

Name: _____ Date: _____

Anatomy of a Scene

Directions: Use these questions to analyze a key scene. When analyzing both film and literature, remember that how things are presented is as important as the things themselves. Everything is a conscious choice of the writer or director. Think about how each choice brings out meaning.

Title of the work:

Director or author:

Character and Casting

1. Who is in the scene?
2. What is each person's motivation in this scene? (In other words, what does each character want?)
3. What subtexts are at work here?
4. How does the casting influence how you see the characters?
5. How do costumes contribute to how you see the characters?

Setting

1. Where is the scene set?
2. Why/how is this setting significant?
3. What stands out about the setting?

Context

1. What is the context of this scene in the larger work?
2. What is the historical, cultural, and/or political context?

Frame (mise-en-scene)

1. What is in the shot?
2. What is centered?
3. What is excluded?
4. How do figures move within the frame?
5. Is the shot wide or long? A close-up?
6. What is in focus? Is anything blurred?
7. How is the frame lit?
8. What are the effects of the frame on viewers? How does how the scene is framed enhance meaning?

Camera Work

1. What camera angles are used here?
2. What point-of-view do the camera angles suggest? Is the camera acting as the eyes of a character? Or of the audience?
3. How does the camera move? What effect does camera movement have on viewers?
4. Does the film use slow motion?
5. How is the film edited? Is the rhythm long (as in "Precious" or short and clipped (like in the "Up in the Air" clip? What effect does the editing have on you?

Mood and Soundtrack

1. Is there music? How and when is it used? What is its effect? What mood does it create?
2. Are there other sound effects?
3. Does the film make use of voiceovers? When? What is their effect?
4. How else besides music is the mood created?

Other

1. What other details, such as props, are important in the scene? What are their function and effect?
2. What do you know about this director or writer? How does your knowledge of his or her work add to your understanding of this movie or book, and this particular scene?

Adapted in part from "The Basics of How to Read a Film" by Holly Blackford http://wire.rutgers.edu/p_reading_film.html

"Anatomy of a Scene" Focus

1. Which aspects of the scene do you plan to focus on for your "Anatomy" feature? Why?
2. What terms and techniques will help you explain your points?
3. What would you like viewers to notice, understand and think about this scene?
4. What specific points do you want to make? Start writing your script ideas here.