

# Key Stage 4.5 Film Studies A-Level Preparation Booklet

Name

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## **This Booklet**

This booklet forms the basis of the knowledge and skills you will need to succeed in Film Studies at A-Level at Hammersmith Academy. Work your way through it, according to the weekly tasks.

Each week will include:

- A technical/practical task
- A general 'Cultural Awareness' reading task
- A short film anthology task
- A preparation task for set texts

## **Film Studies Set Texts**

The following are the filmtxts to be studied:

- *Some Like it Hot* (1959)
- *Do The Right Thing* (1989)
- *Amy* (2015)
- *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)
- *City of God* (2002)
- *No Country for Old Men* (2005)
- *This is England* (2006)
- *Shaun of the Dead* (2004)
- *One Week, The Scarecrow, The High Sign, Cops* – short films by Buster Keaton

Whilst it is possible there may be some change, the majority will stay the same. The stronger your knowledge of these texts (including summaries, key ideas, themes, characters, directors, criticism and their contexts), the easier you will find Film Studies at A-Level. It is expected you will be studying these texts alongside the work in this booklet.

## **Completing the Tasks**

Lines/space have not been left as this booklet is meant to be primarily used virtually; as you type in your notes, do so by working to the subheadings or indicators on the page, the rest of the booklet will simply move down as you type. Some of the tasks are likely to be easier completed on paper, using the headings given in this booklet, copied down.

## **Future Preparation**

As you study the texts, it is good practice to make notes as you go – highlighting key ideas, annotating any texts or articles with any ideas you have, adding post-its or folding down pages in the texts on key sections. Then, as with GCSE, creating flashcards as you go to ensure that you spread your workload across the year.

# Week 1

## Technical: Recreating

Recreate an iconic scene using your phone to edit/shoot in sequence; it should be no more than 2min long. The aim of the task is to practice framing and to help get into the mind of a director. Use a Lego figure/sibling's most treasured stuffed animal as the actors.

Your primary focus should be:

- Framing of the shot
- Distance of the 'actors' from the camera

Possible sequences:

[\*Fight Club\*](#)

[\*Jaws\*](#)

[\*Reservoir Dogs\*](#)

[\*The Matrix\*](#)

Suggested research:

[Framing and Composition](#)

## Cultural Awareness: The Studio System

Work your way through the reading list below; you will be required to work with and evaluate these ideas:

### Initial reading

- <https://www.classichollywoodcentral.com/background/the-studio-system/>
- <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/UsefulNotes/TheGoldenAgeOfHollywood>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studio\\_system#%3A%7E%3Atext%3DA\\_studio\\_system\\_is\\_a%2Cnumber\\_of\\_large\\_movie\\_studios.?wprov=sfla1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studio_system#%3A%7E%3Atext%3DA_studio_system_is_a%2Cnumber_of_large_movie_studios.?wprov=sfla1)
- <https://filmschoolrejects.com/studios-owning-movie-theaters/>

Write a 200 word summary of the Studio System, then evaluate it by answering the following questions:

- What were the benefits for the studios in the studio system?
- What were the drawbacks for the consumer?
- How did the talent fare under the system (actors, writers, directors)?
- Do these principles still apply today with institutions like Netflix producing, financing and 'distributing' their films?

## Short Film Anthology; *A Girl's Own Story* (1987)

Follow the link to the [HA Firefly page](#); watch the short film and complete the section from the '[Short Film Master](#)' powerpoint.

Once you have completed the Short Film Master section for the text, go through at least two of the additional clips and 'Further Reading' links – summarise the ideas and evaluate them.

## Set Text: *Amy* (2015)

Watch the film (use your various ways of gaining access to it) and write a 300 word review of the film; how did it make you feel? What parts of it stand out in your mind? Were there any particular moments that were interesting in terms of filmmaking? How does it compare to other films by the director or of the genre?

### Additional suggested research:

[\*The Warrior\*](#) (2001), [\*Senna\*](#) (2010) and [\*Diego Maradona\*](#) (2019) are both documentaries created by the same director, [Asif Kapadia](#).

## Week 2

### Technical: Screen Writing

Using [Celtx](#) (a free screenwriting programme that helps you learn the appropriate formatting for a screenplay), rewrite a fairy tale as a screenplay. Feel free to be as creative as you would like; could you make Red Riding Hood a kick-ass female protagonist being chased by a wolf? Could Humpty Dumpty become a tragic tale of a man left to die?

**Expectation:** Three pages of screenplay, recounting/recreating a simply fairytale.

**Suggested research:** [Celtx Tutorial](#)

### Cultural Awareness: Auteur Filmmaking

Work your way through the reading list below; you will be required to work with and evaluate these ideas:

#### Auteur Theory

- <https://indiefilmhustle.com/auteur-theroy/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzTRjsefTXc>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/20/movies/the-auteur-theory-of-film-holy-or-just-full-of-holes.html>

Write a 200 word summary of the auteur film making, then evaluate it by answering the following questions:

- What is auteurism?
- Can you have an auteur filmmaker?
- Who are notable auteur filmmakers?
- Do you agree or disagree that a film can be a single director's vision? Why?

### Short Film Anthology; *About a Girl* (2001)

Follow the link to the [HA Firefly page](#); watch the short film and complete the section from the 'Short Film Master' powerpoint.

Once you have completed the Short Film Master section for the text, go through at least two of the additional clips and 'Further Reading' links – summarise the ideas and evaluate them.

### Set Text: *Some Like it Hot* (1959)

Watch the film (use your various ways of gaining access to it) and write a 300 word review of the film; how did it make you feel? What parts of it stand out in your mind? Were there any particular moments that were interesting in terms of filmmaking? How does it compare to other films by the director or of the genre?

Suggested further research on the director, Billy Wilder:

#### Wilder's Life

- [Billy Wilder](#) on *Some Like it Hot*
- [Billy Wilder](#) as auteur
- [The Legacy of Billy Wilder](#), a lecture by Leonard Maltin
- Billy Wilder – Historic Hollywood by [Popcorn Talk](#)
- [TCM Tribute](#) to Willy Wilder

#### Wilder's works

- [The Seven Year Itch](#), iconic comedy written and directed by Billy Wilder
- [Ace in the Hole](#), dark film written by Wilder
- [Spike Lee](#) on *Ace in the Hole*
- [Sunset Boulevard](#), a critique on the Studio System by Wilder

## Week 3

### Technical: Storyboarding

Create a storyboard of a sequence of a chase scene down a street. Storyboard how this could look if you wanted to create tension

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQsvhq28sOI>

**Expectation:** At least 16 shots planned.

### Cultural Awareness: Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954)

Work your way through the reading list below; you will be required to work with and evaluate these ideas:

#### Hitchcock and *Rear Window*

- <https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/movie/rear-window>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4Yw8hz3tG8>
- <https://www.filminquiry.com/rear-window-1954-review>
- <https://www.sothetheorygoes.com/auteur-alfred-hitchcock/>

Write a 200 word summary of Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, then evaluate it by answering the following questions:

- Is *Rear Window* a auteur film?
- What elements of the film are auteur-esque?
- What did you think of the film as piece of art?
- Do you agree or disagree that a film can be a single director's vision? Why?

### Short Film Anthology; *Connect* (2010)

Follow the link to the [HA Firefly page](#); watch the short film and complete the section from the '[Short Film Master](#)' powerpoint.

Once you have completed the Short Film Master section for the text, go through at least two of the additional clips and 'Further Reading' links – summarise the ideas and evaluate them.

### Set Text: *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

Watch the film (use your various ways of gaining access to it) and write a 300 word review of the film; how did it make you feel? What parts of it stand out in your mind? Were there any particular moments that were interesting in terms of filmmaking? How does it compare to other films by the director or of the genre?

#### Further research:

The [HA Firefly page](#) contains eight different videos you can use to explore both Lee and Lee's works.

## Week 4

### Technical: Framing

Create a storyboard of a conversation sequence between two characters; as the sequence continues, create tension using only framing.

[How to shoot slow-building Tension](#)

[How Hitchcock Creates Suspense](#)

[How Spielberg Builds Nail-Biting Suspense](#)

**Expectation:** At least 16 shots planned.

### Cultural Awareness: Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

Work your way through the reading list below; you will be required to work with and evaluate these ideas:

Spike Lee as auteur:

- <https://amp.theguardian.com/film/2017/nov/26/spike-lee-shes-gotta-have-it-netflix-auteur-american-film>
- <https://www.roughcutcinema.com/amp/an-auteur-for-the-mtv-age-the-music-of-spike-lee>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfx8YiMrjSY>
- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2018/08/02/movies/spike-lee-movies-visuals.amp.html>

Write a 200 word summary of Lee's *Do the Right Thing*, then evaluate it by answering the following questions:

- Is *Do the Right Thing* a auteur film?
- What elements of the film are auteur-esque?
- What did you think of the film as piece of art?
- Do you agree or disagree that a film can be a single director's vision? Why?

### Short Film Anthology; *Curfew* (2012)

Follow the link to the [HA Firefly page](#); watch the short film and complete the section from the '[Short Film Master](#)' powerpoint.

Once you have completed the Short Film Master section for the text, go through at least two of the additional clips and 'Further Reading' links – summarise the ideas and evaluate them.

### Set Text: *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006)

Watch the film (use your various ways of gaining access to it) and write a 300 word review of the film; how did it make you feel? What parts of it stand out in your mind? Were there any particular moments that were interesting in terms of filmmaking? How does it compare to other films by the director or of the genre?

### Further research:

The [HA Firefly page](#) contains eight different videos you can use to explore ideas linked to the text.