

Intro to Film Study – Basic Terms & Practice

How to "Read" Film

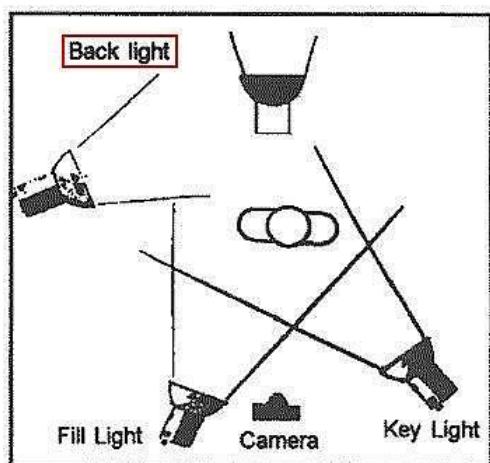
When we conceive of film as a “text” that we must “read,” our relationship with moving images shifts; instead of being passive consumers of mere entertainment, we become active viewers who are engaged in a process of critical appreciation. To facilitate this process, there are a few basic terms and concepts you will need to think about when you watch any film.

Basic Terms for Film Analysis

Diegesis	The objects, events, spaces and the characters that inhabit them, including things, actions, and attitudes not explicitly presented in the film but inferred by the audience. That audience constructs a diegetic world from the material presented in a narrative film.
Shot	A single stream of images, uninterrupted by editing. The shot can use a static or a mobile framing, a standard or a non-standard frame rate, but it must be continuous.
Scene/Sequence	A scene is a segment of a narrative film that usually takes place in a single time and place, often with the same characters. Sometimes a single scene may contain two lines of action, occurring in different spaces or even different times, which are related by means of crosscutting. Scene and sequence can usually be used interchangeably, though the latter term can also refer to a longer segment of film that does not obey the spatial and temporal unities of a single scene. For example, a montage sequence that shows in a few shots a process that occurs over a period of time.

Some Major Classifications of Film Technique

Mise-en-scène	Refers to the note-worthy details of the frame. All the things that are "put in the scene" : the setting, the decor, the lighting, the costumes, the performance etc. Narrative films often manipulate the elements of <i>mise-en-scène</i> , such as decor, costume, and acting to intensify or undermine the ostensible significance of a particular scene.
----------------------	--



Décor	The viewer must scrutinize and make inferences about the type and placement of objects in every scene.
Acting	The actor's history and appearance must be taken into consideration of the role he or she is playing. Certain types of actors typically play certain roles.
Staging	The placement of characters and objects in the frame is very important. Viewers can make all sorts of inferences about character motives or relationships.
Costume	Clothing worn by characters can allow viewers to make all sorts of inferences about the character's relationship to other characters and to the character's physical or social context.
Lighting	(Three-Point [see diagram], High-Key, Low-Key, & Natural/Ambient) – Light is often used to comment directly and indirectly on a character. All sorts of inferences can be made about characters when the light shines on them or fail to illuminate. Of course, light is also an important symbol.

The Hunger Games



Citizen Kane



The Godfather



Editing	Is the sequencing of shots to create a diegesis in narrative film or to create a dominant impression/to reinforce an argument in documentary film. The editing rate or rhythm can be fast or slow depending upon the length of shots and how quickly the filmmaker transitions from one shot to the next. Films generally try to relate narrative through the more conventional continuity editing style, though montage often provides a more striking visual commentary on the subject at hand.
Continuity	Creates the illusion of continuous action in a sequence of film.
Montage	A synonym for editing, the film editor links together shots from different times, places, sources, and of different subjects to create a unified visual collage of images. Juxtaposition of images that are similar and/or dissimilar can create lead viewers infer a third meaning.
Cross Cutting OR Parallel Editing	Utilizes elements of both continuity and montage to blend together multiple narrative or visual threads of film, often for the purpose of having one thread comment on the other. The editing technique allows one sequence to comment on the other and through juxtaposition a third meaning is created for the viewer.

<u>Film Title:</u>	<u>Name:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Pd:</u>
<i>Mise-en-scene (& Editing) Techniques? List</i>		<i>Effect of Techniques? List</i>	

Paragraph evaluating the devices and their effects. Even though this is a film clip, use the ACE model.