

## Intro to Film Study – Basic Terms & Practice

### How to “Read” Film

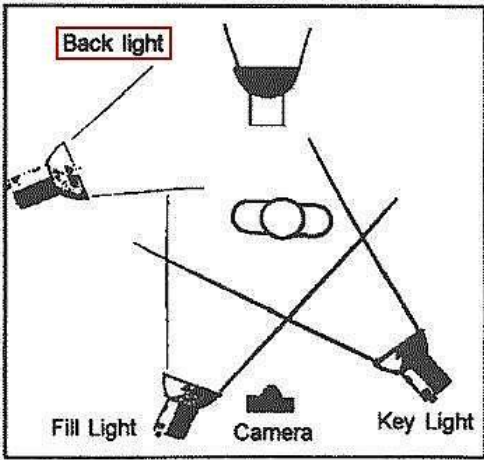
When we conceive of film as a “text” that we must “read,” our relationship with moving images shifts; instead of being passive consumers of mere entertainment, we become active viewers who are engaged in a process of critical appreciation. To facilitate this process, there are a few basic terms and concepts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

### Basic Terms for Film Analysis

<b>Diegesis</b>	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.
<b>Shot</b>	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.
<b>Scene/Sequence</b>	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

<b>Mise-en-scène</b>	Refers to the note-worthy details of the frame. <b>All the things that are “put in the scene”</b> : 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.
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 <p>The diagram illustrates the Three-Point Lighting technique. It shows a subject (represented by a circle) with three light sources: a Back light positioned behind the subject, a Fill light positioned to the left, and a Key light positioned to the right. The Camera is positioned in front of the subject. Lines connect the lights to the subject, and a line connects the camera to the subject.</p>	<b>Décor</b>	The viewer must scrutinize and make inferences about the type and placement of objects in every scene.
	<b>Acting</b>	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.
	<b>Staging</b>	The placement of characters and objects in the frame is very important. Viewers can make all sorts of inferences about character motives or relationships.
	<b>Costume</b>	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.
	<b>Lighting</b>	(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*



