

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

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|--------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 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

While work from many centers is improving as the program continues, there are many centers which seem stuck at a certain level of achievement. This assessment does seem to be affected by the culture of the school, and by the teacher's understanding of the assessment requirements. It is not surprising that work from many centers is improving, as there are so many opportunities at this time for subject teachers to train and to exchange ideas about the Film Studies class. Whether it is taking advantage of training sessions at conferences or

online, using the OCC to exchange ideas in forums with other Film Studies teachers, or simply building a network of colleagues who are engaged in teaching film, it is clear that teachers at some centers are very engaged in discovering new and more effective ways to both train the students in practical production methods and to help them understand the important formal requirements of the assessment.

While the best work is very good indeed, and shows a clear understanding of the criteria for the assessment and the formal requirements, there is still much work submitted that is unsuitable and which seems to arise from a misunderstanding about the goals of this task. There are still some students who complain in their commentary that the film could have been better if they didn't have to make a film only 5 minutes long, at SL, or 7 minutes long, at HL. These students seem unaware that this complaint is evidence of poor planning and that the time-limits are part of the conditions of this assessment. They seem misled by an incorrect assumption that they are trying to create the best film that they can possibly create, rather than the best film they can create *within* the given formal conditions of the assessment.

It is also troubling to see evidence in the commentary that many students begin work on this significant assessment - which is worth half of their marks in the course - with very little time to plan, shoot, edit, and polish the final work. Often, there are indications that the work may have been done in only a few weeks. This makes no sense. Pre-production work and planning of this assessment can clearly begin early in second year (and - in many schools, where climate may be a factor in the shoot - might well require some filming during the vacation break between first and second year). There is no reason why the Production Portfolio should be accomplished in a rush at the end of the two-year program.

Finally, some students persist in presenting work that ignores the guiding conditions about **content and treatment** presented on page 36 of the subject guide. Teachers must counsel students that, should they anticipate presenting work that is problematic in terms of those restrictions, they must work with the teacher so that the teacher can reasonably clarify the rationale for presenting work that comes close to the edge of the restrictions. Work in clear violation **cannot be presented**. In this case, the student will fail to meet the requirements.

Teachers should make clear that while their Portfolio Film, and Trailer at HL, need not be "serious," it must be a **serious attempt to meet the formal requirements and the criteria descriptors** of the assessment.

Another area which has seen much improvement is the observation of the conditions regarding Copyright material. As stated on page 37, "The intention of the film course is that students, especially in the production portfolio component, will be the original creators of, or have a significant role in the creation of any audio or visual material that they use in their work."

This year's assessments saw students creating their own news shows and films for inclusion as part of their film, created and inserted via green screen. Original music is heard much more frequently, as is student generated Foley and sound design, and in some cases there was even the creation of original prop material such as comic book panels and other art so that the students were truly in control of the mise-en-scene.

There is still some problem with the use of software to make "original" music. The intention of the guide is clearly that the students use this kind of software to combine and re-combine instrumentation and *short loops*. What is not acceptable is software that has an extensive library of finished songs or sound effects. This is not what is clearly intended by the guide, as such software is, in essence, previously finished work and there is little or no creativity in evidence when students use it. It is essential that teachers draw student attention to this requirement, as the use of other creators' images and audio - photos, moving image, sound, and music - will result in a 0 awarded for the entire group in criterion E: Originality and Creativity.

Finally, teachers are reminded that the work submitted in DVD format should be in a form that can be ***easily played on a standard DVD player***. This year has seen some work presented as collections of work files which then needed to be downloaded into a video editing suite to work. This is inappropriate. Also problematic are file forms that are intended for playback on the internet. ***Student work should be viewable on a standard television in the best possible playback form, and region code should be set to 0.***

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A - Planning and Research

At HL and SL level, the best work is a combination of written commentary supported by extensive pictorial, graphic, and other documentary evidence that is clearly related to the student's own role and the production history of the film (that is planning and organization). As stated in the guide, the student should maintain a production journal, with the intent of re-visiting it when writing the commentary and keeping materials such as "storyboards, screenshots, script excerpts or excerpts from other production documents."

The most common problem is a commentary which is simply a production history without any supporting materials. As well, sometimes visual materials are very simplistic. There is not much of a reason to include a picture of students setting up a camera, *unless camera placement is a theme in the commentary and the picture illustrates problems overcome or creativity in action*. It is very important that this evidence is presented as a part of the commentary **and not presented as an appendix**. Teachers should be aware that - if

evidence is not presented within the body of the commentary - the awarded mark is very unlikely to be more than 4 for this criterion.

TRAILER: At higher level, a persistent problem is that students, who have otherwise done a good job, fail to discuss the creation of the trailer as part of their commentary. HL students who do not discuss their trailer within the body of the commentary will have their work dropped one level in assessment of Criteria A and B.

Criterion B – Reflection and Evaluation

At HL and SL, the most effective work here presents reflection on the relevant production processes involved with the student's chosen production role. As well, there is an excellent critical evaluation of the project as a whole. Though there is overlap between logistic and artistic reflection, students should remember that both approaches are required. The most common error for both SL and HL students is to fail to include a "critical evaluation of the project as a whole."

In addition, critical summary comments are of the most simplistic kind - "We learned a lot and came to depend on each other as a group." While such discoveries are hoped for, a "critical evaluation" should be a clear-eyed discussion of both the successful elements of the production and the elements that could bear improvement.

TRAILER: At the HL level, a persistent problem is that students, who have otherwise done a good job, fail to discuss the creation of the trailer as part of their commentary. HL students who do not discuss their trailer within the body of the commentary will have their work dropped one level in assessment of Criteria A and B.

Criterion C [Professional and Technical Skills]

At HL and SL, the best work showcases students who do excellent work in their role in both professional and technical skills, and who make highly effective use of available technology. It is good to remember that not just the work on view in the film but also the **documentation as a whole** supports the mark awarded in Criterion C, as it will clarify the logistic and artistic problems encountered and the solutions the student arrived at. A common problem at both HL and SL levels is for a student to become so involved in discussing the history of the production, as well as their planning and research, so that they fail to support their work in their chosen production role. While much of the marking of this criterion is based on production work, the commentary support should not be forgotten.

Criterion D [Effective use of film language]

Student production work is often the strongest part of their Production Portfolio. Even students who have a hard time supporting their work in their commentary can clearly be seen

to be communicating in film language in their film. For many, the assessment in Criterion D is their strongest, so long as the group has taken the time to create a solid film. This is definitely an area where schools with available equipment and technology can provide a real support for the students in terms of technical achievement.

Criterion E – Originality and Creativity

The best student work shows both originality and creativity both with and against the conventions of the genres the students choose to work in, and sometimes a real freshness of approach. Sometimes students, who are new to expressing themselves in visual terms, are somewhat prone to consider fairly obvious ideas as more original than they are. (A moment that moderators see over and over again is a student film that begins with an alarm clock and a student waking up, even though there is no narrative reason why **waking up** is a significant narrative even in the film.) Teachers should try to encourage students to be original and creative, and possibly point-out that their first response to the assessment conditions are ***likely to be the same as the first response of many other students.***

As pointed out earlier, groups of students who use images, video, music, software animation package (like Warcraft or Halo), or any other materials that were primarily created by other individuals will be **awarded 0 as a group for criterion E. At HL this includes the individual trailer, although in that case the 0 will be awarded only to the candidate who presents the trailer.**

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

A continuing problem is the student desire to create features instead of short films, and to deal with topics that are difficult – if not impossible – to cover in the time span allotted for this assessment. For an SL student, the time limit is 4 to 5 minutes, for an HL student the time limit is 6 to 7 minutes. For this reason, time has to be made in class for the **study of short films** (as well as the work of other students) – so that students will begin to internalize the rhythms and possibilities of the short feature form.

Students should be encouraged to look for inspiration from their own lives and not only in other feature films. Robert Rodriguez's maxim "if you've got a dog, make a movie about a dog" should hold true. In addition, Higher Level students must look at a range of Trailers from various time periods so that their response to this requirement is not the simple series of chronological images separated by fade to black edits that is currently in vogue. The best trailers can be both a demonstration of the breadth of a student's practical skills, and a last court of appeal for the student whose abilities might exceed the group's effort. A good trailer can have a significant effect on all criterion in the Portfolio, especially B, C, D, and E.

Further comments

It is very important that teachers are familiar with arrival dates and with the marks forms for internal assessment. It is also important that the teacher strive to be as consistent as possible when marking. Students and teachers should be familiar with the criteria descriptors and understand what the product must demonstrate in terms of the expectations of the assessment. While it is not required by the guide, a word-count is a commonly expected courtesy on a document such as the commentary.

Ignoring formal requirements will result in grade reductions, so it is important that everyone is familiar with the requirements in the guide. Frequently a rationale is forgotten, or in the case of HL students there is a rationale for the film but not a rationale for the trailer. In addition students **may only choose one production role. It is not acceptable to circle more than one role or to choose a role that is not one of those permitted by the assessment requirements and guidelines.** While it is fine for a student to choose to make the film on their own, it is important that the student understand that they are being graded for their **one production role.** “Extra” marks cannot be awarded to an Editor because the editor was also the Director. When choosing how they will be evaluated, the student should *carefully consider where their best work is on view.*

Where HL and SL students are working together, it is ***in most instances not advisable to work on the same film.*** While it is not against the rules for an SL and an HL student to work together, it will result in a 5 minute and a 7 minute cut of the same film. There are very few instances where one of these films (usually the 5 minute film) will not turn out to have been the better planned and more successfully edited film.

The best results seem to come from schools where practical production techniques have been taught concurrently with textual analysis, film theory and film history. Marginal work seems to come from centers in which students have had very little experience with technology. It is important to keep a balance of practical and theoretical work from the beginning to the end of the class.

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

Many candidates were able to choose engaging film theory/history topics and were able to discuss the topic in cinematic terms. The strongest candidates demonstrated a sophisticated understanding and depth of knowledge and were able to communicate that knowledge through a well structured and correctly formatted script. The strongest scripts, even the ones that covered well-trodden ground, demonstrated an enthusiasm for the film theory or history topic, utilized an intelligent and engaging structure, and gathered a variety of well-chosen sources. Many candidates were able to discuss films in critical terms rather than merely “reviewing” them. Most candidates appeared comfortable with the two-column format and the formal requirements. These candidates understood, and were able to successfully exploit, the documentary format as a way to communicate meaning. Some candidates were able to combine knowledge, analysis and interpretation while supporting their arguments with well-chosen, aptly applied film clips.

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

Candidates often had difficulty understanding that the Independent Study is about how ideas, themes, and issues of character are represented, or made manifest, in film. Some candidates seem to ignore that film (most often) represents a director’s intent and that the elements on the screen do not happen by accident.

Many candidates are still focusing on plot, character and a re-telling of the story of the film. This is often an indication that the candidate has not developed a workable topic based on film theory and/or history and so must rely on examining the films as a fan might rather than as a student/scholar.

Some candidates developed complicated and distracting narrator sequences, which used up page space that would have been better utilized for developing the arguments of the topic. While some creative use of the narrator sequences may support audience engagement, the narrator should not become the focus of the script.

There is still a tendency for candidates to choose topics that lead to a sociological or psychological discussion over a cinematic one. Some candidates had little or no familiarity with film terminology and this lack of knowledge weakened their scripts considerably.

Scripts showing a lack of sources and/or a poor use of sources were still fairly common, and many source lists were left un-annotated.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of film genres, styles, and eras. Candidates should be watching films from many different countries and cultures. Teachers should be encouraging discussions of these films and incorporating the proper use of cinematic terminology.
- Teachers and candidates must understand what makes a topic relevant to film history or theory.
- The candidates should be introduced to the concept of “a culture unfamiliar to their own” and should keep that concept in mind when choosing a topic for the IS.
- Teachers should ensure the candidates understand the specific requirements of the Independent Study.
- Teachers and candidates should view a wide variety of documentary films in order to appreciate how the format can be used to communicate ideas to an audience. Candidates must present their ideas in a structure that will engage an audience of like-minded peers.
- Candidates should understand that the primary focus of the script is the film / history topic and should not be encouraged to develop over-long, superfluous and distracting narrator sequences. Teachers and candidates should read the Film Guide for clarification of the student/narrator’s role in the script.
- Candidates and teachers should examine a wide variety of research materials and discuss how to choose and utilize the most appropriate sources. The sources used should be fully annotated.
- Teachers should use the IB support materials, particularly the OCC and the wide variety of sample materials and sample units now available.

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

There does not seem to have been an improvement overall in this session. However, a substantial number of the candidates failed to focus their presentation on an interpretation of the chosen extract. 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 school. Most students 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 students seem to be challenged by the requirement to provide a “detailed, evaluative interpretation” of the extract. Some of the offered analysis tended to be simplistic, for example stating that shadows equalled evil, white represented purity and so on.

Too much time was wasted by many candidates who considered 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 filmically.

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

Although the general level of knowledge and understanding was rather mixed for this session most candidates 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 strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

In spite of difficulties shown during this session, the significant strength of many of the candidates was their good understanding of the underlying themes and intentions of the films that they had studied. They seem to have 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. Many more candidates in this session were finishing their presentation in significantly less time than allowed. At HL it was not uncommon to have presentation timed at less than ten minutes and at SL at less than seven minutes. The timing of the Presentation commences after the candidate has given the School 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 coherently prepared. At their best, however, candidates are 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.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The current Film programme must be read fully and carefully.
- 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 presentation 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 the sound levels on the CDs to be sent to the examiner sufficient to be heard. Some presentations for this session were inaudible. All recording 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.
- 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 school level, teachers should be encouraged to choose both well-known and lesser-known films from the list. In addition, students 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 students. 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.
- Students should be given practice with films other than those listed for the assessment consistently 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.

- Students, 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 students from offering redundant material in their presentations. Narrative summaries and lists of actors, characters and technicians waste valuable time.