

## ANALYSE A FILM FOR VCE ENGLISH: ANALYSING PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES WITH 'CAMELS'

'CAMELS' is an acronym that gives students an easy way to remember the production elements they should look for and mention when they analyse a film for VCE English.

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### CAMERA TECHNIQUES

'Camera techniques' refers to how the camera is used to tell a story. There are a number of different types of camera techniques to look at when you analyse a film for VCE English including:

- **Camera movement:** This refers to how the camera moves.
  - *Terms include:* Crane, dolly, doll in, dolly out, handheld, pan, pedestal, point-of-view shot, snorricam, static, steadicam, tilt, tracking, vertigo effect, whip pan, zoom.
- **Shot size:** This refers to the proximity of the camera to the subject or scene.
  - *Terms include:* Extreme long-shot, long shot, full shot, mid shot, close up, extreme close up.
- **Camera angle:** Refers to the camera's angle in relation to the subject or scene.
  - **Terms include:** High angle, eye level, low angle, point-of-view shot, tilted angle, neutral angle.
- **Focus:** This refers to the clarity or precision of the shot.
  - **Terms include:** Deep focus, depth of field, pull focus, shallow depth of field.

When looking at camera techniques in a film, ask yourself questions like “What does this particular camera technique tell us about the character?” or “What is the director trying to communicate through this technique?”.

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## ACTING

Nearly everything an actor does is part of a scripted performance which has been directed down to the smallest detail. When you analyse a film for VCE English, you must pay attention to small details of an actor’s performance including:

- **Facial expressions:** These help the audience understand the character’s emotions and personality.
- **Body language:** Body language can communicate a lot about a character to the audience – a character who routinely bows her head, for example, may lack self-confidence.
- **Tone of voice/accents:** How a character speaks often reveals important information, such as their personality or socioeconomic background.

When analysing acting, ask yourself questions like “What effect does this facial expression have on my understanding of the character?” or “What does this character’s accent tell me about their background/life experiences?”

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## MISE EN SCENE

‘Mise en scene’ refers to *what* appears in the frame – the actors, lighting, décor, props, costumes, colours – and *how* it is arranged. Everything in a frame is a deliberate choice and often helps the audience piece together important information about characters or the plot.

When analysing mise en scene, ask yourself questions like “What does this costume tell me about the character?” and “How does the use of colour add to the mood of the shot?”

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## EDITING

When films are edited, filmmakers think carefully about how the sequences of shots, pace of editing, and use of editing techniques contribute to the narrative.

When you analyse a film for VCE English, look at editing techniques such as:

- **Fast motion:** Here the rate the story is told is sped up. A good example of this is montages, where often many months of in-film time are compressed into a few minutes.
- **Slow motion:** This is where time is slowed down. This often gives the audience time to absorb a dramatic event or dramatizes a particular scene.
- **Fade in/out, dissolve, wipe**
- **Cuts**, including **jump cuts** (where the camera remains stationary while the subject is in motion) and **cross cutting** (where multiple events occur at the same time and the film switches back and forth between them)

Ask yourself how these techniques communicate messages to the audience about characters or the plot.

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## LIGHTING

Although lighting in a film often appears natural, filmmakers go to great lengths to achieve particular lighting effects to create mood and atmosphere in a scene.

Some common terms to refer to film lighting include:

- **Soft:** Lighting that is soft and diffused, not harsh.
- **Hard:** Lighting that creates harsh, obvious shadows.
- **High:** A scene is well lit with minimal shadow
- **Low:** Lighting is poor, lots of shadows are cast
- **Warm:** Lighting with a warm yellow or orange hue.
- **Cool:** Lighting with cool blue or green hues.

When analysing lighting, ask yourself questions like “What type of light is used?” and “What does the lighting tell the audience about the character?” – a character who is always cast in shadows, for example, may have sinister motives.

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## **SOUND**

Visuals are not the only thing filmmakers think about – the use of sound is also incredibly important. Many sounds are added in the post-production phase. *All* sounds have been deliberately chosen: every sound contributes to the narrative, character development, and audience engagement in some way.

When you’re watching a scene, think about how sound contributes to character development by asking questions such as “What type of music is used when this character appears on-screen?” and “What impact do the sound effects have on the narrative?”

## ANALYSE A FILM FOR VCE ENGLISH: FILM TECHNIQUES WORKSHEET

### CAMELS

| SCENE NAME:           | WHAT DO YOU SEE? | WHAT IS THE EFFECT? |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| CAMERA                |                  |                     |
| ACTING                |                  |                     |
| MISE-EN-SCENE         |                  |                     |
| EDITING               |                  |                     |
| LIGHTING AND<br>SOUND |                  |                     |

## CRITICAL LENSES

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| <b>WHAT CRITICAL LENS CAN YOU APPLY?</b> |  |
| <b>WHAT CAN YOU SEE WITH THAT LENS?</b>  |  |

## OVERALL SCENE IMPACT

**How does this scene fit into the movie?**

**What does it mean?**

**What would you like your audience to see?**