

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

For higher level the range of work across the criteria varied, but frequently the films and commentaries were very well done. Weaker candidates often had not given themselves enough time for adequate planning and work during each of the production stages, and had not spent time gathering evidence or planning their production portfolio commentary. The weakest films were clearly shot in a day or two, and looked rushed and unplanned. At the

same time, the best work was very close to professional in quality with clear evidence of technical skill and careful planning. At times, candidates would explain in their commentary that this was the first time they had taken on the particular role they were being assessed in. This is problematic, as the IA is a final assessment, and whatever role the candidate has taken on should be a role which they have performed well in before and in which they have developed confidence and skill. The creation of music for films continues to be problematic, with candidates frequently stringing together loops of royalty free material as a fallback for actual creativity and creation of a soundtrack. At some point in the course, all candidates should study sound and music with at least some time spent on foley and on creative solutions to music composition.

Overall, work submitted by standard level candidates appeared somewhat weaker than the higher level work, though the best work still showed imagination and creativity, as well as technical skill in the candidate's chosen role. The task of creating a 5 minute film is, to some degree, more difficult than the longer film required from higher level candidates, and here it is even more important that candidates are familiar with the structure and style of the short film. The weakest films often ape the clichés of feature length films, and candidates must recognize that the assessment task is to create the best 4 -5 minute film that they can. As it is at higher level, it is important to remember to spend time on set gathering supporting evidence for the portfolio commentary. All groups should have a camera on set and remember to take pictures that support their work in the production process and their individual work in role. Frequently, standard level commentaries were weak, without supporting evidence and - at its weakest - little more than an assembly of production journals with little thought given to the requirements of the assessment criteria. At both levels, candidates should choose a production role that they have developed skill in and one that they are confident in.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A Planning and research

This criterion relates to the written commentary only and requires that there is a clear picture of the production process. The most frequent problem is that there is no photographic or other visual materials to support the written commentary, as required by the guide. Also, it is important that evidence is 'woven into the body of the commentary' and not presented as an appendix. The best portfolio commentaries provide evidence (screen captures, set photographs, set plans and documents, script excerpts, organizational documents) which have been well chosen to support the written work. For higher level it is important that the commentary also discusses the process of creating the 40-60 second trailer.

B Reflection and evaluation

It is important to remember that the candidate is being marked on their choice of a role and that logistical analysis of their film will be centered on their role (although artistic evaluation may be more wide ranging). As is the case for criterion A, photographic and graphic visuals, when woven into the body of the commentary, will be strong support for the work in role. The criteria also require a critical evaluation of the project as a whole. Frequently this is ignored,

and often instead of a critical evaluation of the project, the candidate writes a critical evaluation of themselves. The idea is that the finished work has been looked at with a 'clear-eyed analysis' that cites both the positive and negative elements overall, and in the candidate's role. The best portfolios feature critical analyses of the entire production coupled with astute comments on the candidate's chosen production role. Again, higher level candidates are required to discuss the trailer, something which is frequently forgotten or dealt with in a cursory manner.

C Professional and technical skills

It is important to note that evidence for this criterion can come from either the written commentary or the finished film. Observations in the commentary can support what is seen in the film; however, evidence from the film itself is also enough to satisfy the criteria. The focus of this criterion is the work that a candidate has done in their chosen role, so as stated previously, it is important that they choose a role which they are confident in. In addition, teachers should make sure only one role is chosen on the cover sheet, as it is impossible to mark this criterion base on more than one role. If a candidate has worked in multiple roles, or created the film entirely by themselves, they must use intelligence in choosing the role that is best suited for evaluation.

D Effective use of film language

This criterion is usually the strongest of the five for most candidates. It is addressed in different ways depending on the role chosen. Screenwriter and sound designer/sound editor are the two roles that candidates appear to struggle with the most. For a writer, dialogue will be an important element of the production process, as well as helping to set the scene. If a group is planning a silent movie a candidate should probably think twice before selecting the role of writer, as a major element of the role will not be featured. Cinematographers will focus on lighting and image creation, collaborating with the director on camera blocking and composition. The director's primary focus will be on the authorship of roles and camera blocking, working with *mise en scène* and composition in collaboration with the cinematographer. The editor will focus on narrative and pacing, creating meaning with the cut. In the small groups common in IB film projects, the editor will probably also work with the image in terms of colour correction and other post-production opticals. Finally, the sound designer should be working with the recording of dialogue, the creation of sound effects and foley, as well as working with the soundtrack.

E Originality and creativity

Candidates should be encouraged to pursue ideas that fit into the short film format and not to copy structure from feature films. All candidates should really have looked at many short films to grasp the possibilities of the form. The weakest films frequently fall back on copying common genre clichés, and although work within a genre can be done well, frequently creativity involves looking at those unique resources that candidates have in their own communities and lives. Stories about themselves, their own lives, their communities, and things that they understand well will probably serve them better than copying the clichés of feature films. It is important that all candidates should mention in their commentary any music, video inserts, or other materials that might be mistaken for copyright material, briefly

noting how they have been created, as marks can be limited in criterion E if work originates from another source.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

With schools that have offered film for some time, a film-making culture has developed where candidates pass skills on to one another. It always helps to have as many film making experiences as possible during the first year. It is important that assignments allow candidates to experiment and develop their skills in the various roles of screenwriter, director, cinematographer, editor, and sound designer. If candidates can have enough production experience that they have a good understanding of their own areas of strength then they are more likely to do well on the final assessment.

Candidates should realize from the beginning that they are planning a 4 – 5 or 6 – 7 minute film, and that this exercise is an assessment which measures their ability to meet a set of criteria. Given the conditions of assessment, it will probably not be the greatest film they can ever make, but it should be the greatest film they can make within the boundaries of the assessment. It is important to remember that this assessment is focused on a short film, and it is necessary that candidates look at short films in their classes and not just feature films. Short films are like short stories, with different internal structure and style than features, and being familiar with the pacing and development will help candidates craft their own short features.

In general, when there are multiple short production experiences, highlighting all the different roles to be assessed, then candidates approach this final assessment with much more skill and confidence. Sharing the criteria and highlighting the descriptors – perhaps even making these the criteria for another self-marked assignment – will help focus the candidates on the requirements of the task

It is important that candidates are reminded that their commentary accounts for 20 of 50 marks, and is influential in another 10 of those marks. Frequently, the film has been given more attention than the writing that accompanies it. Of course, the film is important, but the assessment is based on both elements of the portfolio, and candidates have to remember the importance of presenting supporting evidence.

Finally, it is also important that higher level candidates study a variety of trailers so that they are aware of the many possibilities in response to this task and not just the ‘fade to black’ style that is so common at this time.

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 range and suitability of the work submitted

The candidates for this session proved to be au fait with the formal requirements of the project. Far less candidates omitted formal requirements like the annotated bibliography. Indeed, many candidates realized that the annotations were not put in as an afterthought, but were an integral part of interrogating the reliability and authenticity of sources in shaping the depth and scope of their arguments. This was especially useful in areas like Film Noir, the French New Wave or Hitchcock where there is quite a variety of material available for candidates to investigate.

The most sophisticated projects, which showed a personal interest and passion of the candidate on a variety of individualized topics, were rooted in a rich understanding of film theory and demonstrated a sophisticated use of the AV format.

The less able candidates were descriptive and vague in approach, took a fan/enthusiast or generalized treatment of films in tackling topics that were ill-defined and poorly used the AV format.

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

Whether standard or higher level, it is critical for candidates to correctly express their rationales, anchoring them in film language and terminology, to clarify the area of investigation. A substantial number of candidates need to differentiate between the topic (general area of investigation) and the rationale (the specific question to be examined critically). The latter needs to be expressed succinctly in 100 words.

Engaging with a topic of film theory or history is also a challenge, particularly for those candidates who focus on a social or political issue, but don't endow it with a cinematic base. A general rule of thumb is that the rationale provides the road map for the study to unfold. It is very rare to find a poorly expressed rationale that will yield an insightful and in depth study.

Most candidates succeeded in finding a "candidate voice" for the narrator and pitching it towards the target audience. Far less "guest" or dual narrators appeared in the May 2014 session. Candidates need to be reminded that film language analysis terms need to feature prominently in their narrations.

The marrying of the visual with the commentary in the AV format remains problematic. For a substantial number of candidates, the visual serves as a kind of "wallpaper" which provides some pictures while a kind of essay unfolds in the aural column. So there is a disjoint. The best candidates showed sophisticated text analysis by linking both columns closely, thereby successfully unveiling their thesis in solid film terms and text analysis.

A related problem in use of the AV format is the difficulty of some candidates in describing shots in sufficient detail. Quoting YouTube clips, referencing time code or vague descriptions like "close up killer" do nothing to promote audience engagement. It is important to note that a separate column to denote time code or running time of the study is not required.

It was a delight for an examiner to read a paper where a candidate "ran" with the topic. What is meant here is that candidates went way beyond minimum requirements in referencing films. Yes, four (in the case of HL) and two (for SL) films were examined in depth, but many candidates made wide ranging references to the cinematic history in various cultures of how their specific question had been treated. Such an approach really enriched the scope and depth in the treatment of the argument and revealed a depth of passion for film.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As has been said in previous reports, this task is really the culmination of what should be two years of study of the theoretical aspect of the IB film course. Treating the independent study as some kind of "stand alone" assessment task usually yields very superficial or inappropriate areas of investigation. It is strongly recommended that teachers invest in a rigorous and comprehensive program of teaching film theory over two years and exposing candidates to a wide range of unfamiliar cinema to whet appetites and prepare them for the requirements of this task.

Candidates should also be given ample opportunity to familiarize themselves with the unusual format of this task so they truly get used to writing "a documentary on paper". So a list of short preparatory exercises is strongly recommended, even starting with a question to be investigated in one film, then building to two from different cultures and so on.

Teachers are strongly advised to help candidates draft clear and interesting rationales with a strong filmic focus and to guide candidates in choosing a range of relevant films so that they have a clear base for investigation. Even though the correction of one final draft of the

independent study is allowed, it is strongly urged that teachers maintain a regular conversation with the candidate to monitor the development of the process.

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

This session's candidates showed improvement in many areas. Whilst some candidates are still reciting lists of awards to indicate how films were received, many more are, at higher level, incorporating brief quotations from critics or scholars.

More candidates are organising their presentations effectively and are preparing more fully. Although it is clear that candidates are using well prepared notes as aides memoire it must be emphasised that candidates are not allowed to read their presentation verbatim from a prepared script. Candidates who do read their presentations risk their presentations being put forward as possible examples of malpractice. It would be better if teachers prevented candidates from commencing their presentation if a prepared script is about to be used. An opportunity should then be given to return with appropriate notes.

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

In this session there were encouraging signs of an overall improvement over previous sessions. However, there are still areas where more improvement is essential. The principal element of the presentation, to analyse a specific film extract still appears difficult for some candidates. Many concentrated on offering an interpretation of the whole film, making only brief references to the extract. Candidates frequently concentrated on character analysis, discussion of broad themes rather than how meaning is constructed in filmic terms.

There were fewer instances where candidates describe their extract rather than analyse it but this remains an issue. Whilst many descriptions are detailed this only constitutes describing what they see or hear rather than how or why specific techniques are used to represent elements such as major themes, ideas and character.

Basic preparation and organisation is, for some candidates, an issue. Too many candidates are not achieving their full potential as they are finishing their presentation significantly well short of the time allowed. For standard level, some candidates are finishing in less than six minutes whilst, for higher level, some are finishing in less than ten minutes. The timing of the presentation itself commences after the candidate has given his/her school and candidate numbers. Far too much time is often wasted by candidates providing unnecessary detail, such as lists of characters and actors or a summary of the plot.

Although it is possible to follow the extract through shot-by-shot this is not the most efficient or effective method. It is better to identify key elements in the extract and the relationship to the film as a whole and explore how the meaning is constructed in the chosen extract. Many candidates, even if they do not follow shot-by-shot simply jump from thought to unrelated thought. Occasionally this is a result of nerves but more commonly because their notes are not coherently organised.

Some candidates find it difficult to meet the challenge of finding complex meanings in their chosen extracts. There is a tendency to rely too heavily on simple analysis such as “black shadows signify something bad” or “high angle camera shows power”.

Of more concern is that a small but significant number of candidates are not fulfilling the requirements as set out in the criteria. Some candidates present a detailed analysis of the extract but nothing more. At standard level, candidates must address the film’s genre, the place of the extract within the film as a whole, its place in a broader socio-cultural context and perceived directorial intent. In addition to this, higher level candidates must refer to responses from audiences, reviewers, critics and scholars at the time of release and/or subsequently.

It is worrying that some candidates, albeit only a relatively small number, appear not to have watched the film as a whole. There were references to having only watched extracts on YouTube.

In spite of some of the problems indicated above, more candidates are trying to integrate a detailed analysis of the extract in relation to the film as a whole as opposed to presenting a shot by shot description. It is encouraging to see that most candidates are engaging enthusiastically with their chosen film.

At their best, candidates were able to fully integrate a thorough and perceptive insight into the themes, issues and socio-cultural contexts of their films with a close, detailed textual analysis of their chosen extract.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The Film guide must be read fully and carefully before setting out to prepare candidates for the presentation.
- Co-ordinator's notes in the November preceding the May session must be accessed to identify the prescribed films for the examination session.
- Too few candidates create truly coherent presentations. Candidates must therefore be given ample opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination pieces.
- Candidates should be given ample opportunity to rehearse practice presentations from films other than those set for the examination.
- Teachers should help their candidates be selective in what they say so that they can work effectively within the time frame to present all elements of the presentation.
- Candidates must be given practice in timing for their presentations. Too many are either too long or too short.
- Teachers must check the sound levels before commencing recording and also the sound levels of the presentations sent to be examined. Some presentations have been inaudible.
- Once recordings have been 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 the recording of the presentation begins.
- Teachers must not allow candidates to read their presentations. Brief notes are acceptable. Teachers should check a candidate's notes before commencing the recording.
- Recordings must be made in a private, quiet place: not, for instance in an open classroom. Make sure, as far as possible that the candidate will not be interrupted by outside noise. Some candidates were disturbed by loud school announcements on a public/school address system.
- Teachers must not intervene during the candidate's presentation apart from stating, "You have X minutes left. Do you have anything more to say?" Teachers may not prompt candidates by referring to specific areas that they think that the candidate has not fully explored. Anything that is said in response to an inappropriate intervention by the teacher cannot be rewarded.
- Each candidate's recording must be clearly identified not only on the recording itself but on the screen ident.
- Candidates should pronounce the common filmic term "mise-en-scène" accurately. Phonetically it should be pronounced "meez on sen".
- It is also worthwhile teachers indicating the correct pronunciation of the names of directors.

Guidance for the recording of the Presentation

To avoid any confusion regarding the timing of each presentation, teachers are encouraged to use the following script as an introduction to each candidate's recording.

"This is an [*HL or SL*] Film Presentation for [*Name and number of School/College.*] This Candidate is [*Name and number of the candidate*]. The Presentation will be on [*Name the film*]. The scene chosen is [*identify the scene as on the cover sheet*]."

Then say to the candidate:

"You may begin your presentation."

This makes it clear when the examiner is to begin timing the candidate.