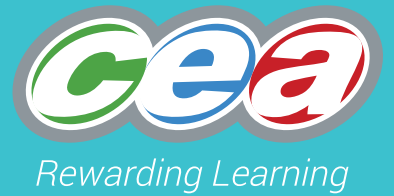


GCSE



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

Summer Series 2023



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2023 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 microsite 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, organizational 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

Component Overview

This online examination requires 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.

The exam is split into three sections.

Section 1 covers Film Language, Genre and Representation.

Section 2 requires Comparative Analysis of two film sequences.

Section 3 addresses Creative Production, Management and Industry Contexts.

The delivery and sitting of the Summer 2023 Component 1 exam has been very successful. Overall the vast majority of candidates fared well with the exam and were able to disseminate their knowledge and understanding of the core film language areas and genre theory. Almost all candidates were able to gain marks in the higher mark questions and there were very few instances of unanswered questions. This year's exam was accessible for all students and Sections A and C provided opportunities to gain marks for candidates who may have struggled with the longer analytical questions.

A concerning trend that appeared in many candidates' responses this year was the increased use of non-standard film language terminology. Terms such as shaky-cam and wobbly-cam were used in place of the correct term hand-held camera, for example. Bird's eye view was used instead of overhead or aerial shot. The misidentification of the zoom or dolly zoom was also problematic. Many candidates referred to forward tracking shots as zooms. This is somewhat understandable, however candidates from a few centres consistently misidentified forward tracking shots as dolly zooms. This use of non-standard or inaccurate terminology prevented some candidates from accessing the higher mark bands.

Another issue that still persists is that significant numbers of candidates do not carefully read the question and then answer accordingly. Again this year we saw candidates of all abilities drifting off the subject of the question to cover other areas of film language that were not asked for. This is most common in the area of editing. Candidates are possibly bringing their practical experience in the editing of their own films into the exam. This leads to discussion of sound design and colour correction instead of actual continuity editing techniques. Some candidates are also still covering the low mark questions in too much depth and then perhaps not having enough time to answer the higher marks questions in sufficient depth. To gain marks in the upper mark bands for the longer questions, candidates must address all the elements asked for in sufficient depth and with a clarity of written expression that makes the meaning suitably clear.

Section A

- Q1** This question was answered competently by most candidates. A common mistake was to list a shot size rather than the shot type (over the shoulder), which was an invalid response.
- Q2** Almost all candidates had some understanding of genre tropes. However, many candidates just listed elements of iconography. This was so common that the examining team gave credit where relevant elements of the iconography of the Science Fiction genre were given.
- Q3 (a) to (c)** The camera movement in this shot was often misidentified as a zoom. While many candidates failed to correctly identify the forward tracking shot, they were able to state the mood that was created. Many of the responses to Question 3(c) were too basic and did not explain the impact of the movement clearly enough to gain the additional mark.
- Q4 (a) to (c)** This set of questions was answered competently by most candidates. Their knowledge of the mise-en-scene elements which were evident in the clip enabled most to correctly answer Parts (a) and (b). Few however went into sufficient depth to merit all four marks in Part (c).
- Q5 (a) to (c)** How candidates viewed the representation of the LGBTQ+ community in film was very broad. This made the interpretation of what impression the director was trying to give of the character in Part 5(b) more difficult than it should have been. This also spilled over into Part 5(c) where candidates found it difficult to identify and analyse elements of the character's appearance and how these conveyed information about their personality. Responses tended to be too general and not specific enough about elements visible in the screen shot.

- Q6 (a) (b)** Most candidates gave valid responses for Part 6(a). Camera technique remains the most solidly understood element of film language. In Part 6(b) there was a wide range of ability exemplified. The best responses were in-depth and insightful with accurate use of terminology for both areas. It is the accurate use of terminology where many candidates falter. The use of inaccurate or non-standard terminology prevents many candidates from progressing to the top mark band.

Section B

- Q7** The best responses in this section made solid comparisons throughout, discussing similarities and differences. The strongest and most articulate responses compared and contrasted in a sustained way from the outset. Many of the middle band candidates dealt with one sequence as a stand-alone and then the next with a short conclusion making connections between the two. The lower ability candidates were able to engage with the mood of the clips but lacked depth in their analysis and more specific use of terminology.

The analysis of camera techniques was generally strong across all abilities of candidate. The differentiation in performance observed here related to variation in the depth of the analysis and understanding of the director's intentions. Knowledge and understanding of editing was noted to be generally much less assured. Candidates are possibly drawing upon their practical experience of post-production from their own film-making and bringing that into the exam. This leads them to discuss sound design and colour correction processes, which they do in their own 'editing', instead of looking at actual editing conventions. It is therefore recommended that candidates focus their analysis of editing on the techniques of editing used within the continuity style, as listed in the specification. This would enable them to achieve higher marks in this question.

Section C

- Q8** This question focused on the identification of continuity editing techniques. Many candidates struggled to correctly identify just two techniques.
- Q9** Very few candidates were able to correctly describe the animation technique of pixilation. It is essential that candidates are familiar with the content of the GCSE MIA fact files to enable them to achieve higher marks in this section of the exam.
- Q10** Very few candidates were able to list three responsibilities of a camera operator. 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)** The health and safety question was answered consistently well across the board with many lower ability candidates accessing the full range of marks in both parts of the question. There were fewer instances of candidates not addressing the given scenario this year.
- Q12 (a) to (c)** These questions on camera technique were answered well by the majority of candidates with many achieving full marks.
- Q13** Very few candidates could give an example of on-screen written exposition.
- Q14** There was a slight improvement this year in the quality of shot lists. There were more examples of shot lists gaining marks in the top band. To gain marks in the top band, candidates must address shot sizes, camera angles and camera movement. Accurate use of terminology is also key. Many candidates are still using vague shot choices such as POV or OTS. These shot types also require a shot size and angle to fully describe them.

Principal Moderator's Report

Component 2 Acquisition of Skills in Moving Image Production

Component Overview

In Component 2, candidates complete four controlled assessment tasks from a stimulus booklet released annually by CCEA. The tasks are designed to support the development of practical skills across all of the film language areas and the majority of candidates successfully attain marks in Levels 3 and 4 in these tasks.

The controlled assessment tasks are:

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

Task 1: Storyboarding

In Task 1, candidates create a storyboard in response to the genre-specific script provided by CCEA, through which they demonstrate their level of knowledge and understanding of visual storytelling, camera and editing techniques and genre conventions. The specified time for completing this controlled assessment task is 2 1/2 hours; observations at moderation suggest that this may be exceeded at times and we remind centres to adhere to this limit.

The storyboard can be created through hand-drawing, photography, or a combination of both methods, with drawing being the most commonly employed approach. Drawing proficiency is not a focus for assessment, although a reasonable effort to depict action, characters, and settings is expected. There is no requirement for hand-drawn storyboards to be coloured, and the time for the task may limit the inclusion of colour.

Moderators observed an increase in the use of photographic storyboards and, for candidates choosing this method, it is important to note that genre-specific elements can be included at a later stage in the process. Therefore, imagination and creativity need not be constrained by what is available to be photographed.

There has also been a rise in the submission of digitally drawn storyboards, created through a variety of means. Moderators noted that often where software was used to create storyboards, these tended to be less effective in conveying a variety of shot sizes, angles, and creative genre elements and that shot composition often lacked a personal touch of creativity.

The choice of an appropriate storyboard template can impact student success; the most effective templates encourage consideration of various factors, including shot size, camera angles, and movement. Moderators observed that prompts related to editing descriptions have sometimes led to errors, revealing a lack of understanding on the part of the candidates. An understanding of editing techniques can be demonstrated through the sequencing of shots and the incorporation of techniques such as directional continuity, eyeline match, cross-cutting, or match-on-action in the planned shots. For candidates to attain the highest level, their shot descriptions must be mainly correct; certain common errors persist, such as mislabelling of shots, movements, and continuity techniques.

It is recommended that the final storyboard is reviewed before submission to ensure pages are correctly combined into a single, easily readable document. In general, the majority of centres applied accurate marking standards to this task.

Task 2: Camera & Editing

In Task 2, candidates produce a one-minute film in response to the stimulus script issued by CCEA and are assessed on the range and effectiveness of the camera and continuity editing techniques evidenced in realising the script narrative.

The stronger candidates were able to visualise the script and translate this into a believable narrative film sequence, showing knowledge, understanding and effective use of camera and continuity editing techniques. Confident and effective camera control is indicative of higher level work, where students consistently use a tripod, and camera movements are purposeful and controlled. An eye for shot composition also marks the higher level candidates and a number of films made creative use of the mirror prop within the script in the composition of their shots.

The higher level candidates made effective and consistent use of continuity techniques such as eye-line match and match-on-action in their sequences. In Level 3, candidates often demonstrated a competent level of knowledge and understanding of continuity techniques but lacked the technical control to execute the sequence effectively or creatively. Use of rack focus was less evident this year, perhaps a result of an uptick in the use of mobile phones for filming.

Lower-level films exhibited less control and intention in their camerawork, along with a more limited grasp of continuity editing techniques. Common issues in lower-level work included shaky footage, 'hosepiping' (unsteady camera movement), excessive use of transitions, unintentional jump-cuts, challenges with lighting, framing, and focus. Camera movement often involved a handheld camera following behind the actor.

Moderators noted that unsteady footage was a more prevalent issue this year, perhaps reflecting an increase in the usage of mobile phones rather than cameras, and we strongly encourage students to make use of tripod adaptors for their phones.

Areas for improvement in this task remain consistent; the variety, composition, and stability of recorded shots, exercising more controlled camera movement and employing a more deliberate application of continuity editing techniques.

Some Task 2 films are still significantly over the specified length and centres must ensure that films do not extend significantly beyond one minute in length. The task was generally marked accurately by most centres, with a tendency towards leniency at times.

Task 3: Postproduction Sound

In Task 3, candidates create a multi-layered soundtrack for a twenty-second segment selected from a longer clip supplied by CCEA. The excerpt from the Pixar short film 'Lifted' provided candidates with the opportunity to construct soundscapes reflecting the ambience of the indoor and outdoor environments, as well as convey the genre, mood and drama of the sequence through synchronising diegetic sounds to the on-screen actions. Additionally, candidates had the opportunity to employ sound perspective techniques to highlight the contrast between the two environments and utilise sound effects (SFX) to emphasize the UFO's emergence into the tranquil rural setting, contributing to the establishment of science fiction genre conventions.

In higher level work, the majority of diegetic sounds were well-synced with appropriate volume levels and candidates had created original foley sounds and integrated these to create a convincing soundtrack. The stronger candidates created a clear contrast in the soundscapes of the exterior and interior environments such as the house, countryside and alien craft. They utilised sound effects (SFX) to effectively emphasise drama, mood, atmosphere, and even humour within the given time constraints.

Lower level work was less consistent, with missing or out-of-sync diegetic sounds and less appropriate effects/music, resulting in a less believable soundtrack overall. The combination of diegetic and non-diegetic sounds in the soundtrack was also less successful in lower-level submissions. There was a notable lack of attention to sound perspective, especially in contrasting the two environments, using SFX to highlight the emergence of the UFO in the tranquil rural scene, and incorporating science fiction SFX to adhere to genre conventions.

Moderators observed that some candidates missed opportunities to creatively handle moments of silence, where mood, atmosphere, and pacing could be considered.

A significant number of centres do not submit a screengrab of the editing interface and sound log, as specified in the task detail; these documents are vital for evaluating a candidate's work and must be included in the submission. The creation of foley sound is not completed by all centres and this would also be an aspect for future improvement. Additionally, moderators also noted a tendency towards lenient marking in this task.

Task 4: Animation

In Task 4, candidates animate a jointed model in response to audio clips of voice cues provided in the CCEA stimulus materials. The detail and fluidity of the character movements and the degree of camera control in the recording of the sequence are the key aspects of success in this task. The choice of an appropriate model plays an important role, with wooden manikins and jointed toys being effective options due to their articulation capabilities and accessibility. However, some candidates opted for Lego or plasticine models, which tended to limit the range of achievable movements.

In higher-level animations, the movements were characterised by greater detail, realism, expressiveness, and responsiveness to the voiceover instructions. In contrast, lower-level work exhibited less fluid animated movements, and the camera work often lacked control, resulting in abrupt or "jerky" shots that were not sustained for the appropriate duration.

We recommend that candidates make use of reference live action video (LAV) as it is an effective approach for achieving lifelike and convincing animated movements.

Moderators noted that a number of centres are allowing students to complete this task at home and we would like to remind all centres that the specification clearly states that this task should be completed under teacher supervision.

Component 3 Planning and Making a Moving Image Product

Component Overview

In Component 3, candidates choose from one of the genres specified in the CCEA stimulus booklet and create a production portfolio, comprising of a complete short live action or animated film and creative and organisational preproduction materials. Other genres should not be chosen for Component 3. The portfolio must include the following:

- Research Analysis (including a Synopsis) and an Evaluation.
- Screenplay and Storyboard.
- Shot List, Shooting Schedule and Director's Notebook with evidence of production research, design development and production management.

The vast majority of centres submitted Component 3 work in line with the Instructions to Teachers issued. Centre marking of Component 3 tended to be less consistent than in Component 2, mostly so in the marking of the Research Analysis & Evaluation and Film elements.

AO3 Research Analysis & Evaluation

In the Research Analysis, students state the genre they have chosen and give a concise synopsis of the film scenario before going on to analyse relevant filmic sequences and establish personal creative and technical goals inspired by this sequence.

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 and it is critical that candidates' writing is focused on these two areas. Moderators note each year that candidates find it challenging to address both aspects equally, tending to focus on either sequence analysis or discussion of goals. In some centres, the Research Analysis would appear to be written after the film has been made. This approach denies candidates the opportunity to establish clear creative and technical goals informed by the work of others and we recommend this is completed in advance of preproduction planning.

Moderators noted this year that film language terminology is not consistently used to describe and analyse techniques and this would be an aspect for improvement in many centres. In both the analysis and the establishment of personal goals, candidates often tend to overly prioritise aspects such as narrative and mise-en-scène, which are more accessible, while avoiding a more thorough examination of elements like camera work, editing, lighting, and sound techniques that demand a deeper level of knowledge and understanding. Other pitfalls observed are presenting written description of a sequence without identification or analysis of the techniques used, and very broad and general discussion of a genre, movie or a director. However, these approaches were less common than in previous years.

AO3 is the least consistently marked element of Component 3, perhaps reflecting the range of approaches taken by centres to this task. Moderators reported a reduction in unreferenced content in this year's submissions, which was encouraging. Quality of written communication is assessed in AO3 and candidates should be encouraged to spell check before final submission.

The Research Analysis component continues to pose challenges, and several issues persist.

- Difficulties in adhering to the specified word count.

The GCSE specification states a limit of 800 words for the Research Analysis and 600 for the Evaluation and, while we have, at Agreement Trials agreed that a slightly longer word count is acceptable, we are now regularly seeing documents of up to 7000 words in length submitted for moderation.

As the word count is limited, candidates need to ensure that they address the assessment objectives within this limit. Moderators noted that many centres are directing students to consider all five aspects of film language in the Research Analysis, as is expected at AS level. At GCSE level it is sufficient to focus on a fewer number of areas, selecting those most relevant to personal intentions.

Careful selection of which aspects of film language to analyse within a chosen sequence is important. Moderators observed that when students analysed camera and editing techniques, they often had more opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of film language usage. In contrast, analysis in the mid or lower levels tended to focus on costume, make-up, basic shot sizes or more obvious techniques like high/low key lighting, which candidates were unable to discuss in equivalent depth. We would advise candidates to ensure that they take the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of film language techniques in their selection of techniques for analysis.

- Analysis of film language within a specific sequence

There is also a growing trend for students to base goals on a single reference shot in isolation and we would like to highlight that analysis of a short sequence is key to attaining the higher levels. It is increasingly rare to find a student selecting a relevant scene or sequence where a specific effect has been created and analysing how film language has been used to create that effect.

Perceptive analysis of film language techniques underpins candidates' capacity to establish appropriately challenging personal creative and technical goals and is a key element of AO3. It is useful to select, deconstruct and analyse a sequence with clear genre conventions and demonstrate understanding of how these film techniques combine to create a specific atmosphere, meaning, or effect on the audience, supported with relevant screenshots from the sequences. A narrower range of reference sequences allows candidates to achieve greater depth in their analysis.

There is also a growing trend for students to base written analysis on a single shot rather than a short sequence, meaning opportunities to consider how film language techniques work in concert to create atmosphere and emotional response from the audience are missed. This often results in overly simplistic, entry-level comments, such as merely identifying and explaining the purpose of basic shot sizes. Consequently, the creative and personal goals set by candidates can then tend to reflect a similarly basic level of ambition.

- Creative and personal goals lack detail

The Research Analysis is also a statement of the candidate's personal creative goals in terms of the techniques they intend to use and the effects they hope to achieve. As discussed, these goals should be informed by the analysis of techniques within selected sequences but discussion of these goals should extend beyond simplistic statements such as "this is what I will do in my film."

In an increasing number of centres, candidates' personal, creative goals are expressed in terms of applying the most basic film language techniques (e.g. 'I intend to use a variety of shots', 'I intend to use continuity editing'). A common trend is that students name techniques used in a reference sequence, such as LS MS CU, diegetic sound, natural lighting etc and go on to say 'I will use LS, CUs etc in my film'. These types of statements cannot be classed as detailed personal goals; use of film language techniques at this basic level is expected from all students. Candidates should instead be encouraged to establish goals which involve the purposeful use of particular film language techniques to create a specific effect on the audience. In higher level written work, personal creative goals were discussed in greater detail, for example, ideas for specific shots or sequences within the film with consideration of how techniques would combine to create the desired effect.

The Evaluation element is marked alongside the Research Analysis and gives candidates the opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the techniques employed in their film, in relation to their original intentions. Moderators observe that in general candidates' understanding and use of film language improved significantly in the Evaluation, showing the learning that had taken place during the filmmaking process.

Often, the Evaluation is approached as a description of the process of making the film, rather than an appraisal of the film's creative and technical success; higher level Evaluations gave a critical assessment of the effectiveness of the sequences in relation to the original creative and technical goals set, with evidence provided in the form of screenshots. Often, the inclusion of less relevant material increased the word count while failing to address the assessment objectives, for example discussion of technical or organisational issues.

A02a Preproduction (Screenplay/Storyboard)

The scripts and storyboards observed during moderation generally met a good standard, with most candidates creating comprehensive preproduction materials in an appropriate format, achieving Level 3 or 4 for this aspect. A small number centres do not format scripts correctly, and could refer to the exemplar material available on the CCEA website and within the Component 2 stimulus booklet for guidance.

As a general guideline, one page of correctly formatted script equates to approximately one minute of screen time, so scripts should typically be around two pages in length. However, scripts that were heavily reliant on dialogue often led to less effective films, and candidates should be encouraged to explore visual storytelling techniques. The use of text messages as a common narrative exposition device has become prevalent, and candidates should be encouraged to venture beyond this approach to embrace more creative visual storytelling techniques.

Photography was a popular method for producing storyboards in many centres, providing candidates with an effective means to explore mise-en-scène and framing before shooting their films. Moderators noted that very few candidates now submit screengrabs from their final films as storyboards. It's also important to note that 'traced' storyboards, where frames are traced from the completed film, render the storyboard invalid as evidence of preproduction planning and this approach should be discouraged.

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

In AO2b, preproduction work is generally well executed and presented by the majority of centres, with accurate marking. Exploration of genre in the directors notebooks has diminished overall

The Director's Notebook should be presented in PDF format (not as a Keynote or PowerPoint), consisting of 5-10 pages, and it should primarily focus on purposeful, visual planning for the film production, accompanied by relevant annotations.

At higher levels, it should showcase purposeful primary research, such as first-hand photography that explores location, lighting, mise-en-scène, shot ideas, or creative experimentation with elements like costume and makeup.

It's important to emphasise that the Director's Notebook should be completed as a tool for preproduction planning and should not include screengrabs from the final film, which are better suited for the Evaluation document. Additionally, examples of classwork that are part of routine teaching and learning activities should not be included, as they do not directly relate to the candidate's personal and self-directed planning for their film.

Moderators noted a growing trend for candidates to submit experimental films as part of the preproduction work. While it's encouraging to see GCSE candidates preparing for their productions and developing practical skills in advance of filming, it's important to clarify that this is not a requirement for GCSE. Instead, it's recommended that these additional video files not be submitted, and instead, annotated screengrabs from these experiments should be presented within the PDF of the Director's Notebook as evidence of the candidate's personal experimentation.

AO2a Film

The final film, AO2a, gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their creative and technical skills and combine techniques from all film language areas to achieve their creative goals. The two minute final film should employ the conventions of their chosen genre, convey a narrative effectively and successfully manipulate audience response. All five film language areas are considered and assessed in this piece of work.

The Component 3 booklet has stimulated a variety of personal and creative outcomes in response to the genre scenarios. Horror, Sci-Fi, Crime, and zombie horror genres remain popular choices among students. While the majority of films submitted were live-action, there remains a slight increase in the number of animations in this year's moderation, which might be attributed to the challenges posed in recent years for live-action filmmaking.

Films in the highest mark range were characterised by creativity, ambition, and technical proficiency. They employed a range of film language techniques with skill and understanding; developing the skills established in Component 2. Confident application of camera and continuity editing techniques marked the higher level films.

The issue of 'shaky footage' remains a characteristic of weaker work across many centres. It's crucial to emphasise that the use of a tripod is absolutely essential for all shooting, except when deliberately planning handheld footage. Shaky footage is identified as a significant factor reducing attainment in the AO2a Film element.

Component 3 animations demonstrated a range of approaches, mainly employing stop-motion and hand-drawn techniques. Some excellent and highly creative work was observed during moderation. All film language areas are assessed within animation, and candidates displayed good consideration of camera angles, editing, mise-en-scène, and sound in creating their animated films. While the expectation is that candidates achieve the same fluidity of movement emphasised in Component 2 Task 4, it's important to note that this is not the sole focus for assessment in Component 3.

While live-action films tend to be consistently marked by most centres, animated outcomes were less consistently assessed.

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