

How to analyse a text or a film

When candidates study a text or film, they could explore the following elements, making possible connections between them and finding enough evidence in the text or film to justify and develop their views on them.

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| Characters |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protagonist: leading character. • Antagonist: character, group of characters, or institution that represents the opposition against which the protagonist or protagonists must contend. • Focal: character that has a decisive role, but does not have to be the protagonist. • Minor character: character that is not essential to the story. • Static and dynamic characters: Dynamic characters are the ones who change over the course of the story, while static characters remain the same throughout. • Purpose, actions and goals of the characters • Characterisation: ways in which character is portrayed including physical appearance and personality. |
| Key themes/issues |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was it written / made? • What was the purpose of it? • Is there a moral in the story? |
| Social and cultural settings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical: historical period or periods that are portrayed in the story, as well as the moment in history when the text or film was made and its impact on it. • Cultural: elements of the society that are present in the text or film, either in an implicit or explicit way. • Geographical: place or places where the story takes place. • Time: flash-back, flash-forward or ellipsis. • Author's biographical information: this can have an effect on the story. |
| Styles/techniques used |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic elements: auto-biography, description, narration, dialogue and monologue. • Rhetorical devices: alliteration, allusion, amplification, analogy, antiphrasis, antithesis, epithet, hyperbole, metaphor, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, personification, parallelism, simile, understatement, among others. • Time: circular, cyclical, lineal or anachronistic. • Plot: foreshadowing, suspense, conflict, exposition, rising action, crisis and resolution. • Symbolism: use of symbols to represent an idea, a feeling or another key element. • Point of view: narrator, 1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person (objective) or omniscient. |



| Styles/techniques in a text | Styles/techniques in a film |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genre: drama, romance, satire, tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, fiction and nonfiction.• Choice of language: verbs and tenses, adjectives and nouns.• Syntax: structure of the text, types of sentences and punctuation.• Imagery: use of elements to create a mental picture using visual and other senses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genre: action, adventure, comedy, crime & gangster, documentary, drama, epics, historical, horror, musicals, dance, science fiction, war and westerns.• Visual elements: images, shapes, lines, colours, use of the camera, light, shot transitions.• Audio elements: words, sound effects, silences, music and accents. |