SAETA Refresher Course 2014

A Beginner’s Guide to Film Study
Assessment Design Criteria

Knowledge and Understanding

• KU2 Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the creators and readers of texts use language techniques and conventions to make meaning.

• KU3 Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which texts are composed for a range of purposes and audiences.

Analysis

• An2 Analysis of the ways in which language techniques are used to influence opinions and decisions in a range of contexts.
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• An2 Analysis of the ways in which language techniques are used to influence opinions and decisions in a range of contexts.
Performance Standards

Knowledge and Understanding
Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the creators and readers of familiar and unfamiliar texts use a range of language techniques and conventions to make meaning.

Analysis
Perceptive analysis of a range of ways in which authors use language techniques to influence opinions and decisions in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
Performance Standards

Knowledge and Understanding
Knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the creators and readers of familiar and unfamiliar texts use a range of language techniques and conventions to make meaning.

Analysis
Perceptive analysis of a range of ways in which authors use language techniques to influence opinions and decisions in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.
The theory behind the scenes

You are assessing your students’ ability to understand and interpret how the author of the film is attempting to influence the audience of that film.

This is why the phrase ‘reading a film’ in the classroom is more appropriate than ‘watching a movie’.

It is also why setting assessment tasks that ask students to give opinions on the characters in the film as if they were real people will not allow them an opportunity to show a perceptive analysis of the language techniques used in filmmaking.
Born out of an influential group of 1950's French film critics and filmmakers, the Auteur Theory explores the notions of individual creative vision and control in cinema. In short, the critical perspective dictates that the director is in a unique and irreplaceable position of personal artistic perspective, and that the film is, most importantly, a product of that perspective.

The employment of the French word for "author" (auteur) associates the director with the individual output of other mediums (painting, literature, etc.), and rebels against the seeming "collectiveness" of the film studio.
Francois Truffaut's sensational assertion that "there are no good and bad movies, only good and bad directors" importantly situates film as the characterized output of a creative individual, and responds to the economic and productive tensions in filmmaking.
Another very conscious function of the theory is the emphasis on a director's body of work as a whole, rather than individual films. This is a product of the notion that the "imprint" of the director will be apparent, regardless of a particular film's consistency or relation to other films in the individual's collected body of work. In short, placing a film within a chronological context becomes important in the auteurist sense.
Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*

2 very good sets of teacher notes:

**NSW Department of Education and Communities**

Critical literacy in English Years 8–10

Subject: Stage 5 English

Class group: Year 10

Syllabus content: Film studies unit

Text: Psycho by Alfred Hitchcock

Lesson length: 70 minutes per lesson

Context: The unit of work on Psycho aims to develop students’ critical literacy skills, and thus prepare them for the literacy requirements of the Stage 6 English syllabus.
Psycho Study Guide from filmeducation.org

http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/Psycho.pdf
TEN FILMS
THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

IT'S BACK!

Alfred Hitchcock's
PSYCHO

PSYCHO
STUDY GUIDE

www.filmeducation.org
Social Context
How did *Psycho* change the cinema experience forever?
* NO ONE ... BUT NO ONE ... will be admitted to the theatre after the start of each performance of

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S

PSYCHO

STARRING

ANTHONY PERKINS  VERA MILES  JOHN MILES

and JANET LEIGH as MARION CRANE
From a 1950's high school home economics textbook, teaching girls how to prepare for married life.

http://www.ultimatehousewife.com/2013/02/1950s-housewife.html
• HAVE DINNER READY: Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal--on time. This is a way to let him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned with his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home, and having a good meal ready is part of the warm welcome that is needed.

• PREPARE YOURSELF: Take fifteen minutes to rest so that you will be refreshed when he arrives. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift. Greet him with a smile.

• CLEAR AWAY THE CLUTTER: Make one last trip though the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up children's books and toys, papers, etc. Then run a dust cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you lift too.

• PREPARE THE CHILDREN: If they are small, wash their hands and faces and comb their hair. They are his little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

• MINIMIZE ALL NOISE: At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise from the washer, dryer, or vacuum. Encourage the children to be quiet.

• SOME "DO NOT'S": Don't greet him with problems and complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as a minor problem compared to what he might have gone through that day.
1950s
1960s
What happened in 1960?

- First oral contraceptives made available to the public
- The Flintstones debut
- Over one hundred million television sets in use worldwide
- Aluminium cans are used for the first time
- Thomas S. Monaghan buys a pizza parlour in Detroit and renames it Domino's
- Ford introduces the Falcon
- First Teflon non-sticking cookware goes on sale at Macy's in New York
- John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson win the Presidency with one of the smallest margins in history (113,000 votes) out of 68.3 million
- Seventy million people watch the presidential debate between Sen. John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard Nixon
- American Heart Association Links smoking to heart disease and death in middle aged men
- Black students stage a sit-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, NC, to protest segregated seating - event inspires a wave of sit-ins across the South
- The United States announces that 3,500 American soldiers are going to be sent to Vietnam
Worksheet 2: Guide for viewing *Psycho*

**Credits**

1. What words could you use to describe the music playing during the credits? (slow, soft, etc?)

2. How do the graphics in the opening credits work? Do they reveal anything about the film? Why?

3. What mood do the credits create (peaceful, romantic, etc?) Why?

**Opening sequence**

1. From what perspective do you view the opening shot?

2. What would you call this camera shot?

3. Describe the time and place of the opening sequence. Why do you think the director was so specific about time and place in the opening sequence?

4. Why are the two characters dressed in the way they are? What does this tell us about the film conventions of the day?
Mise en scene refers to everything with a specific scene in a film that gives the scene meaning. All scenes in films are meticulously planned to mean certain things. It is useful to analyse how the scene is shot, where the actors are placed, what sounds are in the background, what objects are placed in the scene and the lighting of the whole scene to unpack what meaning the director wants to convey to the audience.

- In groups, watch the following scene and write in the following boxes what you observe.
- Report back to the class what your group observes.
- Discuss how these elements combine to make meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of the actors</th>
<th>Length of shots</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angle of shots</th>
<th>Lighting</th>
<th>Objects within the scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Create a revision guide

Students can, in pairs or small groups, elect one aspect of the film to summarise with examples:

• Foreshadowing
• Costume
• Camera shots and angles
• Music and sound effects
• Symbolism
• Lighting
Ask each group to type up their observations and send them to you. This can be put together to create a booklet or electronic document that the whole class can use to help with their assessment task.

The added accountability of publication always helps students to take care with this task.
“You eat like a bird...”
Essay questions

How does the director of Psycho explore the difference between good and evil?

How does the director of Psycho use a range of stylistic features to explore the idea of duality?

How does the director of Psycho use a range of stylistic features to shock the audience?
What is *Psycho* really about?

Women as the keepers of morality

Victimhood

The duality of human nature

A violent society

Voyeurism
Andrew Niccol’s *Gattaca*

VCE English- *Gattaca* noted (for Year 11 VCE students). By Emma Roache


Insight Text Guide

Social Context

Science Fiction

Utopia/Dystopia

Biotechnology

Ethics

Eugenics
Utopia/Dystopia
Teaching resources on genetic engineering from the National STEM Centre (free but registration required)

http://www.nationalstemcentre.org.uk/elibrary/collection/1265/resources-to-support-science-teaching
## Questionnaire

### Background
Through natural selection, cross pollination and retention of the most sturdy crops for next year's planting — man (and nature) have successfully altered the genes of almost every food we eat. This is a widely used technique for evolving crops and is limited by natural barriers that prevent one species from breeding with another.

Today's scientists have taken this one step further - changing an organism by selecting a single desired trait and inserting that gene directly into the chromosome of another organism. Industry, government and many scientists proclaim the benefits of such technologies while others voice extreme concern.

### So where do you stand? Take our quiz to see which camp you belong to.

Say how much you agree or disagree with the following comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe that GM food is bad for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I believe that GM food is safe to eat</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I would like GM food to be labelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I think that genetic engineering is unethical and immoral</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Genetic engineering can improve the productivity of certain crops</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. GM food can help feed the world more effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Genetic engineering tampers with nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. UK wildlife is affected by genetic engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Man has been &quot;engineering plants&quot; for almost 10,000 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. GE has helped scientists to find cures for some diseases</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Because all living things have DNA, scientists can actually transplant a gene from one organism into another.

In this way they have discovered how to change the **characteristics** of an organism.

What characteristics do you think they are interested in?
Genes are long ‘pieces’ of DNA, which contain instructions for specific parts of our body.

The ‘human genome project’ has mapped every gene, identifying that every individual has at least 99.9% of their DNA in common.

There are just 30,000 human genes, but you have a one in *three million* chance of having the same DNA as another human on the planet.
Use of symbolism and colour is very prevalent in *Gattaca*
VALID

MORROW, JEROME
011010100-09564

GNQ9.8612 = VALIDITY JE7542DAN
“I lent you my body...you lent me your dream.”
What kinds of things can you not engineer?

• Kindness

• Inspiration

• Courage

• Determination

• True friendship
Names

“GATTACA” — The chemical building blocks of genes are made up of individual stretches of nucleotides. The four base nucleotides are known by the letters G A T C

“Jerome” — genome

“Morrow” — tomorrow

“Eugene” — genes

“Irene” — gene

“Vincent” — from the Latin Vincentius, meaning “to conquer”
Create a revision guide

• This time the list can include ‘colour’ as a topic
Essay question

How does the film *Gattaca* warn us about the future?
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