

GCSE



**Chief Examiner's and
Principal Moderator's Report
Moving Image Arts**

Summer Series 2019



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2019 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's section on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE MOVING IMAGE ARTS

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

In a culture that is significantly shaped and influenced by audiovisual discourse, this specification promotes candidates' development as individuals and skilled contributors to the creative and cultural industries. It enables candidates to use creative and critical skills in viewing, writing, directing, producing and editing film. It also promotes the development of creative enterprise, technical, organisational and people management skills. Candidates will develop contextual knowledge and critical skills when researching and applying a variety of historical and contemporary moving image techniques. The course allows candidates to make connections between their own work and that produced in the wider creative industries. It will also provide candidates with the opportunity to progress to higher levels of study, vocational training and employment. Our GCSE Moving Image Arts is an applied qualification in which candidates develop knowledge, understanding and skills through practical demonstration in a context related to employability.

Component 1 Critical Understanding of Creative and Technical Moving Image Production

Overview

This online examination asks candidates to respond to questions and scenarios relating to:

- Film Language;
- Genre and Representation;
- Creative Production Techniques;
- Production Management; and
- Industry Contexts.

The exam includes a variety of different types of stimulus, including previously unseen film clips, sound clips, film stills and script excerpts.

This online examination continues to be well received by both candidates and teachers, addressing a wide range of knowledge and skills. As a result, it is engaging for candidates at the teaching and learning stage. This increased engagement can be seen in the depth of the candidate's responses and in the extremely low number of unanswered questions in the examination series.

The method of distribution of the exam to centres is now a well-established and robust process. There were very few technical difficulties and those that did occur were quickly identified by the invigilators and had minimal impact on the candidates sitting the exam. A wide range of ability was presented, from those achieving very high marks and demonstrating an excellent analytical ability which was impressive for their age, to a number of candidates who found the exam to be more challenging, especially in those questions that required extended writing and comparative analysis. We have noticed an improvement year on year in the quality of responses across all film language areas. However, a few problem areas remain; most notably editing and mise-en-scene. The exam caters mixed ability candidates and is both theory and industry focused. The connection made by the examination with learning gained on the coursework element of the course is evident and enables a large number of candidates to display their understanding of the filmmaking process within the examination context.

Teaching

The support documents and training for teachers continue to be well used and appreciated. These consist of sample assessment materials, workshops and fact files on many of the key areas to be covered in the examination. These materials provide a solid foundation for teachers to plan their lessons and as a result enabled their pupils to perform admirably in most sections of the exam.

A few areas of concern remain. In this specification lighting is its own film language area. In film studies lighting would normally be addressed as a part of mise-en-scene. In Moving Image Arts when candidates are asked to address mise-en-scene they should not cover lighting. This is clearly laid out in the specification and the exemplar materials. Knowledge of editing still proves to be problematic. Many candidates continue to confuse post production techniques and sound design for editing. Many are also unsure of some of the key roles in filmmaking, technical details and documents explained in the fact files. More comprehensive and accurate use of terminology would also benefit candidates. Many candidates this year repeatedly used pan as a catch-all-term for any camera movement. Correct vocabulary and terminology must be used. These areas need to be addressed more specifically in the teaching of this specification and have been supported by the production of the fact files that all candidates should be given access to.

While we have seen significant improvement, many candidates still struggle with the compare and contrast question. It is important that in the candidate's response to this question that they cover both sequences equally and offer some points of similarity or contrast between them.

Exam Technique

The exam interface aids candidates in completing all of the questions and effectively managing their time. There were very few instances where it was clear that candidates ran out of time. The structure of the exam places the higher stakes questions in the middle part of the exam and led candidates into these responses with more basic questions that aimed to help frame their thought process and build their confidence.

An issue that persists year on year is that many candidates do not carefully read the question and then answer accordingly. Again, this year we saw an increased number of candidates of all abilities drifting off the subject of the question to cover other areas of film language that were not asked for. Some candidates are also still covering the low mark questions in too much depth and not answering the higher marks questions in sufficient depth. To gain marks in the upper mark bands, candidates must address all of the elements asked for in sufficient depth and with a clarity of written expression that makes the meaning suitably clear.

Exam Structure

The exam is split into three sections. Section 1 covers Film Language, Genre and Representation. Section 2 requires Comparative Analysis of two film sequences and Section 3 addresses Creative Production, Management and Industry Contexts.

The exam structure and question types used throughout allow candidates of all abilities to make a variety of attempts at all questions; usually the low mark questions in sections one and three were those best answered by candidates of all abilities. The longer responses asked for in Question 6(c) and Question 7 call for greater involvement from the candidate. In these questions the candidate must explain or discuss how various elements of film language or genre conventions are used within the sequence. It is within these questions that the most able candidates can bring forth their own insights and judgments. An essay

based response is required here. Question 14 is a creative task that requires candidates to create a shot list from a given piece of screenplay. Most candidates coped well with this question, however candidates should be reminded that they should use a wide range of shot types, camera angles and camera movements.

Section A

- Q1** This question was answered competently, without issue by the majority of candidates. Some wrongly listed POV as a shot type.
- Q2** It is evident that many candidates didn't know how to clearly define foley sound. With many not being specific enough to gain the second mark.
- Q3 (a) to (c)** These were answered successfully by most candidates who correctly identified the forward tracking shot and the mood it created. Many of the responses to Question 3(c) were too basic and did not explain the impact of the movement clearly enough.
- Q4 (a) to (c)** Most candidates answered Part (a) correctly. Part (b) was addressed well by most candidates, however, a lack of understanding of mise-en-scene was very evident. Sound and lighting were referred to repeatedly as mise-en-scene. General things like props, characters, setting were listed rather than specific examples. Many struggled to explain the impact of the mise-en-scene clearly. In Part (c) the most confident candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of horror iconography and how this created an eerie atmosphere. Many candidates across the range of abilities, however, did at some point drift off topic and discuss how sound or other film language elements contributed to the mood of the sequence.
- Q5 (a) to (c)** The representation question was misunderstood or misread by many candidates this year. Misunderstanding of the portrayal of the character was evident, some candidates focused on other aspects in the screen shot rather than the man in the wheelchair. Many focused on the actor (e.g. disabled actors can help show others that they can do anything) rather than stereotypical roles.
- Q6 (a) to (c)** Parts (a) and (b) of this question were answered competently by most candidates. Part (c) presented a greater challenge. Some candidates did not discuss the movement of the camera and instead focused on framing or editing techniques. Some wrote too much in Part (b) covering content that should have been left for Section C. Also, many addressed other film language areas other than camera and sound. Editing was a common area focused on. Using correct terminology for sound was an issue and many lacked understanding of the impact of sound. Some responses were very descriptive and lacked depth.

Section B

- Q7** The best responses in this section made solid comparisons throughout, discussing similarities and differences. Some candidates only focused on one area of film language as a point of comparison.

The strongest and most articulate responses compared and contrasted from the outset and throughout. Many of the middle band candidates dealt with one sequence as a standalone and then the next with a short conclusion making connections between the two. There were numerous examples of camera and editing techniques to compare in the two sequences provided and a clear difference of style that could be commented on. The lower ability candidates were able to address thematic

content of the clips but lacked depth in analysis and specific use of terminology. Very few candidates attained full marks in this answer and it was surprising how many did not identify the contrasting time-lapse and montage techniques by name. The question did allow stronger candidates to excel and demonstrate a genuine knowledge and awareness of film language and its ability to move the viewer in time. Some candidates, however, displayed great fluency in their expression but there was a distinct absence of film terminology. In these instances, this greatly affected the mark awarded. Some candidates are still referring to film language areas beyond the two asked for in the question.

Section C

- Q8** Very few candidates were able to recall two responsibilities of a cinematographer. It is essential that candidates are made aware of the fact files that will enable them to score better in this section of the exam.
- Q9** Most candidates were able to list four ways films are distributed. A common mistake in this question was to including several types of disc-based formats.
- Q10** Many candidates did not know what a floor plan was. Again It is essential that candidates are made aware of the fact files that will enable them to score better in this section of the exam.
- Q11 (a) & (b)** Many candidates seemed to have either misread this question on health and safety or failed to see the opening statement before part a of the question. This statement gave context to the questions and as a result of missing this many of the responses were very general and tenuous. It is important that candidates carefully read all parts of the question before responding.
- Q12 (a) to (c)** These questions on camera technique were answered well by the majority of candidates. This area of film language seems to be the most well taught in centres.
- Q13** There was a lot of guessing with this question. The majority simply didn't know the answer. There are 24 frames of film per second. Many listed 60fps, this is a popular framerate for first person shooter video games.
- Q14** There was a slight improvement this year on the quality of shot lists, though candidates should aim to vary the types of shots chosen and avoid repetition of shots. There were few very strong responses, probably due to time constraints, but generally candidates produced competent shot lists. Further consideration of camera angles and movements would improve many responses. Many candidates are still using vague shot choices such as POV or OTS without details of a specific shot size and doing this for angles and movements too. Candidates should aim to include the shot type, shot size, camera angle and movement where appropriate (e.g. medium, low angle POV).

Note on the use of support materials and fact files:

These exams do not have set texts to study. All sequences and stimulus material are unseen and will test the candidate's understanding of film language elements and genre conventions. The exam also covers industry contexts and management roles. Fact files to frame the teaching of these elements are available in the Moving Image Arts area of the website. You will also find many other useful resources there to aid in planning lessons on the prescribed genres and identifying film language elements and analysing these.

Exemplification of exam performance (EEP) and past papers (in the form of mark schemes with stimulus/AV source references) are also available. This will also help support in teaching exam technique.

Principal Moderator's Report

Component 2 Acquisition of Skills in Moving Image Production

Overview

In this component, candidates must complete four tasks from an annually released stimulus booklet provided by CCEA:

- Task 1 Storyboarding;
- Task 2 Camera & Editing;
- Task 3 Sound; and
- Task 4 Animation.

The Component 2 controlled assessment tasks continue to prove effective in building practical expertise in all of the film language areas, with the majority of candidates attaining marks mainly in Level 3 and 4. Some issues persist with the submission of work for Task 1, Storyboarding, and Task 3, Postproduction Sound. Storyboards should be scanned and combined into a single .pdf document and checked to ensure that pages are correctly orientated and legible. The quality of scanning was an issue for a number of storyboards submitted. For Task 3, Postproduction Sound, a screengrab and sound log must be submitted and a number of centres did not submit these documents. In Component 2 submission of Tasks 2 and 4 was generally unproblematic.

Task 1: Storyboarding

In Task 1, candidates create a storyboard in response to the genre-based script provided, through which their knowledge and understanding of visual storytelling techniques, camera and editing techniques and genre conventions can be assessed. This may be hand-drawn or photographic. The selection of an appropriate storyboard template often affects success; the most effective templates seen at moderation encouraged candidates to consider a range of factors such as shot size, camera angles and movement. Storyboards should be checked before submission to ensure that they are combined into a single pdf document, correctly orientated, annotation is legible and the quality of scanning is adequate, as all of these issues continue to cause problems at moderation.

Overall, this task was completed competently by the vast majority of candidates and also marked realistically by the majority of centres. Some candidates didn't recognise the sci-fi genre of the script and interpreted it using horror iconography instead. Candidates tended to include more annotation than in previous years, such as detailed information on sound and lighting. At times this missed the point and candidates left out more pertinent information relating to camera and editing techniques.

As always, the vast majority of storyboards seen at moderation were hand-drawn. Drawing skill is not a focus for marking, although a reasonable effort beyond the most basic 'stick man' is expected. There is no requirement for storyboards to be 'coloured-in' and the task time limit of two and a half hours would usually prohibit this. There was an increase in the number of centres using photographic storyboards in this year's submission. In some cases, this approach afforded candidates the chance to experiment creatively with lighting and mise-en-scene. In many cases, however, genre conventions had not been given enough consideration when photography was used. Genre elements can be drawn later over the photographs and so this choice of medium should not limit candidates imagination or creativity.

A few centres are using software such as Storyboardthat to create digital storyboards. While this is permitted, in the majority of cases seen at moderation, this technique is less effective in conveying a range of shot sizes, angles and creative genre elements. Shot composition tended to lack creativity and shots were often mislabelled, perhaps indicating that candidates were constrained by their skills in using this software.

Knowledge and understanding of camera techniques, such as composition, range of shot sizes and camera movement is a key focus for marking and should be demonstrated throughout the storyboard. Shot composition is the aspect where candidates can most clearly demonstrate personal creativity, enabling access to the highest levels. Some common errors persist in work seen at the lower levels, e.g. 'stick men', a lack of background in the frames, the use of 'speech bubbles', objects labelled within the frame, etc. Often camera movement was not correctly labelled e.g. 'camera moves up' or 'camera follows'; other errors emerged this year such as the use of 'split screen' frames to represent panning movement.

Understanding of continuity editing techniques should be evident both through the sequencing of shots and the use of techniques such as directional continuity, eyeline match, cross-cutting or match-on-action. At times, candidates added annotation such as 'fast cutting' between consecutive shots of their storyboard, or noted a different soundtrack for each shot, providing some evidence of misunderstanding.

Common errors persist, such as mislabelling of basic shots, eyeline matches with no eye shown, 'match-on-action' shots using only one shot rather than two matched shots. The labelling of shots needs to be predominantly accurate to access the highest level.

Task 2: Camera & Editing

In Task 2, candidates shoot a one minute film in response to a provided script. The assessment criteria address the range and effectiveness of the camera and editing techniques employed, the degree of technical control and the success of the film in creatively realising the script narrative. The task was handled well by candidates and generally marked realistically by most centres, with a tendency towards leniency at times. Many films are significantly over the specified length, some extending up to 2 or 3 minutes in length and centres must ensure that films do not greatly extend beyond one minute in length. Overly long films tended to suffer from a weakness in editing and do not advantage the candidate. Moderators commented on a pleasing increase in the use of effective camera movement within submissions, but also noted that understanding of continuity techniques is an aspect for development across many centres.

Candidates responded well to this year's stimulus script, making effective use of the opportunities for visual storytelling afforded by the scenario. The home setting made the task accessible for all.

Films at the higher levels demonstrated confident understanding of camera and editing techniques and a creative approach, evident through controlled and purposeful camera work, more creative shot composition and use of more advanced camera techniques.

Candidates should consider that the provided script creates opportunities to demonstrate the use of continuity editing techniques, such as eyeline match and match-on-action. These were not universally employed and were generally more indicative of higher level work.

At the lower levels, camerawork was less controlled and purposeful, with issues with lighting, framing and focus frequently evident. Lower level films tended to demonstrate limited knowledge of continuity editing techniques and suffer from issues such as 'hosepiping', overuse of special effect transitions and unintentional jump-cuts.

The aspects of the Camera & Editing task where improvement could be made remain consistent year on year - variety, composition, focus and steadiness of shots recorded, controlled use of camera movement and more considered and consistent use of continuity editing techniques. The use of a tripod to ensure steady footage is key; this still remains inconsistent in the work seen at moderation, often pulling work down into the lower levels.

Task 3: Postproduction Sound

In Task 3, candidates are required to create sound for twenty seconds of a provided film clip, integrating self-generated foley sound effects, sourced sound effects and musical score into a multi-layered, atmospheric soundtrack. This year's sound task clip was taken from *Cats and Dogs* (Laurence Guterman, 2001), which provided candidates with the opportunity to create an ambient soundtrack of laboratory sounds, to sync specific diegetic sounds to actions, consider sound perspective and off-screen sound and to build up layers and tension as the accident occurs.

Candidates responded well overall to the stimulus material and some detailed and convincing soundtracks were submitted for moderation. The selection of the twenty second clip was at times a factor in success, with candidates who opted for the first section often missing opportunities for off-screen sound. Moderators noted that volume levels and blending of the sounds proved problematic for a large number of candidates across many centres. A significant number of candidates still do not create self-generated foley sounds and this remains an aspect for improvement. A number of candidates either did not include any musical score or included one that did not complement the action on screen or enhance the desired atmosphere. Diegetic and non-diegetic sounds should be combined in the soundtrack; even where music does not seem appropriate, non-diegetic sounds such as drone could be used.

In higher level submissions, the majority of on-screen action was matched with diegetic sounds that were appropriately, well-synced and obtained from a range of sources. The highest achieving candidates had created a number of original foley sounds and volume levels were adjusted appropriately throughout, creating an effective and believable soundtrack. Lower level work tended to be less consistent, with inconsistencies such as the dominance of musical score over sound effects or missing diegetic sounds. Selected effects/music were often less appropriate to the sequence, out of sync or jarring against one another, resulting in a less convincing soundtrack overall. It should be noted that teachers should not provide a folder of sound effects for use by their class as the selection and sourcing of appropriate sounds is part of the task. Teachers should likewise discourage candidates from sharing sounds they have sourced amongst their classmates.

A large number of centres still do not submit a screengrab of the editing interface and the sound log as specified in the task detail. The evidence provided by the sound logs and editing interface is essential in assessing the work undertaken by the candidate and must be submitted. The screengrab of the editing interface should be presented on one page, where possible, to provide a clear overview of the edited sequence.

Task 4: Animation

In Task 4, candidates are provided with series of audio clips and asked to animate a jointed model to respond to the voice's instructions. The detail and fluidity of the character movements and the degree of camera control in the recording of the sequence are key in successful completion of the task. The quality of animation tasks seen at moderation this year shows continued improvement and it was also positive to see an increase in the number of animated films in Component 3, perhaps reflecting the growing confidence of teachers.

The selection of an appropriate model remains a critical factor for the animation of detailed character movements. Wooden art manikins and jointed toys remain popular choices as they are accessible and articulated sufficiently for the task; this year we also saw the use of ‘Stickybones’ models which were very effective, although the cost may be prohibitive for most centres. A number of centres built simple twisted wire models which can also work well. A few centres are still using Lego or plasticine models which more often restricts the range of character movement achievable.

In higher level work, animated character movements were detailed, well observed, expressive and responsive to the voiceover instructions. Some centres are using reference live action video (LAV) to make the animated movements life-like and convincing, which was a highly effective approach.

In lower level work, the camerawork was often less controlled and the animated movements less fluid. In order to avoid creating ‘jerky’ footage, the camera should be steady throughout and shots planned to be of appropriate duration. Framing was also an issue at times and it is usually best to ensure that the model can be clearly seen in the shot in order to better assess the quality of animation. Some centres re-record the voice clips rather than using those provided and we would stress that the provided clips should be used.

Component 3 Planning and Making a Moving Image Product

Overview

In this component, candidates must complete a complete live action or animated film and research portfolio based on a genre-specific stimulus scenario provided by CCEA. The portfolio must include the following:

- A Research Analysis (including a Synopsis) and an Evaluation.
- A Screenplay and Storyboard.
- A Shot List, a Shooting Schedule and a Director’s Notebook with evidence of production research, design development and production management.
- A 2 minute narrative Film (can be 40-60 seconds if animated).

In Component 3 candidates choose from one of six genres and create a production portfolio, producing a short film and all supporting creative and organisational preproduction materials. The Component 3 booklet stimulated a range of personal and creative outcomes in response to the genre scenarios.

Centre marking of Component 3 tends to be less consistent than in Component 2 notably so in the marking of the Research Analysis & Evaluation and the Film elements.

The guidelines for Component 3 submission of work contained in the Instructions to Teachers booklet should be reviewed before submission to ensure that files are presented correctly within a single folder. Films should be compressed according to the guidance available on the CCEA website as many films submitted this year were huge in size, taking up valuable time during moderation in order to compress these for viewing. While candidates are responsible for the compression and submission of their work, it is essential that teachers check the content of the folders before submission to CCEA for moderation.

A03 Research Analysis & Evaluation

In the Research Analysis, candidates show their understanding of film language techniques and the conventions of their selected genre, setting out their creative and technical goals for their own film work. A concise synopsis of the film should be included and the chosen genre/scenario stated. The specification gives a word count of 600-800 words. This word count is exceeded by many centres, often by up to four times the acceptable length which is problematic at moderation. Often this is due to the inclusion of material not directly relevant to the assessment objectives, such as excessive narrative detail, information on chosen directors etc. and it is therefore important that the writing remains focused on the assessment objectives. The team intend to conduct a formal review of word counts and the consequences for exceeding them, applicable from first teaching September 2020.

The document should be submitted as a pdf and presentations with embedded clips should not be submitted. A few centres continue to write the Research Analysis after filming has been completed which must be discouraged; the establishment of clear technical goals in advance of filming can only have a positive impact on outcomes. Quality of written communication is assessed at AO3 and candidates should be encouraged to spellcheck before final submission. AO3 is the least consistently marked element of Component 3, perhaps reflecting the range of approaches taken by centres.

The Research Analysis is assessed against two criteria; analysis and evaluation of the work of others and the establishment of carefully considered personal creative goals. It is essentially a statement of intention, demonstrating analytical understanding of genre-specific film language techniques in the work of others which then informs the candidate's own personal, creative and technical goals. Moderators note each year that candidates seem to find it difficult to address both criteria equally, often focusing overly on either sequence analysis or discussion of their own goals.

Moderators noted this year that fewer candidates overall are actually analysing film sequences, with the majority referring only to film stills in their discussion. The still images often appear to have been sourced online, with little in the written analysis to indicate that the sequence has been viewed or studied by the candidate. The framing, lighting and mise-en-scene of the still frame is the focus of discussion and candidates do not consider how various film language techniques combine to manipulate the emotional response of the audience in the relevant scene. Sequence analysis is a key element of AO3. Candidates should select a small number of appropriate genre-specific reference sequences to analyse; a narrower range of sequences allows candidates to analyse in greater depth. The analysis should be illustrated with purposefully annotated and relevant images/screengrabs taken from the sequences viewed.

Perceptive analysis of film language techniques underpins candidates' capacity to set sufficiently detailed and challenging creative and technical goals for their own production work. To attain the higher levels, analysis of film language techniques should extend beyond the naming and purpose of basic shot sizes - candidates should be discouraged from setting overly simplistic personal goals, e.g. 'the use of varied shot sizes and angles'. In higher level work, personal creative goals were discussed in greater detail, for example, ideas for specific shots or sequences within the film.

The Evaluation is marked alongside the Research Analysis, and is also often considerably over the specified word count. Evaluations are frequently detailed and show more understanding of the use of film language techniques when compared to the Research Analysis, showing the learning that has taken place during the filmmaking process. Often, however, the inclusion of less relevant material increases the word count while failing to address the assessment objectives; many centres continue to approach the Evaluation as a description of the process of making the film, rather than an appraisal of the film's creative

and technical success. Discussion of factors such as technical failures, unreliable actors, etc. is not relevant. Higher level Evaluations give a critical assessment of the effectiveness of the completed film work in relation to the original creative and technical goals set. Film language techniques used in candidates' own sequences are evaluated critically and perceptively, with evidence provided in the form of screenshots from the final film.

Moderators noted that there was very little unreferenced content evident in this year's submissions, which is very encouraging. They also noted that the confident use of film language vocabulary might be an aspect for further improvement in many centres.

AO2a Preproduction (Screenplay/Storyboard)

The Creative Preproduction elements submitted are generally of a good standard, with the majority of candidates creating detailed preproduction materials in an appropriate format and attaining Level 3 or 4. A number of centres are not formatting their scripts correctly and should refer to the exemplar material available on the CCEA website and also within the Component 2 stimulus booklet. As one page of correctly formatted script equates to a minute of screen time, scripts should be around two pages in length. Many short scripts are seen at moderation, usually showing underdevelopment of the narrative. Scripts which rely heavily on dialogue usually result in less effective films and candidates should be encouraged to use visual storytelling techniques as much as possible. The text message has also become a very commonplace device for narrative exposition and candidates should be encouraged to look beyond this towards more creative visual storytelling techniques.

Photography was used to produce storyboards in many centres and this is an effective means for candidates to explore mise-en-scène and framing. Very few candidates now submit screengrabs from their final film as a storyboard. As in Task 1, the template used for the storyboard influences the level of detail that candidates include in their final film.

AO2b Preproduction (Shotlist/Shooting Schedule & Director's Notebook)

Shotlists and shooting schedules are well-presented by the majority of centres, sufficiently detailed and correlating well to the storyboards. The planning elements were marked realistically and consistently by centres, in the main.

Moderators noted that the Director's Notebook element is still under-developed and even formulaic in most centres; the majority of candidates do not present detailed and purposeful exploration of ideas for their final production, often including mainly secondary images. More first-hand photography and exploration of relevant design considerations including lighting, costume and make-up would improve this element of planning.

The Notebook should be 5-10 pages, or slides, in length and show purposeful, predominantly visual, planning for the film production with some relevant annotation. It should not be text heavy and its contents should relate directly to the candidate's own planned production.

Most centres present this document as an exported Keynote or Powerpoint presentation, exploring aspects such as mise-en-scène, setting, costume, etc. through secondary and primary visual research. Many candidates continue to include prosaic, second-hand images as planning for mise-en-scène; 'everyday' clothing, typical living rooms and ubiquitous objects such as mobile phones. While this is reasonable to an extent, it is not indicative of creative preparation. Personal experimentation and exploration is key to attaining the higher levels. The content of the Director's Notebook should meaningfully inform the development of ideas for the final production; the work of the strongest candidates is marked by a clear focus on visual research to support their final film.

This year, for the first time, a few centres submitted short experimental films alongside the Director's Notebook, perhaps reflecting a trickle-down effect from AS Moving Image Arts. It is fantastic to see candidates preparing for their productions so thoroughly and honing their practical skills in advance of filming. These films should be well-documented within the Director's Notebook pdf through screengrabs but not submitted as film files to moderation.

Candidates should ensure that the Director's Notebook is completed before the final film, as it is an element of preproduction; many included screengrabs from final films which does not provide evidence of preproduction planning.

AO2a Film

The vast majority of films submitted this year were live action films although there was an increase in the number of animations seen in Component 3. This was encouraging and we hope to see this continue in coming years. Horror, Action and Crime remain the most popular genre choices for candidates with the 'Cursed Object', 'Haunting Season', 'Sports Training Montage', 'Chalk It Up' and 'Good Cop Bad Cop' amongst the most popular choices. The Western remains the least popular of the genres. Film work in the highest mark range was creative, ambitious and technically accomplished, employing a range of film language techniques with considerable skill and understanding.

Camerawork is one of the strongest aspects of film language in the Component 3 films, with candidates evidently gaining skill and confidence in this area over the course of their GCSE MIA studies. The quality of cinematography seen at GCSE level is exceptional at times. Creative shot composition and advanced techniques, such as rack focus, are being used skilfully by higher level candidates to great effect. The issue of 'shaky footage' remains a characteristic of weaker work across many centres; the use of a tripod is absolutely essential for all shooting, except where deliberately hand-held footage has been planned. This is the single biggest factor reducing attainment in the AO2a Film element.

Many films continue to exceed the specified length of two minutes and this usually reflects a weakness in editing. Moderators noted that the use of continuity editing techniques would be an aspect for further development in many centres, perhaps requiring consolidation of Task 2 learning.

Mise-en-scene is essential in conveying the conventions of genre and candidates should be encouraged to take a more ambitious approach to mise-en-scene, explored through the Director's Notebook. Filming away from school and home is generally more effective but there were some strong examples of film work shot in school, where excellent use had been made of camera, editing, lighting and sound techniques. Moderators also noted an increase in candidates using lighting techniques in their work, at times with exceptional skill, particularly so within the Crime and Sci-Fi scenarios where noir style lighting was highly effective.

Building on the skills gained in Task 3, candidates should be creating soundtracks which are multi-layered, combining non-diegetic and diegetic sound to create atmosphere and manipulate the emotions of the viewer. This was done well by many candidates, but the single-layer music soundtrack is still greatly overused, perhaps reflecting time constraints as deadlines loom in Year 12.

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