic rather than sections for each film selected for the illustration of the argument.

The focus of the discussion was justified with aptly chosen clips and voice overs explaining how effects are achieved through camera, framing, editing, script, costume, colour, light and shadow, music and sound, direction etc. The best scripts showed thorough primary research balanced and supported by thoroughgoing secondary research. Some of the best scripts displayed a laudatory sense of rhythm and pace.

In the best scripts the voice was clearly that of the student writer, and quotations used in support of the voice overs were meticulously annotated in footnotes or endnotes or otherwise linked to listed print and non-print sources. In these scripts the quotations were integrated into the student's own voice and did not "take over" the script. The strongest scripts were those that demonstrated awareness that films are constructed for audiences, and that the deployment of filmic codes is one way film seeks to engage the intended audiences.

The stronger scripts selected films that reflected a clear understanding of the intention of the I.S. to lead students into the study of films from cultures other than their own. As a result, many of these scripts displayed the freshness and excitement of knowledge newly discovered and insight newly made. These scripts had truly tackled a "cinematic tradition unfamiliar to their own culture".

The best scripts used talking heads to punctuate their documentary, preferring to use the greater part of screen time for clips from the films under discussion. The very best of these added detailed time-code information for each clip, linking them meticulously with the voice overs in the parallel column.

The areas of the course and assessments where candidates performed less well

Many topics were not approached through film history and theory, or through film discourse, but were discussed primarily in terms of the story and characters of the film and/or in a context of trade trivia. Some topics that did lend themselves to a historical or theoretical approach were discussed the same way. This was particularly true of the many topics exploring a 'theme'. Thematic topics dealing with issues, character types, narrative conventions etc. and their *representation, depiction* and *presentation*, often under-interpreted the meaning of these words for the weak synonym *show*, and merely told how the films under discussion *showed* their chosen topic rather than exploring how the films *built or constructed meaning* around them. The focus was on the narrative 'what' rather than on the filmic 'how', 'why', or 'in what context'. Many of the weaker scripts had poorly structured arguments, depending on assertion (with or without example) to do the job of a carefully linked and justified argument.

Some schools seem not to have been aware that ‘guest narrators’ are not permitted. Many scripts used celebrities to host their scripts, putting inappropriate words into their mouths. Other scripts used long quotations from sources and strung them together with scant narrator linkage, ending up with a patchwork of quotations and little student voice at all. Often these quotations were not acknowledged in any standard way.

A number of weaker scripts tended to engage in a discussion of the type of film that was clearly already very familiar to the writer (e.g. action films, horror films, Kung Fu films), or from countries socially close to their own (e.g. UK and USA) instead of engaging with a “cinematic tradition unfamiliar to their own culture” as required by the Film Guide.

Weaker scripts tended to depend largely on Internet and DVD ‘extras’ sources, frequently failing to distinguish between material that is just trade ‘hype’ and true critical commentary. Some scripts satisfied themselves with reciting easily collected concrete facts about a topic of film history, essentially writing the equivalent of an entry for an encyclopaedia. While this can be informative, it leaves other requirements of the I.S. unaddressed e.g. close reference to films as illustrations; argumentation in support of a topic, cultural and other contextual influences.

A number of weaker scripts were visually dull because they concentrated on talking heads when their arguments would have been better served by appropriate clips from the films under discussion. Others cited clips, but gave only scant or general details, leaving it to the reader/viewer to visualize what was intended by expressions like “a montage of scenes from the film”.

Some scripts sometimes used clips of four minutes or longer without taking note of the time accumulation for the overall script.

As in previous years, some candidates padded out their scripts to the required minimum length by using:

- Oversized margins, headers and footers
- Extra large font size (12 point Courier is specified in the Film Guide)
- Large imported images
- Offset sound and visual columns leaving blank space, rather than keeping sound and visuals side by side
- Cover sheet, synopsis page and/or resources page(s) as numbered pages of the script

Recommendations and guidance of the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should commence their work on I.S. early enough to allow ample time for a complete and considered product.
- It is not possible to overstate the importance of a close and exact reading of the syllabus and assessment details relating to I.S. as a precursor to beginning work on it.
- Candidates must be clearly informed of the specific requirements for the presentation, layout and length of their scripts.
- Candidates need guidance in selecting topics related to film theory and film history and need to be steered firmly away from topics that do not meet the criteria.
- Candidates need to be constantly reminded of the difference between film promotion and critical commentary on film

- Candidates still need assistance understanding the differences in various film cultures.
- Candidates will continue to benefit from exposure to exemplar pieces of Independent Study work in class in conjunction with the detailed analysis of the assessment criteria
- The close analysis of short documentary films in class can help students understand how to structure an argument in film and how best to link sound and visual elements.
- Teachers should continue to emphasize instruction on the appropriate selection, listing and acknowledgment of sources.
- Teachers should continue to insist that students understand the distinction between unsupported assertion and well-developed argumentation.

Presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-25

The Presentation requires candidates to deliver an audio taped critical analysis of an extract from a given film “relating its features to the film as a whole and to the wide sociocultural context”. Candidates make their own selection of material from the film and spend four weeks on a close study of the selection researching the broader context of the film and of the chosen extract.

The areas of the course and assessment in which candidates' strengths were apparent

The best candidates covered all the requirements thoroughly and coherently. They had clearly prepared well and had a thorough and sensitive understanding of the film studied. Extracts were chosen for their suitability for careful analysis and for their context within the film as a whole. The best candidates were able to combine an enthusiastic appreciation of their films with thoughtful and imaginative analysis of not only what the films were communicating but also how meaning was constructed. These candidates were often able to comment lucidly on aspects of socio-cultural significance.

The areas of the course and assessments where candidates performed less well

Candidates seemed to confuse the need for detail with detailed analysis. Often they would describe in detail their chosen extract but only as far as what it literally contained rather than what meaning was being constructed and how this meaning was construed. Too many candidates appeared to have done little or no research into the film, whilst others seemed merely to have taken material from the extras on the DVD. Research into the socio-cultural context proved beyond too many candidates. Some

candidates were able to identify aspects and examples of film technique, but failed to interpret them in any way, while others were insecure with even basic facts and theories.

Lack of good organization in the Presentation was a common problem. Too many candidates spent too long on unnecessary introductions to the films, enumerating cast lists, synopses of plots, lists of awards, and filmographies of directors.

Some presentations were overly mechanical in their treatment of the individual areas to be discussed, treating 'director's intention', for instance, as a question to be answered in a vacuum, without relating it to or integrating it with other aspects of the presentation.

Many candidates had difficulty with the use of film discourse, relying instead on literary terminology in their descriptions and analysis. Some candidates seemed to be significantly ill-prepared. Some even appeared to be presenting their ideas for the first time as they recorded their presentation. A disappointing number of presentations were significantly too long or surprisingly too short.

Recommendations guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- It is it not possible to overstress the importance of a close and exact reading of the syllabus and assessment details.
- Candidates need to approach this task as they would any research essay and plan in great detail.
- Long before the examination itself, candidates should be given substantial practice with textual analysis using extracts from films that have not been set for the examination
- Exemplar presentations should be studied in class in conjunction with the detailed analysis of the assessment criteria
- Candidates need guidance in the use of the terminology and in researching the socio-cultural context of films
- Candidates need help and guidance in the preparation of useful notes as aides-memoir
- It is vital that candidates use the four weeks allocated to research the film, its director, other significant crew members, their work, the production conditions of the film, its importance as a cultural/historical text, as well as critical and academic writing about the film.
- Candidates must link the evaluative interpretation of the extract to broader, relevant information.
- Preparatory time must be spent on constructing a detailed argument that connects supported points and moves towards a reasoned conclusion.
- Candidates need to show they understand by analyzing how and why the techniques they emphasize are used
- As it is not appropriate for candidates to present a shot-by-shot running commentary, the need to play any parts of the extract during the presentation should be avoided.
- Teachers should be aware of when to prompt students and of the kind of prompting that is appropriate during the presentation. Only if the candidate presents for significantly less than the minimum time should there be any need for teacher intervention, and then only to ask the candidate to further develop points already made. Under no circumstances should teacher prompting be used to elicit new information on topics not already broached by the candidate.

Production portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-29	30-36	37-43	44-50

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 Production Portfolio is internally assessed and externally moderated. At HL candidates make a completed film projects of approximately seven minutes in length, and an associated trailer for it. At SL candidates make a completed film project of approximately five minutes in length. Each production is accompanied by a portfolio of support material consisting of a rationale of 250 to 400 words (HL) or 200-400 words (SL), and a written commentary of no more than 1750 words (HL) or 1200 words (SL).

Observations on the effect of the changes to the film guide examined for the first time

- The substitution of the trailer to the HL syllabus for the second production was a clear improvement in the production portfolio at that level
- The elimination of the second full production has removed problems arising when the two films might be of very different quality, the poorer one thus penalizing work that was otherwise excellent
- Concerns with scheduling time for use of the editing equipment for each candidate to make an individual trailer will be diminished or eliminated in future with fore-knowledge of the potential problem
- The elimination of the bundle of 20 pages of production materials from the production portfolio has had a salubrious effect on the overall effectiveness of the written commentary
- The use of trailer at HL helped make a clearer differentiation between HL and SL
- Broadening the assessment criteria this year to mark the production portfolio out of 50 rather than 25 appears to have been successful, facilitating a greater differentiation among candidates' contributions.

Issues with tapes and DVDs

- VHS and DVD are the **only** formats allowed
- Schools, teachers, and coordinators need be aware of what happens to material after it leaves the school. Problems arise when materials are not properly marked and identified on *both* the cassette or DVD *and* the case, listing:
 - The course and course component
 - The name and number of *both* the school *and* candidate(s)

- Several pieces of work can be submitted on a single DVD, provided the DVD is properly chapterized
- Videocassettes and non-chapterized DVDs should contain only a single piece of work representing either a group of candidates or an individual candidate
- The quality of the recording needs to be optimized in all formats. Quality should be checked at the school before work sent for moderation.
- The use of cheap or poor quality DVDs and cassettes can cause needless problems in moderation when the recorded signal becomes corrupted or otherwise unreadable
- DVDs need to be given the zero region code

The areas of the course and assessment in which candidates strengths were apparent

HL work had more examples than in previous years showing a high degree of understanding of the process of narrative and technical skill with camera, editing, and sound. The best work on view by HL students was very, very good indeed and demonstrated exceptional learning and understanding over a wide range of criteria. The trailer assignment often helped clarify the individual candidate's skills and, in some cases provided a last court of appeal when a group project had not done well.

At SL, work tended to cluster towards the center of the mark range, although there were examples of work of the highest caliber. Those groups or individuals did well who were engaged in their work, who took the time to thoroughly plan their production and who gave themselves enough opportunity to confront the problems of shooting, editing, and polishing. At the highest levels, productions found their own form and candidates found their own voice, creating technically sophisticated work that was both imaginative and original. A pleasing number of productions displayed an awareness of the short film format and an encouraging use of solid camerawork. A range of topics was explored. Many were dealt with sensitively and maturely. The most successful productions were clearly the result of hard work and dedication where pre- and post-production had been a major focus.

While some of the best portfolio work was very good indeed, the very best technical work was not always supported by the best portfolio work. At the highest levels, candidates took the opportunity to demonstrate the details of their individual work through judicious selection of both journals and production materials [storyboard, set plans, location photos, etc.] that clearly presented the problems or production and their unique solutions. The highest-level work showed candidates not only at their most imaginative and technically proficient, but also saw them matching the forms of film language to the demands of their own stories, finding unique and personal voices.

The best commentaries made liberal use of excerpts from production documents to reinforce central points, expressing themselves confidently using film discourse. Students offering the best production portfolios made it very clear what role they had performed in the production, and justified and illustrated that work thoroughly in the documentation, often including well chosen examples of preproduction materials in support.

The areas of the course and assessment where candidates performed less well

In general the weaker work appeared to have suffered from the lack of emphasis on both pre- and postproduction. Candidates who performed less well gave little consideration to audience. Some candidates chose to produce films that were longer than the time allowed. Some films seemed to lack ambition in terms of narrative and aesthetic intentions. Many films were shot as straight linear narratives, without exploring the potential of cinematic time and space. For instance, there is a

tendency to rely on dialogue to develop the narrative, rather than on imagery. Among the weaker productions there was little evidence of students incorporating their awareness of films outside of their own local filmmaking tradition into their own films. Sound is the weakest domain and this is not entirely due to technical limitations. Too often, students rely on music in the soundtracks for which they do not have copyright permission. They do not use remote microphones, and do little to no postproduction work to improve or balance sound.

One significant improvement needed in the rationale is to offer comments on technical and aesthetic ambitions, rather than solely on the narrative or thematic ones. Weaker portfolios tended to be a collection of journals with little or no artistic and logistical analysis of relevant production processes. In the commentaries, students included plenty of references to specific examples, but sometimes these are merely descriptive [what went wrong and how we fixed it] rather than analytical [why we made the choice and why it succeeded or failed]. Some commentaries made little reference to actual production documents. More regular and informed employment of the cinematic terms included in the glossary of the guide is needed.

Some students failed to make it clear what role they had performed in the production, laid claim to a role that is not permitted in the Guide, or claimed no major role at all, other than assisting in one or more capacities.

Some candidates presented work that was an excerpt from a longer piece. This represents quite a risk, as most films are not built of coherent narrative sections that can simply be sliced from a longer version of the film. A number of SL candidates worked with HL candidates cutting a seven minute presentation into a five-minute film. This was probably a bad idea in general, although perhaps the advantage remained with the SL students who created the more succinct work.

Recommendations for teaching of future candidates

- Centers and should review and teach the section of the syllabus on page 15 of the Guide that details the content and treatment of films produced.
- Questions of copyright, particularly with music, need to be emphasized by teachers so that candidates are fully aware of implications of using copyright material in IA
- Candidates need to be involved throughout preproduction, production and postproduction even when their part in the film is mainly in only one of these stages
- The distinction between journal, daily logs, production materials, and the ultimate aim of presenting a portfolio should be covered in detail so that the student understands not only the place of this work in the evaluation but also the necessary requirements of Assessment Criteria A and B.
- Candidates should remember that the running-time limitations on the project are a fundamental part of the evaluation and are strictly adhered to in moderation.
- Schools should ensure that students have viewed both feature films and short films so that they can absorb the editing pace and narrative style of short features
- Candidates would benefit from writing short scripts [one-page equals one minute] through a number of drafts so that an appropriate length script is created before production starts.
- Candidates will benefit from a range of production opportunities for three to six short films, even if some of these productions experience focused on only one skill.
- The importance of planning time cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Many productions and portfolios suggest that candidates ended the year in a hurry with deleterious effect on their work.

- Candidates need to develop familiarity with equipment in exercises throughout the course so that they are able to make reasoned choices as to their own areas of interest/expertise when deciding upon production roles.
- It is suggested that candidates are given more opportunities to shoot and edit dialogue in a variety of ways and to become more aware of the need for coverage on a shoot.
- It is important to ensure roles for assessment are appropriate and clearly indicated on cover sheets.