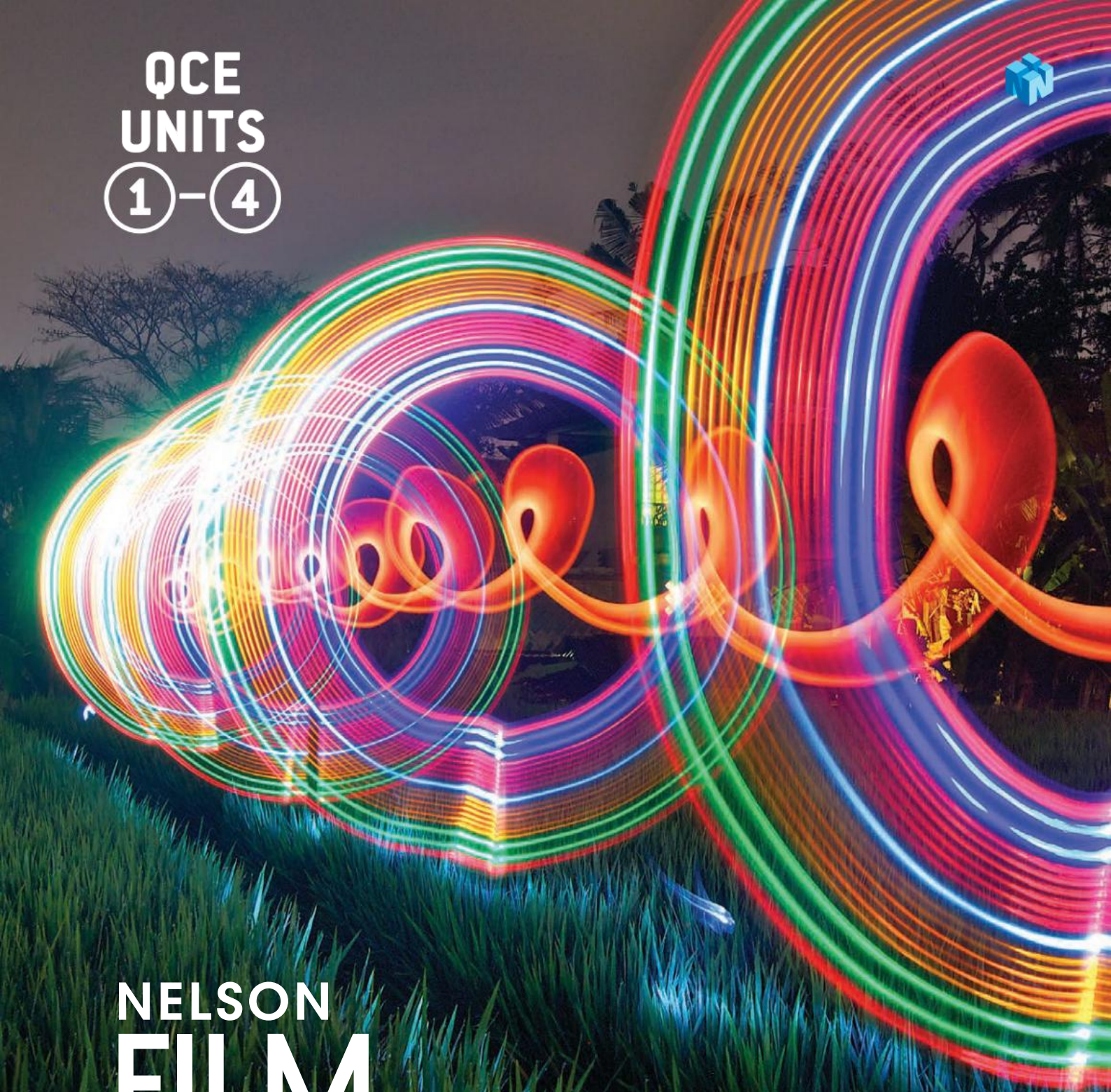
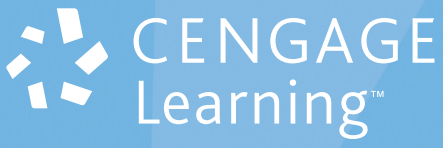
QCE
UNITS
1–4



NELSON

FILM, TELEVISION & NEW MEDIA

COLIN STEWART
KYLIE AGNEW
MATTHEW BEATTIE
AIMEE GUST
DARREN SINCLAIR



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FILM, TELEVISION & NEW MEDIA

COLIN STEWART
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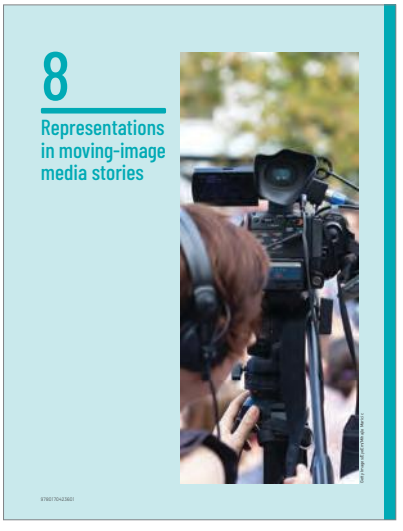
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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Nelson Film Television and New Media is a complete, two-year course book written specifically for the QCAA Film, Television and New Media syllabus. It is the first textbook specifically written for the Queensland Film, Television and New Media syllabus. This authoritative text delivers content knowledge for deep understanding and skill building for students who wish to learn about the key concepts of both production and theory.

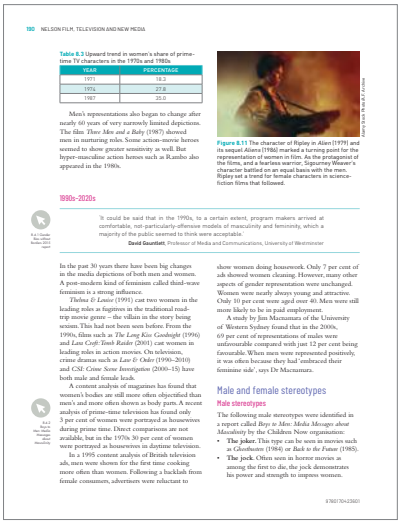
The highly visual text has been written by an experienced team of teachers who have been involved in every stage of Film, Television and New Media curriculum and assessment. All syllabus unit subject matter, objectives and cognitions, and key concepts are matched and addressed in detail throughout the text. Comprehensive, yet flexible in design, the text is suitable for a variety of individual school teaching plans.

Structure



Chapter opening images

The chapter opening images help to navigate the students through the text. Teachers can use the images as stimulus for class discussion and pre-testing of knowledge and understanding. Each chapter heading refers to the key concept that is foregrounded within each unit.



Within the text

The content has been broken into manageable chunks of information for students and comprehensively covers the syllabus unit subject matter. This suits a variety of teaching and learning styles, but in particular the 'chunk and chew' approach, shared in-class reading and independent exploration via the flipped classroom approach. Important information and relevant quotes feature in breakout boxes. Icons on the page indicate a weblink (as a hot spot in the NelsonNet book and on the weblinks page on NelsonNet).

Key concepts and subject matter

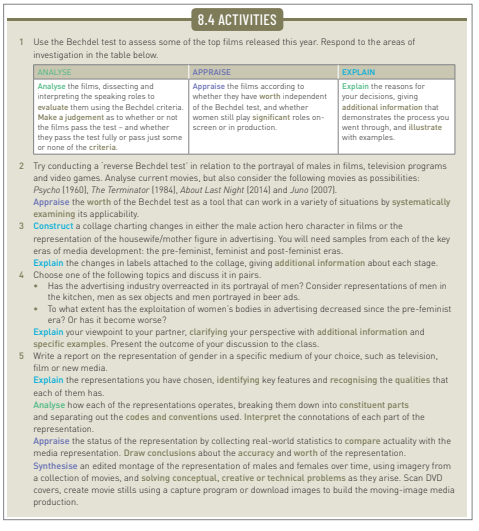
Chapters are based around the five key concepts of the Film, Television and New Media syllabus and they cover all the required subject matter in each unit of the syllabus. The key concept approach enhances flexibility and allows the textbook to provide suitable content for a wide range of individual school programs. It also allows for easier access by students when they are studying by themselves.

Images as a learning channel

Nelson Film, Television and New Media features a range of up-to-date and relevant images. Each image is accompanied by an extended caption that provides the students with additional information to enhance and deepen their learning experience.



Figure 8.2 (a) The representation in this image of a family from the 1950s suggests the woman's place is in the home. The man's role is to provide financially and allows a minimum of involvement in family life. (b) A 1990s image of a family includes the father within the family circle and suggests through body language and clothing that the mother is an equal partner in all things, probably including employment. However, the family is still represented as a conventional nuclear family. (c) This modern image of a family suggests that single parenthood may be a likelihood, while maintaining the possibility that the rest of the family is elsewhere in the house. The portrayal of the father as a potential single parent is an innovation on the typical portrayal of a woman as the single parent.



8.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Use the Bechdel test to assess some of the top films released this year. Respond to the areas of investigation in the table below.

ANALYSE	APPRAISE	EXPLAIN
Analyse the films, dissecting and interpreting the speaking roles to evaluate them using the Bechdel criteria. **Make a judgement** as to whether or not the films pass the test – and whether they pass the test fully or pass just some or none of the criteria.	**Appraise** the films according to whether they have worth independent of the Bechdel test, and whether women still play significant roles on-screen or in production.	**Explain** the reasons for your decisions, giving additional information that demonstrates the process you went through, and illustrate with examples.

2 Try conducting a 'reverse Bechdel test' in relation to the portrayal of males in films, television programs and video games. Analyse current movies, but also consider the following movies as possibilities: *Psycho* (1960), *The Terminator* (1984), *About Last Night* (2014) and *Juno* (2007).
Appraise the worth of the Bechdel test as a tool that can work in a variety of situations by systematically examining its applicability.

3 **Construct** a collage charting changes in either the male action hero character in films or the representation of the housewife/mother figure in advertising. You will need samples from each of the key eras of media development: the pre-feminist, feminist and post-feminist eras.
Explain the changes in labels attached to the collage, giving additional information about each stage.

4 Choose one of the following topics and discuss it in pairs.
- Has the advertising industry overreacted in its portrayal of men? Consider representations of men in the kitchen, men as sex objects and men portrayed in beer ads.
- To what extent has the exploitation of women's bodies in advertising decreased since the pre-feminist era? Or has it become worse?

Explain your viewpoint to your partner, clarifying your perspective with additional information and specific examples. Present the outcome of your discussion to the class.

5 Write a report on the representation of gender in a specific medium of your choice, such as television, film or new media.
Explain the representations you have chosen, identifying key features and recognising the qualities that each of them has.
Analyse how each of the representations operates, breaking them down into constituent parts and separating out the codes and conventions used. Interpret the connotations of each part of the representation.
Appraise the status of the representation by collecting real-world statistics to compare actuality with the media representation. Draw conclusions about the accuracy and worth of the representation.
Synthesise an edited montage of the representation of males and females over time, using imagery from a collection of movies, and solving conceptual, creative or technical problems as they arise. Scan DVD covers, create movie stills using a capture program or download images to build the moving-image media production.

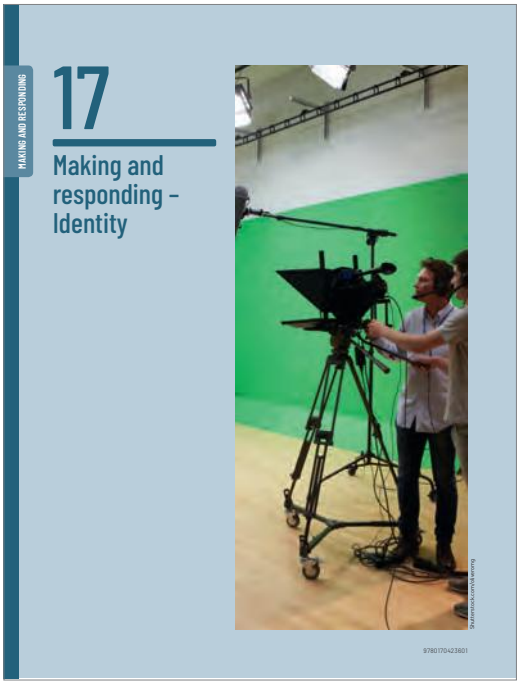
End of section activities

Marzano's cognitions and the syllabus underpinning factors are structured into the student activities. Each activity is based around one of the key cognitions used in the syllabus. The activity sentence stem begins with the cognitive verb. The activity then pushes students to explore the full potential of the cognition by taking them through the enabling aspects of the cognition and key supporting concepts as listed in the syllabus. Each activity is also designed to reflect the syllabus underpinning factors of literacy, numeracy and the 21st-century skills (such as collaboration or critical thinking).

The activities sections take two approaches to supporting students in acquiring and developing the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in Film, Television and New Media.

The 'vertical' approach moves students along the question and the cognition. In this approach, the cognitive verbs are stacked vertically as separate skills to be developed through a task that has several independent components. Enabling aspects and key supporting concepts are identified in brown. This ensures students explore all aspects of the cognition.

The 'horizontal' approach, usually in a table, moves students in a logical progression across the page. The cognitive verbs are interrelated in a developmental way to the core task of the activity. Students perform developmental cognitive tasks on the same 'umbrella' concept. As with the vertical approach, enabling aspects and key supporting concepts are identified in brown, ensuring the cognition is fully explored.



Making and responding

The 'Making and responding' sections address student assessment outcomes. These sections are designed to provide students with the practical information they need to complete formative and summative assessment tasks. Information about both written, pre-production and production tasks is provided.

Using the book for exam study

The exams can be a stressful time for Year 12 students. Doing well in an exam depends on several attributes:

- having good subject understandings within the five key concepts
- being able to flexibly apply those understandings in processes related to unseen exam questions
- developing good organisational skills
- enhancing memory skills through spaced repetition.

This textbook provides a comprehensive subject knowledge and helps to develop skills in each of the syllabus objectives. It is ideal for private study.

NelsonNet

NelsonNet is a protected portal to the premium digital resources for Nelson textbooks located at www.nelsonnet.com.au. Once your registration is complete, you will have access to digital content to supplement and complement each chapter, including activity sheets and weblinks. Icons in your NelsonNetBook will link you to these resources.

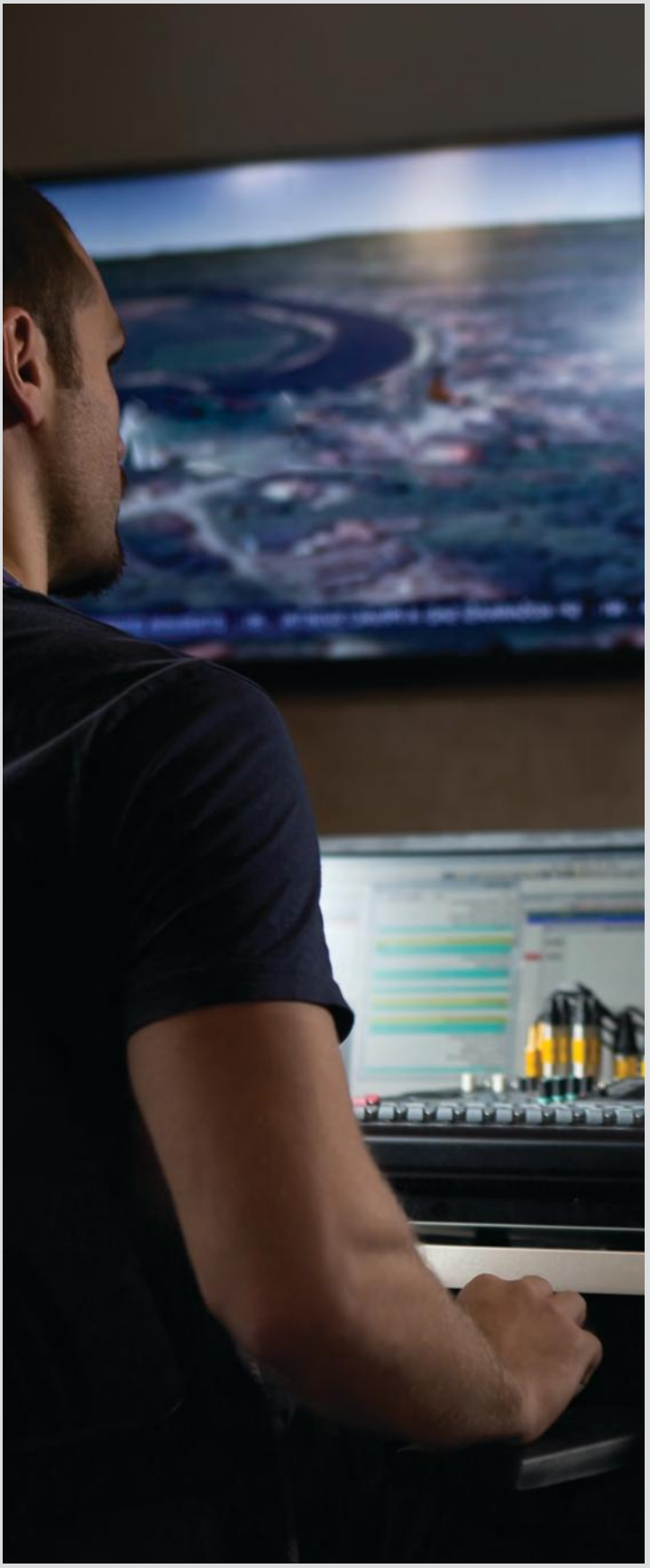
Teachers will have access to these resources plus teaching programs in Word and PDF formats, stimulus material for helping students develop their work and a PDF version of the student book.

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1

Introduction to Film, Television & New Media



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WHAT IS MEANT BY 'MOVING-IMAGE MEDIA'?

1.1.1 The Theorist of Mass Communications
Denis McQuail

According to the strictest meaning of the word, a medium is a channel of communication. 'Media', as the plural of 'medium', simply refers to more than one channel. 'The media' also refers to the institutions in which teams of people work to produce the communications we consume. The term is broad enough in its usage to also include the cultural products of the media: texts such as movies and computer games.

- **Moving-image media.** This term refers to the media associated with film, television, video and digital games, which are the media studied in the subject Film, Television & New Media. Text-based media (such as newspapers) and exclusively audio-based media (such as radio) are not included in the study of moving-image media. Still images or photography is also outside of the scope of study.
- **Traditional media** developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. This term refers to the types of media through which a small number of producers communicate with a mass audience. Traditional media are sometimes called 'one-to-many' media.
- **New media** developed in the late-20th century and have come of age in the 21st century. New media are computer-based media with a more complex pattern of interaction between producers and consumers. New media are sometimes called 'many-to-many' media.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the term 'media' has come to include both the traditional media and the emerging new media of computer-based and digital communication.



Getty Images/WireImage/Don Arnold

Figure 1.1 The media scrum. Behind each camera and microphone can be millions of viewers.

Purposes of the media

According to communications professor Denis McQuail (1935–2017), the new and traditional media fulfil the following roles in society:

- **Political role.** The media perform an essential political role in all societies, whether democratic or non-democratic.
  - They provide debate and supply information.
  - They make politicians widely known in the general community.
  - They allow governments to exercise power because politicians have easy access to the media.
  - They promote new ideas, social change and global understanding.
- **Cultural role.** The media are now among the most important communicators about culture.
  - They are agents of socialisation. Like schools, the media educate the young about the meanings of our culture.
  - They provide an experience that we can share. Media programs and images allow many people to have a shared sense of belonging. This is why, for instance, many comedians make jokes about politicians or television shows – because we've all seen them.
  - They provide important pastimes and leisure activities for many people.
- **Economic role.** The traditional media are large industries. The developments in new media have increased the importance of the media to the overall economy.

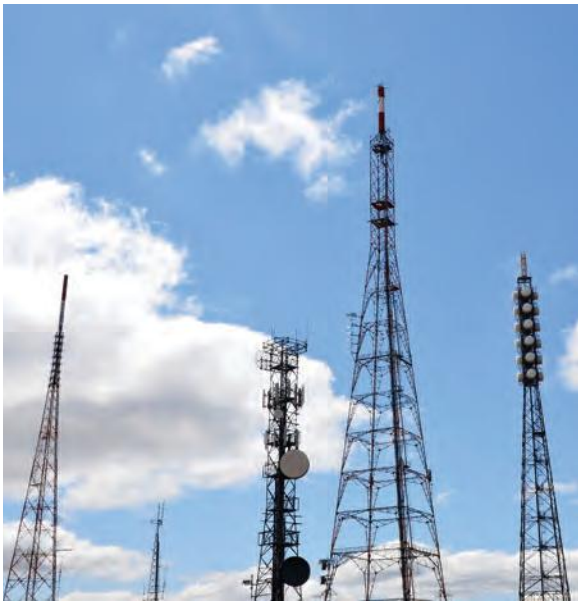
Traditional media

The traditional media, the so-called 'mass media', includes television and movies. Because their production is so expensive, it is very centralised. As a result, the communication tends to be from a privileged few to many.

The traditional media have all or some of the following features:

- **Large numbers of people are reached.** The audience may truly be a mass **broadcast** audience, or it may be a much smaller **narrowcast** audience. With the exception of movies in cinemas, traditional media products are usually produced centrally but consumed privately.

- **Media products are often multimodal.** Language has a variety of modes of delivery. These include speaking, writing, audio, nonverbal and visual modes of communication. Media products commonly combine several modes.
- **Some form of technology is employed.** Although the technology used may be simple, most traditional media use advanced technological processes.
- **Industrial corporations are involved in production.** With the traditional one-to-many media, large-scale government or commercial organisations control the production processes.
- **There is often multiple authorship.** Since media production is an industrial process, workers often have specialised roles, as on an assembly line.
- **Government regulation often applies.** The media industry is usually regarded as a 'special case' and is subject to some degree of government regulation.



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Figure 1.2 Television transmission towers (one for each channel). Traditional media are broadcast media following a one-to-many model: one broadcaster and an audience of many hundreds of thousands.

New media

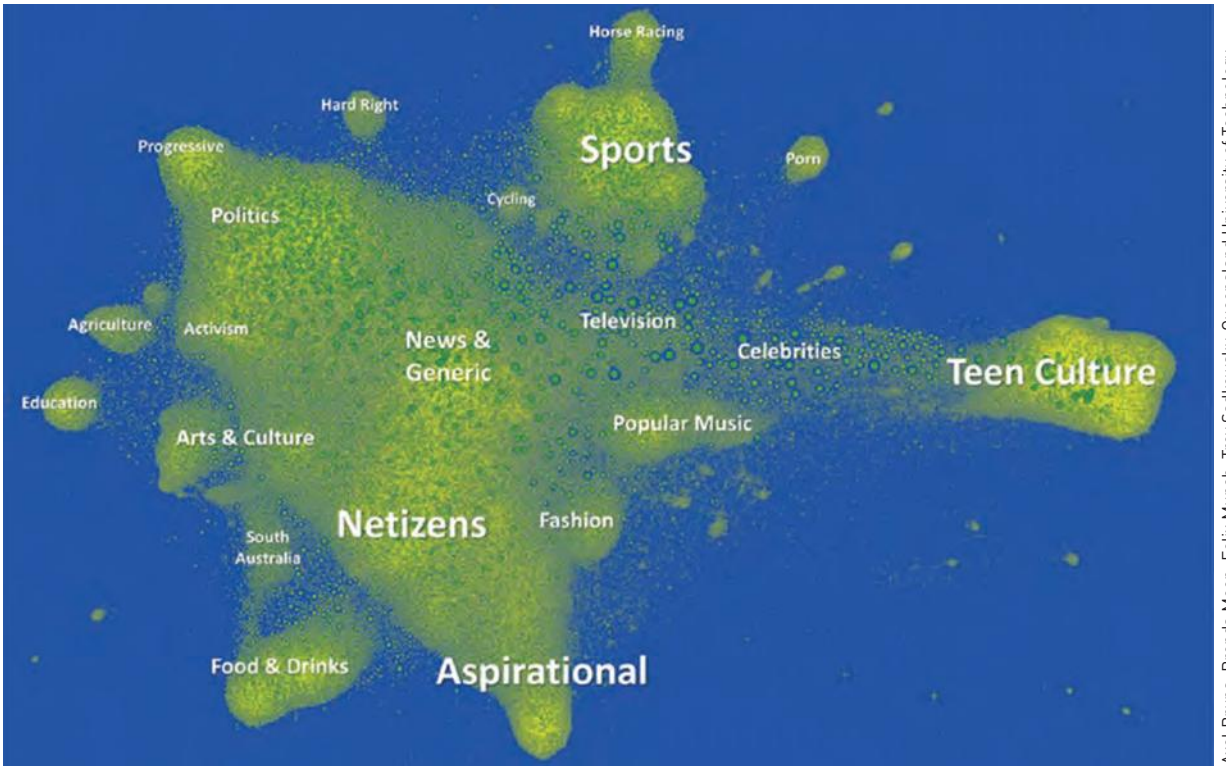
The new media are loosely defined and in a process of constant change. Large numbers of people are involved in both the production and the consumption of new media. Anyone with a computer and a multimedia program can be a producer. Rapid changes in technology have affected media production and consumption more than most other areas of society.

Technological change is 'ecological', says American cultural critic Neil Postman. He uses the term in the same way as environmental scientists. 'If you add caterpillars to a given habitat, you do not have the same environment plus caterpillars. You have a whole new environment.' According to Postman, a new technology does not add or subtract something: it changes everything!

New media have all or some of the following characteristics:

- **Digitality.** New media convert information from real-world lived experiences into numbers stored on a computer hard drive.
- **Interactivity.** New media allow the consumer to interact with the product to make certain choices.
- **Hypertext.** Hypertext in new media differs from the linear style of storytelling by allowing people to jump around from text to text and within a text.
- **Dispersal.** New media allow widely dispersed many-to-many communication.
- **Shared.** New media involve user participation and encourage user-generated content.
- **Social.** New media allow groups of people with shared interests to collaborate.
- **Virtuality.** New media have created electronic 'places' and 'spaces'.
- **Global and local.** New media provide instant communication across vast distances, but also make it easier to socialise and communicate with friends locally.
- **Everywhere at once.** New media are embedded in everyday objects and in our daily lives.

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Axel Bruns, Brenda Moon, Felix Munch, Troy Sadkowsky, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. The Australian Twittersphere in 2016: Mapping the Follower/Followee Network. *Social Media and Society*, Volume 3, Issue 4, Figure 3. © 2017 Reprinted by Permission of SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Figure 1.3 A map of Twitter communications grouped according to the themes of the discussions. The map was produced by Queensland University of Technology's 'Mapping Online Publics' project led by Dr Axel Bruns.

Film, Television & New Media – the subject

Film, Television & New Media is a Queensland Certificate of Education subject that recognises the importance of the media as our primary sources of both information and entertainment. This means that the media are giving us many of our ideas and shaping the way we think. The subject has a long history that spans the movement from traditional linear media to digital new media.

The subject in the 20th century

The study of television, film and moving-image media has a long history in Queensland. Thousands of students have graduated from the subject over more than 40 years. Many of them are now 'movers and shakers' in the media industries in Queensland, nationally and internationally. Included are Hollywood actors, heads of internationally known production companies, and well-known journalists and news readers. A host of production people, such as editors, post-production staff, camera operators and sound-recordists have also graduated from Queensland schools having studied the subject in Years 11 and 12. More than that, the subject has created a generation of people who are highly media literate.

The development of the subject can be broken down into several stages.

1.1.2 Mapping online publics

Early beginnings

The course has its origins in short film courses taught as part of English in certain independent private schools and some state schools. For example, Anglican Church Grammar School (Churchie) established a film course and its own production studios in 1970. Beaudesert State High School set up its own production courses and an annual film festival in 1977.

At this time, many schools used the junior school English textbook *Mastering the Media* by Barry Dwyer et al., first published in 1971. However, there were no dedicated senior school textbooks for the subject.

The first FTV syllabuses

Writing began on the first Film and Television (FTV) syllabus in 1975, and it was trialled in eight Queensland schools between 1979 and 1980.

The schools were: Beaudesert SHS, Indooroopilly SHS, Noosa District SHS, Gordonvale SHS, Miami SHS, Anglican Church Grammar School, Villanova College and Corpus Christi College (now Mary MacKillop College). The syllabus was approved as a success and implemented state-wide in 1981.

Queensland was the first state in Australia to offer such a course for university entrance. Students in these early syllabuses studied the following key topics:

- visual narrative
- the soundtrack
- news and documentary
- advertising
- **genre** and convention
- propaganda and ideology
- censorship and freedom of expression.

Period of rapid growth

Film and Television quickly became one of the most popular subjects with students in the 1980s and 1990s. More and more schools began to offer the subject. However, it remained a specialty course, and only about 25 per cent of schools taught the subject. In this period, the subject developed its own understanding of itself as a discipline. It also developed its own way of structuring curriculum content.

Several new textbooks made an important contribution in this period. Western Australian teachers Barrie McMahon and Robyn Quin's *Real Images: Film and Television* (1986) brought the study of media codes and conventions to the subject. Queensland teacher Colin Stewart (co-author of this book) published *Media Ways and Meanings* in 1990; this book helped clarify the study of genres in Film and Television.

In 1996, a new syllabus for Film and Television brought about a major shift in the teaching of the subject. This syllabus introduced the study of the key concepts: Technologies, Representations, Audiences, Institutions and Languages. These concepts were introduced from UK curriculums, and they are now the basis of the subject discipline around the world.

The subject in the 21st century

In 2005, the name of the subject was changed to Film, Television & New Media. This was to account for the huge growth in digital media from the early 2000s onwards. Including new media in the name of the subject allowed for the study of video across a whole range of new platforms that hadn't existed when the subject was first established. These include digital games, internet subscription services and mobile phone platforms.

Moving-image media is the media type that is studied in the subject. This is in keeping with the tradition of the original subject, and its concern with television and film. In many ways, the moving-image media are the most attractive ones for most people; they are also the ones that most resemble the appearance of the actual world. This makes moving-image media the most influential and significant of all media.

Key concepts in Film, Television & New Media

To come to an understanding of the moving-image media, whether traditional or new, more than just the media product needs to be considered. The media embody social customs and relationships, as well as buildings and hardware such as fibreoptic cable, steel transmission towers and printing presses.

The subject Film, Television & New Media develops understandings about the media around the key concepts. These were originally developed by the British Film Institute. The key concepts allow the study of the media in broad areas of investigation. They are as follows.

- **Technologies.** The technologies of production, distribution and reception are integral parts of the media themselves. They are the tools and the processes used to create media products. How we receive a communication determines how we use it and has an impact on what it means.
- **Representations.** What we see through the media is not reality, but a 're-presentation' of reality. It is constructed from various selection decisions made by the producers. The way the media construct a view of the world provides an insight into their relationship with society.
- **Audiences.** While members of the audience may not immediately think of themselves as part of the equation, without them the media would have no meaning. Audiences consist of individuals and groups. The media products are made for them, and audiences make meaning of them.
- **Institutions (industries and organisations).** Media products are influenced by the organisations that produce them. Roles involved in assembling the products have an

impact on the style of the product. Patterns of ownership and government regulation also have a significant effect. Institutions make it possible to have media products. Institutions also limit what is produced – whether by cost limitations, regulations or just inability to 'think outside of the square'. Institutions both enable and constrain production and use.

- **Languages.** The media have their own way of looking at the world. Each uses a specialised language, whether visual or written. Media products have distinctive ways of telling stories; they have particular narratives and recognisable genres. Moving-image media languages are the systems of signs, codes and conventions that help to create the meanings we get from media products.

Film, Television & New Media 2019 v1.2 General Senior Syllabus
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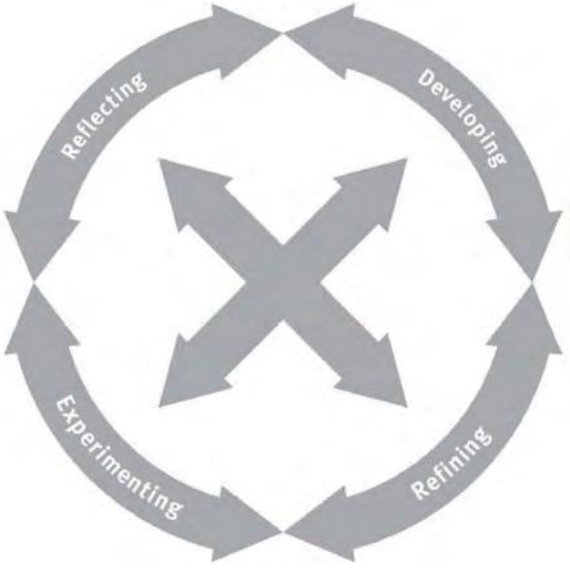


Figure 1.4 A graphic from the QCAA syllabus showing the interrelationship between each of the key concepts in the subject Film, Television & New Media. Moving-image media can be investigated from the perspective of each of the key concepts. The key concept acts as a lens to look through. The whole system should be considered in the light of the contexts of production and use.

Key terms in Film, Television & New Media

There are some specialised terms used in Film, Television & New Media you may not have heard before. In some cases, you will be used to hearing another term in its place. It is the idea that is important, and more familiar terms can be used interchangeably until you become accustomed to the specialised language used to study the media.

Moving-image media texts or products

The products of the media are often referred to as **media texts**. Media texts or media products are the programs, videos, films and digital games you are familiar with. The term can loosely include any sequence of communication, such as a music video, a radio broadcast or a mobile phone game. Texts have the following features:

- **A text is a unit of meaning that is complete in some way.** A sequence of meaning, or a story, is the most common media text. News stories, television soap operas and movies are sequenced narratives in which the meanings systematically relate to one another: there is a start, a middle and a finish. However, a single image such as a movie poster could also be a text, since it is complete in itself.
- **Media texts are created through a process of selection.** For example, what is finally shown on a television program is the end result of selection decisions made by the scriptwriter, producer, director, camera operator, editor and even the actors.
- **Media texts are said to be 'constructed' rather than natural.** Media texts come with certain perspectives that have attitudes, interpretations and conclusions already built in. This is inevitable because they come from particular contexts. Institutions such as commercial television stations may have constructed the text, and the text may have been aimed at a certain audience, such as 18- to 39-year-olds. The combination of these factors means that a point of view is always present, even in seemingly neutral texts such as news stories.

Moving-image media processes

Media processes are the stages of production that media texts go through from the initial idea to the final distribution to an audience. To make a film, for example, teams of people are involved in the media processes that take the idea and produce a finished feature film for release in cinemas, on DVD and via online platforms.

The staged processes of media production are called pre-production, production and post-production (see page 89).

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Mediums

Mediums include the traditional media of television, movies, radio, newspapers and magazines. Media forms also include the new media of the internet and video games. However, modern media cannot be so easily divided. The boundaries between mediums are blurring, and many traditional media are moving into new media forms of delivery. Television is an example of this, as many well-known television programs have both traditional and online delivery.

Platforms

A media platform is a means of delivering media content to audiences. It is a means of allowing audiences to engage with media categories such as film, games or social media. A platform can be regarded as an information or content space.

Platforms can be mediums, sites or services. The term 'platform' can be used interchangeably with 'medium', as in television as a platform. It can also refer to internet sites. YouTube is referred to as a platform. Facebook is a platform. Subscription services delivered over the internet can also be referred to as platforms. Netflix and Stan are platforms.

Context

The context is the surrounding environment of the text. In the subject Film, Television & New Media, the context has two parts: the contexts of production and the contexts of use (or reception).

1. **Production context.** When language, the time of production, nationality, organisation, government regulations and all other factors of a production environment are combined, they create what is called the context. Context refers to all the natural, cultural and social aspects of an environment that help shape the final meaning of a text.
2. **Use context.** The contexts of reception and consumption are the surrounding circumstances in which a media text is consumed or used. The reception context includes the following:
   - surrounding environment of the audience
   - technology used to consume the media product
   - time of day
   - individual personality and life history of the audience member
   - background knowledge or cultural knowledge of the individual.

Genres

Genres (from a French word meaning 'type, classification or category') are used to put media texts into categories according to the characteristics they share. For example, similar plot lines, characters or settings in different films suggest they belong to the same genre. The habitual use of genre conventions tends to mean their structure stays the same – at least for as long as they are a useful way of doing things. Consequently, genres have predictable patterns.

Units in this course of study

The subject Film, Television & New Media is a two-year course that has four units of study. This textbook is arranged to follow those units of work, and to focus on the key concepts of Technologies, Representations, Audiences, Institutions, and Languages (TRAIL).

Unit 1: Foundation. Unit 1 is an introduction to the ways in which the visual languages are used to communicate meaning. You will learn about media technologies, media institutions and media languages.

Unit 2: Story forms. Unit 2 investigates how stories are told in moving-image media, and how the form a story takes changes depending on its platform and contexts of production and use. You will learn some of the formats and techniques involved in creating moving-image media stories. The key concepts to be focused on are media representations, media audiences and media languages.

Unit 3: Participation. Unit 3 explores the potential for media users to participate in the moving-image media experience. Audiences can participate as users across multiple platforms using the internet and smartphones. They can also participate as producers using modern consumer production technology such as DSLR movie cameras. At an advanced level, you will investigate the key concepts of media technologies, media audiences and media institutions.

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Unit 4: Identity. Unit 4 is the final unit and encourages experimentation with moving-image media production to explore and question individual artistic identity. Identity expressed through media production can be explored in various aesthetic, historical and cultural traditions and contexts. In doing so, an individual style can be developed. At a more advanced level, you will develop understandings in the key concepts of media technologies, media representations and media languages.

1.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Make a list of all the media productions you have participated in. The list could range from photography to blogs, videos and so on.
Explain one of these types of productions in greater detail, **giving information** about what you did, who you worked with and who made up the audience for the production.

2 Neil Postman says that technological change is 'ecological'. In small groups, brainstorm some recent technological changes in media and apply Postman's theory.
Appraise whether it changed the whole environment in some way. As a starting example, **make judgements** about ways in which the increase of downloading has changed the music and broadcasting industries.

3 Select a media form/medium (e.g. television) and consider the characteristics of the media that apply to that media form. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how the characteristics of the media generally apply to the medium you have chosen. **Give information** about the way your chosen medium matches the characteristics.	**Analyse** component features of your chosen medium by **examining** each and **consider** the **strengths and limitations** of the medium.	**Appraise** the **significance** and **status** of the medium, **drawing conclusions** about its overall **worth** for audiences.

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UNIT 1 FOUNDATION

UNIT INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 you will learn all the foundational understandings you need for the rest of the Film, Television & New Media course. What you learn in Unit 1 will be useful to you for your own productions, and also for the critical responses you make to television, film and new media products.

The building blocks for your productions, and of all media products, are the signs, codes and conventions of media language. Once you have mastered these, you can make your audience laugh or cry, and keep them on the edge of their seats. The best way to learn this is to watch what others have done and make a detailed study.

All media, including your own, come about through institutional practices. Whether it is your own little production company of one, a small group or a large multi-national media corporation, there are certain routine practices undertaken. There are also certain regulations and safety procedures that must be complied with.

Using technology to communicate is what defines the media. You will learn how technology has evolved, making media more and more central to our lives. At the same time, technology gives us new ways to interact with the media.

By the end of Unit 1, you will have made your own production project and closely analysed a significant production work by another.

AREAS OF STUDY

Languages: How do signs and symbols, codes and conventions create meaning?

Institutions: How are institutional practices influenced by social, political and economic factors?

Technologies: How are tools and associated processes used to create meaning?

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2

Language codes and conventions of moving-image media



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ABOUT LANGUAGE CODES AND CONVENTIONS

The rules of spoken or written language cannot be used to understand the sound effects or visual images in movies and video games. All that unites these modes is that they are all acts of communication. This uniting factor provides a starting point for analysis. The study of visual language can be helped by using some of the ideas from written communication. However, there is a need for a whole new way of investigating visual communication.



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Figure 2.1 The universal film leader was a set length of film that was attached to the start of a film reel. It was used to help thread the projector, without damaging the theatrical film. The leader also allowed the projector to run up and reach correct speed. With modern digital projection, the film leader is no longer needed. However, it survives as a tradition and convention.

Signs, codes and conventions

The study of systems of signs and symbols is called **semiotics**. At the most basic level, communication takes place through **signs**: gestures, sounds, grunts and drawn images. It is possible to analyse at this level, although it reduces media language to tiny particles of communication. However, the reduction to signs does allow all print, sound and visual aspects of media communication to be studied together.

In semiotics there are generally agreed to be three areas of study:

1 signs – the smallest unit of communication
2 codes and conventions – ways in which signs are put together
3 culture – the cultural meanings that are given to signs and codes.

Signs

All communication can be seen as messages created out of signs. A sign can be a smile, a rude hand gesture, a photograph, a laugh or a letter of the alphabet. The audience for a message derives meaning from the message by interpreting the signs.

Signs refer to something other than themselves. They work as pointers or directions, guiding the audience towards thinking in a certain way. For example, the collection of marks on a page that is the word 'apple' bears no resemblance to an actual apple. All the marks do is point us in the direction of thinking about a real apple. While a photograph does bear a resemblance to the object it signifies, it is not the object itself; therefore, a photograph is only directing us to think the thought, in the same way as letters on a page do.

The meaning of a sign depends on its cultural **context**. Communications professor John Fiske gives the example of an ox. In an English-speaking context, an ox may suggest a beast of burden or something served between two buns with French fries. For a Hindu in India, where killing this sacred animal can be punishable by a jail term, the word ox carries a very different meaning.

Types of signs

Terms defining or relating to signs include the following:

- **Signifiers** are the signs. For example, the word 'apple' is a signifier. What is signified are the many meanings of 'apple' – some of these could include associations such as primary school teachers and education systems, or the poisoned apple from the fairytale *Snow White*. Signifiers can also be called 'connotations' (see below).
- **Icons** are signs that resemble the object they refer to. Photographs are icons because they are images of things that exist. However, icons can also be words. Onomatopoeia works like an icon because it makes language sound like the thing it signifies. For example, the word 'crash' sounds like the noise it refers to.
- **Symbols** are signs that do not resemble the thing they refer to. They derive their meaning from associations built up over generations of habitual use. The olive branch representing peace, or the cross representing Christianity, are both easily recognised symbols with roots in antiquity.

Denotation and connotation

Creating meaning around a sign is achieved through denotation and connotation.

- **Denotation** is the term given to the naming and describing level of a sign. This level defines or denotes what the sign refers to. For example, the word 'dove' denotes a small bird from the same family as the pigeon.
- **Connotation** refers to the associated thoughts that any particular sign brings to mind. These might be anything connected, suggested or implied by the sign. For example, a white dove brings to mind the concept of peace, while a turtledove is connected with the imagery of love.

Polysemy refers to the capacity of all signs to be 'many signed' (polysemous); that is, to have more than one meaning. A dictionary is a good place to discover this. The average number of meanings for a single word (or sign) in English is four to five. The word 'range' is one of the most polysemous as it has 17 different meanings. Within a particular culture, signs are not usually regarded as endlessly polysemous. The variations that occur are within limits set by the social and cultural context.



Alamy Stock Photo/Wing Lun Leung

Figure 2.2 The Mercedes is a powerful sign with strong associations. Connected with it are connotations of wealth, luxury and status. But the Mercedes is polysemous. It can mean a range of other things to different people. For some, it could also signify unfairness, greed and ruthlessness. In parts of Africa, for example, a black Mercedes is often associated with corruption and violence. However, the variations of meaning are not endless – they deviate within limits.

Codes

2.1.1 Codes

Codes are systems of signs put together (usually in sequence) to create meaning. As with a spy code, a set of rules governs the way the code is assembled and the linkages that will be made. Members of the community who use the code consent to the rules, and in this way make sense of the communication. Codes are therefore a product of the social and cultural context.

Writing is a code that allows us to represent thoughts on paper. Carefully schooled agreement among users allows the code to be understood. In the same way, sequences of images in a television drama are a code that allows us to participate in the narrative genre.

Types of codes

Code systems may be classified as either technical or symbolic.

- **Technical codes** are codes of the craft or the profession. They are technical in the sense of being techniques of construction. Technical codes include camera techniques, journalistic techniques and editing techniques.
- **Symbolic codes** are systems of signs that are embedded within the text itself. These signs have strong associative or connotative meanings connected with them. Symbolic codes include actors' clothing and body language.



Courtesy Matchbox Pictures

Figure 2.3 Creator Benjamin Law with the cast of *The Family Law* (2016–). The television comedy is loosely based on his own teenage years, starring Tristan Ngo as the partly fictionalised young Benjamin Law. It is set in the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Technical codes of production are those based on the technology – in this case, the camera taking the shot and the choice of angle, framing, etc. Symbolic codes are those in the image itself, including costume, setting, body language, etc.

Table 1.1 lists the technical and symbolic codes of the media.

Table 1.1 The technical and symbolic codes of the main media forms. Each media form/medium favours particular codes, and this may affect the final representation.

MEDIA	TECHNICAL CODES	SYMBOLIC CODES
Television, film, photographs, computer-based multimedia (images)	• framing • composition • shot type • camera angle • lighting • special effects • editing • camera movement • sound volume • sound fades and cuts • sound layering • written (structural; e.g. division into parts, words on the screen such as 'later') • computer screen design • computer interactivity • computer sequencing • computer navigation	• symbolic objects • set design • actors' body language • actors' appearance • lighting • dialogue • sound effects • music • choice of language
Radio, CDs, etc.	• fades and cuts • sound volume • sound layers	• dialogue • music • sound effects • silence
Newspapers, magazines, computer-based multimedia (text), etc.	• sentence construction • headlines, etc. • columns • page design • story placement • layout • (also refer to the codes for photographs)	• choice of emotive words • symbolic typefaces or fonts (e.g. Medieval) • (also refer to the codes for photographs)

Media encoding and decoding

As with all systems of signs, coded communications must be constructed (encoded) by the sender and then interpreted (decoded) by the receiver.

- **Encoding** refers to the process of making codes. Producers of texts encode their messages using systems of signs. Institutional issues influence this process.
- **Decoding** refers to the reading of coded messages by the receiver. Issues related to audience have an impact on this process.

Conventions

Conventions are habits or accepted ways of doing things. Through repeated experiences, often over generations, audiences become familiar with the procedures of conventions.

The media have hundreds of conventions. Each of them has been built up over so many years that the audience believes they are just common sense. In television and film, for example, a fade to black may indicate the passing of time. Had Hollywood developed differently, it could just as easily have been a fade to white (which instead tends to suggest death or a dream).

Conventions operate by general agreement with the audience. They are therefore the social and cultural component of signs and codes.

Binary oppositions

Thinking in terms of oppositions (masculine/feminine, black/white, active/passive, good/bad, rich/poor) is very human. Often we have to remind ourselves that things are not always black and white, but rather many shades of grey. **Binary oppositions** are an outcome of our way of communicating through signs, codes and conventions. Pairing opposites has an interesting effect on our thinking about power. Educators Emma and Sophie Robinson say oppositions have the effect of including or excluding individuals or social groups.

Binary opposites are not usually equal to each other. More often they are locked in a power struggle for dominance. For example, the gender opposites of male and female have been engaged in a 'battle of the sexes' since time immemorial.

Commutation

The meaning of a sign, code or convention can often be discovered by **commuting** it into something else. Movement, transfer or exchange of a code can result in vastly different meanings. For example, if the white clothes of the traditional melodrama hero were commuted to black, there would be a change in meaning. This change communicates to us the cultural significance of white clothes.

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Alamy Stock Photo/AF Archive

Figure 2.4 In *Junior* (1994), Arnold Schwarzenegger becomes pregnant during a medical experiment. 'My body, my choice,' says Schwarzenegger when advised to end the pregnancy. The humour in this movie comes from the incongruence of this biological commutation. It illustrates how, even today, male and female roles remain divided.

Meaning

Meaning derives from the cultural and social context just as much as it does from the text. Indonesian shadow theatre would have little meaning to a western audience because they do not have access to the cultural context.

Even within the same culture, different meanings can be read into one text. A text provides information-rich sequences that are rather like building blocks. Most people would use the blocks to build understandings that look similar, but each person's ideas would be a little different. Life experiences, gender, race or class may all be factors influencing a person's 'construction'. Some people could build quite unusual structures, yet still be using the same set of building blocks. In the same way, people make different interpretations of the blocks of meaning that are media texts.

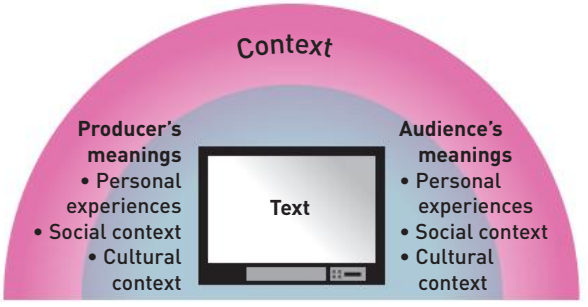


Figure 2.5 A text (e.g. a television program) exists within a social and cultural context. Producers and audiences within these contexts each contribute to the meaning of the text. Certain influences affect the producers, and the audience is subject to a range of other influences. Put simply, meaning is made on both sides of the text.

2.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Collect images (or words) you believe are clearly more polysemous than most. The meaning of these signs will depend on context. You will be able to change the meaning to some degree by changing the context.
Construct a numbered sequence of the images.
Explain the range of potential meanings that you can see. Give additional information about each, **clarifying** how the context could alter the meaning.
Construct captions to anchor the meaning to a particular interpretation you wish the audience to make for each image.
Explain the totality of the effect and **give additional information** about the connotations of each individual image.
Discuss the results with your class.

2 **Construct** a list of well-known visual media conventions and **provide additional information** about their usual meanings. **Illustrate** each convention using an example from a well-known film or television program. Examples of conventions might include cuts, fades, wipes, split screens and dissolves.

3 **Construct** a script for a 10–20 second video sequence that relies on the powerful connotative effect of selected images to present an emotional appeal. The topic can be of your own choice. Choosing a topic that allows you to take a strong view about something may make it easier to think of ways to manipulate associations and images. For example, emotive images are readily available for topics dealing with environmental issues. Advertisements are another suitable choice.

Explain the nature of the target audience you have in mind. Clarify by giving two examples of the kind of audience member who represents that group.
Explain the connotative effect you hope to achieve on your target audience with each of your chosen shots.

4 Title sequences of movies and television programs are often rich in meaningful signs, as producers show the key elements of the program and the audience to which they are appealing. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the basic sequence of images in the title sequence. Give information about its general style and the use of text and music. Illustrate the explanation with some examples of key scenes in the sequence.	Analyse key elements of the sequence, examining individual scenes and considering the use of accepted codes and conventions. Analyse the strengths and limitations of the title sequence using audience appeal as criteria.	Appraise meanings communicated to the audience about the show, and interpret the signs, codes and conventions to make a judgement about the impact of the sequence. Appraise the significance and status of the title sequence, drawing conclusions about its worth compared to other iconic title sequences you know of.

GENRES AND CODES AND CONVENTIONS

Genres (from a French word meaning 'type, classification or category') are repeated sets of codes and conventions. In the media, genres are ways of categorising texts according to the characteristics they share. For example, similar plot lines, characters or settings in different films suggest they belong to the same genre. The habitual use of genre conventions tends to mean their structure stays the same – at least for as long as they are a useful way of doing things. Consequently, they have predictable patterns.

However, unlike the clear classification systems of biology (for instance), genre classification is vague and blurry. Boundaries between genres are not strictly defined. **Hybrid texts** change those boundaries all the time. Film genre specialist Stephen Neale has argued that each new text extends or changes the genre by adding something new or altering one of the conventions. In this way, says communications academic John Hartley, the creation of just one Western film changes the whole genre.

Genres are based on shared knowledge held by the producers and the audiences. Genres are a means of selecting and constructing a certain view of the world. As such, they are closely related to **audience 'reading' practices**. An important feature of all genres is their tendency to progress in stages. For example, the narrative genre (defined below) typically begins with an orientation stage before moving to a complications stage, possibly an evaluation stage and, finally, a resolution stage.



Judy Horacek/Jenny Darling Associates Literary Agents

Figure 2.6 Genres are made up of codes and conventions, as well as the expectations of the producer and the audience. The relationship among these factors is circular. A change in audience expectation or interpretation can mean the need for a genre change. Producer experimentation may meet audience approval and therefore change a genre.

Larger genres

Broad categories of genre are based on whether texts are fiction or nonfiction, and whether or not they use story techniques. The large genres are as follows:

- **Narrative genres**. These use storytelling codes and conventions such as plot, character and setting. They are fictional or literary genres. The narrative genre includes most Hollywood movies.
- **Report genres.** These are based on the retelling of factual information but can use aspects of narrative as they relate events. News stories fall within the report genre.
- **Exposition or expository genres.** These aim to convince or argue a point of view. Documentaries and newspaper feature articles are regarded as expositions.
- **Non-narrative genres.** These are genres that do not tell stories. For instance, a single-frame newspaper cartoon does not have any plot development and so is a non-narrative text. Music videos that don't rely on a story and use jumbled imagery are another example.

Smaller genres

Most people use the smaller categories of genre when they think of genre texts. These may be divided into the following:

- **Specific genres.** There are many well-known media genres such as the horror movie, the newspaper feature article, the situation comedy (sitcom) and so on. Each of these will fit into one or other of the larger categories.
- **Subgenres.** Genres are often divided into subgenres. For example, the horror film genre encompasses at least five subgenres – slasher, supernatural and so on.



2.2.1 Australian film genres
2.2.2 Film genres
2.2.3 Genre and convention

Features of genres

Genres have the following characteristics.

Genres have a step-by-step structure

Genres have a relatively predictable structure of stages that follow one another in a sequence. In the narrative genre, the Hollywood formula for musicals was said to be 'boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl'. This is an example of the familiar narrative structure of orientation, complication and resolution.

Audiences can usually identify genres because they have recognisable features and step-by-step structures. Audience enjoyment of them is often derived from the familiarity of repetition, with just enough variation to add 'spice'.

Genres are a development of the cultural context

In a particular culture, people get used to interacting in certain ways. For example, the rituals of the traditional Maori greeting developed out of the habitual interactions of that culture. Within a culture, people like hearing stories with familiar subject matter. In Japan, a favourite genre is the samurai story; respect, loyalty and tradition are important to this genre.

The values and beliefs of a culture will affect the types of stories it prefers. For example, western culture generally favours stories in which good triumphs over evil. There is little demand for stories in which evil is rewarded or good and evil meet with random consequences. These preferences lead the audience to expect particular characters and familiar plots. The interest lies in the twists and turns along the way to resolution.

Particular communities and countries favour certain genres. For example, the Australian cultural context appears to have been favourable to the development of the television soap opera. Australian soaps are now shown around the world.

Genres can change

Genres change at about the same pace as the overall culture. Being closely tied to the culture, they reveal the concerns of the time as well as who has most power in that culture. For example, some 19th-century British novels, mostly written by women, portray a class-based society that denied women access to power. This is shown in the 1995 movie of Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility*.

Genres are changing relatively quickly at the moment. Technology has brought about a rapid transformation in culture, changing previously accepted ways of doing things. As genres are ways of doing things, they too are changing.

Multigeneric or hybrid texts

Many texts 'mix and match' a range of genres to suit new purposes created by a changing society. For example, television programs such as some

modern crime dramas combine elements of the soap opera in the format. Documentaries, often regarded as belonging to the larger exposition genre, can also display features of the report genre. Docudrama combines both genres with the storytelling features of the narrative genre.

Intertextuality

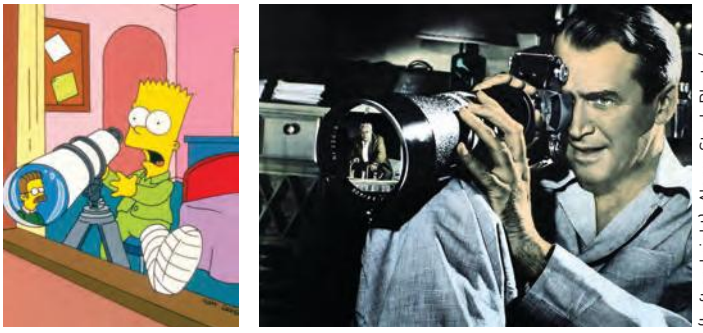
Intertextuality refers to the way in which any one text is woven into the whole culture and operates as a link to many other texts. It is also a reading practice carried out by audiences. The ability of the audience to use their familiarity with other texts is a skill built up as cultural knowledge develops. By drawing on references to other texts, audiences are able to derive more complex and enjoyable meanings.

The animated television sitcom *The Simpsons* is an obvious example of a text that uses intertextuality to maximum effect. When young children watch the program, they are largely unaware of the hundreds of in-jokes and references to other television programs, movies and books. As they become teenagers, more of these references become apparent and so they derive more enjoyment from watching the program. For adults watching with their families, this effect is often greater still, affording them extra pleasure when they watch the show.

Types of intertextuality

The following are types of intertextuality, according to John Hartley.

- **Genre relationships.** Other texts within a genre that the audience has seen can be used as a reference point to help understand and predict a new text.
- **Character and actor relationships.** Well-known actors or characters provide a link to other texts and a sense of familiarity.
- **Direct-quote relationships.** Sometimes a text makes a direct quote from another text, using it in some new way. This kind of 'recycling' is common in music videos and in television comedies such as *The Simpsons*.



(Left and right): Alamy Stock Photo/ United Archives GmbH

Figure 2.7 *The Simpsons* pays 'homage' to the famous opening scene of the mystery thriller *Rear Window* (1954), directed by Alfred Hitchcock. This scene is often used in film courses to teach about narrative. The reference is probably lost on young children, but more experienced viewers gain a heightened sense of pleasure from recognising the intertextuality.

Genres and audiences

2.2.4 Intertextuality in *Moulin Rouge*

2.2.5 A decade of *Simpsons'* movie references

2.2.6 A Visual History of Literary References on 'The Simpsons'

There has been very little research into how audiences make sense of genres to construct meaning for themselves. However, two possible approaches are indicated:

- **Genres build audiences.** A media genre is a way of creating an identifiable product for sale. This product will then attract a certain sort of audience. In the case of television genres, the audience attracted can then be on-sold to advertisers. Genres also serve as a way for producers to manipulate audience memories and expectations.
- **Audience members use genre to build their own identities.** Some research has been attempted into gender preferences for particular genres. There is also some indication that people may use preferences for certain genres as building blocks to their sense of self. For instance, someone who has seen the romantic comedy *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) several times may possibly be using this movie to tell themselves something about their own desires or who they are.

Genres and industry

It probably isn't a coincidence that *Antz* (1998) by DreamWorks and *A Bug's Life* (1998) by Disney/ Pixar came out in the same year. It just makes good economic sense! Once a genre has been found to be successful, various studios will produce more of works in this genre to extract the most profit.

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Recycling genre products has several other economic advantages. Reusing props, sets and costumes can save a considerable amount of money. Teams of writers and technicians can be built up, and their skills specialised into particular styles of production. Producing more of something eventually leads to what are called economies of scale: cost efficiencies created by mass production.

Genres change relatively slowly compared with the pace of production. Therefore, media companies are able to standardise their production within genres and know that their techniques will suit the market for a reasonable period of time. Different audiences can be catered for using different genres. This increases profitability because it leads to better targeting.

Table 1.2 Movies with similar storylines released at around the same time

PLOT PREMISE	MOVIE 1	MOVIE 2
Earth under threat from space	*Deep Impact* (1998)	*Armageddon* (1998)
CG animations about insects	*Antz* (1998)	*A Bug's Life* (1998)
Supernatural magic events set in late-19th-century Europe	*The Illusionist* (2006)	*The Prestige* (2006)
CG animations about supervillains who experience a change of heart	*Megamind* (2010)	*Despicable Me* (2010)
Ordinary characters in search of justice	*Kick-Ass* (2010)	*Super* (2010)

2.2 ACTIVITIES

1 As a whole class, make a list of all the media text genres you can think of. Begin with movies and then consider other media texts.
Explain individually two of the genres listed by the class, **identifying** unique **codes and conventions** used by the genres.
Construct a **systematically arranged** sequence of movie posters gathered from internet research that **illustrates** the genres you have chosen.

2 In small groups, list movies that came out in roughly the same time period and seem to have dealt with the same topic and used the same genre.
Explain some of the reasons for the similarities, **identifying** contextual factors that may have influenced the development processes.

3 View an episode of *The Simpsons* and consider the use of intertextual references.
Construct a list of textual cross-references.
Explain the references by **identifying** the original source and **providing additional information** about the connection between the original source and the humour in the program.

2.3.1 The 30 camera shots every film fan needs to know

CAMERA CODES AND CONVENTIONS

Moving-image media have been around for a little over a century, and in that time a number of codes and conventions have developed. These are associated with production elements such as shot size, camera movement and so on. Everyone now has grown up with the cinema, and so the codes and conventions are well understood by audiences.

The use of the camera in a narrative has the capacity to transform the meaning of the material being depicted. The main variables for the camera are:

- the shot itself
- shot distance
- camera angle
- camera lens and depth of field (focus)
- framing and shot composition
- camera movement.

The meaning of each of these is very dependent on the context. The use of a particular camera element is determined by the narrative. However, there are some very broad general meanings that can be applied.

The shot

The **shot** is the prime vehicle for carrying the narrative. In the visual language of photography, television and film, the shot is the smallest unit of communication. It is equivalent to a short sentence

in prose. A typical Hollywood movie has between 800 and 1200 shots, or picture statements.

Like sentences, picture statements have subjects. The picture statement may be saying, 'Look at these great wide-open plains.' The next shot may say, 'Look at this man on a horse – see what he is doing.' Picture statements are usually changed for one of two reasons: a new subject is being introduced, or something different about the same subject is going to be shown.

In film, the term 'shot' has at least two definitions, and in the early days of cinema they were clearly distinguished. The arrival of computer-based media has tended to blur the differences between the two. In the first definition (camera on/off), a shot is the interval of time from when the camera is first turned on in a scene until the stop button is pressed. This definition includes any continuous movement within the shot. In the second, less common definition (position change), the shot is the duration of time until the camera is moved to another position. Depending on how strictly it is interpreted, this definition may or may not include continuous camera movement.

A filmmaker or photographer can consider five variables when creating a shot: shot size, framing, focus, angle and movement.

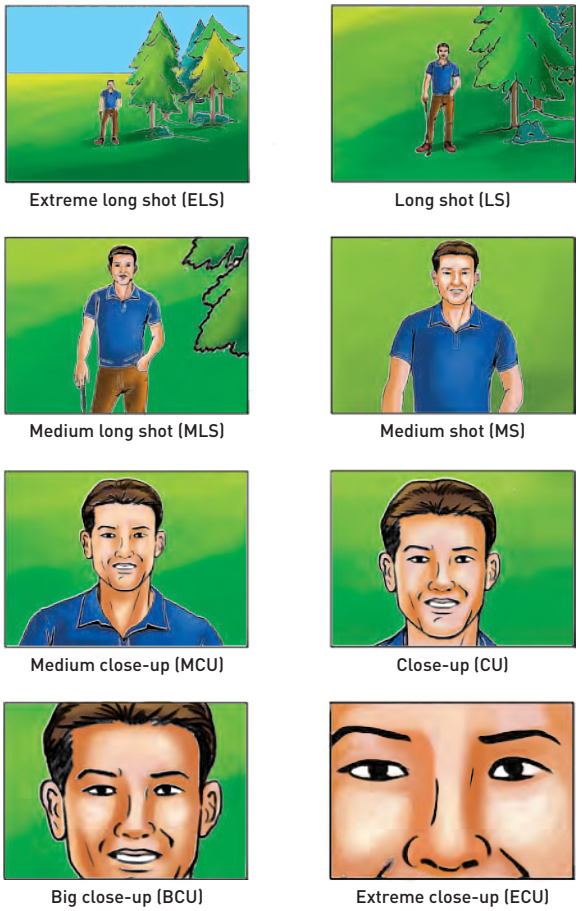


Figure 2.8 The eight shot sizes. The human body is traditionally used to define the size of the shot. We measure everything against ourselves.

Length of takes

At the immediate opening of a film the size of shots tends to be larger. The same thing happens at the opening of scenes. Shot duration is often longer in the openings of individual scenes as well. Shots tend to be about five to eight seconds long, but the duration of introductory shots is often twice that.

When the narrative is in its early stages, audiences need to gather as much information as they can about the characters and setting. The pace of editing needs to be slower and the shot needs to last longer. Once the audience is familiar with the characters, the shot duration can be cut down.

Length of **take** falls under the umbrella of camera decisions because it requires the camera operator to perform it. However, length of take is also an editing decision. The editor may decide to reduce the length of take in order to increase the pace

Uninterrupted shots of more than one minute are called long takes. One of the most famous long takes in cinema history is at the opening of Orson Welles's *film noir* classic *Touch of Evil* (1958). It lasts for three minutes. A bomb is planted in a car. The camera cranes up to give a bird's-eye view, then tracks off following the car. The man and woman in the car engage in ordinary conversation, while the audience is held in suspense. The shot closes with the inevitable explosion. Robert Altman pays homage to this shot in his eight-minute opening take in *The Player* (1992). An exceptionally long take begins the film *Gravity* (2013). This is a complex shot made with the help of computer-generated imagery. It lasts for 17 minutes and draws the audience completely into the world of the story. The art film *Russian Ark* (2002) was deliberately filmed at the Winter Palace as one single Steadicam shot that lasted 96 minutes: a ghostly narrator floats through various rooms of the palace encountering different characters from the 300-year history of the city of Saint Petersburg up until 1913 (just before the 1917 Russian Revolution).

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Figure 2.9 The long take is defined as an uninterrupted shot of more than one minute. There are many reasons directors use it. Sometimes it is a matter of style and a way of drawing attention to the artistry of the film; At other times it may suit the content of the narrative. A slow long take may be the best way of allowing audiences to gather a lot of information at the beginning of a narrative.

Shot sizes and narrative purpose

Alfred Hitchcock once told French film director and critic François Truffaut that the size of an object in the frame should be roughly in proportion to its importance in the story at that particular time. Directors choose their shot sizes carefully to suit the narrative.

There are eight main shot sizes (see Figure 2.8). Visual emphasis is directly related to the size of the subject in the shot. The shot size also determines the amount of visual material that can be included. Smaller shot sizes concentrate audience attention. Therefore, the choice of which shot to use is among the most fundamental decisions every director makes.

Extreme long shot (ELS)

Extreme long shot (ELS) shows a wide view of the complete setting, such as a coral reef in the middle of a vast ocean. In human terms, a person would be barely visible in the scene. The ELS is almost always an exterior shot. Extreme long shots are often highly composed and use traditional techniques such as the rule of thirds and diagonals to focus attention on particular zones (see page 27). Extreme long shots are usually held for a longer time because it can take a while for the audience to absorb all the information.

In the narrative, an extreme long shot has several functions:

- An ELS gives a sense of scale and also provides location. Extreme long shots are often used in those genres that rely on landscape: epic movies, historical movies, Westerns, road movies and science-fiction movies.
- An ELS can be used to provide a frame of reference for the closer shots that follow. For this reason, they are often used as **establishing shots**.
- An ELS can show spatial relationships and the way groups of people are going to come into play with each other. The ELS is also used for grand scale with massed human subjects. For example, an ELS is often used to show a battle scene.



Alamy Stock Photo/Atlaspix

Figure 2.10 Extreme long shot from *The Revenant* (2015). This scene was shot in Alberta, Canada where the temperature rarely reached above –30 degrees Centigrade. Diagonal lines formed by the mountains direct the viewer's attention to the human figure in the landscape. The character is a mere speck on the flat expanse of snow, but the attention is also drawn to him because he is moving.

Long shot (LS)

A long shot (LS) is closer than an ELS but still shows the complete scene. On a human scale, a human figure is clearly visible, and the complete person fits easily within the frame. In a typical LS, the background still dominates the human figure. The term 'long shot' can be imprecise. The closest an LS gets to a person is to show the whole human body from head to toe. At its furthest, an LS keeps the human body as dominant in the frame. However, emotions are not easily read at this distance.

The LS is one of the most common shots in the cinema.

1 An LS is used in narrative to establish the scene and to introduce characters. Genres that focus more on character or the human figure and less on landscape tend to use a lot of long shots. Such genres include musicals, martial arts films and action movies. Long shots are often used in these genres to allow us to see characters displaying their skills. An LS allows the audience to see the full body in movement.
2 An LS can be used as an establishing shot, particularly in order to establish or leave a scene. It shows where all the characters are in relation to each other in the scene. It also gives a glimpse of the complete action.
3 Characters in a group are often filmed in LS. An ELS allows characters to be recognised, but facial expressions cannot easily be read.
4 Long shots can be used to limit emotional involvement with characters. For instance, antagonists are more often filmed in LS than protagonists are.



Shutterstock.com/Getmilitaryphotos

Figure 2.11 The long shot has several purposes in the narrative. It can introduce characters or work as an establishing shot. It tends to create emotional distance as we cannot read facial expressions. In a war movie, characters filmed in long shot will not garner the same level of audience distress when they become casualties.

Medium long shot (MLS)

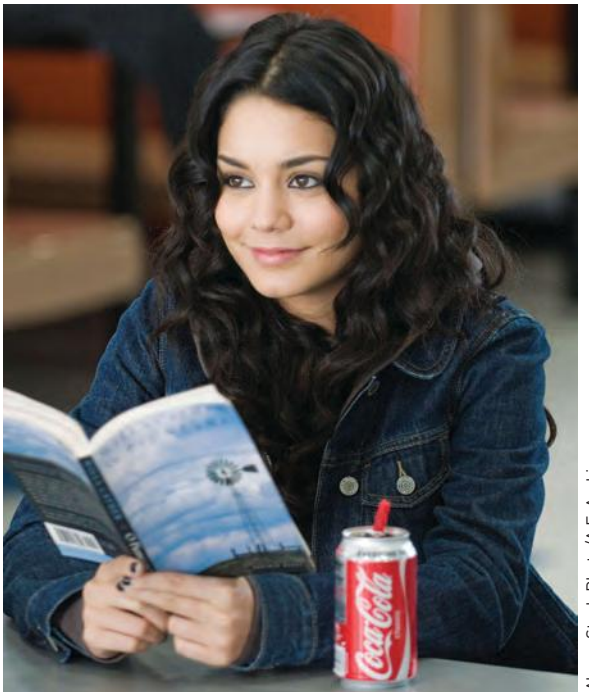
Medium long shot (MLS) still provides a great deal of information about the setting. Human characters can be seen in detail and almost all of the body (usually from just below the knees) is in the frame.

French filmmakers once called this 'the American shot', as it was very common in Hollywood Westerns and during the ***film noir*** period.

1 A common purpose of the MLS is to provide for both dialogue and action. In *noir* films, a detective may be surrounded by a carefully arranged formation of underworld characters.
2 An MLS is often used for **two-shots** because there is room in the frame for more than one character.
3 Some emotion can be seen, so MLS is suitable when other characters and landscapes are involved in emotional relationships.

Medium shot (MS)

Medium shot (MS), sometimes called mid-shot, is defined by some as 'not too close, not too far'. On the human body, an MS would start at around the waist and include a little space above the head. Gesture and expression are now more clearly visible.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 2.12 A mid-shot from the movie *Bandslam* (2009). Shallow depth of field in this shot has defocused additional background information, except for the product placement.

The MS is ideal for the following narrative situations:

1 showing conversations between one or more characters, often until a key moment arrives when there is a cut to close-up
2 showing dialogue together with some limited action
3 revealing aspects of body language and facial expression combined. A significant part of the body – the upper body – is still included
4 providing the midway point in a sequence from long shot to close-up.

Medium close-up

Medium close-up (MCU) frames the subject moderately closely. Medium close-ups used to be the typical frame for a newsreader, but many are now framed in medium shot. The head and shoulders fit comfortably in the frame with a little room above the head.

1 An MCU allows the audience to see facial expressions and emotions.
2 An MCU also allows the audience to see body language.
3 Background information is still visible, although it is often defocused. The director can still take advantage of *mise en scène* (props, costumes, landscape, lighting carefully placed in the scene).
4 An MCU increases emotional involvement.



Photo by Matt Nettheim, image courtesy of Blackfella Films.

Figure 2.13 Eddie Mabo (Jimi Bani) and his wife Bonita (Deborah Mailman), in the living room of their Townsville house, from the television miniseries *Mabo* (2012). A medium close-up shows the head and shoulders. *Mabo* is a biopic about Torres Strait Island man Eddie 'Koiki' Mabo who was a gardener on campus at James Cook University in Townsville. He led a campaign all the way to the High Court of Australia that would eventually establish the principle of native title. Native title gave Indigenous Australians land rights. It established that the land was inhabited, and that the land was owned before Europeans arrived. Before that High Court decision in 1992, it was assumed that Indigenous people had no system of ownership, and that the land was vacant (*terra nullius*). Eddie Mabo changed Australian law, and the way we think about our history.

Close-up

Close-up (CU) shows the detail of a subject. A typical CU shows only the head of a person, usually from the middle of the neck upwards. Close-ups often use a shallow depth of field. This is so the audience focuses only on the important details.

The existence of the CU is one of the reasons acting for film differs from acting for the stage.

1 The CU is often used in narrative to show emotion. It is common in both film and television, but television narrative relies more heavily on it. Before the advent of film, a close-up view of a face was usually only seen in intimate real-life situations.
2 Audience identification is much stronger when characters are shot in CU.
3 A CU is often used at plot turning points and moments of high emotion.
4 A CU can convey the importance of the subject – the more space is devoted to something in the frame, the more important it is in the narrative.

Big close-up (BCU)

Big close-up (BCU) shows the detail of its subject, with the emphasis on the most important features. For example, a BCU might show the area from the middle of the forehead to just above the chin; this would show the **social triangle** of the eyes and mouth.

The BCU fulfils a similar function to the CU.

1 BCUs are used to show extremes of emotion.
2 A BCU completely restricts background information.

Extreme close-up (ECU)

Extreme close-up (ECU) shows only a portion of detail or magnifies something that is minute.



Getty Images/by_nicholas

Figure 2.14 Extreme close-ups can be used to show a detail of emotion, such as a tear drop. They are often used when the detail is symbolic. The use of ECUs indicates that the detail is extremely important in the narrative.

An example of an ECU would be a dramatic focus on someone's eyes. Often an ECU is used to create a sense of mystery. It can be very effective in hiding what something is until a dramatic camera pull-back.

1 An ECU directs the audience to believe that the detail is extremely important in the narrative. It can often be useful for foreshadowing. Sometimes an ECU of an object means it is about to be use; for example, a close-up of a gun immediately suggests its appearance in use in the next shot.
2 An ECU is often used when a detail is symbolic.

Table 1.3 The range of shot sizes used in selected films from the database of Australian film historian Barry Salt. ASL refers to average shot length (in seconds). Note the increase in frequency of big close-ups (BCU) and the decrease in extreme long shots (ELS) over time.

		ASL (SECONDS)	FREQUENCY OF SHOT TYPE						
TITLE	YEAR		BCU	CU	MCU	MS	MLS	LS	ELS
The Birth of a Nation	1915	7	1	19	26	78	126	172	79
Battleship Potemkin	1925	3	32	75	67	69	71	160	26
The Birds	1963	5.3	59	127	111	69	57	58	19
Beetlejuice	1988	4.2	44	166	106	50	66	55	12
Dark City	1998	2	153	112	44	39	42	97	12
10 Things I Hate About You	1999	6.7	64	224	82	37	36	53	3
The Blair Witch Project	1999	15.8	96	74	70	93	88	79	0
The Sixth Sense	1999	8.6	91	135	93	59	59	60	2

Source: http://www.cinemetrics.lv/salt.php

2.3.2 Camera angles: the art of manipulation

Camera angle and the narrative

The camera angle can often serve as a director's comment on the subject matter. It allows the director to manipulate the audience's reaction to the material in the shot. The camera angle sets up the relationship the audience has with the subject of the shot. Camera angle can also establish the power relations between characters on screen. An example of this occurs in the musical *Dirty Dancing* (1987), when Baby first declares her admiration and love for Johnny. Having played her hand, she is shown as vulnerable in a high camera angle; he is powerful because he may reject her. A low camera angle ensures he towers over her, until he softens and then declares his love in return. At that moment, the camera angle returns to normal and equalises their power relations.

There are five main camera angles: eye-level angle, high angle, low angle, extremely high or bird's-eye angle, and canted or Dutch angle.

Eye-level angle

The height to which the camera is most often adjusted is eye level. This is how we experience the world, so shooting at this level creates a feeling of normality.

In a narrative, eye-level shots suggest realism. They are routine, everyday shots that encourage the audience to suspend disbelief and enter into the world of the story.

High camera angle (HCA)

This angle is created when the camera is positioned high and tilts down on the subject. HCAs tend to place the audience in the position of an adult looking down on a child. The subject looks inferior or unimportant and the viewer feels superior.

In narratives, HCAs tend to suggest vulnerability. A HCA also tends to slow down movement. It is not effective in giving a sense of urgency or speed. However, HCAs do increase the importance of the surrounding environment, making the person seem less important. HCAs can also give the audience the feeling that characters are overwhelmed or stressed out.



Courtesy NBCUniversal



Courtesy NBCUniversal

Figure 2.15 In the film *Psycho* (1960), Marion Crane steals $40 000 and drives out of Phoenix, Arizona, to California. She sleeps overnight in the car but is awakened by a suspicious policeman. Marion is intimidated by the policeman, and the high camera angle (top) has the narrative purpose of making us feel her lack of power and vulnerability. The low camera angle shot of the policeman (bottom) gives him extra power and superiority. The audience also feels menaced because he looks directly at us.

Extremely high camera angle

If the camera is very high, almost overhead, it gives a bird's-eye view of the subject. This can create a feeling that the viewer is like a god looking down on events. This type of shot is sometimes called an **overshot**.

In a narrative, an extremely high camera angle is often used at the end of scenes. In certain cases, it can suggest impending death or punishment. A spectacular example of this occurs at the end of the cult road movie *Easy Rider* (1969). The overshot can be used to hide aspects of character, as occurs in *Psycho* (1960) when the killer Norman Bates is filmed directly overhead on the staircase.

Low camera angle (LCA)

When the camera is low to the ground and tilts upward at its subject, the viewer feels inferior or threatened. The subject seems overpowering. LCA creates the perspective of a child looking up at an all-powerful adult.

In the narrative, LCA can suggest someone is threatening or it can suggest someone is superior or respected. The interpretation depends on the context. LCA also tends to speed up movement, so it is good for violent scenes. It can also create a sense of confusion. Information about the environment is limited, because LCA captures mostly ceilings and skies.



Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives GmbH

Figure 2.16 An extreme low camera angle from *Batman Begins* (2005) makes the audience feel like vulnerable prey. The shot with a spiral staircase is an intertextual reminder of a shot in *The Third Man* (1949). Low camera angle is usually not so dramatic, as even a minor lowering can produce a narrative effect.

Canted or Dutch angle

When the camera is canted or tilted to one side so that the horizon is on an angle, it creates an effect that is disorienting and unsettling for the audience. It feels off-balance and therefore suggests a crazy world. Dutch angle was commonly used in **German Expressionism**.

In the narrative, Dutch angles create a sense of disorientation and confusion. If there is a sequence of canted shots, it is tradition to tilt from one side to the other, so a left-canted shot is followed by a right-canted shot. Dutch angles can be seen in the opening scenes of *Bagdad Cafe* (1987), where the angles add to the foreignness of the situation and reflect the domestic conflict between a German couple lost in the American desert. Dutch angles are also used in *The Third Man* (1949) to show the protagonist's disorientation.

Camera lenses and depth of field

2.3.3 Types of lenses
2.3.4 How different film lenses affect how we perceive movies
2.3.5 Favourite focal lengths of famous directors

Camera lenses allow the filmmaker to make the settings and spaces of the film suit the purposes of the narrative. Different lenses can make the subject matter of the shot look quite different.

Types of camera lenses

Camera lenses come in three basic ranges based on their focal length. Focal length determines the angle of view. It is basically defined as the distance from a midpoint in the lens to the focal point on the film or imaging surface (sometimes called the picture or focal plane). Focal length is measured in millimetres. The following ranges refer to 35-millimetre movie cameras.

- **Normal movie lenses** (focal length 27–75 millimetres) are roughly approximate to the perspective of the human eye. There is no distortion apparent.
- **Wide-angle movie lenses** (focal length less than 27 millimetres) provide a wider angle of vision than the human eye. They make the scene look wider and deeper. For example, the shot in Figure 2.10 from *The Revenant* (2015) uses a wide-angle lens. Characters and objects in the foreground look larger; characters and objects in the background look smaller. These lenses also accentuate movements that are close to the camera because they make distances look longer. They tend to exaggerate movements that are placed in the central field of view. *The Truman Show* (1998) uses a wide-angle lens at times to emphasise the sense of surveillance.
- **Telephoto movie lenses** (focal length 75–1000 millimetres) compress the distances between the foreground and background. This makes objects appear to be much closer together, flattening the perspective. These lenses also seem to slow down movement towards the camera. This is because distances are compressed, and close figures seem to be a similar size to more distant ones (flattened perspective).



Shutterstock.com/kqlsm

Figure 2.17 A telephoto lens compresses the distance between the bikes and gives the impression of slow movement. Directors choose their lens type to suit the effect on settings and spaces.

Depth of field

A filmmaker can use focus to make the audience pay attention to certain details within the narrative. Selective focus can be used to draw attention to someone's face, for example. The background and other details can be downplayed by keeping them out of focus.

The area of the frame that is in sharp focus is called the depth of field. The depth of this area is determined by the length of the lens and the size of aperture used. Generally speaking, a wide-angle lens has a greater depth of field than a telephoto lens – that is, more of the image will be in focus with a wide-angle lens.

> 'If I made big budget films I would have that deep depth of field because it plays upon the effect of surprise. It can give you a whole series of little tricks, little hiding places, little hooks in the image where you can hang surprises, places where they can suddenly appear, just like that. You can create the off-frame within the frame.'
>
> **Benoît Jacquot**, French film director, *Seventh Heaven* (1997)

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There are two main types and usages of depth of field.

Deep focus

The term 'deep focus' is applied to films that have everything in focus, from the foreground to the distant background. Deep focus films need lots of light, a small camera aperture, a fast wide-angle lens and fast film stock. Deep focus tends to favour long takes. With so much of the frame in focus, there is more information for the audience to absorb. Therefore, there is a greater need to linger on the shot. Deep focus also favours the 'invisible style' of **continuity editing** (see page 41). Movies using deep focus include *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Jaws* (1975) and *The Untouchables* (1987).

Because deep focus mimics the operation of the human eye, it creates a greater sense of **realism**. The filmed image looks more like the real world. Some critics say this allows the audience to make up their own minds about meaning a lot more easily – just as they do in real life.



Alamy Stock Photo/Collection Christophel

Figure 2.18 The deep focus technique is evident in this shot from *Citizen Kane* (1941) showing Kane (Orson Welles) in the foreground, addressing a rapt audience of businessmen at a long banqueting table.

Selective focus

Most modern films use a selective or shallow focus technique, where only some of the shot is in focus. Selective focus or shallow focus relies more on quick cutting and lots of close-ups. It is therefore more suited to **montage** editing (see page 430) and the quicker pace of many films.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 2.19 Selective focus in *Avatar* (2009). Deep focus is disappearing from the modern cinema, says film analyst David Bordwell. Shot lengths are decreasing, and framing is getting closer. Modern dialogue scenes are often shot in mid-shot or close-up.

Selective focus is often said to be less realist in its approach, and more expressive and personal. Because the audience seems to see less of the real world, the director's personal view is strengthened. A film that exemplifies the selective focus approach is Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001).

Changing focus

Sometimes the focus is changed in the middle of a single shot. The two main kinds of focus change are follow focus and pull (or rack) focus.

- **Follow focus.** The camera follows the moving subject, keeping the subject in focus while the background changes.
- **Pull (or rack) focus.** The focus suddenly changes in order to direct attention away from one subject and towards another. For example, a shot with wire net fencing in sharp focus may suddenly be pull focused onto the prisoners exercising in the enclosed yard beyond.

Framing

The photographic frame is not just a simple border, according to American film academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. It is not like the margin of a page. The frame produces a vantage point. It gives a point of view and it selects some details over others. The frame lets us see some things and not others.

Bordwell and Thompson list four main ways that framing can influence what the audience sees.

1 **Aspect ratio.** The size and shape of the frame is called the aspect ratio because it is based on the ratio of width to height (gained by dividing width by height). The standard television ratio is 4:3 or 1.33:1, while widescreen television uses 16:9 or 1.78:1. Cinema uses a variety of

ratios, but most widescreen formats are slightly larger than 16:9, with 1.85:1 the most common. However, some epic films such as *The Lord of the Rings* (2001, 2002, 2003) use CinemaScope, with a ratio of 2.35:1.

2 **On-screen and off-screen space.** When the audience sees a shot on screen, everyone assumes that space and life continue consistently outside the frame and all around it. How a director uses this assumption can be important to the narrative. An example of this is the use of looking space or talking space. This is an area of negative or empty space in front of a framed person, which suggests someone else is outside the frame. Another way of suggesting space outside the frame is to use **eyelines**. A character can appear to look towards a point outside the frame.



Figure 2.20 Space outside the frame is suggested in both these shots. Shot A uses 'looking space' to suggest that the character is talking to someone outside the frame. Shot B has negative space behind the person, suggesting action is happening, or is about to happen, outside the frame behind the character.

3 **Angle, height and distance.** The idea of the frame as a vantage point suggests that framing places the viewer in a certain position – perhaps above or below the subject, or close or far in the distance. Each of these positions affects the narrative in some way.

4 **Frame movement.** As the camera moves, so too does the frame. How this happens in relation to the events on the screen changes our involvement in the story.



Courtesy NBCUniversal

Figure 2.21 In Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho* (1960), diagonal lines formed by the cars and the roadway all point to the powerful figure of the policeman and thus help to position the character within the narrative.

Composition

Composing a shot is a matter of arranging the elements to create a desirable effect within the narrative. The following two conventions are among the most commonly used.

- **Lines and diagonals.** Placing elements on imaginary lines can create interesting effects. The lines may be horizontal, vertical or diagonal across the image. In a narrative, diagonal lines build a sense of drama and may be used to direct attention towards a character or event. For example, the shot in Figure 2.10 (see page 20) from *The Revenant* (2015) uses diagonals to heighten the sense of emptiness.
- **Rule of thirds.** Some say the subject of a photograph should never be placed in the centre of the frame. Instead, the focus of interest should be at the intersection of imaginary lines that divide the frame into thirds.



Shutterstock.com/REX/Kobal/Warner Bros

Figure 2.22 From *300: Rise of an Empire* (2014). The rule of thirds can be applied to this image. Points of visual interest are at the intersections of the lines.



Getty Images/Universal Images Group/Photo 12

Figure 2.23 *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* was the most reprinted photograph of World War II. Victorious but exhausted, a small group of marines climbed Mount Suribachi to hoist the flag. Notice the use of strong diagonals and the application of the rule of thirds in the photograph. Notice also how inspired and triumphant this photograph is: the flag is flying upwards not drooping; all men are engaged in the struggle, the last reaching upwards, the first crouched down; the open sky dominates the space; and the wreckage of war forms a base for victory.

Composition is placed in the camera section because it requires the camera operator to compose aspects of the shot. However, composition is also a technique of *mise en scène*. The director decides which elements to include and how to arrange them.

Camera movement

Camera movement in a shot directs the audience to where the filmmaker wants them to look. It can help establish visual emphasis. But the movement of the camera can also be like our own movements. For example, when the camera moves in, it is as though we have moved closer. Camera movement is important in positioning the audience within the narrative.

Following are the main types of camera movements and their narrative purpose.

Panning shot

The term **panning** is derived from 'panorama' and means moving a camera in a long horizontal sweep from one side of a scene to another. Since a long rotation from left or right can be difficult to perform, most camera operators use a tripod. Pans occur in real time; they cannot be edited down or shortened very easily. Therefore, pans are placed at moments in the narrative when there is sufficient time – often at the beginning of the movie.

Swish or zip pans are extremely fast and tend to blur everything between the start and finish of the pan.

In a narrative, a pan helps to set the scene. For this reason, pans are often used as establishing shots. A pan can also be used to heighten the suspense in a narrative, as the audience scans the scene, waiting to be shown something. In this way, a pan can also be used as a point-of-view shot (POV shot) to show what a character sees as they scan the scene. Probably the most analysed pan in cinema history is the opening shot of *Psycho* (1960). At the start of the narrative, this pan across the city hints at the way 'evil' can randomly enter the lives of ordinary people.

Tracking shot

In a **tracking shot**, the camera moves along the ground: forward, back, diagonally or from side to side. Originally, cameras were moved on little railway-like tracks. This method is still sometimes used today; however, a dolly (tripod with wheels) is often substituted. More recently, Steadicams have also been used.

In a narrative, a tracking shot moves the audience through the scene, making it seem more three-dimensional. It is also very precise about what is important: the subject being followed. Tracking and dollying lend narrative significance or importance to the subject. For instance, tracking shots are used to introduce the characters in *GoodFellas* (1990).



Alamy Stock Photo/Album

Figure 2.24 Crane and tracking shot for a film shoot. Note that a small section of track has been laid down to allow the crane carrying the camera to move smoothly.



Film Victoria, photo by Daniel May

Figure 2.25 A tracking shot being filmed for HBO's *The Pacific* (2010) outside Flinders Street Station, Melbourne. Note that a small section of track has been laid down to allow the camera dolly to move smoothly.

Steadicam shot

A **Steadicam** is a gyroscopic camera mount that smooths out camera movements. It uses weights and counterbalances to allow the camera to float on a mechanical arm. The operator wears the Steadicam attached to a special harness. A Steadicam can mimic tracking shots and dolly shots, and allows the operator complete freedom of movement to circle 360 degrees around a character or even to run up some stairs with them.

In the narrative, the fluid movement of a Steadicam allows the audience to feel they are really there. Because it is achieved in real time, the camera movement gives the audience the impression that something really important is happening and all editing has been slowed to allow its significance to be seen. Steadicam is a useful camera movement for closings; for example, a Steadicam shot is used to resolve the narrative in the closing scene of the film *Notting Hill* (1999). Steadicam was first used in horror movies, because its floating movement was able to conjure up the sense of 'the monster' and create suspense.



Alamy Stock Photo/Dreamworks/Everett Collection

Figure 2.26 A Steadicam smooths out camera movements by mounting the camera on a counterbalanced mechanical arm. The Steadicam was invented in 1979 and transformed camera movement.

Dollying shot

A dolly is a wheeled tripod or platform with the camera mounted on it. **Dollying shots** are similar to tracking shots. A dolly is used in the opening sequence of Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992).

In the narrative, a dolly can be used to comment on the action. Often when a tense moment has arrived in the plot, the camera will dolly in on a character until they are shown in close-up. The movement heightens the tension and significance. Perhaps the character has to make a decision or has made a crucial discovery. A dolly-out suggests leaving the scene, but often after something significant has happened – perhaps a crime. Dollies can also be used to move in on important evidence left behind.

Crane shot

A **crane shot** is performed by a camera moving up or down on a mechanical arm or crane. For different effects, the camera can be raised or lowered at all sorts of angles.

In the narrative, crane shots can be used to give a sense of scale. They are often used as establishing shots for this reason. Crane shots give a feeling of entering or leaving a series of events. A crane shot up and away at the end of a scene gives an air of finality. Crane shots are dramatic and are usually reserved for significant moments in the narrative. This happens in *The Piano* (1993) when Ada finally agrees to obey her husband and give Baines piano lessons. A crane shot is used to heighten the effect of her submission to his will.



Shutterstock.com/Hipgnosis

Figure 2.27 A camera mounted on a crane boom. Some cranes allow the camera operator to sit up with the camera on a small platform.

Zoom shot

A **zoom shot** is similar to a tracking shot but the camera stays still. A zoomin enlarges or magnifies an area of the frame, changing shot size from

(for example) a long-shot to a close-up. A zoom-out is the reverse, changing shot size (for example) from close-up to long shot. A zoom does not have the effect of allowing us to move through the scene. Unlike a tracking shot, it does not add to the three-dimensional feeling. Instead, a zoom enlarges or magnifies the subject. Zooming in on a character suggests we should listen to him or her; zooming out has the opposite effect.

First appearing in films in the late 1920s, the camera zoom is a technique that has no parallel in the human eye. Some filmmakers therefore consider it an unnatural technique and use the zoom sparingly. The first use of a zoom in a Hollywood film is believed to be that in the opening scenes of *It* (1927) starring Clara Bow. For many years the zoom was only used in nonfiction genres such as news or documentary. However, modern filmmakers are turning to it for its shock value, often using a rapid zoom called a **zip-zoom**. This technique can be seen in the opening scenes of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996).

In a narrative, a zoom suggests a sense of urgency and often extreme danger. Because of its association with news (and its similarity to the contra zoom from horror), the zoom makes the audience feel a stronger sense of immediacy. It feels as though the action is happening now.

Contra zoom (dolly zoom) shot

Horror movies often use a specialised zoom called a contra zoom. It can also be called the Hitchcock zoom, since he was the first director to use it, but it has many other names. Some refer to it as a dolly zoom, a triple-zoom reflex, or even the trombone shot. In a **contra zoom**, the camera zooms in at the same time as it tracks in the reverse direction, leading to a dramatically disorienting change in perspective.

In a narrative, the contra zoom is effective in portraying a reaction of horrified awe. This can be seen in *The Lion King* (1994) when Simba practises his roar and almost gets caught in a stampede. The technique is also used in *Jaws* (1975) when Chief Brody first spots the great shark's fin.

Tilt shot

A **tilt** movement swivels the camera up or down while it is mounted on the tripod. This movement is like a vertical pan. The tilt is also like a pan in that it happens in real time.

In the narrative, a tilt is often used as an establishing shot, just like the pan. The scene is introduced as the camera gradually tilts up or down to also, eventually, reveal the character. This makes a connection between the character and their setting. Like the pan, the tilt gives the impression that something will eventually be revealed. It can also give the feeling of a scene gradually unrolling like a scroll, from top to bottom. In Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci's *Besieged* (1998), a tilt from the bottom of a stairwell to the top landing establishes the distance between an African servant and her wealthy British employer.

Handheld shot

Handheld cameras have tended to signify amateur productions for most of the history of television and film. However, the arrival of lighter cameras meant that handheld shots became quite common in news and documentary filming. In these genres, the information was seen as more important than the formal construction of the shot. From the 1960s, the **cinéma vérité** movement in documentary film strengthened the importance of handheld camera work in news and documentary genres. The handheld camera found new popularity in fictional films after *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) used documentary techniques in a horror movie.

In a narrative, use of a handheld camera often lends an air of documentary truth or creates feelings of frantic confusion.

Cable shot

With the increasing portability of cameras, dramatic shots can be achieved by mounting the camera on a flying-fox device strung on a cable. This can be used to fly a camera in through a window, for example.



Newspix/Adam Head

Figure 2.28 Stuntman Keir Beck testing his flying camera system at the Holden Performance Driving Centre at Norwell, Queensland.

Digital composite shot

Modern computer-generated special effects allow for all sorts of camera movements that are impossible to achieve in real life. Many of these are combinations of several of the traditional camera movements. A digital composite shot is used at the beginning of the science-fiction movie *Contact* (1997). The shot starts by zooming away from Earth into the solar system, through the Milky Way, and finally comes out of the eye of a young girl! The famous opening shot of *The Birdcage* (1996) is a digital composite shot made up of three separate shots seamlessly joined together. It starts with an aerial shot over the Atlantic Ocean, speeding towards the Art Deco buildings of South Beach, Miami, and ending up on the dance floor and stage inside the Carlyle Hotel.

Table 2.1 Frequency of camera movements in selected films, from the database of Australian film historian Barry Salt. Note that the total number of camera movements can fluctuate considerably between films and is not clearly dependent on the time of production.

TITLE	PAN	TILT	PAN WITH TILT	TRACK	TRACK WITH PAN	TRACK WITH PAN AND TILT	CRANE	ZOOM	TOTAL
Gaslight (1940)	7	34	27	29	20	3	41	0	161
Back Street (1941)	13	0	6	12	19	5	2	0	57
Dark City (1998)	15	10	11	22	1	6	35	0	100
10 Things I Hate About You (1999)	12	3	6	20	32	18	10	1	102
The Blair Witch Project (1999)	12	12	79	24	15	137	0	31	310
EDtv (1999)	15	3	11	29	9	11	3	5	86

(http://www.cinemetrics.lv/salt.php)

2.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Find the most dramatic camera angle in a chosen film.
Explain how you think this was achieved technically. **Provide information** about the purpose this angle fulfils.
Construct a folio of magazine photographs that **illustrate** the main shot types and angles.
Systematically arrange each photograph on a separate page of your folio.
Title each page with the type or angle that the photograph illustrates (for example, *shot size – medium long shot).*
Explain the effect of the shot size or angle underneath each picture. Provide **additional information** about the creation of the shot that helps clarify understanding.

2 View the pan across the city of Phoenix that opens the film *Psycho* (1960).
Explain how this pan suggests that 'evil' can enter anyone's life, and **explain** how the pan develops the narrative of the movie. **Identify** the key points in the movement of the camera that reveal the limitations of the **available technology** (for example, one of them is at the entry into the window).
Compare Hitchcock's pan with the one across Paris that opens *Moulin Rouge!* (2001).
Analyse the narrative similarities and differences. **Make a judgement** on the **strengths and weaknesses** of each scene using narrative effectiveness and use of **available technology** as the criteria.

3 Select a scene from a film, view it several times, and then note down the shots and the range of sizes used.
Explain how each shot in the scene is filmed in the appropriate shot size to suit the narrative at that point.

4 **Analyse** the potential of two alternative shot sizes that could have been used for a shot from the scene. For example, could the close-up shot in the original film have been shot in mid-shot or long shot? **Make a judgement** as to why these sizes would have been less appropriate, using progression of the narrative as the **criteria**.

5 Find a scene in a movie where lens choice or depth of field makes an obvious contribution to the narrative.
Explain the effect of selective focus or lens choice.

9780170423601

Analyse the scene and break down the **constituent parts** of the shots where choice of lens or depth of field is important. **Consider** the elements of the scene that are enhanced by the use of these techniques. **Make a judgement** as to the effectiveness of the choice of lens or depth of field using progression of the narrative as the **criteria**.

6 Select one or two dramatic or climactic moments in a film. Carefully study the camera movements that are used in those scenes.
Explain the movement of the camera, **giving information** about the technical processes involved in achieving the shot.
Analyse the shot and interpret the extra meaning that is added through the camera movement. **Make a judgement** as to the effectiveness of the movement using progression of the narrative as the criteria.

7 Review the camera movement in the opening scenes of a film.
Analyse the scene, **considering** the duration of the shots and the types of camera movement, especially in the first few shots. **Make a judgement** as to how this assists in the initial development of the narrative.

8 Imagine a scene in which the characters have a clear power relationship. For example, it could be a teacher–student scenario, boss–worker or bully–victim. Then respond to the areas of activity in the table below. At the end, show your experiments to the class and discuss your findings.

EXPLAIN	CONSTRUCT	EXPERIMENT
Explain the premise of the scene and provide some **additional information** about the characters and their power relationship.	**Construct** a narrative plan of the scene, **systematically assembling the elements** of the story for that brief section. **Construct** an acting and shooting plan showing where the characters will be and where the camera will be placed.	**Experiment** with camera angles to produce a narrative effect, **trying out new ideas** until you **discover a technique** that works. **Experiment** using minor changes to the camera angles at first, and then film a take with more dramatic ones. **Experiment** by challenging traditional ideas about the meaning of angles (e.g. HCA necessarily means superiority).

9 **Experiment** with the contra zoom or dolly zoom to create the classic shock-and-awe effect.

10 Re-shooting a popular movie scene (or even the whole movie) shot for shot as an act of homage (see page 100) by fans with limited budgets is called **sweding**. Many sites exist on the internet showcasing these homemade versions of big budget films.
Synthesise an homage to a short scene from a well-known film. Be sure that the scene is safe to replicate and will not put actors or crew at risk. Consult with your teacher and prepare a risk assessment (see page 109). **Solve** any of the **technical or creative problems** posed by the demands of the scene and your available technology using your knowledge of **production practices**.



2.4.1 Mise en scène
2.4.2 Explainer: *mise en scène*

MISE EN SCÈNE

Many terms in film have their origins in the theatre. ***Mise en scène*** was originally a theatre term that meant something equivalent to 'staging'. It is now important in the analysis of films. *Mise en scène* helps to create the narrative space and progress the narrative.

The main elements of *mise en scène* are setting, costume, make-up, acting and lighting. It is best to consider *mise en scène* as that which the director has control over. This would normally exclude the script, for example. Acting and lighting are dealt with in more detail in other sections.

Each element of *mise en scène* influences how the audience experiences the story. Filmmakers use *mise en scène* intentionally in a systematic way to present character development and to establish themes and moods.

Mise en scène is French for 'put in the scene or frame' and refers to all the visual details a filmmaker can include in the screen image. Although the term is widely used, it is of relatively recent origin. French film critics coined it during the **French New Wave** of the 1950s. They saw *mise en scène* as a unique mode of expression for an *auteur* (author/director). It was very useful as a concept when most films were shot in studios or on constructed sets. The director,



Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

Figure 2.29 Aaron Eckhart in Australian director Stuart Beattie's *I, Frankenstein* (2014), filmed in Melbourne at Docklands. The film started out as a graphic novel. The director, production designers, location scouts and other crew prepared the *mise en scène* of the film well in advance of filming. *Mise en scène* refers to all the visual details put in the frame: the 'look' of the film. Note the amount of space or territory taken up in the frame by the main character. This use of the actor as a graphic element is part of *mise en scène*.

or *auteur*, had a lot of control over what went into the shot. This occurred from the early days of the movies until the 1950s. In modern film analysis, its use has gained more relevance as directors use more computer-generated imagery.

Mise en scène is the film's way of communicating a mass of information. It is equivalent to the descriptive passages in a novel – that is, everything in the novel except the spoken dialogue. One way to think of *mise en scène* is to imagine a still image from a feature film. If you sat down and pored over this image, extracting every bit of meaning from it and noting every detail, then you would be analysing the *mise en scène*. You would be studying every prop, every detail of furniture and every aspect of costume. As you did so, it would probably become clear to you that almost nothing is in that image by chance. It was all put there!

The look of the film

The *mise en scène* of a film is determined quite early in the pre-production and production stages. The director usually sits down with the production designer and they plan how the film will look before any filming takes place. Location scouts, art directors, costume designers and make-up artists all work together to have everything ready in advance. The director may even call in the actors and do some preliminary blocking of their movements. A choreographer may gather together a team to plan out the action sequences or song and dance movements.

Composition

Composition in this text is described as both a camera technique and a *mise en scène* technique. It refers to how the objects, actors and spaces are composed or arranged in the frame. Composition in film is similar to composition in art. It tends to be based around symmetry or balance. This comes from the arrangement of dominant and non-dominant centres of attention.

- **Symmetry**. This refers to the balance of light, colour and objects or figures in the frame. A common rule of thumb in achieving this is the rule of thirds (see page 27). However, a director can also call attention to particular elements in the frame by creating an unbalanced composition.
- **Dominant centres of attention**. The viewer's attention can be guided to particular places in the frame in three main ways:
  - **Movement.** The audience will pay attention to whatever is moving about the most in the frame: the speeding car, the dancing girl or the galloping horse.
  - **Colour.** Contrasting colours will draw attention. Bright colours will be dominant while muted colours will merge into the background.
  - **Lighting.** The viewer's eyes will be drawn to the area of the frame that has the most light.

Location and sets in *mise en scène*

The setting is where and when the narrative unfolds. According to film theorist André Bazin, setting is much more important in television and

> 'In many respects, a film shot resembles a painting. It presents a flat array of colours and shapes. Before we even start to read the image as a three-dimensional space, *mise en scène* offers many cues for guiding our attention and emphasising elements in the frame.'
>
> **David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson**, University of Wisconsin

film than it is in theatre. Theatre, he argues, is all about human beings: 'The drama on the screen can exist without actors. A banging door, a leaf in the wind, waves beating on the shore can heighten the dramatic effect.'

Setting

The setting establishes the place and time of the narrative.

Settings can be either natural or specially constructed for the purpose. From the setting, the audience can construct an array of meanings about the story, the characters and the genre. For instance, a Monument Valley setting immediately conjures up the Western genre.

In the *mise en scène,* the décor and props are also considered part of the setting.

Motif in *mise en scène*

A **motif** in *mise en scène* is a recurring prop or location or an actor as a shape or figure. It is repeated in the narrative and becomes significant or symbolic in some way. The word is of French origin and should not be confused with 'motive'. As part of *mise en scène*, a motif can be a way of linking aspects of the story, or revealing a character or theme. Motif also appears in editing, where it can be created with a recurring image or sound.

In *Psycho* (1960), both props and décor become motifs. The shower curtain starts as décor, but its repeated appearance makes it a motif. The newspaper initially is just a prop, but then it too is used in the narrative as a repeated symbol, thereby becoming a motif.

Table 2.2 Object-, prop- and location-based motifs in films

FILM	MOTIFS IN *MISE EN SCÈNE*
Citizen Kane (1941)	Rosebud (the object)
Vertigo (1958)	Tunnels Spirals
Psycho (1960)	Birds The newspaper The shower curtain
Jaws (1975)	Barrels
American Beauty (1999)	Roses
Minority Report (2002)	Glasses



Alamy Stock Photo/RGR Collection

Figure 2.30 Production designer Grant Major (far right) advises director Peter Jackson on the set of *King Kong* (2003). Setting is more important in film and television than it is in the theatre, according to film theorist André Bazin. Locations and sets establish the setting.

Costume and make-up

Costumes and make-up work in a similar way to setting in providing information about the place and time of the narrative. Like setting, they can be realistic or completely stylised and artificial. An example of a film with highly stylised make-up and costume is the German expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920).

Costumes and make-up are also important in the development of character. Costume changes can indicate mood changes or alterations in the status of characters. For instance, in *The Godfather* (1972), both costume and make-up are used to show the ageing of Don Corleone. Romantic comedies often use costume to indicate that a character is 'coming out of their shell'. In *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), costume is used to make statements about the characters. For instance, Richie Tenenbaum, a faded tennis star, still dresses in the costume of his professional career.

Costume can indicate character role. For example, many silent films used costume to establish who was the hero and who was the villain. In modern films, minor characters are sometimes branded on the basis of costume, and their character roles become more recognisable to audiences.

Costume can also play a causal role. An article of clothing can be important in the plot, either as a clue or as a signature item. When Richie shaves off his signature moustache in *The Royal Tenenbaums*, it is symbolic, and also causative, of his final transformation.

Acting – figure placement in *mise en scène*

> 'I never said actors are like cattle. I said they should be treated like cattle.'
>
> **Alfred Hitchcock**, director

Most definitions of *mise en scène* include acting and acting style. However, acting as an element of *mise en scène* can also be considered in a graphic sense – the actor can be considered as an object that takes up space. The actors' bodies become part of the visual field. The arrangement of that human space or territory within the frame is part of the *mise en scène.*

The blocking that directors do in rehearsal allows them to shift characters around and establish patterns of character movement. What the audience finally sees on screen can be careful and artful compositions that comment upon character relationships and help to establish the narrative.

Characters and graphic space

The space allocated to people and objects is one of the most important resources in film. 'The way that people are arranged in space can tell us a lot about their social and psychological relationships,' says Louis Giannetti, Professor Emeritus of English and Film, Case Western Reserve University. He argues that dominant characters always take up more space in the frame. This dominance refers to their importance in the narrative, not their importance in society. If the film is about peasants, a peasant will take up more frame space than the king, says Giannetti.

Similarly, the amount of open space in a shot can be symbolic within the *mise en scène*. A long shot with lots of clear open space suggests freedom. This can also be called loose framing. A close-up or mid-shot with lots of heavy shapes tightly framed around a character appears confining. This is also called tight framing.



Shutterstock.com/Arthur-studio10

Figure 2.32 A full-front character tends to create a stronger sense of intimacy with the audience. We are more likely to share their emotions rather than merely observe them.



Alamy Stock Photo/Lifestyle pictures

Figure 2.31 In *Sweet Country* (2017) director Warwick Thornton chose indigenous actors not on the basis of acting experience, but on their connection to country. 'When the camera rolled, they were owning the landscape spiritually, mentally and physically', says Thornton. Arrangement of actors can be considered an aspect of *mise en scène* when the actor is considered as a figure in space. The actor becomes part of the visual field.

Filming an actor in different positions can also suggest different relationships, not only with other characters but also with the audience. Louis Giannetti has identified five basic positions.

1. **Full-front** – most intimate with the audience. We tend to identify with the character, even if it is just momentarily.
2. **Quarter turn** – often used by filmmakers because it allows involvement with other characters, but it also allows the audience to feel intimate.
3. **Profile** – the characters seem to be unaware they are being observed. This is less intimate, but we are also free to stare.
4. **Three-quarter turn** – increasing remoteness, but still some degree of accessibility for the audience.
5. **Back to the camera** – least intimate for the audience and the most remote position for a character.

> 'It is necessary to intervene in a colour film, to take away the usual reality and replace it with the reality of the moment.'
>
> **Michelangelo Antonioni**, Italian film director

Colour in *mise en scène*

Colour in film can be thought of in at least two ways:

- **Naturalism or realism**. Colour obviously reflects the real world much more closely than black and white. Because of this, colour can simply be used to reflect the world as we see it. This makes the film more likely to gain audience acceptance as being realistic.
- **Colour as spectacle**. In the early days of film, when colour first came out, it was often reserved for genres such as the musical; colour was seen to add spectacle and enthusiasm to those genres. More serious-minded genres, such as crime, kept using black and white for some considerable time.

Colour in modern movies is used both ways. It is used as a process of realism and as spectacle, in the sense of being highly symbolic.

Colour is often a subconscious element in film, says Louis Giannetti. Its appeal is emotional and expressive. Giannetti argues that people often see lines and diagonals of composition in a logical way. However, the audience often just accepts colour without noticing it. This allows colour to create atmosphere and mood subliminally.

Colours have different connotations, many of which are cultural. However, while there are cultural differences in interpretation, there is also evidence of a lot of agreement around the world about the 'temperatures' of different colours. Blues and greens tend to be seen as cool or tranquil. Reds and yellows tend to be seen as warm. In western cultures, reds can suggest violence or sex.

Cooler colours tend to fade back into the frame, whereas warm colours tend to stand out and be noticeable. Therefore, colour can be used to create dominant objects in the frame. Strong use of colour can be a compositional element.

Colour can be used as a sign of character. It can also be used as a recurring symbol or motif. For example, whenever the audience sees a certain colour, they might have particular associations.

Lighting in *mise en scène*

Lighting is considered part of the *mise en scène* because of its power to suggest ideas and emotions. Lighting helps the viewer to construct meaning. It can suggest time, place, mood or genre. Lighting is a powerful tool that directors can use to express their art.

In early cinema, natural lighting was all that was available. Filming took place outside in the sun or in studios with vast glass roofs. Some studios even had opening roofs. This partly explains why the early film studios moved to the sun-drenched California desert, and what was then the small village of Hollywood. Around this time, during the First World War (1914–18), Hollywood film studios found a peaceful use for the arc-searchlights that had been developed to spot enemy aircraft. Thus began the expressive film lighting we know today. From around 1915, Hollywood's standard three-point lighting set-up was introduced, and practice has changed very little since then.

The need to run studios like factories working around the clock was one reason that standard three-point lighting was introduced. Another was the arrival of the star system with its emphasis on glamour.

Three-point lighting

In standard three-point lighting there are three main positions for the lights:

- **Key light.** This is the hardest and brightest light and is focused slightly to one side of the main subject. The key light is normally the main source of illumination.
- **Fill light.** This is a softer, more diffuse light that is placed slightly to the other side of the main subject at about the same angle as the key light. The fill light fills in the shadows cast by the key light.



2.4.3 Standard three-point lighting rule

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- **Backlight.** This is placed behind the subject and works to separate the subject from the background. If the subject is against a wall, the backlight creates a sense of three-dimensional distance or separation, preventing the subject from being 'plastered' to the wall by the intensity of the two main lights. Backlights are usually hard lights to better create an outline around the subject.

Three-point lighting is used in most situations even today. Audiences now accept it as natural looking, yet it also has the effect of glamorising its subjects.

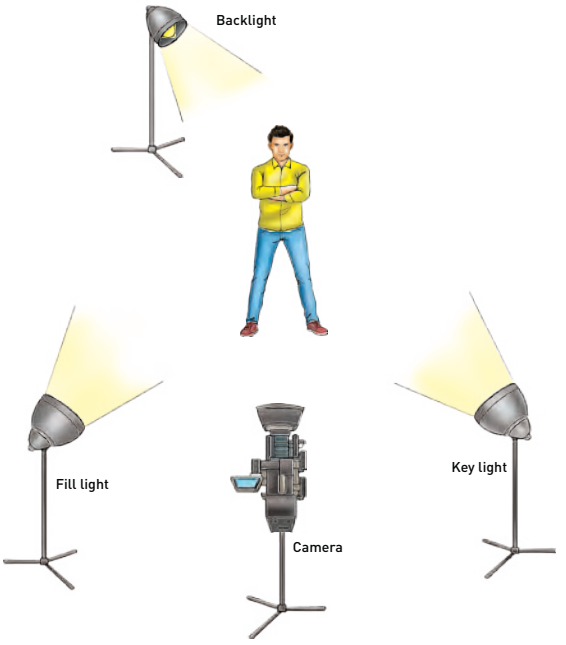


Figure 2.33 The layout for standard three-point lighting. In practice, the lights may need to be moved around somewhat until the shadows have been reduced.



Two-point: K, F – Key light (RH) and fill. 'Broad lighting' directs the key light to the wider side of the face.



Two-point: K, F – Key light (LH) and fill. 'Short lighting' uses the fill light on the more visible side of the face area.



Three-point: K, F, B – Daylight-coloured backlight is added to the key and the fill, separating the subject from the background.



Three-point: K, F, B – Contrasting warm-coloured tungsten backlight lifts the hair colour from the background even more.



Two-point: K, B – Key light and backlight only leave a darker line when the fill is removed.



Two-point: F, B – Backlight and fill reduces modelling on the face.



One-point: B – Backlight only shows the work an individual light does within a three-point set up.

Figure 2.34 The key light may be placed to mimic a genuine light source direction. Distance can be used to fine tune the brightness of the fill light, and the backlight must not shine directly into the camera lens. Each light should be individually cut to check the contribution it makes.

2.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a film in which setting is an important element of *mise en scène*. Horror movies, Westerns and road movies are genres that particularly use setting as *mise en scène*. However, do not limit yourself to this list.
Explain how the *mise en scène* builds the progression narrative. **Identify** the ways that the setting interacts with the characters, **providing examples** to clarify your explanation.

2 Research some of the cultural connotations of the main colours. Find a film example where a chosen colour is used as a theme or motif.
Explain the director's use of colour in the film. Provide **additional information** based on your research and **illustrate** it with the usage of colour in the film, **explaining** the effect the director seemed to be promoting.

3 Select a still from a movie of your choice.
Analyse the *mise en scène*, **examining** each element that makes up its **constituent parts**. **Make a judgement** about its effectiveness, considering setting, costume, make-up, acting and lighting.
Present your analysis to the class, showing the chosen image as you speak.

4 **Analyse** a still from a movie in which the actors appear to have important 'figure placement' as part of *mise en scène*. **Examine** dominant and subordinate characters based on the space they are allocated in the shot. **Consider** the position of characters in relation to the rule of thirds. **Consider** what might have been the effect if the director had placed the characters differently. Discuss how this would alter character relationships and possibly the narrative. **Make a judgement** about the effectiveness of the placements, using character role and importance as the **criteria**.

5 View short segments from one or more of the following films. Each is noted for its significant or historical use of colour. *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Pleasantville* (1998), *Schindler's List* (1993), *Rumble Fish* (1983), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), *Wings of Desire* (1987), *Vertigo* (1958), *Amélie* (2001), *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *Big Fish* (2003), *Corpse Bride* (2005). Alternatively, select a film of your own choice.
Explain how colour was used in the film in new or different ways, **illustrating** and **exemplifying** how colour becomes a symbolic code. Present your commentary to the class with the film segment playing in the background (sound off).

6 Examine the lighting in a shot from a black and white *film noir* (see page 217).
Explain how the use of light and shade is important to the narrative or develops a sense of character.
Identify the justifications that are offered for the source of the light.
Analyse how the different elements of light and shade contribute to the development of the narrative.
Examine each in detail and consider how they interact.
Appraise whether you think this use of light is realistic or disruptive. What effect might the scene have if ordinary studio lighting was used? **Draw conclusions** about the role of lighting in these kinds of films.



2.5.1 Cuts & Transitions 101

EDITING CODES AND CONVENTIONS

A Hollywood movie contains between 800 and 1200 shots. For a narrative movie, the shooting ratio of filmed rushes to final selection is usually about 8:1. However, news and documentary genres, being less tightly planned than films, can have shooting ratios as high as 20:1. Editing is often thought of as a process of cutting down. However, editing can also be seen as a means of building up a story. Both are valid approaches.

In its simplest form, editing may be defined as the process of coordinating one shot with the next. This process of coordination of units of vision and sound creates the cause-and-effect chain of events in time and space that is the narrative. Editing is a process of combining images so they play off each other and create meaning.

Juxtaposition of shots

It is said the founders of film, the Lumière brothers, stumbled on one of the techniques of editing quite by accident. The camera broke down in the middle of filming. When they got it going again, they found the jump in **continuity** actually looked good. **Juxtapositioning** had been discovered.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 2.35 Auguste and Louis Lumière (whose surname means 'light') are considered the founders of film.

Juxtapositioning of shots simply means the placing of shots side by side. The shots interact with each other and create certain meanings. The selection and sequence of shots has an impact on the audience's understanding of the message. Traditional Hollywood productions begin with a juxtapositioning of certain shot sizes. The opening sequence usually runs from an extreme long shot (ELS) through medium shot (MS) to close-up (CU).

Kuleshov effect

In the early 1920s, the film industry in Soviet Russia was very advanced and well funded. A number of experimental techniques were developed for the industry at the time that became the basis of much modern filmmaking. One such experimental technique was developed by Lev Kuleshov, a Russian film teacher.

The 'Kuleshov effect' is a montage effect demonstrated in the 1920s by Russian filmmaker Kuleshov, who showed how audiences can make different inferences about a shot depending on the shots with which it is intercut – this has become a central principle of modern editing.

The experiments

Kuleshov wanted to show that the meaning of a shot was significantly determined by the meaning of the surrounding shots. He invited passers-by off the streets to view short sequences of film, and then asked for their reactions.

- **The soup bowl experiments.** Kuleshov took a series of shots of a famous Russian actor named Ivan Mozzhukhin looking as calm and neutral as possible. He then cut these shots together with shots of a bowl of soup, a girl in a coffin and a (supposedly naked) woman on a sofa. In each case, the audience members thought the actor was experiencing a different emotion – hunger, grief or desire. The audience is said to have 'raved' about his acting, yet Mozzhukhin's image was exactly the same.

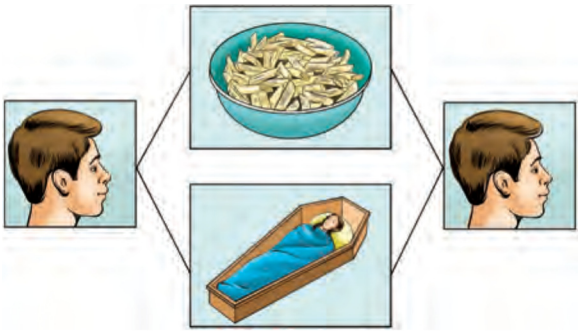


Figure 2.36 The actor's expression was neutral, but the meanings for the audience depended on the shot that was edited in – hunger or grief.

- **The White House experiment.** In what Kuleshov called 'creative geography', he took shots of a man walking from right to left across the frame in one street in Moscow, and a woman walking from left to right in another street. A third shot showed them meeting somewhere else and shaking hands. The man then points into the area off screen. Kuleshov cut into this series some shots of the White House in Washington, DC, in the United States. The audience believed the actors were actually in Washington.
- **The jigsaw woman.** To further demonstrate the Kuleshov effect, a shot of a woman was created out of images of the face, body, hands and legs of several different women.

Kuleshov believed his experiments proved that film had its own system of meaning that could be manipulated in a way that was unique to moving-image media. Time and space become the creation of the editing process.

Soviet montage/collision of images

One of Kuleshov's students was Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. Film historians credit Eisenstein with developing modern editing. Although he made only seven films, his influence has been greater than almost any other film director in film history. Eisenstein developed the montage approach to editing.

'Montage' is the process of using a collision of images to create an idea in the minds of the audience. Each image contains ideas and meanings. If separate shots with different meanings are placed side by side, even if they mean opposite things, then a third meaning can arise.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 2.37 Sergei Eisenstein's most famous film is *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).



Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/Goskino



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/Goskino



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/Goskino



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/Goskino

Figure 2.38 Six shots from the Odessa steps sequence in Sergei Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). The collision of these apparently unrelated shots of soldiers, guns, bodies and a woman carrying a dead child create a powerful emotional response in the audience. The technique is called montage.

Collision of images was the basis of most scenes involving violence before the arrival of computer-generated imagery (CGI) in the 1990s. A classic scene might be a shooting. Imagine a shot of a man lying on the ground; next to this imagine a shot of another man holding a gun. Neither shot on its own indicates that a murder has occurred. However, the collision of the two independent images suggests this third meaning.

Eisenstein developed the theory of montage from the Kuleshov effect. He was also influenced by Japanese character-writing or pictographs. In Japanese writing, the intended idea might come from putting two symbols together, but the outcome is more than the sum of the parts. For example:

- child + mouth = scream (not 'child's mouth')
- bird + mouth = sing
- dog + mouth = bark

Eisenstein worked with a film movement called **Soviet montage.** His technique became known as Soviet montage as well, to separate it from 'American montage'. Sometimes Eisenstein's technique is referred to as dialectical montage. 'Dialectic' is a term meaning a collision of opposing ideas.

Montage proved to be one of the most important developments of early cinema. Collision of images has formed the basis of almost all Hollywood special effects up to the development of computer-generated imagery.

Editing as continuity

Editing involves a dilemma. The break between one shot and another interrupts the audience's attention. Each cut is a small jolt for the viewer. Every time a cut is made, there is a risk that the viewer will be brought back to reality. On the other hand, there is no other way of constructing a film. The filmmaker's problem is how to use editing, yet also control its disruptive power.

Classical Hollywood continuity editing

Continuity editing, favoured during the Golden Age of Hollywood, is sometimes called 'the invisible style'. It has the following features:

- **Shot progressions in the classical Hollywood style** – ELS, LS, MS, CU
- **Continuity cutting** – for example, cutting on action or movement to distract the viewer
- **Matching techniques** to hide cuts – for instance, eyelines are matched
- **Transitions such as dissolves** to smooth the remaining joins where necessary
- **Simultaneous time/parallel editing** (cross-cutting)
- **Point-of-view shots** – shot/reverse shot when filming conversation
- **Application of the 180-degree rule**
- **Use of standard three-point lighting** to naturalise appearances
- **Use of music** that is subservient to the story, reinforcing the meaning.

American montage

Hollywood directors commonly refer to montage as a series of shots that condense time. In early film, the classic American montage sequence might be a shot of calendar pages peeling off and blowing away as a character goes through a series of actions that might have taken months or years – such as growing up. American montages are also often used in training sequences to show a character getting more and more skilled. A famous example of American montage occurs in the British romantic comedy film *Notting Hill* (1999) during the marketplace scene when William Thacker (Hugh Grant) has just broken up with Anna Scott (Julia Roberts). A year without his girlfriend goes past as he walks through four seasons of the marketplace from summer through to winter and back to summer. The song 'Ain't No Sunshine' by Bill Withers plays throughout the scene, uniting the montage.

Cross-cutting (simultaneous time/parallel editing)

Cross-cutting (also known as simultaneous time or parallel editing) is the editing technique of cutting between scenes that are happening at the same time (simultaneously), but in different locations. Cross-cutting gives the audience extra knowledge that the characters do not have, because the audience can see alternating shots of each scene. As a result, the audience experiences suspense.

Early filmmaker DW Griffith was one of the first to use cross-cutting in his famous 'last-minute rescue' scenes. As a result, the cliché of cross-cutting is the damsel tied to the railroad tracks while the train approaches and the hero rides to her rescue.

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A rule of thumb in cross-cutting is that the action in the separate scenes must eventually come together. In the clichéd example given, there must be a scene in which the train, the damsel and the hero are all together.

Many films rely on cross-cutting as an important feature of the film's narrative. Examples include Steven Spielberg's first film *Duel* (1971), which cuts between a car and a menacing truck; *Jeepers Creepers* (2001), cutting between a car and a demonic vintage vehicle; and *Run Lola Run* (1998), cutting between a young woman extorting money and a young man about to hold up a supermarket.



Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

Figure 2.39 *Run Lola Run* (1998) relies on cross-cutting to develop the narrative.

Although creating suspense is one of the most common uses of cross-cutting, it does have other uses. Cross-cutting can be used to draw parallels or to create contrasts. For instance, showing images of wealth cross-cut with scenes of poverty can make the injustice much more apparent. Cross-cutting to create a contrast was used in a memorable scene from *The Godfather* (1972). At a baptism, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) accepts God and renounces Satan. Cross-cut with this scene, we see Corleone's henchman violently executing his enemies one by one.

Transitions: visual punctuation

2.5.2 Sherlock - How creative transitions improve storytelling

The devices used to shift from one scene to another provide the equivalent of punctuation. They convey certain impressions. They also assist understanding and help to make meaning clear. Audiences learn to make meaning from these visual language conventions because they are constantly repeated.

Following are some devices used as 'visual punctuation'.

Cut

A cut is an instant change to another shot. In real life, this is similar to an abrupt change of attention – when we suddenly decide to inspect something else. A cut is the least obvious transition because it occurs so quickly and seems to work naturally. A cut can be regarded as the shortest distance between two shots.

However, there should be a reason for the cut, so the audience feels they want to look at the next shot. The motivation might be provided by the dialogue or an action from a character. Cutting on action is common because the movement in the shot distracts attention from the shot change. Cutting on dialogue seems natural because the audience naturally wants to see each person speak.

Dissolve

During a dissolve, one image gradually blends or dissolves into another. A dissolve is a longer route between two shots than a cut. For this reason, it introduces greater disruption. It can represent a dramatic pause. In a narrative genre, a dissolve can be used to suggest a smooth and gentle change in time or place.

Fade

A fade-out gradually fades the picture to an empty or black screen. A fade-in begins with a black screen and gradually reveals a picture. The fade is an obvious and disruptive transition. It signals a major change in the progress of the text. It is often compared to the curtain in a stage theatre, which opens and closes the show and separates the acts. The fade is the longest route between shots.

Defocus

Defocus shots provide transitions by gradually moving out of focus on one scene and refocusing on another. They are similar in character to the dissolve and are a more gradual way of easing the audience from one shot to another.

Wipe

During a wipe, a new image 'wipes' across the old one using a defined line. Digital effects switchers allow for a huge variety of wipes, including the flip frame and the page leaf. A wipe is the most

unnatural transition and consequently is the most obvious to the audience. It is commonly used in those genres that allow for disjointed presentation, such as news, documentaries and sports coverage.

Some cutting rules

2.5.3 Top rules for video editing
2.5.4 8 essential cuts every editor should know
2.5.5 Breaking down edit-speak

Experienced filmmakers have some general rules that help to maintain the invisible style of classical Hollywood editing.

Jump cut

A **jump cut** occurs when a cut is made from one shot to another of the same subject without any real change in camera position or shot size. It is called a jump cut because usually some time has passed and the subject of the shot is doing something different, or is perhaps just shown in different lighting; the result is a perceptible jump that breaks the sense of continuity. In classical editing style, the jump cut is regarded as poor form. However, many modern filmmakers use the jump cut as a deliberate technique to jolt the audience, or to increase the sense of unreality or chaos. The deliberate use of jump cuts in this way was first popularised in the French New Wave films of directors such as Jean-Luc Godard – most famously in his film *Breathless* (1960). Deliberate use of jump cuts is seen in the Guy Ritchie film *Snatch* (2000), and during the shaving scene in *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001).

30-degree rule

Classical Hollywood editing style suggests that the camera should be moved at least 30 degrees away from its previous position when shooting the same subject to avoid a jump cut and appear **seamless**. Some editors demand that the camera should also change shot size, for example from a mid-shot to a close-up.

180-degree rule

2.5.6 What the 180-degree rule is and how to break it

One of the biggest sins against classical Hollywood editing style is to 'cross the line'. The line refers to the 180-degree line of interest between actors (or sometimes objects, such as moving trains or cars). Cameras should be placed or moved behind one side of the line only. Cameras should not be placed on opposite sides of the line. If they are, it looks like the characters have reversed the direction they are facing. The 180-degree rule is a function of screen geography (see page 207).

Cutaways and cut-ins

Two useful editing techniques are cutaways and cut-ins.

- **Cutaway.** A cutaway is a shot of something other than the main action that can be inserted to hide a jump cut, or to condense action. These shots are therefore cuts *away* from the main action to something related, but different. Sporting coverage often uses cutaways to audience members in order to compress time or make the action appear quicker. In films or television, directors often insist that camera operators get shots of general activity around the main action, so that these shots can be used as cutaways. For example, if two characters are walking down the street, the camera operator might collect cutaway shots of street art, shop windows, kids playing, buskers, stray dogs and so on. These could be inserted to hide cuts in conversation or to speed up the action without the audience noticing.
- **Cut-in.** A cut-in shot is used for the same purposes as a cutaway, except that it represents a further cut into the action – usually with a mid-shot or close-up. A cut-in can also be used to hide a jump cut or to compress time. For example, in a scene involving characters walking down the street, the camera operator may have picked up some shots of one of the actors taking a drink from a bottle, or looking at a watch, or pushing their hair away. These shots represent a cut *in* to the main action, but could be especially useful if the editor needs to shorten the conversation between the characters and wants to cover up the cut.

Shooting ratio

The **shooting ratio** is the total amount of footage shot compared with the actual length of the completed production. The ratio varies widely between different productions depending on the overall budget and the type of finished product.

It is said that there were 31 miles (50 kilometres) of celluloid film shot for the classic film *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). However, most modern drama productions have a shooting ratio of between

5:1 and 15:1. The shooting ratio in a drama can depend on a number of factors apart from budget. These could include shot coverage of conversations, the number of takes, the number of scenes and the number of camera angles. Nonfiction programming, such as reality television, news or documentaries, tends to have quite high shooting ratios.

Shooting on digital cameras has meant that shooting ratios have risen across all types of productions. This is because digital footage is inexpensive. With more footage, the editor has more 'room to move'; although the downside of this is that there is also a lot of footage to sort through and log.

2.5 ACTIVITIES

1 View some action films and find examples of collision of images. Take a still of each image that makes up part of the technique.
Explain how the collision of images sequence works. Provide **additional information** about each image in the sequence describing what the viewer sees. **Identify** the shot sizes and the arrangement of the people and objects in the frame. **Clarify** how the sequence works as a set of **codes and conventions**.

2 Record some examples of visual language punctuation (transitional devices), using them to **illustrate and exemplify** at least three of the techniques. Present them to the class.
Explain their purpose and effect, **recognising the particular qualities and characteristics** of each.

3 Manipulate time in a short filmed sequence. Film an event where time is an important factor and then edit the footage into a short sequence. You could try an American montage to compress time, or film a moment of shock or extreme tension to expand time.
Structure the sequence **systematically** to expand or compress time to create the desired effect. Provide **reasoning** for your choices in a brief written response after you have edited.

4 The use of cross-editing (simultaneous time/parallel editing) has changed over time. Compare the use of simultaneous time (S.T.) in the scenes involving the truck chasing the car in Steven Spielberg's *Duel* (1971) and in *Jeepers Creepers* (2001).

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how the S.T. sequence works in the two movies. **Give information** about each of the movies and the events in the S.T. sequence.	**Analyse** the climactic scene in each sequence, **examining** each movie and: • **considering** the effect of each cut back and forth • **examining** screen geography • **considering** the use of any special effects. **Analyse** the **strengths and limitations** of each S.T. sequence with the sense of threat and audience excitement as the **criteria**.	**Appraise** the effectiveness of each sequence, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of each of these to the audiences at the time of movie release, and to modern audiences today.

5 Re-film some of Kuleshov's early experiments and test them on an audience who is not aware of the intended purpose.
Structure two to three sequences using Kuleshov's original ideas as the basis for your own experiments, **making adaptations** to suit your purposes.
Explain the findings of your Kuleshov experiments in a presentation to the class, **providing information** about the survey audience and their responses to the footage.

6 Film a short (10- to 15-shot) video sequence on a topic of your own choice. The sequence should attempt at least one example of each of the following:
- **Structure** an edited sequence using collision of images to create an idea that isn't in either shot.
- **Structure** a sequence of simultaneous time created by cross-cutting, with the two sets of action coming together in the last scene.
- **Structure** into the sequences at least two different types of transitional devices.

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SOUND CODES AND CONVENTIONS

Sound creates the feeling that you are in a 360-degree world that extends far beyond the frame and surrounds you in your seat. Movies have never been without sound. Even in the silent film era, there was always musical accompaniment. Sound is fundamental to creating the world of the story.



Shutterstock.com/Everett Collection

Figure 2.40 There never really was a truly 'silent era' of mass audience film. So-called silent films always had a musical accompaniment. Sound has been a partner with vision in creating a story world for audiences since the beginning.

Elements of sound

2.6.1 Designing sound

Sound has three elements in film and television: dialogue, music and sound effects.

Dialogue and voice-over

The main sound we hear in film and television is the human voice. Dialogue and voice-over move the narrative forwards. Without the human voice, we would not know what the characters were thinking, feeling or hoping to do. Dialogue and voice-over make the following apparent to the audience:

- character motivations
- character response to events in the cause-and-effect chain
- character relationships
- conflict with sources of opposition and blockage.

Both dialogue and voice-over are said to work best when they are not the exact mirrors of what the audience can already see in the image. In other words, dialogue should not state the obvious.

Dialogue

Dialogue is defined as what is spoken by the actors, and only happens in the story world. It is such a powerful element of film sound that it is rarely trumped in volume by music or sound effects. Dialogue almost always takes precedence over the other elements.

There can be two extremes of television and film dialogue. At one end of the spectrum is highly staged theatrical dialogue. At the other end is mood dialogue in which it is the characterisation the words convey, rather than the words themselves, that is important. Most modern dialogue is a blend of the two.

Dialogue is important in establishing character. The way someone talks reveals their background, culture, age, authority and social class. Dialogue also reveals the character's emotional response to events.

Voice-over

Voice-over is narration that is heard only by the audience. Voice-over narration allows the director to guide the audience through events that might be too hard to understand otherwise. There are two types of voice-over:

- **Subjective voice-over**. This gives the audience access to the inner world of a character. For example, in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) we listen to the character Joe Gillis reflect on the events that led up to his murder. *American Beauty* (1999) uses voice-over in a similar way. *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) uses voice-over to give insight into other characters. *True Grit* (2010) uses voice-over to explain character motivation. A documentary uses subjective voice-over when the filmmaker involves themselves in the action.
- **Objective voice-over.** An objective voice-over is a narrator who is not one of the characters in the story. Objective voice-over is less common in modern films. Objective voice-over is commonly used in documentaries.

Voice-over is said to work best in films where the audience can still follow the story without it. Instead, the voice-over works as a kind of commentary that provides additional insights.

Aspects of voice

There are four key qualities that give the human voice its power, say Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis of North Carolina State University.

1 **Volume**. A louder voice usually indicates more emotional intensity, suggesting that a character may be experiencing anger, fear or

passion. Softness can suggest tenderness or even sneakiness.

2 **Pitch.** This is the frequency of a voice – whether it is high or low. Deep voices are often associated with power or authority. However, they can also be associated with evil or menace. High-pitched voices can convey weakness or fear.

3 **Speech qualities.** The way a character speaks says a lot about them. The following are important aspects of speech quality:
   - **Accent and dialect.** These can indicate cultural background and social class. A character's accent can also explain setting and even character motivation.
   - **Diction.** The choice of words that come out of a character's mouth, and the way they are said, are both very revealing.
   - **Vocal signature.** The actual sound and rhythm of an actor's voice may be important in creating character. Many actors have signature styles of speaking.

4 **Acoustic qualities.** The way a voice sounds can indicate the location and setting. It can also suggest distance between characters. Sound engineers working on a film can manipulate the acoustic qualities of the voice to create the right perspective and degree of warmth.
   - **Sound perspective.** The sound perspective lets the audience know how far away a sound is. It also tells the audience what kind of environment the sound is travelling through. For example, there could be an echo if the sound is travelling through an empty room.



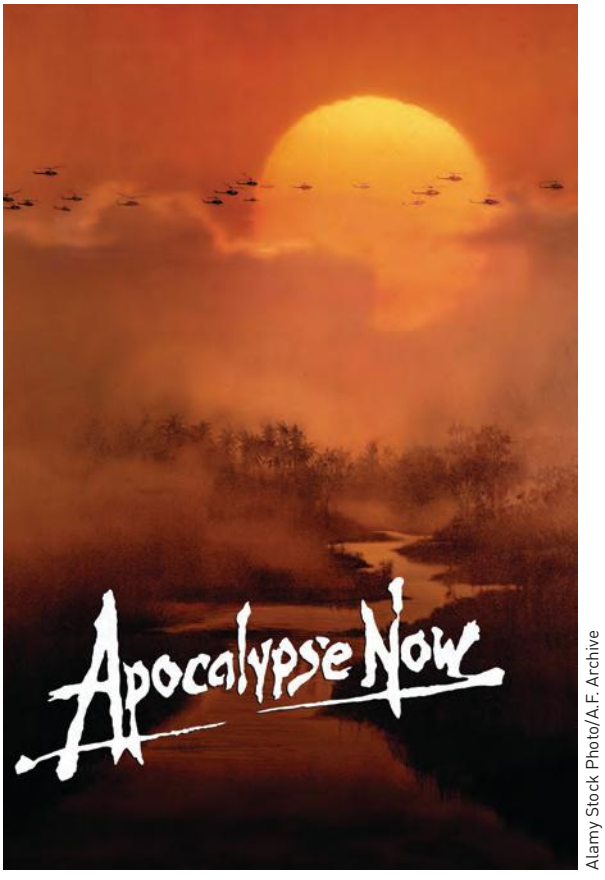
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Figure 2.41 A film crew recording dialogue. Notice how the mike on the end of the boom pole is held just above the characters but just outside the frame of the movie shot. The large foam 'zeppelin' or 'windjammer' that the mike is contained within is designed to reduce wind noise.

Sound effects

Sound effects and background noises help create a sense of reality in a visual text. They also build the idea of a real space in which the action is taking place. They give character to the environment. The following are the ways in which sound effects are used to build a scene:

- **Defining location.** Sound allows the audience to identify the location. Sometimes this can just be a generic location, such as a city. At other times, a particular sound may mean a specific location.
- **Lending mood.** Sound can have an emotional effect on the audience's response to a scene. It can build the sense of mood in a scene. For example, horror movies often add the sounds of violent thunderstorms to provoke fear in the audience.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 2.42 *Apocalypse Now* (1979, R-rated) opens with a shot of some jungle. A fluttering sound is heard and moments later it is identified by the silhouette of a military helicopter. Seconds later the forest explodes in flames of napalm. The Doors song 'The End' begins simultaneously. In this opening sequence, the sound has immediately defined the location in a very specific way. The music has established the mood and the theme.

- **Signalling impact on characters**. It is very common for sound to be used to show how characters are being affected by the action. The sound seems to stand for how the characters feel. For example, in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959), a crop duster plane is heard humming in the background, but as it approaches the character Thornhill, the sound gets louder and louder and then the plane begins firing bullets. The rising sound makes us feel his panic.

Music

The power of music to manipulate emotions has always been acknowledged. It is often the music that makes an image come alive, producing an effect in combination with the image that is greater than each element on its own.

In modern movies, popular songs are used more often than scored orchestral tracks. These have the advantage of bringing to mind other cultural meanings and connotations. Popular music can suggest a time period or even a location. Popular music lyrics can also be used to underscore the meaning of the image or dialogue. What the singer is saying is commenting on what the audience can see.

Sound sources

The Greek word 'diegesis' was used by Aristotle to describe the world of the story that is created by the text. In movies, the diegesis is the fictional world that is shown on screen. This fictional world of the diegesis is the one experienced by the characters. It is not the same as the world experienced by the audience, which may include other elements such as orchestral music or voice-over narration. The diegesis can include all of the events that the characters in the story experience, whether in the past, present or future. Thus, the diegesis of a soap opera would include the 'bible' that outlines all the character histories as well as their likely future paths.

In television or film, sound can come from one of only two sources. It either comes from inside the story or it happens outside the story. These two sources of sound are labelled diegetic and non-diegetic sound.

Diegetic sound: in the story world

Sound from within the story is called **diegetic sound** because it happens inside the diegesis (the world of the story). This means the story characters, as well as the audience, must be able to hear the sound. It could be a gunshot, or it could be music from a radio in the scene, for example. Usually the audience can see the source of the sound. Diegetic sound comes from the on-screen action that we observe and that the characters participate in. There are two types of diegetic sound:

1 **External diegetic sound.** This is sound that has an external source in the world of the story. A character is talking, for example, or a gun is fired.
2 **Internal diegetic sound**. This is sound that is still in the world of the story, but comes from inside the mind of a character. Just as we cannot hear another person's thoughts in real life, internal diegetic is not available to other characters.

Non-diegetic sound: outside the story world

Sound that is imported into the movie but is not related to the on-screen action is called **non-diegetic sound**. Non-diegetic sound may contribute to the story or it may build atmosphere or enhance the emotional power of a scene, but its source is not seen on screen. If the characters cannot hear it, it is non-diegetic. Voice-overs and narration are non-diegetic sound.

Types of sound

Two types of sound are used in the visual language of television and film. Film theorists have come up with a variety of terms for these types of sound. For example, Karel Reisz uses the terms 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous'. James Monaco uses 'parallel' and 'contrapuntal'. Monaco argues that music, sound effects and speech can either work with the image or comment on it.

Parallel sound

Parallel sound (or synchronous sound) is logically connected with the image. The sound comes from within the scene or emphasises some aspect of the scene. The classical style of Hollywood's Golden Age relied on parallel sound, using music, sound effects and dialogue to underline and support the image.

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Contrapuntal sound

Contrapuntal sound (or asynchronous sound) provides a commentary on the image and may be unconnected to it. The sound may work against the image to create a third meaning. Contrapuntal sound can come from outside the scene. Stanley Kubrick's films *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) both use contrapuntal music. In *A Clockwork Orange*, Beethoven's symphonies are contrasted with futuristic scenes of stylised violence. Hitchcock used contrapuntal sound in *Psycho* (1960). Scenes of apparent ordinariness were given high tension through the use of a disturbing orchestral soundtrack.

Transitions for sound editing

Sound editing has fewer transition choices than vision editing.

- The **fade** is the most important sound transition. A fade-out is a gradual decrease in volume until eventual silence. A fade-in is a gradual increase in volume. In sound, a fade can represent an easy means of starting or finishing something. It gives the impression of infinity, or that the sound is going on forever somewhere if only the audience could hear it. A fade can also mean that a sound is moving closer or further away.

  Audiences will accept almost any change in sound as long as it is gradually faded in or out. This is why sound editing is often not noticed as readily as vision editing. Since the fade is so common, audiences expect gentle transitions as a matter of course.
- The **cut** is not as readily accepted by audiences for sound productions. As a result, the most common use of a cut in sound editing is to create a sudden shock. Sharp sounds, explosions, door slams and so on are useful ways of suddenly cutting from one sound to another.
- A **segue** (pronounced *seg-way*) is a smooth transition from one piece of music or sequence of sounds to another. It is rather like a dissolve in vision editing. Segues are usually achieved by first matching the beat of two sound sequences, and then fading down one sequence and fading up the other.
- A **sound bridge** occurs when sound from one scene is carried over into another. This is why sound bridge is also called **overlapping sound**. The sound can be overlapped either before or after a scene.

2.6 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a movie that you are very familiar with. Identify two or three highly climactic points in the movie.
Explain the nature of the music at these points. **Clarify** how the music makes you feel and describe your own reactions to the sound at these points.
Explain how the sound supports the progress of the narrative and the filmed action.

2 **Construct** your own top five, all-time, best voice-over narrated movie openings of the 21st century. Collect sample openings from online sources. Play them to the class.
Explain why you think the voice-over is so good, referring to the features of dialogue in this textbook.
Identify the different elements of voice-over and **explain** how they work in each example.

3 **Construct** a list of actors you would employ on the basis of their voice quality.
Explain your reasons for including them in the list, describing their voice, and **provide additional information** that **illustrates** these qualities (for example, other roles they have played). **Identify** some suitable new roles for them.

4 Find a movie scene in which a sound effect is used to establish location. Decide whether this sound effect establishes a generic location (for example, a city somewhere) or a very specific location.
Explain the elements of the sound effect that work to suggest either generic or specific location, **identifying particular characteristics** of both the sound and the location.

5 Create a quiz for your class based on selected scenes from movies. The scenes should contain either diegetic or non-diegetic sound. They should also contain parallel (synchronous) and contrapuntal (asynchronous) sound. Play each scene and ask the class to **identify** which type of sound it is.
Explain the reasons for the answer yourself or ask the class members to do it.
The person with the most correct answers is the winner.

6 There are four key qualities of the human voice. For each quality, find an example in a film. With these in mind, respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how the voice quality is illustrated in the example you have given. Identify possible reasons the director may have sought out these qualities.	**Analyse** the narrative purpose behind the choice of voice quality, **examining** story needs of the movie and **considering** the effect of each quality.	**Appraise** the effectiveness of each quality, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of each of these to the audience.

MUSIC IN MOVING-IMAGE MEDIA

Music in film is sometimes considered (or even dismissed) as just a background element to support everything else. However, music can add cohesion to a scene by filling the silences in between dialogue, or it can provide a convenient sound transition between scenes. The soundtrack is often composed to complement the imagery, but not be so noticeable to an audience that it detracts from the rest of the action.

Functions of music

In addition to playing a supporting role to the visual elements in a film, music can also enhance the narrative, or create extra layers of meaning and emotion for an audience. Music can contribute to the complexity of the film in five main ways, according to film scholars Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis. Film music can establish historical context, represent space, define characters, shape mood or provide a distanced or ironic commentary on a scene's visual information.

1 Establish historical context

A resourceful way for a filmmaker to establish a time period in a film is to use music that was either composed or popular in that era. If the music is diegetic, this historical context can be further supported through the means of performance or sound delivery. For example, if music is playing from a mobile phone or other digital device, depending on the style of the technology, this suggests the film is set from the mid-2000s onwards.



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Figure 2.43 A mulleted Adam Sandler fronts a cover band in *The Wedding Singer* (1998). The opening song 'You Spin Me Right Round' (1985) is immediately recognisable to an audience as a classic 1980s tune. This performance, combined with the *mise en scène*, quickly establishes the setting of the film.

2 Represent a scene's geographical space

The geography and locations of a setting can also be distinguished through diegetic music. For example, as a character moves from a loud party scene to another room, the music dims in volume to reflect the room's proximity to the party. Film music can also suggest a country or region. In the *Braveheart* (1995) soundtrack, the symphony orchestra sound is augmented by the use of traditional Celtic instruments such as uilleann pipes, Irish whistle and bodhrán.

3 Define characters

2.7.1 Leitmotif

The type of music favoured by a character can contribute to that character's representation. A character's musical taste, or the musical motifs associated with a character through a non-diegetic soundtrack, can signify their personality or importance in the narrative. The term 'leitmotif', first used to describe a technique in Richard Wagner's operas, is a melodic phrase that is associated with a particular person, situation or idea. Composer John Williams often used the **leitmotif** technique in his orchestral

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scores to link a particular melodic idea with a character. Decades later, many people can still hum 'The Imperial March' that is associated with Darth Vader in the *Star Wars* franchise, or the triumphant 'The Raider's March' in the *Indiana Jones* franchise.



Alamy Stock Photo/Photo 12

Figure 2.44 Muriel sits alone her bedroom, listening to 'Dancing Queen' by ABBA and dreaming of a different life in *Muriel's Wedding* (1994). Despite being an 'uncool' choice, Muriel's favourite band is ABBA, and their music is used throughout the film. 'Dancing Queen' serves as a motif signalling key moments in Muriel's story.

4 Shape mood

Music plays a powerful role in how audiences 'read' a scene or react emotionally. Film music can reinforce the heartache of unrequited love or have the audience on the edge of their seats, waiting for something bad to happen. In the 1998 film *The Truman Show*, this effect is illustrated 'live' as the fictional executive producer, Christof, directs a scene for the reality show. As Truman hugs his long-lost father, the simple lamenting, almost questioning piano melody is combined with soaring violins. Christof directs his editors and composer to increase the volume of the music to cue the audience's emotions.

5 Provide a distanced or ironic commentary on a scene's visual information

The contrast between sound and image is sometimes manipulated by filmmakers to make a point or draw attention to a particular moment. In *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003), Pippin is commanded to sing to entertain Denethor. As the moving refrain continues, this scene cross-cuts between close-up shots of Denethor as he feasts, men riding into battle, the Orcs preparing to annihilate them, and Pippin's reluctant performance. The disgusting, ravenous feasting is in stark juxtaposition to the beautiful song, and it suggests how indifferent Denethor is to the people he's sending to their deaths.



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Figure 2.45 *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014) characters are being processed for incarceration at a high-security prison. Peter Quill (aka Star-Lord) confronts a prison guard for using his Walkman, Peter's most prized possession. The prison guard tasers Peter into submission to the tune of Blue Swede's 'Hooked on a Feeling' (1973). This upbeat 1970s rock number distances the audience from the violence and also highlights that Peter's treatment is the exact opposite of a 'loving feeling'.

Attributes of film music

When unaccustomed to studying music, it can be easy to fall into the trap of using ambiguous or simple terms such as 'passionate' or 'scary' to describe film music. However, Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis argue that even non-musicians can still analyse and write about film music by focusing on five key attributes of film music: patterns of development, lyrical content, tempo and volume, instrumentation and cultural significance.

1 Patterns of development

Musical motifs can be associated with a character, place or idea. Musical themes are repeated during a film where they signify important character or plot developments. Melodic motifs can also be

used to foreshadow events in a film or film series. For example, in *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (2002), Anakin Skywalker fails to rescue his mother alive and lays waste to the sand people in a fit of rage. Yoda feels this disturbance in the force, and the main theme from 'The Imperial March' is clearly audible in the soundtrack. This motif reinforces Anakin's struggle with the dark side and foreshadows his character development in the following *Star Wars* instalments.

Alamy Stock Photo/Pictorial Press Ltd



Figure 2.46 The song 'Young and Beautiful' by Lana Del Ray was used as a reccurring theme throughout *The Great Gatsby* (2013). The haunting melody and refrain symbolise the intense longing of both Daisy and Gatsby. The melody becomes a motif in the film and is woven into Craig Armstrong's score. The song is even used as an up-tempo foxtrot and performed by a jazz ensemble at one of Gatsby's grand parties.

2 Lyrical content

From the 1960s onwards, some filmmakers started to use individual popular songs in their film soundtracks instead of the traditional scored orchestral works. The lyrics of the song usually (but not always) support the visuals in some way.

3 Tempo and volume

The tempo (speed) and volume of film music can contribute to the pace and energy of a scene. For example, chase scenes in films are often accompanied by loud, up-tempo music to reinforce the sense of danger and excitement for an audience. The tempo of a soundtrack usually links to a character's movement, whereas the volume of music often symbolises the space (emotionally and physically) around a character.

4 Instrumentation

Even for those not completely familiar with specific orchestral instruments, terms such as 'low brass', 'percussion', or 'high strings' are more descriptive and useful in analysing film music than just saying 'the orchestra'. The type of ensemble that is creating the music is also important in creating specific sounds. For example, a film score played by a symphony orchestra has a very different sound to a rock band.

5 Cultural significance

Audiences can derive additional meaning from a scene through the intertextual references in the soundtrack. When audiences make an intertextual link, this can lead to further enjoyment or a feeling of superiority at understanding references that give extra meaning. In *The Matrix* (1999), when Neo first arrives at the Oracle's home, an instrumental version of a traditional jazz standard is playing in the background. For audiences who recognise the tune as Duke Ellington's 'I'm Beginning to See the Light' (1944), this adds additional meaning to the scene as Neo is about to learn pivotal information that influences his development as the 'saviour'.

The background of the song 'The Show Must Go On' in *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) carries extra cultural significance. Satine is dying from consumption in the film, while in real life the song is about the effort of the lead singer of the band Queen in continuing to perform despite being seriously ill. At the time, Freddie Mercury was dying of AIDS, although his illness had not yet been made public in spite of ongoing media speculation.

2.7 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** the type of music used for a selection of film soundtracks. Are the soundtracks orchestral? Electronic? Rock music? Popular songs with lyrics? A mixture?
2 For each of the five functions of film music, **identify** a moment in a film that shows music being used in that way.
Analyse how the music functions in those scenes to create meaning.
3 Select a short excerpt of a film that leads up to a climactic or important moment in the narrative.
Explain the features of the music by describing the instrumentation, tempo and volume of the soundtrack

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Analyse how the soundtrack creates meaning for audiences in this scene
Draw conclusions about how the music contributes to the climax or pinnacle moment of the scene.

4 **Synthesise** a short film sequence.
Experiment with different types of music to create specific genres. For example, film and edit a chase sequence, then experiment with different music selections to suggest the genre of action, romance, science fiction or comedy.

5 Choose a film that uses mainly popular music in the soundtrack, such as *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), *Juno* (2007) or *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* (2017). Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

SYMBOLISE	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Symbolise the plot/character developments and associated songs using a diagram, identifying key plot/character developments and the popular songs used at each stage.	**Analyse** the lyrics of each song and compare the lyrics with what is happening visually at those moments in the film.	**Appraise** the significance of these song choices by assessing whether the lyrics: • provide an appropriate 'mood' for a scene (but may not be strictly related to the story developments) • match the action/storyline of a scene • further or enhance the narrative • provide a distanced or ironic commentary • contribute to how a character is represented.

NEW MEDIA CODES AND CONVENTIONS

Computer-based media combine traditional media forms with new digital versions. Through a process called **convergence** (see page 56), traditional media forms 'converge' with digital formats, accessed via computer or mobile device. Convergence has seen the combination of existing media and the creation of engaging and innovative new forms. Computer-based language shares elements of traditional media, particularly film, television, magazines and newspapers.

Basic units of new media communication

Computer-based media language units are text, images, audio, video and animation. These elements are combined to create **multimedia** forms including the internet, disk-based multimedia, interactive television and video games.

Hypertext

Internet sites and multimedia products typically involve a series of menus and document pages linked together in a web-like structure that allows nonlinear access to information. Users select their own path to specific information by following a trail of related information – 'drilling down', click by click, to reach their objective. Any page, picture, paragraph or word can be linked to any other. Information can be accessed in whatever order the user chooses. This navigation system is called **hypertext**. Each link – whether word, icon, graphic, picture or video – is known as a hypertext link or **hyperlink**.

Conventions of hypertext

Convention dictates that when a mouse pointer is positioned above a hypertext link, it should change form from an arrow to a hand. In this 'hover state', the link should also change appearance. When the link is clicked, it should temporarily change appearance again ('active state'), and the link content is loaded. A 'visited' hyperlink is also often represented by a different colour ('visited state').

Hypertext is a very efficient way to store information. It not only provides a link to specific content, but also gives contextual links to related materials.

User interfaces

A user interface is used to help navigate through computer-based media. The interface ranges from simple buttons and menus on the screen to more complex interface tools such as 3D goggles, motion sensors and even body suits with sensors allowing the user to 'feel'. The interface also includes the product's artificial intelligence, especially obvious

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in video games. User interfaces can be classified into three categories: symbolic, iconic and indexical interfaces.

1 Symbolic interfaces

This form of interface is commonly known as programming. A user must know the computer language used and the conventions of its use. Programming languages use textual 'code' in the same way that the English language uses words – to represent objects or actions. This interface features few barriers to hinder the user's creativity, but is almost impossible to use without a thorough knowledge of the code.

2 Iconic interfaces

This interface style features icons that stand for actions, and menus that allow the user to select among predetermined options. This interface is extremely productive and easy to use, but limits the user to a range of pre-programmed actions. The most common examples are the Windows and Mac OS interfaces with their metaphoric 'desktop' functionality. By using a metaphor that simulates a real-life environment, users of the product quickly become familiar with its functions.

3 Indexical interfaces

This style of interface is richly decorated with images and colour. It is immersive, becoming part of the production and not simply a way to use it, which enhances the overall effect and allows the user to become more involved with the product. This kind of interface is commonly found in multimedia and video game products. It provides a variety of navigation options, from simple iconic buttons to random artistic patterns or images that transform when clicked. Indexical interfaces allow a designer to artistically explore the possibilities of interface design.

Multimedia

Multimedia is a key aspect of all new media forms, including the internet, interactive television and video games. Multimedia is an environment in which more than one media type is used.

Multimedia elements

There are five main media elements used in new media: text, graphics, animation, audio and video. The combination of these media elements in an interactive form is known as multimedia.

- **Animation** can provide a multimedia work with a slick, well-produced look and feel, adding impact and creating visually exciting interfaces. Animation is also useful for demonstrations and presenting data. It is often used for artistic effect or for storytelling.
- **Video** is a familiar and proven means of effective communication. Video in websites, online advertising and games is common. It is compressed into smaller file sizes by 'stripping out' inessential data, such as unused colour information, unchanged image areas from frame to frame and out-of-frame footage. However, relying too heavily on video can mean that users with slow internet connections do not wait for it to download.
- **Audio** can be integrated into a multimedia product in a variety of ways. One way is through narration. Speech can offer commentary without obscuring the information on the screen. Audio can also be used for providing a sense of place or creating a mood.
- **Text**. Computer-based media content is viewed on a computer screen. Screens have limited resolution, which makes it difficult to read small text. Until screen technology improves to rival the readability of paper, large amounts of small text should be avoided. Designers overcome readability problems by breaking the text into manageable pieces linked via hypertext.

  Text for computer-based media is written in an inverted pyramid style, following the tradition of print journalism, with the most important information at the top. Where text is placed over a background, simple background colours and images should be used to ensure the text is legible.
- **Images**. Multimedia is highly visual. Like video, pictures are compressed to save space. Graphics may be content, but are also used in the user interface and to establish 'look and feel'.

Structuring information in multimedia

The power of multimedia and hypertext lies in the way information can be linked together. However, users view any site only one page at a time. This is in contrast to newspaper readers who can view the work as a whole. Because of this, a multimedia user needs to create a mental model of the content structure, or the ways in which the information is linked and related.

Users need predictability and structure, with clear functional and graphical continuity between the various components and subsections of the multimedia product. Menus and document pages share a consistent identity through using the same graphics, icons and visual style. This avoids 'orphan' pages. The organisation of information into an ordered and easily understood layout is called information architecture.

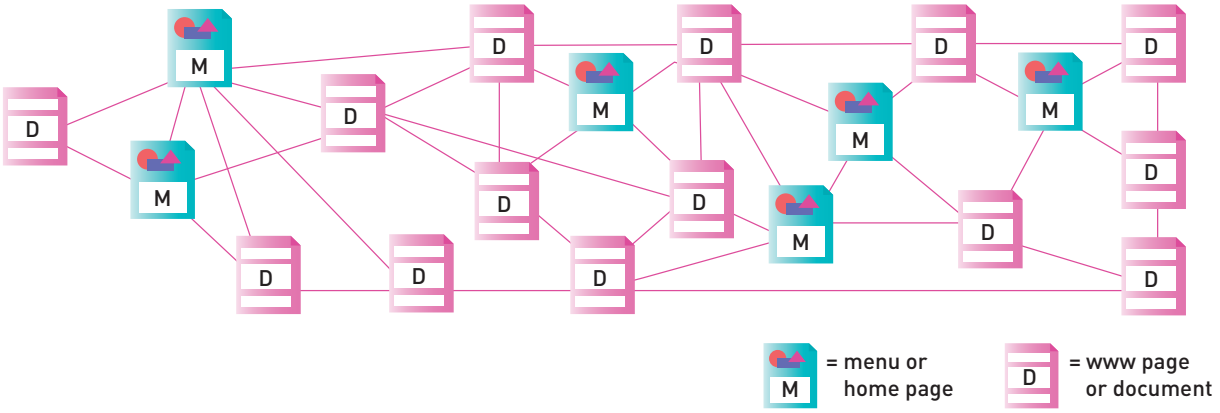


Figure 2.47 Poor multimedia design. This model of information organisation is jumbled and difficult to follow. Users of this multimedia product or website would find it very hard to navigate.

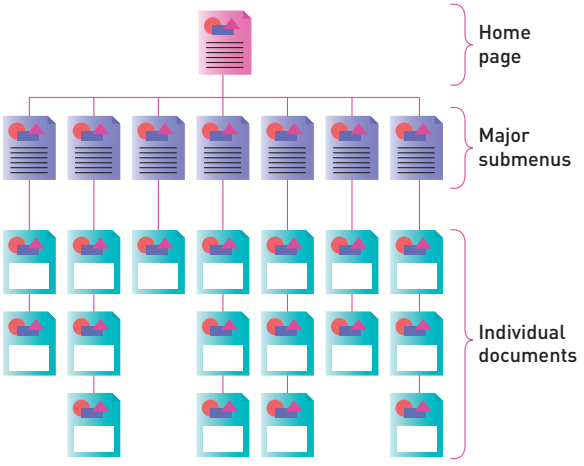


Figure 2.48 Good multimedia or internet page layout and organisation. The user has easy access to information, which is arranged in a clear, logical and predictable way.

2.8 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** how hypertext is a useful means of making information easier to find.
Explain how hypertext works and **illustrate** its processes by providing a sample, with the links **exemplified** or worked through.
Demonstrate your **understanding** of the form by **identifying** its advantages and also any disadvantages.

2 In small groups, visit the library to choose and research a topic of your choice, such as a historical event. Half the group should search for information on the topic and related data in print sources, while the rest should use the internet or online encyclopedias.
Analyse your results. **Consider** which method found the best information, which was the easiest to use, and which provided the most relevant related information.
Make a judgement about the effectiveness of each approach, **considering strengths and weaknesses.** Use overall efficiency and accuracy of information as the **criteria**.

3 **Structure** a diagram showing the plan of an actual or imaginary website, **exemplifying** how each of the pages are linked via menus and sub-menus.

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3

Institutions and moving-image media



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ABOUT MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

'Though a highly consumer-oriented good, [the media] is very different from most other such goods, like cars, toasters, washing machines. Whereas the latter provide the means, the former trades in the meanings of life.'

J. G. Blumler, media theorist



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Figure 3.1 The Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) is located in Federation Square, Melbourne. ACMI has set itself the goal of becoming the world's leading moving image collection and exhibition centre. Australia has a unique range of media organisations. They extend from public sector organisations through private enterprise organisations to local community organisations built around volunteers.

3.1.1 ACMI



Shutterstock.com/Who is Danny

Figure 3.2 The media are consciousness industries. They help shape our individual thoughts from an early age. The media are a key factor among those who are influencing our society and culture.

The media have been called the consciousness industries, selling ways of thinking and ways of seeing or talking about the world. They are engaged in the production and distribution of states of mind. There can't really be a neutral position on the media; this is because its social function is so profound and so central.

Media institutions are different from other knowledge institutions (such as schools, churches or art galleries) in several ways:

- they carry all types of knowledge, including on behalf of other institutions
- they are open to all members of society
- the relationship between sender and receiver is often more complex
- the media reach more people, for longer (over a lifetime) than any other institution.

Convergence, divergence and remediation

Three terms used to describe the impact of the new communications media are convergence, divergence and remediation.

Convergence

The blurring of the boundaries between different telecommunications media is termed **convergence**. The boundary between television and the computer is already blurring. So too are the boundaries between newspapers, radio, computers, mobile phones, video game systems, and surveillance, identity and global positioning systems.

Media convergence can occur in two main ways:

- **Textual convergence**. This occurs when the genres and programs become hybrids and merge their textual characteristics together. This can also happen when the media products from one platform become influential in another. For example, movies and video games have experienced a convergence in recent times. Media companies such as Sony Entertainment

have products and franchises that span multiple platforms, such as both films and digital games.

- **Platform convergence**. Many news organisations have experienced platform convergence. This occurs when a new digital platform, such as online newspapers, takes on elements of other platforms. For example, news websites now contain print stories from newspapers, video footage from television and sound-only stories from radio. Platform convergence sometimes produces new media forms. For example, it could be argued that converging digital photography, the internet and mobile phones produced Snapchat and Instagram.

More and more, computers and smartphones are becoming the basis of all communication and entertainment. Convergence has also affected the major media and internet companies, with many forming alliances or merging to attempt to capitalise on, or survive in, new media industries.

Multimedia represents the convergence of text, pictures, video and sound into a single form. In the same way, the internet represents the convergence of television, radio, newspapers, literature, movies, video telephony, video games, telephone services, surveillance and tracking systems into a single form.

Media culture expert Henry Jenkins believes that convergence is not only technical, but also social and cultural. He speculates that new media will not simply replace old media but also interact with it. He defines a 'convergence culture' where 'old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways'.

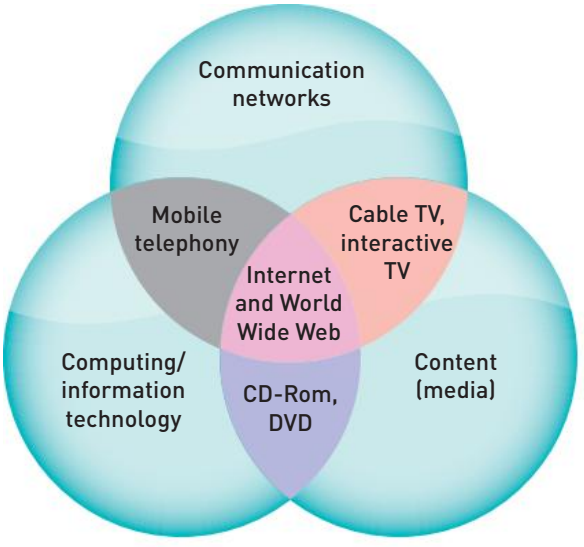


Figure 3.3 Trevor Barr, an Australian media theorist, illustrates what he terms 'the Three Cs of Convergence', where the merging of communication networks, computer technology and content create overlapping and convergent new media forms.

Divergence

Technological developments are increasingly allowing many forms of media to be delivered through the one device. The mobile phone is the most successful. However, the smart TV also represents the same process of technological diversity.

Multiplying the forms of delivery of a media product is called **divergence**. For example, television is delivered in many ways: free-to-air, cable, satellite, the internet, handheld devices and ordinary household appliances. All of these are connected to the same global information networks. Divergence has also affected media owners, allowing a wide range of media content to be delivered by more than just the few media players in traditional media spaces.

Remediation

When new media became a significant force, it was thought that old media would die out. Instead, both new and traditional media have survived and borrowed from each other.

Nowadays both new and traditional media are constantly making references to each other and showing each other on screen. New media is especially good at this – re-distributing and re-making older forms of media such as movies and television shows.

New media has also borrowed most of the codes and conventions developed in traditional media. It has also added its own conventions (such as hypertext).

Remediation occurs when the codes, conventions or texts of one media platform are re-presented in another. The media is constantly borrowing from, and refashioning itself, say Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, the media academics who came up with the term.

Remediation can be either invisible or visible.

- **Invisible remediation**. When a comic is made into a movie, or when a movie becomes a television series, this is invisible remediation. Usually no reference is made to the original product – it just appears in another form on another media platform. The original media



3.1.2
Trevor Barr

text is absorbed completely into the new. Movie adaptations of books are another example.

- **Visible remediation**. This occurs when the original media product is shown or referred to on the new platform. The audience is aware of the original text but sees it in a new context with new meanings. For example, when a music video clip includes news footage of the 9/11 attacks and shots of President Bush or Osama bin Laden, this is visible remediation. Sometimes codes, conventions or even technical features of other mediums can be incorporated into the new. For example, old-style television signals of 'snow', 'static' or test patterns are often incorporated into editing transitions, or new media graphics and title designs.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 3.4 When Simba roars and reacts in shock and awe to the stampede in *The Lion King* (1994, 2019) the animators chose to show this with a contra zoom (see chapter 2, page 30). The contra zoom is a camera technique. There is no need for it in computer-generated animation – there isn't even a camera lens. However, the film camera techniques are 'remediated' into the new medium of CGI.

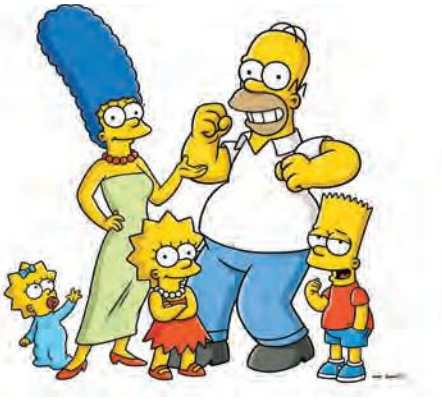
Globalisation

Globalisation has its recent history in the development of multinational corporations. These huge business empires, such as Disney and Google, have capital resources larger than the economic output of many small- and medium-sized nations. Movements to encourage freer world trade have also encouraged trade in media products and the spread of multinational media corporations. Technology has contributed to the process by making it possible to access media content from anywhere in the world over the internet.

Global McCulture

The US imports about 5 per cent of its media products, while the worldwide average for imports is upwards of 30 per cent of the total schedule. Australia imports around 45 per cent. Many small developing countries import more than 90 per cent. Most imports are sourced in the US, leading to accusations of cultural imperialism. However, some audience researchers believe there is little cause for alarm in these figures and argue that audiences interpret American media texts in ways unique to the local culture. Others believe this is swinging the pendulum too far. Audiences have *some* power to make interpretation, but the producers still set the agenda in subtle ways.

Producer power depends to some extent on the genre. News is less open to audience interpretation, and therefore the producer has more power. Global news networks such as Cable News Network (CNN) undoubtedly are successful in relaying an American, first-world point of view. Entertainment genres could be regarded in a different light. Soap operas may be somewhat more open to local definitions. When people watch an entertainment program, they enter an imaginary world. In contrast, information genres may be saying, 'This is how it is!' Australia has been described as a dumping ground for overseas media products. Cable and satellite technology, the internet and the continuing international growth of news networks, such as CNN, all contribute to the 'Coca-Colonisation' of local culture.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 3.5 Globalisation means more television programs are aimed at a world audience. The BBC news has had a global reach for decades. *The Simpsons* is another example of an effective global program. One reason for its success is that a cartoon can be dubbed into any language. The show is devised in America and animated at cartoon studios in South Korea.

Localisation

Many analysts believe globalisation is being accompanied by the opposite trend – **localisation**.

They use the word 'local' to indicate a region, as well as to cover a range of narrow groupings of people across individual societies or even across the world. For example, local could mean the people of a particular place, but it could also be used to mean everyone around the world interested in the music of a certain band. Digital media are capable of targeting like-minded, subcultural audiences who may find the mainstream channels irrelevant. Communities of interest might be another term for the concept of localisation.

Localisation may occur as the 'social glue' provided by the old national media gradually loses its strength. Some analysts see the trend as positive because it allows more media rights for subcultural or local groups. Others believe it is a double-edged sword, with as many potential negatives as positives.

Loss of nation

Between the extremes of global and local, the importance of the nation may be under threat. In the past, commentators worried about a society that might become dominated by a handful of media. Now, however, we are faced with a society where no one is on the same page. Governments find it difficult to reach voters because there are so many different media sources. Everyone is watching something different.

Other commentators have wondered whether the forces of globalisation and the forces of localism will need the surviving nation more than ever – to mediate between the two extremes! Only the nation can make laws to regulate how multinational 'big tech' corporations such as Google or Facebook must treat citizens.

3.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Survey the class on the extent to which their media consumption is based on a convergence approach. Consider the responses to the following questions:
   - How many have the computer set up either in conjunction with the television or to function as the main television?
   - How many use a mobile phone in a similar way?

   Explain the survey information, giving some idea of the nature of the respondents and the conditions of the survey.

   Analyse the quantitative (numerical) results, considering the percentages for each constituent part of the survey. **Make judgements** about the extent of convergence and its effect on your respondents.

2 Is your media diet global or local? Or perhaps it is 'glocal' – a combination of global media and involvement in specialised communities of interest.

   Explain how you see your media consumption. **Identify** the main sources of your media consumption and **locate** each of them in terms of whether they are global, Australian or Queensland-based. **Illustrate** your response with some **examples** of the kinds of media products that are typical of what you use or view.

3 Compare your media consumption with that of your parents or guardians when they were your age, or even your grandparents.

   Explain how it has changed in reference to globalisation and localisation.

GLOBAL MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

New technologies have led to new patterns of distribution. Digitising screen content and then distributing it via the internet has become the dominant form of content delivery.

Online distribution

The online distribution business went through three stages of development:

- **Pioneering stage.** In the late 1990s, a number of small start-up firms began trialling online distribution. They found that the technology did not allow for easy distribution of content because bandwidth was limited. Many of these early firms went broke and disappeared.
- **Hollywood majors enter.** After seeing what had happened to the old music companies once online distribution of music took place, the big Hollywood studios attempted to enter the market in the early 2000s. At that time, the market still did not have a strong enough basis. People were not willing to pay for shaky distribution across limited bandwidth. By 2005, most of these companies had failed as well.

- **Market leaders arrive**. In the late-2000s, the current market leaders first appeared. YouTube, iTunes, Netflix, Amazon and Hulu had arrived. Smaller independent distribution sites have battled to make headway against these giants.

Traditional media companies that have dominated until now may struggle to maintain dominance. Companies that run the platforms delivering content to huge audiences now have a competitive advantage, and may be the first global online television networks.

'If content is king, then distribution is King Kong. The power and profitability in screen industries have always resided in distribution'.

Stuart Cunningham, Professor of Media and Communications Queensland University of Technology; **Jon Silver**, Senior Lecturer Creative Industries Faculty Queensland University of Technology

YouTube

It may be that YouTube is shaping up as the world's first global television station, with 1.5 billion users in 2018. YouTube is a media company that is primarily an 'aggregator'. It is not a significant content producer, but rather it is a collector of content produced and developed by others. YouTube is not actually in the video business to any great extent – its real business is the provision of a platform to supply content.

YouTube's business model is to provide an easy-to-use platform that allows online video sharing. This content then brings in audiences and other new participants. They supply more content, and the business continues to grow. YouTube offers participants the chance of wide exposure and even fame. The business makes its money out of advertising based on its high volume of visitors.

Context

YouTube is based just outside San Francisco. It was established in 2005 by three former employees of PayPal, an online commerce website. It was very much a part of the Silicon Valley 'tech start-up' culture. YouTube's innovation was to use technology to allow widespread sharing of video online. A simple interface allowed users to upload streaming videos without requiring a lot of technical knowledge.

Ownership

YouTube started with humble beginnings and was soon purchased by Google for $US1.6 billion. YouTube fitted Google's aim of being able to organise the world's information and make it accessible.

Copyright issues

Existing media companies and the major Hollywood studios have argued that YouTube has been encouraging online video piracy. YouTube was profiting from copyright infringement, they argued. Many of them have restricted or blocked content. Some of them have signed revenue-sharing agreements with YouTube and Google.

YouTube allows copyright holders to submit a copyright infringement notice if they spot unauthorised content that has been uploaded. The site also uses an **algorithm** called Content ID to scan uploaded videos for high-quality video files and potentially copyrighted music. It checks these against a database of copyrighted material. The copyright owners can then choose to either take the video down or to monetise it through paid advertising.

'Not only has YouTube created the largest online video community in the world, it's shaping the way video is produced, distributed and monetised.'

Hunter Walk, Head of Product at YouTube

Areas of operation

YouTube operates in the following areas:

- **User-generated content (UGC).** YouTube is a video sharing site that allows users to upload videos and share them with other users. Users can also rate videos and add them to their favourites lists. Users can also subscribe to the channels of other users.
- **Professionally generated content (PGC).** Although YouTube started primarily as a UGC site, many of the videos now uploaded are professionally generated. This occurs through negotiations with major production studios. However, much of the PGC content is restricted to the US. The aim is to distribute video in an ad-friendly environment.

Audience and social impact

The YouTube website is the most popular entertainment platform in Australia, the UK and the US – easily gaining more visits than traditional broadcast websites, such as that of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It is always in the top 10 of the most visited websites globally, and in 2018 was the second-most popular site in the world.

YouTube has had a profound effect on what most people think video on the internet looks like. The videos are short, often humorous, and accessible with very little effort – usually just one click. The videos often have some kind of visual sensationalism, such as a skateboarding accident, or they are instantly recognisable pieces of mainstream media.

YouTube has a team of moderators to review content with the aim to protect advertisers and creators from inappropriate content. In 2018 there were approximately 10 000 moderators. Moderating is an extremely stressful and potentially disturbing job with a high turnover rate. Many moderators are hired from temporary employment agencies. However, YouTube overwhelmingly relies on algorithms to police its content that might violate its guidelines. Violent extremist videos are often targeted by algorithms. YouTube claims that 98 per cent of the videos removed for extremism are removed automatically by the algorithms.

The videos that YouTube algorithms recommend have the power to influence people around the world. Every day, people watch more than a billion hours of YouTube content worldwide. The algorithm creates personalised playlists and recommendations based on previous views. According to YouTube, these drive up to 70 per cent of the viewing time that people put in. On some social media sites, such as Facebook, people choose to follow certain newsfeeds. On YouTube, the algorithm pushes content to people. Critics say these sometimes get more and more extreme as the recommendations progress.

Netflix

> 'I think there will be 20 years of evolution from linear broadcast to internet television.'
>
> **Reed Hastings**, CEO Netflix

More and more viewers are consuming film in the comfort of their home rather than in the theatres. This is not an expression of some kind of dislike of public arenas. It is a by-product of the combined technologies of convenient online streaming and comfortable home theatre rooms. Netflix has influenced the way in which media is consumed – to the point that older forms of receivership are under threat of extinction.

Netflix's dominance is not just a matter of internet convenience. Netflix has shifted the value of television content in new directions. Through non-traditional finance models, Netflix is capable of producing big-budget films and television shows for exclusive release on its network. These texts, called 'Netflix Originals', often boast A-list actors and directors and are capable of rivalling big studio productions. Brad Pitt appeared in the Netflix Original *War Machine* (2017), and Baz Luhrmann directed production of Netflix Original *The Get Down* (2016).

The fact that Netflix is capable of attracting A-list talent to produce high-quality cinematic content means the medium of television has

undergone radical shifts in value. This is new. Previously if a big-screen actor made the switch to small-screen television, it was always considered a demotion; for the most part, it was always due to the lack of quality that television produced. But the recent shifts in the quality of television have led to a new kind of exchange. Actors are able to cohabit television studios and major film studios without concern over the direction of their career.

Areas of operation

Netflix rose to dominance because of the ease in which quality viewing could be accessed over the internet. Since it is made available on portable devices, viewers simply view their favourite programs whenever they like. But while viewer choice seems empowered by Netflix, Netflix also restricts choice. When viewers sign in to Netflix, they are confronted with rows of thumbnails of various movies and television shows. Each of these thumbnails are guided by a particular algorithm that determines content choice. The content choice is an expression of two key inputs – viewing habits and a small questionnaire when first signing up. This data is then used to personalise the viewing experience by predicting what the viewer may watch next.

An essential characteristic of Netflix is binge-watching. Netflix often launches its programs as events in themselves. This turns them into something that people feel compelled to watch – in other words, making them binge-worthy. One means of achieving this is to release all of a season's episodes simultaneously.

Context

Netflix began as a DVD sales and rental business in 1997 in the town of Santa Cruz, California. It was founded by Reed Hastings, who is now the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Netflix entered streaming video in 2007 and now operates in 190 countries, with millions of subscribers. In 2013, Netflix began producing its own content. The first production was the political thriller *House of Cards* (2013–17). The organisation has now moved its headquarters to Silicon Valley, California.

Netflix is a company with shares owned by a large number of private individuals and investment firms. One of the largest shareholders is its founder, Reed Hastings.

Audience and social impact

The cinema once held the monopoly on quality viewing. Netflix has altered the landscape of media, and the viewer's personal lifestyle has shifted as well. The theatre offered viewers a social experience because they are part of a crowd. Over time, home theatres have encroached on the quality of the cinema. Viewers can attain a cinematic experience without paying the cost of a cinema ticket. This has empowered the viewer, who now controls where quality content can be viewed. Viewer choice is underpinned by the convenience offered by streaming media.

For audience members, there can be an issue with algorithmic culture. In some ways, the data does not account for eclectic taste, and might not be a true reflection of viewer choice. Algorithmic culture and the taste communities they produce are coming under increasing scrutiny. In particular, attention is being directed to the way in which cultural viewing habits are being shaped by computers rather than humans.

Mixed distribution

The development of new digital platforms for the delivery of media, the rise of mobile devices and the rise of multi-platform distribution has put traditional media under pressure. As media companies respond to the digital challenge, takeovers and mergers are creating bigger and bigger companies, and fewer large-scale players in the field.

Disney

Disney started off as a small American animation studio in 1923. Today, it is a vast global media giant. The company's annual revenue exceeds the total GDP of more than 100 countries. The Walt Disney Company owns a global network of theme parks, television channels and toy stores. Walt Disney Studios is also one of the world's largest production companies. It owns Pixar, Marvel Entertainment, Lucasfilm (*Star Wars* franchise) and Disney Digital Network, and part-owns American online content distributor Hulu. In 2017, it also acquired most of 21st Century Fox from Rupert Murdoch. This deal gave it a dominant position in movies and also in sportscasting.

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Context

Disney is one of the largest Hollywood studios. Hollywood studios employ a factory-like approach to movie production. They use specialised labour, operate assembly lines of production and have their own studio lots (areas of land) where films are produced. These studios have been one of the main forms of film production since the era of silent movies, but they are increasingly under threat from the digital revolution.

At the same time, Hollywood has become the centre of a global entertainment industry. Movies are not the only activity – all kinds of entertainment is distributed, and movies are just one of many forms.

Disney has assured its survival by becoming a diversified entertainment company. Television is a part of it, accounting for almost 40 per cent of Disney business. The Disney Channel has 107 channels in 163 countries. However, when Disney opened its first theme park back in 1955, it was already beginning to be an entertainment company, not just a movie studio. In later times, Disney has moved beyond the narrow limits of its early 20th-century image. It is now involved in a whole range of entertainment productions that do not have an animation focus.

Audience and social impact

Disney has long-lasting appeal to generations of audience members. Almost everyone in the developed world has had some experience of Disney, and this contributes to its survival. Disney narratives and images have become part of western culture. Disney audiences are drawn from cinema, television and theme park audiences, as well as the readers of children's books. They also include the buyers of Disney merchandise.

3.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Read over YouTube's guidelines for users wanting to upload videos.
Explain what the site says is considered to be an appropriate and inappropriate video, **clarifying** what is likely to be excluded and included in these categories.

2 **Construct** a list of new video genres that have developed over time on YouTube.
Explain some of the features of each of the genres, giving **examples** of video titles that **demonstrate** each feature.

3 **Construct** a list of competing on-demand streaming platforms that offer high-quality content in the domestic home.
Explain how each example is considered to be high quality. **Illustrate** each platform by providing **examples** of their high-quality content.

4 **Construct** a web graphic that simulates how algorithmic viewing works. Start with one movie, and then think of another movie that relates to the first and draw a line to connect them. Then add a third movie, fourth, fifth and so on. Try and make connections between as many movies as you can.
Explain the graphic you have created, **providing additional information** about each of the movies and how it relates to the others.
Appraise whether this map of viewing has **worth** as a reflection of potential viewing habits. **Interpret** your own viewing habits to **make a judgement** about the **significance** of the Netflix algorithm in shaping people's viewing habits.

5 **Construct** a list of all of the entertainment forms that the Walt Disney Company is involved in.
Appraise the **significance** of 'house style' in a company owned by Disney, such as the Disney Studio, Pixar or Lucasfilm. **Interpret** features of the company's output to **make a judgement** about what defines the style of its productions.

REGULATION OF THE MEDIA

Regulation is a process of control by government authorities aimed at ensuring that media organisations operate within set boundaries.

In western democracies, media regulation is usually aimed at protecting the rights of citizens or the community. Media regulations deal with a range of issues, including ownership, types of content and local production.

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In oppressive regimes or dictatorships, media regulation can be used to squash any opposition to the government or controlling parties. Media regulation in authoritarian countries usually deals with issues of free speech and political restrictions.

Reporters Without Borders named 13 countries, including China, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam and North Korea, as the worst culprits for online **censorship**. These countries censor and block online content that criticises them. Foreign companies operating in these countries are expected to comply with their censorship regimes. Multinational companies such as Microsoft and Google have cooperated with the Chinese government in filtering the internet, and have even helped track down cyber-dissidents.

Classification versus censorship

Different countries use different systems to provide varying degrees of control over what the population is able to view. Some use systems of classification, while some use censorship.

- **Classification** is a system of allocating media content to particular categories.
- **Censorship** is a system of removing scenes or shots that could offend some interest group or political party. Censorship can also mean banning the media altogether.

Australia does not have a system of censorship for games, films, television programs or literature. Instead, there is a classification system. This system **classifies** content based on descriptions and depictions, which determine the appropriate classification category. The category contains the limitations as to who is able to access the content.

Motion Picture Production Code

The Motion Picture Production Code was a set of censorship rules that regulated the film industry in the United States from 1934 until its repeal in 1967. From 1930 to 1934 the code was voluntary, and after that it became mandatory. It is often referred to as the Hays Code after Hollywood's chief censor William Hays. In 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America adopted a classification system of rating films. The film *Hitchcock* (2012) shows Alfred Hitchcock visiting the Hays Office with the film *Psycho* (1960).

Some of the guidelines used in the Motion Picture Production Code are as follows:

- No details of crime techniques should be shown.
- Crime must not pay.
- No sympathy for criminals should be shown.
- No man and woman should be shown in bed together – the man must have his feet on the floor if lying down.
- No sex should be shown.
- No excessive or lustful kissing should be shown – a three-second limit was imposed.

Australian Classification Board



3.3.1 Australian Classification Board

The Australian Classification Board is the organisation that classifies films (theatrical release, DVD and Blu-ray), certain so-called 'submittable' publications (such as adult magazines) and computer games. Depending on the medium, the following regulations apply:

- **Films and games** – Every film or game that is legally available must be classified by the Australian Classification Board. Some films and games are exempt, including, for example, current affairs, educational, musical presentation, religious and hobby films. Since 2015, the Classification Board has classified digital games using the International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) system. This internationally agreed-upon system allows game makers to have their games quickly matched in with the classification systems of many different countries.
- **Publications** – Only those magazines or other publications that are likely to require restriction to adults need to be first submitted to the Classification Board.
- **Music videos** – Any video clip that accompanies a music release is said to be a film and must first be classified by the Classification Board (unless an exemption applies).
- **Music** – Songs with lyrics that might be considered offensive must be classified according to the *Code of Practice for Labelling Product with Explicit and Potentially Offensive Lyrics*. Under the Code of Practice, classification of recorded music is the responsibility of members of the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA). Generally, acceptable song lyrics do not require classification.

Table 3.1 The matrix used by the Australian Classification Board when a film or computer game is classified. Board members make individual notes and then use the matrix to arrive at the final rating. A tick is placed for each of the classifiable elements on the vertical axis, depending on its impact on the horizontal axis.

	VERY MILD IMPACT	MILD IMPACT	MODERATE IMPACT	STRONG IMPACT	HIGH IMPACT
THEMES					
VIOLENCE			√		
SEX					
LANGUAGE		√			
DRUG USE					
NUDITY		√			



Courtesy Department of Communications and the Arts

Figure 3.6 The Australian Classification Board in Sydney. Board members view the film or play the computer game and make notes every couple or so minutes, even if it is just to note that the action has not changed. Media may be viewed by board members either individually (for example, a film being released on Blu-ray for home entertainment) or as part of a wider panel of members (for example, a complex computer game or theatrical release film). They use the matrix shown in Table 3.1 to reach an overall decision about the rating to be awarded.

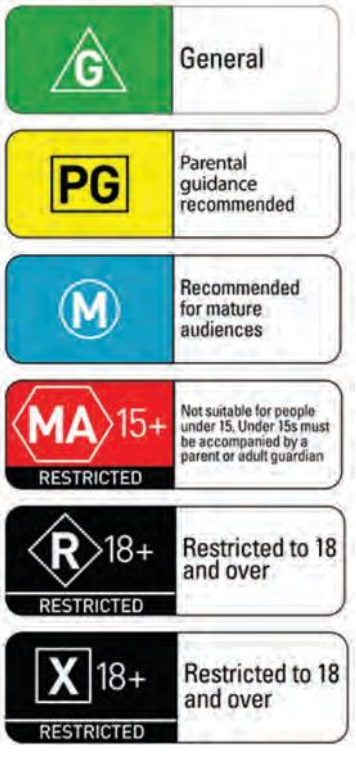
3.3.2 *Commonwealth Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act (1995)*

The Australian Classification Board operates under the *Commonwealth Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*. According to the Act (section 11), the matters to be taken into account in making a decision on the classification of a publication, film or computer game include:

- the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults
- the literary, artistic or educational merit (if any) of the publication, film or computer game
- the general character of the publication, film or computer game, including whether it is of a medical, legal or scientific character
- the person or class or persons to or among whom the publication, film or game is published or intended or likely to be published.

Film and game categories

The classification categories for films and computer games are based on an increasing scale of impact and increasing potential for either offence or harm. The first three categories are advisory only. The final three are legally enforceable restrictions. Cinemas and home entertainment retail and hire stores can be fined if they do not comply with the restrictions.



Courtesy Department of Communications and the Arts

Figure 3. 7 Australian regulation categories for films and computer games.

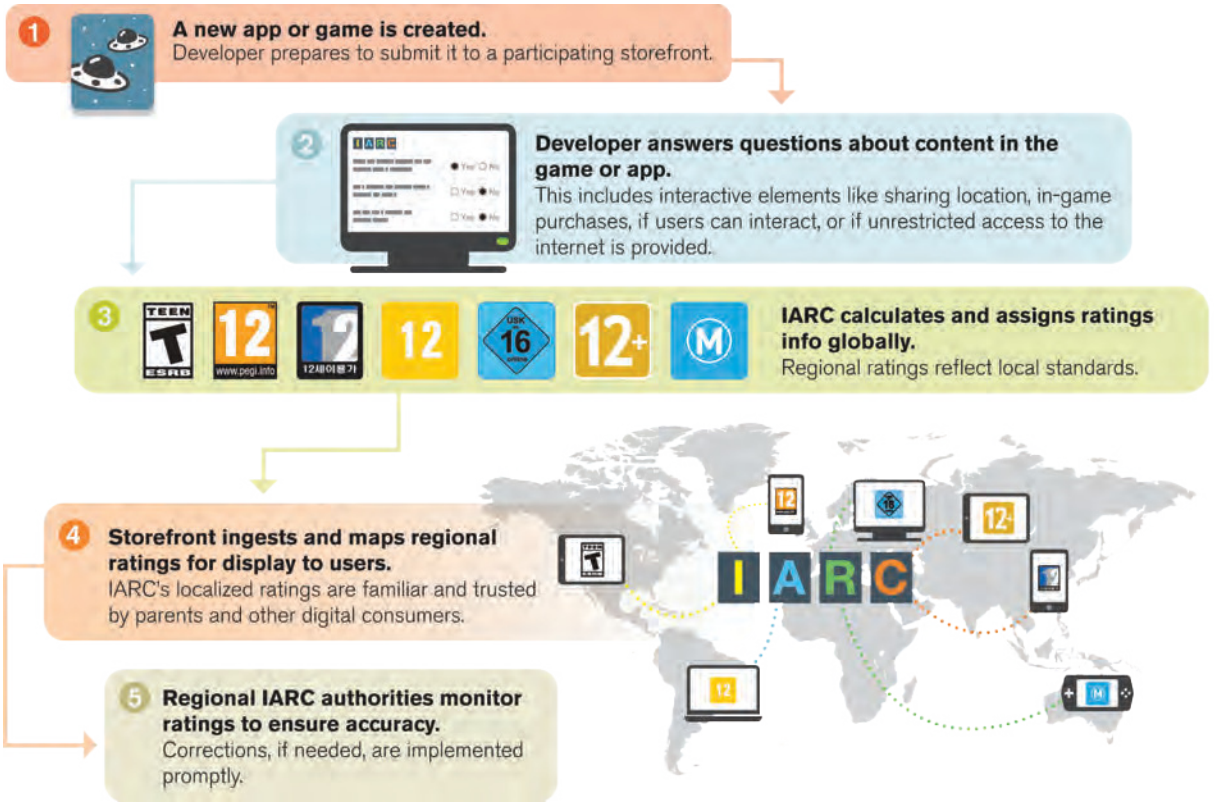
The classification challenge posed by the internet

The internet is now a major distribution platform. It crosses national borders, and the only way to control its content is to stop it coming into the country altogether by cutting off international cables. The internet is international and does not recognise the laws and regulations of different countries.

The internet also offers real-time access to worldwide content. Many Australians are keen downloaders of US programming and use the internet to access shows long before Australian media organisations release the shows.

One way that the Australian Government has responded to the challenge posed by the internet as a distribution platform has been to introduce automated tools such as online questionnaires to classify content under certain conditions. Two such tools are currently in use. It has also established a number of trials and initiatives to make the classification process less time-consuming. These include the following:

- **IARC classification tool for mobile and online games**. Game developers are able to fast-track their classification for the Australian market and other world markets by completing an online questionnaire about their game. An algorithm then generates an assigned rating for the six participating rating authorities that collectively represent regions serving approximately 1.5 billion people. The algorithm applies Australian classification rules to the answers on the questionnaire. If a game receives a classification under this system, it is subject to an audit by the Australian Classification Board at any time.
- **Netflix classification tool**. Netflix, in consultation with the Australian Government, has developed a tool to produce Australian classifications for the content available via Netflix in Australia. The tool relies on the identification and tagging of classifiable content and an algorithm that converts this information into an Australian classification.



The 'How IARC Works' graphic is the property of the International Age Rating Coalition, Inc. and the rating icons it includes are trademarks of the respective rating authorities.

Figure 3.8 A graphic showing how the International Age Rating Coalition (IARC) classification tool works.

Australian content rules

Australian content regulations are set by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The regulations separately cover commercial free-to-air television and subscription (pay) television. The ABC and SBS networks are exempt from these rules because they operate under separate charters. The Australian content rules aim to develop and encourage an Australian cultural identity and diversity. The ACMA states that the Australian community should have access to television programs produced under Australian creative control.

Free trade agreements can affect local content regulations. New Zealand programs are counted as Australian under the Australia–New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement. However, the Australia–United States Free Trade Agreement allows Australian local content regulations to remain in place. Under this agreement, Australia is also able to introduce new local content laws for digital multichannel television and subscription television if necessary.



Goal Post Pictures Australia

Figure 3.9 *Cleverman* (2016) re-imagines several Aboriginal Dreamtime stories and sets them in a sci-fi future. A cleverman in Aboriginal societies was like a shaman who had direct links to the Dreamtime and was a master of magic. One of the aims of ACMA is to promote a sense of Australian identity, character and cultural diversity through Australian productions. The ABC and SBS have a similar set of aims embedded in their charters.

Free-to-air television

The Australian content levels to be broadcast by free-to-air commercial television licensees are set by the ACMA in a document called the *Broadcasting Services (Australian Content) Standard 2005*.

Overall quotas

The transmission quota for Australian content is a minimum of 55 per cent between 6.00 a.m. and midnight. Television stations must also broadcast at least 25 hours of children's drama and at least eight hours of repeat children's drama each year.

Stations are expected to broadcast at least 130 hours of preschool material each year, some of which can be repeats. All preschool programs must be produced in Australia.

3.3.3 Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

Drama

Minimum levels for local prime-time drama are set by a points system. The scores for first-release Australian drama must total at least 250 points in any one year, and at least 860 points over three years. Points are calculated using the following formula:

Drama score = format factor × duration (in hours)

The format factors vary according to the estimated quality of the programs and their costs of production, as outlined below.

For an Australian serial or series programmed more often than one hour per week, the format factor is 1. Most soap operas fall within this category.

For an Australian serial or series programmed for one hour or less per week, the format factor is 3 if it has been made by an independent producer and 2.5 if it has been made by the network. The aim of the factor difference is to encourage the networks to contract out to independent producers. However, some independents say this is not enough. In the European Union as a whole, at least 10 per cent of all television transmission time must be contracted from independent producers. In the UK, the minimum is 25 per cent.

For feature movies, miniseries or self-contained dramas, the format factor is 4. These programs have the highest costs of all.

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Documentaries

At least 20 hours a year of first-release Australian documentaries of at least 30 minutes' duration must be shown between 6.00 a.m. and midnight. The ACMA defines a documentary as 'the creative treatment of actuality'. Reality television programs do not qualify as documentaries.

Advertising

At least 80 per cent of all television advertising on free-to-air stations between 6.00 a.m. and midnight must be Australian.

Subscription television

Subscription television, also known as pay television, is treated separately from free-to-air television in relation to Australian content rules. Since consumers pay a fee for the service, there is a greater sense that they are responsible for what they wish to view. Multiple channels also provide a wide variety of content that cannot be easily regulated.

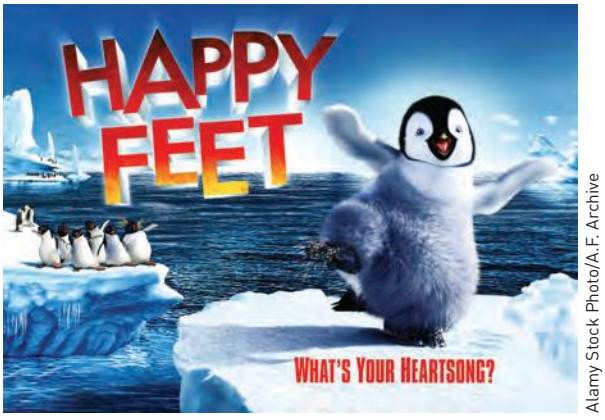
Accordingly, just one simple rule applies: subscription television drama channels must spend 10 per cent of their total program expenditure on first-release Australian (or New Zealand) drama.

Defining Australian productions

The ACMA defines an Australian program as one that meets all the following conditions:

- **Creative control.** The program is seen to be Australian if the producer is Australian, and also if the director or the writer is Australian.
- **Cast.** At least 50 per cent of the leading actors or presenters in the program must be Australian.
- **Supporting cast.** At least 75 per cent of the supporting cast in a drama must be Australian.
- **Production.** The program must be produced and post-produced in Australia, although it may be filmed overseas.

Animations are required to have Australians in three of the following roles: production designer, character designer, supervising layout artist, supervising storyboarding artist or key background artist.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 3.10 The feature film *Happy Feet* (2006) is defined as an Australian animation because Australians had creative control. Pixar's *Finding Nemo* (2003) was set on the Great Barrier Reef and used some Australian voices, but it is not defined as an Australian animation.

3.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Visit the Australian Classification Board's website and read about the rating decision for a well-known film or video game.
Explain the board's decision, **providing information** about the reasons behind it and **clarifying** the main deciding factors determining the final outcome.
Construct a formal argument as to why that decision should be upheld or changed.

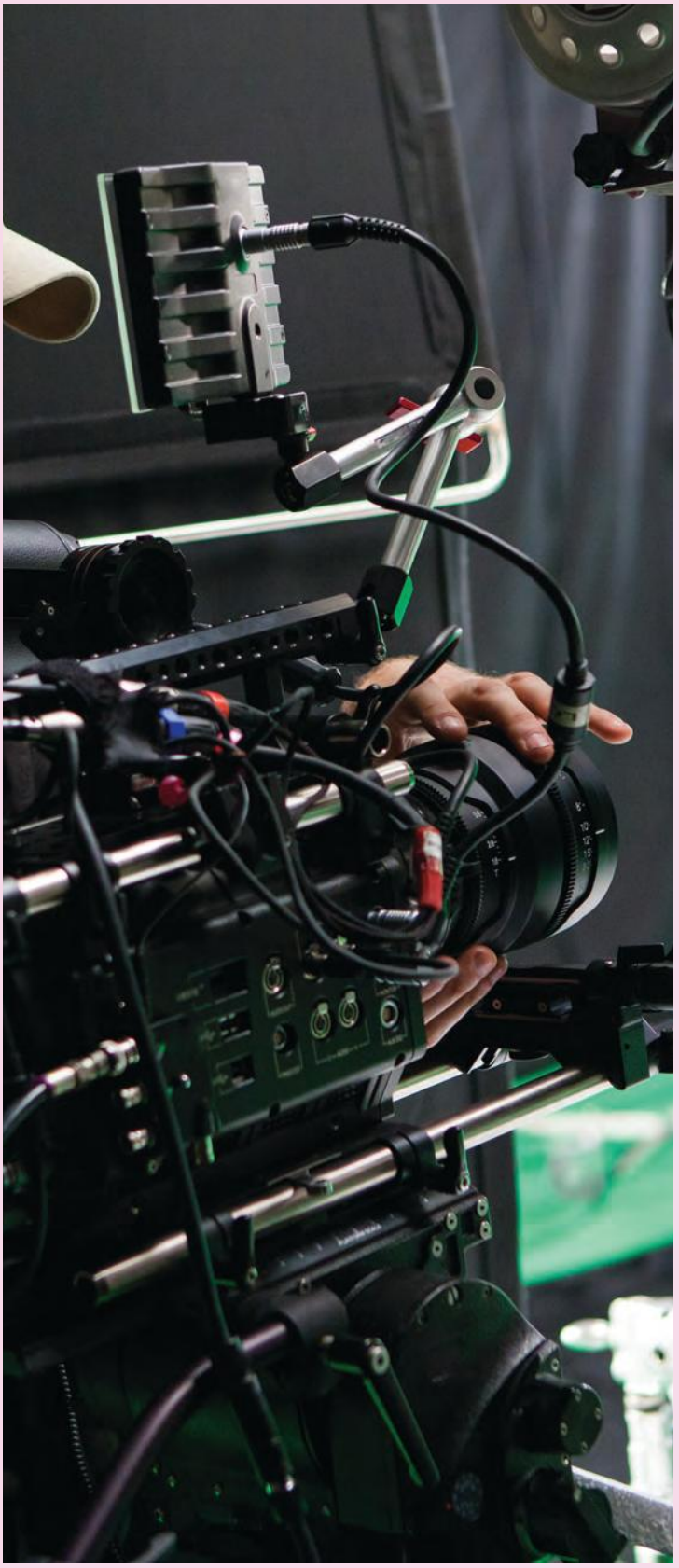
3.3.4 The Australian Classification Board

2 Investigate a commercial broadcaster's compliance with the *Broadcasting Services (Australian Content) Standard 2005* by following the steps in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain your selection of a chosen broadcaster, giving **information** about the station's output between 6:00 a.m. and midnight over a one-week period, using an online program guide.	**Analyse** the type and duration of first-release content, referring to the format definitions and scoring system used by the ACMA, **considering** results as points earned over the week. Multiply this by 52 to determine an estimate for the year.	**Appraise** results to **interpret** the degree to which the station is in compliance with the law. **Appraise** results by **drawing conclusions** around the **worth** of Australian content regulations for the Australian community.

4

Technologies of the moving-image media



Getty Images/ bjones27

9780170423601

ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

The technologies of media representation are mostly taken for granted. Consumers tend to focus on the product. Very few teenagers streaming video on their mobile phones could explain the technology that puts it there. Yet the technologies of representation have a profound effect on the message, and even on the users.

Media technologies tend to become routine. Even our bodies develop habits around them – our fingers get used to texting and swiping, and our sitting positions comfortably suit themselves to tablet computers, laptops and desktops, or wall-mounted television screens. We are habituated and feel at home using media technologies.

One of the defining characteristics of the media is the use of technology. One definition of the media is 'the technological means of communicating messages'. But how do we define what is meant by 'media technology'?

Media technologies of representation can be defined as the tools and processes necessary to mediate the form and content of media communications. The technologies help to create the meanings but can also block some other meanings. For example, radio can transmit sound but not images; a camera angle in a film can tell some parts of the story but hide others. Therefore, media technologies can both enable and constrain the creation of meaning. This broad definition allows for media technologies to be considered as a combination of three key components:

- **Hardware and software.** Media technologies include the actual machines of transmission – the hardware. However, the term also includes software, such as the editing software used in production. The capabilities of the software change the nature of the message just as much as the hardware does. Consider the potential of computer-generated imagery, now common in today's media. Compare that with the special effects available before the 1990s.
- **Institutions.** Technologies affect the media organisations that use them, but sometimes the organisations developing the ideas have an effect on the technology itself. For example, the internet has changed almost every organisation in the modern world. However, the internet in its earliest stage of development is often seen as a product of American universities and the United States military. The web-like structure of communication was used so that nuclear attack would not wipe out the entire system (see page 255).
- **Practices and processes.** Technology involves more than just machines. Media technologies of representation are also part of the traditions and practices of media operators. The term includes the social practices or habits and customs that develop around the technology. For example, there is a whole tradition of camera technique based around the usage of camera technologies. These techniques are often passed down from person to person within the industry. These people affect the ways in which the technology is used.



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Figure 4.1 Vintage filmmaking. The practices and processes of a particular technology are also a part of that technology. For example, a camera is more than just an electronic device. As a technology of media representation, it includes all of the processes, customs and habits of camera use that have developed since the early days of photography and film.

Theories of technology

Theories of communication technology are often divided into three main approaches: technological determinism, determined technology and socially constructed technology.

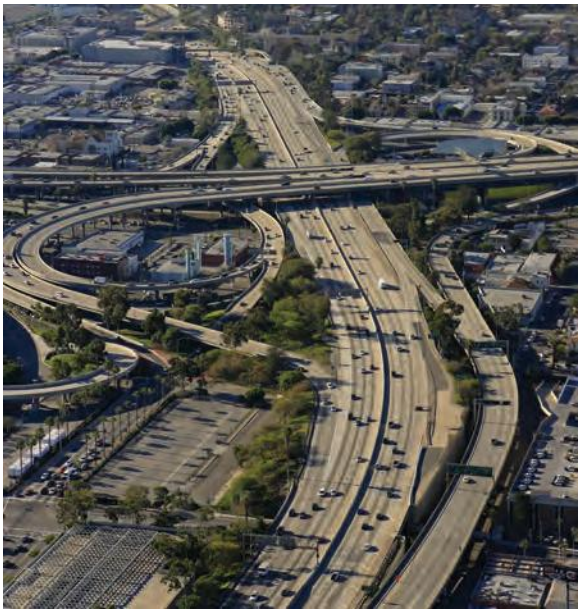
Technological determinism

Technological determinism argues that the nature of technology determines the nature of society. Some theorists call this the 'billiard ball model'. A new technology comes along like a billiard cue ball and shatters the established order, with its effects ricocheting in unforeseen directions. Using this

theory, it can be argued that the internet (or the car, or the aeroplane) has totally changed society. First came the invention, then came the effects.

Supporters of this theory might point to the car as a good example. From its popular uptake in the 1920s, the car has radically changed our sense of distance, our shopping habits, dating habits, city design, house design and a whole host of other aspects of society.

However, this theory of technology allows no possibility of human responsibility once the technological invention has been promoted. The theory seems to suggest that the technology has a mind of its own and just takes over society – whether the community wants it or not.



Shutterstock.com/Sai Chan

Figure 4.2 Freeways in Los Angeles. Supporters of technological determinism would argue that the invention of the car totally transformed society, irrespective of what people actually wanted. The technology determined what would happen.

Determined technology

The theory of determined technology regards technology as being shaped and determined by the particular society that creates it. In this view, it is other social factors, such as economic or political forces, that influence the nature of the technology that a society produces. Technology historian Brian Winston makes the point that, like all of us, technologists are social beings who operate within social constraints – they are people like everyone else. This limits what advances are possible and under what circumstances they will be made available for use.

Winston sees technological change as something that is created by a wide variety of forces that may be operating in society at the time. These affect inventors and their ideas, just as they affect everyone else. What eventually determines whether a new technology will be accepted, or even arise in the first place, is what Winston terms 'supervening social necessity'. Supervening necessities are events, desires or urgent requirements that create the need within a society for a particular technological development. For example, the supervening social necessity of the Second World War created the circumstances for the development of the atomic bomb.

Socially constructed technology

The socially constructed technology approach sees the relationship between society and technology as a complex and interactive two-way exchange of causes and effects. Technology develops according to the ends to which society puts it. In other words, we get the technology that we deserve – like it or not, it was society that developed it. A different society would create different technologies.

Critics often argue that this approach does not take into account the powerful demands of big business corporations and their ability to impose their will on the wider community. This view is seen by some critics as giving too much power to society.



Getty Images/FPG

Figure 4.3 The technological possibility of video phone calls existed as far back as the 1950s. A number of issues held back its marketing, including society's willingness to accept it. In a sense, society had no need for such a thing while it remained clumsy. The socially constructed theory of technology suggests that a technology will not thrive unless it meets an overwhelming necessity in society.

4.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Using the theory of technological determinism, select a technology and **evaluate** the impact it has had upon society. List as many impacts as you can and detail how they ricocheted through many aspects of society. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the technology you have selected. **Give information** about its general purposes and uses. **Explain** its penetration into the market. **Explain** as many of the impacts as you can, making a list.	**Analyse** component features, **examining** each and **considering** the impacts on society, evaluating effects in as many areas as you can think of. **Examine** the ways in which society has been affected and decide how society may have looked if the technology hadn't been introduced. **Analyse** the **strengths and limitations** of the introduction of the technology, **making judgements** using positives and negatives for society as **criteria**.	**Appraise** the **significance** and **status** of the technology, **drawing conclusions** about its overall **worth** to society when compared with other alternatives or the prior environment.

2 Look at the penny-farthing in Figure 4.4 and then research the history of some of the technology 'duels' or 'battles' of the past century or so.
Explain why one technology failed to gain a popular following, while another technology succeeded. **Identify** the key factors that led to one of the technologies being adopted. Examples could include the famous VHS versus Beta video battle, or the more recent Blu-ray versus HD DVD battle.



Shutterstock.com/HodagMedia

Figure 4.4 The penny-farthing is sometimes used as an example of socially constructed technology. This bicycle was not necessarily an inferior design, but instead was used by riders for speed and demonstrations of daring. When large numbers of people wanted to ride bicycles for commuting purposes, the design was changed to the modern 'safety cycle'. Society got the bicycle design that it wanted – hence socially constructed technology.

EVOLUTION OF TECHNOLOGY AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Media technology has been changing at a rate faster than that experienced in many other industries – so fast, that many analysts talk of a communications revolution. The last 20 years have been a time of great optimism, but also great fear. Change has disrupted many of the older, accepted ways of doing things. It has forced many media businesses to either change or go under.

Evolving technology and the 'experience economy'

The Hard Rock Cafe soared to global notoriety because it developed the successful idea of combining service with a unique experience. Food was more like props for an out-of-the-ordinary experience. Getting a coffee or having lunch in a cafe is a common everyday occurrence; most cafes are relatively the same. However, in a time of plenty, what the consumer wants is a special experience. This is what made the Hard Rock Cafe a viable company: their understanding of consumer experience.

Ideas about the **experience economy** began to surface during the late 1990s. At the time, it seemed like commodities and competition were very common, and it was easy for most people to find products. But what people lacked was something like a special experience to make them buy a product. Over time, the idea of shaping experience around a product became more common.

The experience economy is often defined as the next step in the progression of economic value, and it is driving technological evolution.

The word 'economy' has been added because the experience has become part of the product. Experience is for sale, as much as the product is. Thus, experience is commodified (converted into a commodity or product). The personal experience is not just about entertainment – it is about something highly memorable and lasting, but it is also about **aesthetics**. The consumer's choice to engage with products is guided by visual appeal and the potential this has in constructing a memorable experience.

Consumption is linked to the ways in which the product is staged by the company. Steve Job's remarkable strategy in presenting the new iPhone in 2007 was not about a simple phone. It was about offering the public a new aestheticisation (beautification) of everyday life, using more pleasing aesthetics to reshape the common phone call. Possessing the new iPhone became an experience of a cool new lifestyle choice. Since other companies such as Nokia and Samsung were not marketing their phones in the same way, Apple was able to soar well above their competitors. However, it was not very long before other companies began to catch on.

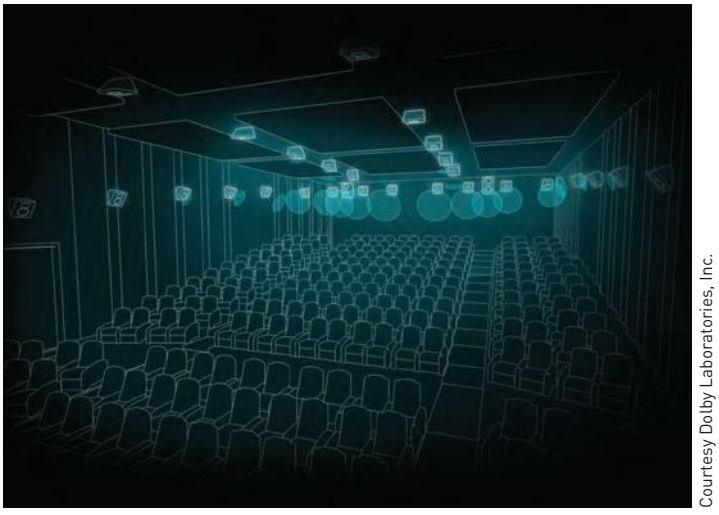
A number of recent advancements in new technologies have been shaped by the experience economy. For example, the push toward a marketable virtual reality (VR) is motivated by consumer interests in better experiences. The gaming console is now too ordinary. VR is therefore the aestheticisation of that everyday gaming experience. But it won't be long before the activity of watching television will converge with VR. This experience is currently being investigated by a number of technology companies. Steven Spielberg's *Ready Player One* (2018) is not only a reflection of consumer interest in the new aesthetics on offer in VR, but also a blunt comment about how everyday life and technology is so heavily intertwined. VR television could be a reality sooner than you think.

The difficulty faced by every company is in sustaining the memorable experience. Once it becomes common, or ordinary, the consumer will likely vacate in preference for another better experience. In other words, if the experience wears off, consumers will seek other brands. The pressure to sustain consumer interest has led to new shifts in the function of new technologies. In many cases, new technologies are no longer concerned with invention as much as they are with fashioning brand loyalty. Designing products so that they can undergo constant updates is one method among many designed to sustain experience. But consumers will chase any experience that is greater, so brand loyalty is in danger of becoming obsolete.

The evolving cinema experience

Viewing the big screen in theatres is characterised by dynamic and spectacular sounds and vision. Imagery is (naturally) large scale, of high resolution and luxurious. For the viewer, satisfaction appears to be mostly a result of the experience of this context. Much of the technological work that has been invested in supporting and sustaining the big screen format has largely been motivated by an experience economy. For example, recent years have seen significant advances in three-dimensional viewing and sound, which is a testament to the way in which experience economy underpins the cultural practice of cinema-going.

Dolby Atmos appeared in Australian cinemas in 2014. Unlike its predecessor, Dolby Atmos is capable of mapping the soundscape so that sounds function as an expression of three-dimensional space. Listening to a film now resembles the spatial qualities of sounds in real life. This new technology elevates the practice of watching cinema, transforming the theatre space into a more special experience.



Courtesy Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

Figure 4.5 Diagram showing the many speakers required for Dolby Atmos to function. Each speaker is assigned a particular sound to create a three-dimensional soundscape. This forms an important part of the viewing experience, bringing a greater sense of it being life like or of high fidelity.

The increase in 3D screenings of certain blockbuster films is also a telling indication of the ways in which the experience economy is shaping viewing habits at the theatre. Making use of a technique called stereoscopic vision, films are either recorded in 3D or post-converted into 3D using computer-generated technologies. These new technological advancements bring new directions in how fidelity (the degree of exactness or truth to real life) comes to the cinema.

The evolving television experience

Viewing the small screen, in contrast to the theatre, offers a completely different experience – one that used to be significantly diminished in both nature and scale. The advent of television in the 1950s brought exciting new modes of viewership. However, it lacked the dynamic experience of theatre spaces. This was primarily a result of the limitations of the technology – a smaller screen with monophonic sound.

The constraints of television technology, particularly the size of the screen, resulted in the medium being characterised as domestic, mundane and ordinary. As a result, the gap between television and theatre was quite large.

During the early 2000s, new developments in technologies allowed televisions to merge into the domain of wide-format viewing. This was an example of the experience economy motivating shifts in the way television was approached. Widescreen televisions now offered greater fidelity in their image. Colour range increased to near infinite numbers and resolutions were greatly expanded. Viewers were now able to experience high-definition content in the comfort and privacy of their home.

The changes occurring around television design also affected the television industry. The shift from 4:3 to 16:9 format created a whole new set of aesthetic strategies for television productions. Television shows that were once deemed 'regular' received an upgrade to become legitimately competitive with what the cinema had to offer.

Platforms such as Netflix now offer films and series for television viewing that employ the same strategies as Hollywood productions. The aesthetic strategies of the television series *Fargo* (2014–) employ panoramic compositions similar to John Ford's Western films. This approach to cinematography, normally reserved for theatre screens, put the essence of big screen **spectacle** into television production.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 4.6 The aesthetic strategies of the television series *Fargo* (2014–) were designed for large-format viewing. Long shots like this characterise the show as more of an experience based on spectacle. The experience of the image as spectacle is only made possible by the increased size of the television screen.

The evolving home-viewing context

The rise of domestic home theatre rooms has also influenced the experience of television. These rooms operate like miniature cinema spaces, complete with sound-proofing and multiple-speaker set-ups – all designed to replicate the experience of the cinema itself. An individual consumer can purchase a large-format television and six to 10 speakers for surround sound, and outfit their space to resemble a cinema.

Building companies now offer theatre spaces in their home designs by default, signifying the importance of a dynamic viewing experience in everyday life. The implications of these developments are far reaching. Television can now encroach upon the once exclusive experience of the theatre, allowing for the home to become a functioning part of the broader experience economy, and the filmic event to become more accessible. The inclusion of home theatres in new homes indicates the extent to which experience economy has shifted domestic viewing habits.

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> 'The action movie changed radically when it became possible to Velcro your muscles on. It was the beginning of a new era. The visual took over. The special effects became more important than the person.'
>
> **Sylvester Stallone**, actor

Evolution of CGI

4.2.1 How CGI changed movies forever
4.2.2 A computer-generated imagery history

Computer generated imagery (CGI) is defined as the use of computer graphics to create or enhance images. CGI animation refers to the use of moving CGI to make up sequences in games and movies.

The photographic image bears a strict resemblance to the object it represents in the historical world. That is the nature of the mechanical reproduction of the camera – it is capable of an extreme precision. A photo of a tree looks exactly like the tree that was captured. Because of this relationship, the image itself carries persuasive power. Viewers engage with the image, and believe it is real because they think the camera does not lie. This engagement with the persuasive power of the image also informs a viewer's involvement, particularly emotional investment. In cinema, a viewer's connection with story is in part due to the degree of realism in the text itself.

The introduction of CGI complicated this relationship. Because viewers are so well attuned to the realism on offer in cameras, CGI first presented itself as more of an obstacle. The computer-generated construction of human form in screen space lacked the precision of the mechanical reproduction of the camera. Early films that featured poor or sub-standard CGI were (and still are) difficult to engage with because of that displacement of reality. The sudden introduction of a CGI object in screen space did nothing more than reposition the viewer's attention upon the artifice of production practice.

The evolution of CGI reached a crucial point in the 1990s. Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993) probably represents the biggest turning point in the history of CGI. Using newly developed technologies in rendering, dinosaurs were provided with a physical texture unlike anything that had appeared before. The result was a hyper-realistic image that stunned audiences.

Many critics stated that the climax of *The Mummy Returns* (2001) fell flat because of the flawed digital design of Dwayne Johnson as the scorpion monster. By that year, audiences expected better. Sadly, there is also a long history of poor CGI that illustrates a negative impact upon emotional investment.

The CGI image has now begun to closely resemble the photographic properties of a mechanically reproduced photo, taken by a camera. This means that the image not only carries persuasive power, but it also provides a positive experience for the viewer. Thus, CGI is a highly active ingredient in the viewer's engagement with and experience of the screen. This engagement and experience are dependent on the ways in which convergence with realism is managed.



Courtesy NBC Universal

Figure 4.7 The obviously flawed digital design of the scorpion monster in *The Mummy Returns* (2001) creates a difficult viewing position for audiences. Viewers attempt to align the figure with reality, but struggle to do so because of the differences in lighting, saturation and movement.

Pixilation animation

4.2.3 Learn about pixilation
4.2.4 Animation basics: what is pixilation?

Pixilation animation involves the use of pixels (small squares) to create an image that lacks overall clarity. From a distance, the combination of pixels (and their colours) allows the viewer to see an image, although it still remains quite obscure.

Pixilation animation is an aesthetic that has gained considerable currency in recent years. Pixels were used primarily in the design of video game aesthetics in the 1970s and 1980s, with much of the gaming industry relying on pixels for well over a decade. Thus, early video games became closely associated with pixilation, as did the decade of the 1980s.

By the 1990s, the use of pixels to create aesthetics decreased in popularity, and technologies advanced in specific ways to reduce the presence of pixels altogether. As resolutions grew larger, pixels became smaller. By the early 2000s, pixels were subtle and gave way to newer, smoother aesthetics that seemed to resemble reality much better.

However, after the release of *Minecraft* in 2009, pixel art experienced a sharp resurgence in popularity. Pixels began to appear again in games, various artworks, advertising and even as commodities. The impact that pixilation animation has had on culture is probably most notable in Google's decision to name their smartphone 'Pixel'. Their use of this term indicates the degree to which the word itself has become a functioning part of everyday life.

For the generations who were young in the 1980s and early 1990s, the impact of pixilation animation has resulted in forms of engagement underpinned by nostalgia. Nostalgia is a yearning for the past in the immediate present and is always present in popular culture.

The presence of pixels in aesthetics is merely an expression of patterns of consumer tastes.



Alamy Stock Photo/Fir Mamat

Figure 4.8 *Star Trek Trexels* is a nostalgic pixelated game for Apple iOS devices. Its design aesthetic is deliberately pixelated. Pixelated animation has become popular partly through the game *Minecraft*, but also as a remembrance of the 1980s and 1990s. For younger generations, it represents a return to simplicity that modern high-resolution images cannot offer.

They operate as signs for a particular 'golden age'. For younger consumers, pixel animation functions in terms of a new aesthetic. Since they have no point of comparison (no experience of the 1980s), their engagement with pixel animation cannot draw from nostalgia. Instead, pixel animation represents a fresh shift in aesthetics that is remarkably different from the high-resolution CGI that saturates the contemporary image. For them, pixilation animation might be likened to a new form of technology.

Virtual or digital actors

4.2.5 Brave new world for virtual actors

'I'll be back.'

Movie catchphrase associated with actor **Arnold Schwarzenegger**

With virtual acting, Arnold Schwarzenegger could indeed 'be back' well after he has finished with being in the movies. Initial steps have already been taken with the resurrection of his younger self in *Terminator Salvation* (2009) and *Terminator Genisys* (2015). Popular sequels could continue well after the actor himself has aged too far.

A virtual or digital actor is a computer-generated actor. Virtual or digital actors can be either based on a real human being or completely digitally created (that is, without an equivalent in the real world).

Digital actors are often used as extras, or in stunt scenes that feature hyperkinetic action. They are the unpaid actors who play the parts that were once performed by real people. Various actors in the industry have expressed anxiety over the continued development of the digital actor, such as Tom Hanks – his concerns are to do with the loss of paid work. However, other actors are more positive about the



Alamy Stock Photo/Paramount/Everett Collection

Figure 4.9 A digital re-creation of Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Terminator Genisys* (2015). The obvious artificiality creates problems for viewers, who spend time registering it instead of experiencing tension or fear in story.

use of digital actors, such as Andy Serkis – he argues for a new category of Academy Award reserved for digital actors and motion capturing.

In their earliest inception, digital actors functioned only in terms of a passive component of the *mise en scène*. In *Titanic* (1997), digital actors were used to create large background crowds populating the decks of the ship. However, advances in technology has seen the rapid rise of digital actors to the limelight. The role of Clu in *TRON: Legacy* (2010) was key, and he shared a significant amount of screen time with real-life actors. Advances in software are narrowing the gap between the digital world and the physical world.

Impact on industry

The human film star, now known as the 'carbon actor', has been an important part of film production for a century. But advancements in technology, and the rise of the digital actor, have set up an interesting situation where carbon actors must now compete with their digital counterparts for roles in upcoming productions.

This has some interesting implications on performance, and more industrial practices such as auditions. Perhaps the day will come when carbon actors must justify their presence in a production, especially if a digital actor commands no wages at all.

There are other ways in which the digital actor has affected the industry. In recognition of the potential for the technology, the first 'post-human talent agency' was created in 1998. It specialises in the relationship between human emotion and its physical expression. Other companies are actively pursuing the rights to the imagery of deceased actors, and a number of living actors.

Carbon actors themselves are in preparations for selling the rights to their own image for when they reach retirement.

Audience impact

Digital actors release television and film production from its dependence on the physical world. This has significant implications, perhaps the largest of which is how a viewer might approach emotionally investing in the performance of a digital actor. For instance, can a digital actor induce an emotional experience in the viewer such as crying or laughter? This may also bring new meaning to the way in which the suspension of disbelief functions.

Despite the advances in software and hardware used to create them, digital actors are yet to achieve that subtlety needed to make the transition completely convincing. Digital actors still have an artificial look – they are not as actual as a carbon actor. The character of Clu in *TRON: Legacy* (2010) was not Jeff Bridges the carbon actor, but a recreation of 1980s Jeff Bridges imagery using a combination of software and earlier footage from other films. The resulting synthetic appearance of Clu had the resemblance of Bridges, but was only hyper-real, not photorealistic. Perhaps there was some acknowledgement of his imperfection in the character's full name: 'Coded Likeness Utility'.

The Uncanny Valley

> 'It's a paradox of animation that you can put arms and a face on a spoon, say, or make a deer talk, and it looks cute. But make a character too lifelike, and the brain no longer reads it as good animation, but as reality with something wrong about it. That's the uncanny valley.'
>
> **Steve Rose**, writer, *The Guardian*

In 1970, Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori noted that an object becomes more appealing as it is **anthropomorphised** (takes on more human characteristics). As an object gets closer to looking human but not exactly right, it suddenly becomes weird and unsettling to audiences. This phenomenon is referred to as the **Uncanny Valley**. The 'valley' refers to the dip in a graph of how appealing an object is as it gets closer to human likeness (see Figure 4.10).

One theory as to why this occurs is that we have evolved to tell if something is slightly 'off'

in another human and be wary of it. This issue is an important consideration for animators, game designers and roboticists.

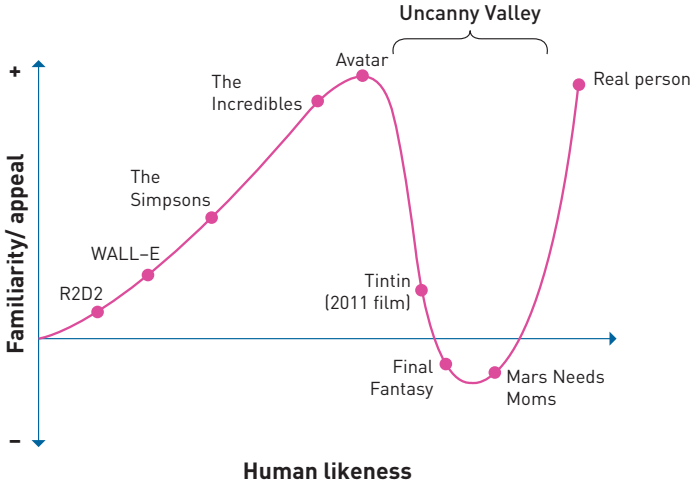


Figure 4.10 A graph of the Uncanny Valley phenomenon with animated characters and films. As a character becomes more human-like, we find it more appealing and can empathise with that character. When a character is almost human but something is not quite right, we find the effect uncanny and the character loses its appeal. Creating convincingly realistic CGI human characters is still the end goal for many media producers.

Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within (2001) was one of the first films to use motion-capture technologies in order to create 'realistic' human characters with CGI. Unfortunately, the film fell into the Uncanny Valley and made a significant loss overall. Ten years later, the CGI animation *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (2011) was commercially successful and won a Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Animation. However, Tintin's representation, particularly the face, was still considered strange and unnatural by audiences and critics.

One way around the issue is to stop right on the valley's edge – to stylise characters just enough so that they're not trying to look like photorealistic humans. Animation companies such as Pixar and DreamWorks, and the creators of films like *Avatar* (2009), have successfully designed characters in this way.



Shutterstock.com/Sarunyu L

Figure 4.11 Pixar's 2017 film *Coco*. Pixar's first foray into creating 'realistic' characters was the baby in their 1988 short film, *Tin Toy*. Although the baby represented significant advancements in CGI technology at the time, its appearance and movements landed it squarely in the Uncanny Valley. With the negative reactions to *Tin Toy*, Pixar learned a valuable lesson about character design. Since then, Pixar has tended to create more stylised human characters.

Technology panics

Technology panics are fears that grip society when a new technology is introduced. They may occur for a number of reasons:

- **Fear of change.** New technologies can be transformative, some dramatically so. In all changes there are winners and losers. For society as a whole, change is not always an overall improvement.
- **Loss of control.** Industries based on existing technologies have a financial stake in the old way of doing things. They may promote technology panics as a means of protecting their own businesses. Newspapers often criticise competitor media forms such as social media, television or the internet.
- **Protecting the vulnerable.** Fears frequently develop around the uptake of new technologies by young people. Those in positions of control (such as politicians, teachers and parents) tend to be older and concerned for the welfare of younger generations.
- **Generation gaps.** New technologies may appeal to younger people, and older generations may develop concerns out of a lack of understanding.

Can panics be justified?

Calling something a 'panic' suggests that the fears or concerns are not real, or that they are blown out of proportion. While this can be the case, it is not always. Sometimes there are valid reasons for concern that need to be addressed, or gradual changes that need to be made if society is to accommodate the new technology. Sometimes change needs to be made to the technology. This is all part of the process of socially determined technology.



Shutterstock.com/Narongrit Lokoolprakit

Figure 4.12 Technology panics may be based around themes such as pornography, violence or the loss of childhood. A technology panic can recur as basically the same fear but applied to different technologies.

Who creates panics?

British communications professor Chas Critcher says there are five main groups within society who have the potential power to create technology panics (and other sorts of panics):

- the media
- politicians and the government
- police and law enforcement groups
- lobby groups, pressure groups and demonstrators
- public opinion.

Together, these groups form an immensely powerful force and other points of view are easily drowned out. However, the five groups do not always line up in agreement and a panic is not guaranteed.

You can view a technology panic timeline by following the weblink.

4.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Research in more detail one of the media panics that have occurred over the past 100 years. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the technology that gave rise to the panic. **Give information** about the reactions in the community, **illustrating** with some examples. **Identify** some of the main concerns.	**Analyse** the contributing factors or component parts behind the panic. **Interpret** the reactions in terms of the reasons for the panic. **Analyse** the chief cause of the panic, **making judgements** about the relative strengths of different concerns.	**Appraise** the **significance** and **status** of the panic with the benefit of hindsight (from the perspective of the present day). **Appraise** the degree to which people were justified in their concerns, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of the long-term impact of the technology.

2 **Construct** a timeline of 'reverse panics' that shows the benefits of each of the technical breakthroughs listed in the timeline of technology panics (available via weblink).

3 Select five to 10 video game, film or television characters that have been created using CGI technologies.
Construct a graph of the Uncanny Valley using the **conventions** of graph design. Place 'Familiarity/Appeal' on the vertical axis and 'Human likeness' on the horizontal axis.
Analyse the **representation** of the characters in terms of familiarity/appeal and human likeness. **Consider** how technical codes and conventions are used to create the characters.
Symbolise the degree of character realism by placing an image of each character on the curve of the graph. Present your graph to the class
Explain why you have placed each character at that position on the 'appeal curve' of the graph. As part of your presentation, provide additional visual **examples** that **illustrate** the elements of the character design that have influenced your decisions.

4 **Appraise** the performance of a digital actor in a movie. **Systematically examine** the performance and use research and your own observations to work out where this performance comes from. Inquire into the understandings or qualifications a computer operator must have in order to create a convincing performance in a digital actor. **Make a judgement** about the **worth** of a virtual actor to audience emotional investment.

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TECHNOLOGIES AND THE MEDIUM

> 'The content of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind.'
>
> **Marshall McLuhan**, literary scholar and futurist

The medium is the message

Canadian literary scholar and futurist Marshall McLuhan coined the famous phrase 'the medium is the message'. McLuhan argued that each new medium is unique in the way that it communicates. Each new medium disrupts society and changes how people think in its own particular way; McLuhan argued that the actual content of a medium was not as important as this. Television disrupts society just by being television – whatever it broadcasts is less important than the actual medium itself. Therefore, the medium is the message.

It was McLuhan who came up with the term 'surfing' to describe how people would switch from one television station to another, or listen to radio while watching images on television. The term has since become widely accepted to describe the behaviour of internet users.

Hot and cool media

McLuhan proposed that a medium can be either 'hot' or 'cool', depending on the way that it communicates. If a medium required a lot of effort from the audience to participate and create the meanings, McLuhan claimed that it was 'cool' or low definition. If the audience did not have to put in much effort, because all the details were provided, then McLuhan regarded the medium as 'hot' or high definition.

Today, 'cool' can mean 'chic' or 'interesting' and 'hot' can mean 'sexy'. However, McLuhan took the terms from their usage in jazz music. Hot jazz is full of big, rich sound with lots of brass. Cool jazz is often produced with just a single instrument – much simpler and smaller.

- **Hot media.** Media that dramatically extend a single sense so that little extra effort is required are termed hot. McLuhan classified film as a hot medium because it extends sight and includes so much detail in a single frame. In jazz terms, film is 'big sound'. McLuhan also classified photography, radio and newspapers as hot media.
- **Cool media.** Simpler, smaller media that require more effort are classified as cool. McLuhan claimed that television is a cool medium because its ability to show detail is much less. This would certainly have been the case with television in the 1960s, although it is debatable as to whether it applies to today's HD television. Cartoons and telephones were listed by McLuhan as cool media (although, again, this refers to phones in the 1960s).

Analogue and digital technology

Analogue media

Analogue media use materials from the real world to transmit their messages. These materials include paper, film, magnetic tape and sound waves. Analogue media can usually be seen and understood in their raw form. Media technologies in place before the 1980s were analogue, but many continued using analogue into the 1990s and beyond. For example, digital film projection did not take off until after 2005. The final switch-off for analogue television broadcast signals did not occur until 2013.



Alamy Stock Photo/dpa picture alliance

Figure 4.13 Binary code is a symbol system expressed in ones and zeroes. Digital media production and transmission relies on binary codes. The code shown here could represent the *Mona Lisa* or an ad for washing powder. Until a computer decodes it, the codes all look very similar.

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Digital media

Digital media use a numerical code system based on zeroes and ones to represent information such as letters, images and sounds. There is little apparent difference between the code for a great work of art and that for an advertisement for soap powder.

Film as a medium

Legend has it the audience stampeded in terror at one of the first cinema showings in Paris in 1896. The first movies were made in France by the Lumière brothers. One of the films, *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (1896), shows a section of railway station platform in the town of La Ciotat bathed in sunlight. Suddenly a train appears, heading straight for the camera – and the audience. As the train approached them in 1896, panic broke out in the theatre: people jumped out of their seats and ran for their lives.

Audiences are more film-literate now. They have grown up with film and know the language, and are no longer so easily frightened. But film still possesses the power to transform an ordinary object, such as a train, and make it extraordinary. David Lynch's *Wild at Heart* (1990) begins with a fierce explosion. As it turns out, it is nothing more than a match being lit – the ordinary is instantly transformed by the power of the cinema.

A film is a sequence of still shots that are projected onto screen, creating the impression of moving images. This impression of movement is due to a characteristic of the human eye known as the phi phenomenon, which is commonly called persistence of vision. Film aims to communicate meaning through recorded images and sound.

The cinema is larger than life. It can amplify both the best and the worst in humanity. It has had a powerful role in 20th-century tyranny as well as in democracy. The tyranny of Stalin's Soviet Russia was powerfully reinforced by Sergei Eisenstein's films. Eisenstein is credited with developing the editing technique 'collision of images' or montage (see page 40). *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Eisenstein's heroic film about working-class struggle, was used



Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive

Figure 4.14 The world's first feature-length film was made in Melbourne. *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) premiered on Boxing Day 1906 at Melbourne Town Hall. By 1908, the film had toured Australia, Britain and New Zealand, billed as 'the longest film ever made'. Reports of increases in crime followed the film everywhere it toured. Despite its role in history, all reels of the film were believed to have been lost by the 1940s. However, some fragments were recovered in the 1970s and have now been restored. Almost a quarter of the film has been restored and digitised.



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Figure 4.15 A 1930s Hollywood script girl or prompt. Early studios used lighting systems developed from technology used in searchlights in the First World War. Film itself has played a powerful role in world history during the last 120 years. Some argue that American films are as powerful as American military strength. American culture is sometimes called its 'soft power', while military might is referred to as 'hard power'.

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to support a cruel regime. The Nazi regime in Germany was boosted by the majestic films of Leni Riefenstahl. Her tribute to Hitler and the Nazi movement, *Triumph of the Will* (1935), although morally abhorrent, is still regarded as one of the masterpieces of film.

Hollywood films were as influential as US military and industrial might in making the 20th century the American century. The power of film has sold the American dream to millions around the world, while at the same time exposing its dark underside.

A primary medium

There are three levels of attention people typically pay to different forms of media. People can pay primary or close attention, for instance when reading a newspaper. They can pay secondary attention to radio or television (for example) while they are doing something else. Or they can pay tertiary attention to a medium when it is in the background and below conscious attention, as with department store muzak (uninteresting piped music).

A narrative medium

The Lumière brothers knew when they showed their early films that people were fascinated by pictures that moved. However, it was not clear what the new invention would be useful for. At the time, people thought of film as a kind of fairground attraction. It was predicted that the novelty would soon wear off.

Cinema could have gone in several directions. It might have become a solely documentary medium, or it might have developed into a kind of television with a variety of programs, such as game shows, news bulletins and music clips. Instead, film became a medium for telling stories. Originally, films were short, one-reel stories; later they became full-length features. Documentaries and non-narratives are produced, of course, but they are a minor component. The novel-length story with well-developed characters and a strong plot has remained the dominant form in the cinema.

Narrative versus spectacle

Film often uses a combination of narrative and spectacle. At different times in the history of the medium, one is favoured over another. Early film and film in the days of the big Hollywood studios (1920s–1950s) tended to slightly favour narrative over spectacle. In the modern era of the blockbuster film, spectacle tends to be slightly favoured over narrative.

- **Narrative.** In simple terms a narrative is a story. It can be defined as a chain of events occurring over time. Film uses time in two ways:
  - **Story time** is the time in which the events take place within the story. For example, it could be the story of someone's life and take place over 70 years.
  - **Narrative time** is the time taken by the movie to tell the story – usually around 90 minutes.
- **Spectacle.** This is an image in a film that is so striking and remarkable that the audience just wants to stare at it. In *King Kong* (1933), spectacle was provided when a lifelike Kong held Ann (Fay Wray) in his giant hands and ripped off pieces of her dress. Audiences of the time marvelled at the special effects. Modern computer-generated imagery now creates spectacles that audiences take for granted.



AAP Image/Gemma Phillips

Figure 4.16 The premiere of the Baz Luhrmann movie *Australia* (2008) was held at the Summergarden theatre in Bowen, North Queensland. The movie was filmed in Bowen. The cinema experience is both collective and individual. A large public gathering creates a shared experience, and the opportunity for shared behaviour.

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Television as a medium

'Television is the first mass-produced symbolic environment. The significance of that can be reflected in the word that sums up the most distinctive element of human life, the most crucial distinction between humans and other creatures – storytelling. We experience the world through stories. Whoever tells the stories of a culture defines the terms, the agenda and the common issues we face.

Television has replaced most stories told by parents and has either replaced or organised what we learn in schools or in church.

We need a new environment movement, addressing the environment that is most crucial to our humanity – the environment of the stories we tell; the environment that shapes so much of what we think and do in common.'

George Gerbner, Professor of Communication, University of Pennsylvania

'Television' – from the Greek *tele* meaning 'far' and the Latin *visio* meaning 'sight' – is defined as a telecommunication system for sending audio and video signals either via cable or through the air (terrestrial or satellite signals) between distant points. The word also refers both to the electronic device used to receive and reproduce the audio and video signals in your living room, and to the content or programming that is broadcast.



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Figure 4.17 The technological changes of the 2010s have led to a boom in **citizen scheduling**, through which the internet allows people to choose their own timeslots.

Why is television so powerful?

The eyes are superior to the other senses as information receivers. Hearing is the second-best sense. The combined impact of these senses is formidable. There is no doubt that television has changed society. It now performs a number of important functions that it would be hard for us all to do without. A modern world without television is inconceivable.

Television has many roles in society:

- **Television as bard or town crier.** British media academics John Fiske and John Hartley have developed the idea of 'bardic' television. Whenever there was a battle, a noble wedding or a murder, the balladeers (bards) of medieval times wrote songs and verse about it. The ballads were sung in every town and village, and the ideas of the time were passed from person to person. The verses of the balladeer reflected the central concerns of the society.

  Today, television fulfils this function, giving society at least one version of the concerns of the present day. When television was first introduced, this 'town crier' function was very evident. Most people did not own



Getty Images/Bettmann

Figure 4.18 Television as the 'town crier' in the early 1950s outside a department store in New York city. When television first appeared, people gathered around the windows of electrical goods stores to watch the news and to admire the new-fangled invention in operation.

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television sets, so they gathered outside electrical retail stores to watch 'the bard'. Television told them, and is still telling them now, of the world outside.

- **Television as modern folklore.** Folklore refers to the traditional beliefs and tales of oral cultures. It allows individuals to be part of a group, a culture and a heritage, and promotes social solidarity. Television works the same way. It presents a view of the current morality of society. It shows a selection of the achievements, the problems and views on the meaning of life within the group of 'folk' in the 'global village'.
- **Television as an educative medium.** Television can fulfil the need for information. All people have a desire for knowledge and understanding. Television can be a great educator on a huge range of topics. Reporting current events is also one of television's duties; it therefore has a responsibility to be truthful.
- **Television as an entertainment medium.** Television can provide entertainment. In this area it has taken over the roles of the circus, the theatre, the concert and the cinema as mass entertainment. It has borrowed heavily from all of these and created a great deal that is unique to itself.
- **Television as the caregiver medium.** Television can fulfil emotional needs. When a preschooler is seated in front of the television set, a parent watches a midday movie to relieve boredom or a tired office worker switches on the television after the evening meal, the television is being used to fulfil emotional needs. It may be the need for love, for company, for tension release or for escape. Its ability to meet these needs is one reason television is so powerful.

You can view a television timeline by following the weblink.

New media

The term 'new media' may be thought of in different ways:

- **Emerging new forms of media that are introduced as technologies evolve.** These new media may come out of existing technologies, but will have different properties and potentials. They will have the potential to change the 'media landscape'. Under this definition, new media can be seen as a continual process of invention and evolution. There will always be new media.
- **Media produced and distributed using binary code.** New media are the computer-based media of the 21st century. This second definition is more commonly used in discussions about media, but it is less easily described. New media are digital and not analogue.

Key features of new media

New media have all or some of the following characteristics (the list has been added to and adapted from one by Professor Martin Lister and his associates at the University of West England):

- **Digitality.** The new media convert information from real-world lived experience into numbers stored on a computer hard drive. This is different from the old analogue systems where lived experience was converted into another real and visible product, such as a videotape. This change means it is now easier to manipulate and alter the data.
- **Interactivity.** New media allow the consumer to interact with the product to make certain choices. This produces a change in the way the audience behaves – for instance, viewers may become users.
- **Hypertext.** The Greek word *hyper* means 'above' or 'outside'. Hypertext is therefore a system of links to other texts outside the first text. Hypertext in new media differs from the linear style of storytelling by allowing people to jump around from text to text and within a text.
- **Dispersal.** Traditional media are very expensive to set up. For instance, a television station costs many millions to establish. Computers have created new media forms that are much cheaper to participate in. New media allow widely dispersed many-to-many communication.
- **Shared.** New media involve user participation and encourage user-generated content. This allows wider involvement in the production processes.
- **Social.** New media allow groups of people with shared interests to collaborate.
- **Virtuality.** New media have created electronic 'places' and 'spaces'. In these virtual worlds, people can immerse themselves in two opposing

experiences. Using digital new media, they can either simulate reality or generate fantasy.
- **Global and local.** New media provide instant communication across vast distances, but also make it easier to socialise and communicate with friends locally.
- **Everywhere at once.** New media are embedded in everyday objects and in our daily lives in such a way that media forms are merging into one another.

The discourse of the 'new' in media

The term 'new media' is often used loosely. For example, is a television program viewed on a digital flat screen regarded as old media, while the same program viewed on YouTube considered to be new media? Or is the big screen new media because it is a 'smart' HDTV? Sometimes we use different terms for the same media. Clearly there is some reason why people want to use the word 'new'. The reason could be that describing something as new positions it within a discourse about 'newness'.

Discourses are ways of thinking that are set up by the culture of the language we use. A discourse is a pattern of thinking that we use in conversations about a topic. We think by means of language, even if it is visual or nonverbal signage. Therefore, language becomes a way of seeing the world. This is agreed to or given to us by the society around us, becoming discourses that we can participate in and contribute to.

Why 'new' is seen as good

Saying that something is new gives it additional power, because our society has strong patterns of thinking or discourses around the idea of 'new'. Attaching the word 'new' to 'media' locates our thinking even more strongly. There are several reasons for this:
- **Obsolescence.** Our society is based on the consumption of material goods. Retail shops and big business are constantly convincing us through advertising that a new product is better than an old one. Making something out of date or obsolete by creating something that looks new (even if it isn't) is called planned obsolescence.
- **Technological innovation.** Newness is closely associated with technological innovation. However, that innovation may not affect the experience of the user. For instance, the viewing habits of people have not changed much simply because they now have HDTV. The experience is much the same, but people believe they have something new.
- **The new as virus.** New developments embed themselves like viruses in the existing order and can gradually change the whole structure. Using the term 'new media' suggests that it has suddenly changed at a particular moment. Instead, there has been a gradual evolution that has preserved many aspects of the 'old'.

4.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Determine some of the characteristics of a film audience by conducting a simple survey. Ask classmates, teachers and family members how often they have been to the cinema within the past month. Collate the responses according to age groups using the following categories: 0–14 years; 15–24 years; 25–34 years; 35–44 years; and 45 years and over.
Analyse the results, examining the findings in each category. Interpret the results to produce a profile of the typical film-goer in the category. Consider any trends you can see developing.

2 Film theorists say that film has 'subsumed' all of the traditional art forms such as literature, music, art and drama.
Construct a list of the elements from each art form that film has used. For example, film uses plots and characters (among other elements) from literature.
Explain how film has incorporated each element from the original art form.

3 Some see film as a transitional technology, halfway between live theatre and virtual-reality entertainment. Discuss this idea.
Explain how this idea could work, identifying the elements of each and recognising the particular qualities that are evident in both film and either theatre or virtual reality.
Appraise the worth of the suggestion that the film medium will ultimately be replaced by high-tech screen entertainment.

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4 Conduct your own class survey of television viewing habits. Prepare a graduated scale of hours watched and then record the numbers of people watching for particular numbers of hours. **Analyse** your results, presenting the numbers per hours watched as percentages of the total number of people surveyed. **Interpret** the results, **making judgments** about what they mean for the future of television and its convergence with new media.

5 The television set no longer gets the undivided attention of its viewers. Research has shown a remarkable range of viewer activities while the television set is on. Observe your family for an evening. What other activities do they engage in while viewing? Alternatively, what is the range of things you do while watching television. Do your habits differ according to whether you are with family or friends? **Explain** your findings, **providing additional information** about the activities engaged in and giving some **examples to illustrate** the activities.

6 Compare a traditional ballad with a television drama.
Explain the main subject of each form of media.

7 **Analyse** reasons why people would listen to a traditional ballad and why they would watch a television drama. Compare the reasons and **make judgements** about any similarities. **Make an interpretation** as to what each tells about the society it came from.

8 Television is like folklore – it allows people to belong to a group. Think about what you watch on television that confirms your membership of a particular group.
Construct a short list.

9 Study the television viewing guide. Count the number of information programs and the number of entertainment programs.
Explain the findings.
Analyse the results, **interpreting** the impact of consumer tastes on television programming, and vice versa.

10 **Construct** a list of new media according to each of the two given definitions. **Identify** the differences between the two lists.

11 How new is new media? Brainstorm some of the media forms that are usually regarded as new media (such as social networking). Research the history of the media form.
Explain your findings, and in particular **identify** any connections with traditional forms of media.

12 **Explain** the differences in the experience for the user now that traditional media have also gone digital. **Identify** any changes that have come about for the audience as a result of digital media (such as digital radio or HDTV).

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5

Making and responding – Foundation



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Part A: Production – the basics

Supposedly anyone can make a video these days. Just look on YouTube if you want to see shaky camera shots, poor focus and little or no editing. Poor productions are all over the internet. For some, the idea of a start and finish seems to be jerky shots of the camera being turned on and off.

Film, Television & New Media (FTVNM) students want something better than that. One of the main reasons for studying Media is to become a creator of polished productions – ones that look impressive. That means having a good understanding of media production processes and being able to take a quality project through from concept to finished product, knowing that it is your creation.



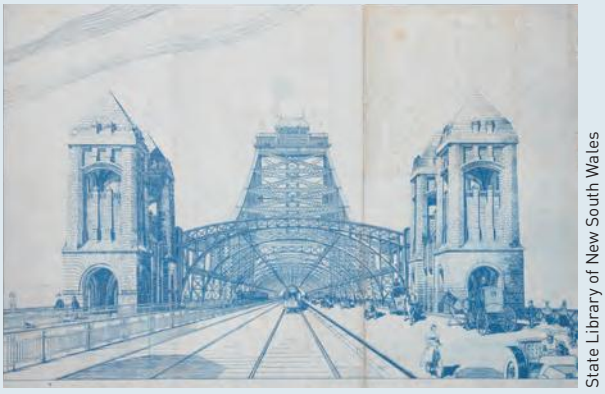
Figure 5.1 Production is one of the most enjoyable aspects of FTVNM. Each production will boost your skills. The finished product will be something you will want to show your friends and family. It will also be a record of your school days long into the future.



Figure 5.2 Students shooting off the storyboard. Quality media productions involve pre-production planning as well as carefully prepared production stages.

STAGES OF MEDIA PRODUCTION

All media productions, in whatever form or medium, go through three basic stages: pre-production, production and post-production. All the while, the needs and interests of the audience have to be kept in mind. Without an audience, all the effort will go unseen.



State Library of New South Wales



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Figure 5.3 Pre-production (top), production (middle) and post-production (bottom) applied to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Pre-production is the planning stage. Production is the making stage. Post-production adds all the special effects. At each stage of production, the needs of the intended users should be kept uppermost in mind.

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Pre-production

The planning stage of media production is called pre-production. This is a very loose term that covers everything that needs to be done before the stage of making the production.

More exact definitions depend on the size of the production company.

- A small production company will include almost all activity in the pre-production stage. For example, the pre-production stage for a film company might include research, meeting with finance people, location planning and scripting.
- A large production company will be more specific about what is done at this stage. For example, a film company will source all their financing, casting, staffing and even their scripting in advance – well before what they term 'pre-production'. Pre-production for a large company may then involve scheduling, location scouting and special-effects preparation. The script will be broken down into detailed scenes. All actors will have been involved in at least one read through.
- Film, Television & New Media students see pre-production as the stage when outlines, treatments, storyboards and scripts are drawn up. Pre-production plans could also include:
  - ideas generation
  - audience targeting
  - planning for casting, locations and so on
  - production timelines.

Production

The production stage is the making stage. It tends to mean the same thing irrespective of the size of the company. Production for a film is the stage at which the footage is recorded.

- A small production company will not have the budget to hire a large crew, and so multi-tasking is normal.
- A large production company has already spent a lot of the budget by the time they arrive at the production stage. Production is often the point of no return – when it is cheaper to go ahead and make the film than to cancel it and lose all the money spent in pre-production and on actors' contracts.
- Film, Television & New Media students see production as the stage when the raw materials of the media product are created – for example, the scenes are filmed.

Post-production

The final stage of media production is called the post-production. Again, this is a very loose term that covers everything that happens after the end of the production stage when the raw materials are created.



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Figure 5.4 George Wilson's run-down garage at the edge of the Valley of Ashes, in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013). Post-production work for the film was shared between Cutting Edge, based in Brisbane, and Iloura, a company based in Melbourne. This scene was post-produced by Iloura. The mountains of smoking ash behind the garage were added in post-production.

Post-production takes the raw materials and turns them into a polished production ready for release. It is common for post-production to take as long as, or even longer than, production. An old rule of thumb in video production was that it took an hour in post-production for every minute of finished product.

- A small production company may complete its post-production in-house. Staff may be multi-skilled and may have been involved in both pre-production and production stages as well.

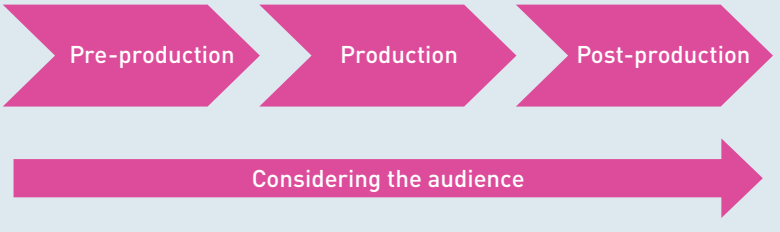


Figure 5.5 The three stages of media production. Across the whole creation process, the audience is what it is all about.

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- A large production company will have specialised staff who may have had nothing to do with the earlier stages. Sometimes these services are contracted out to post houses – businesses that specialise in post-production. Many of these are scattered around major film studios.
- Film, Television & New Media students see post-production as the stage when the following take place:
  - editing
  - special effects
  - sound effects and music
  - titles and credits
  - reflections and evaluations.

5.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Search online for any news articles or documentation on the production stages of some of your favourite films. For example, use Google to search for 'pre-production' + your film choice.
Explain the pre-production processes they took the film through. Give **additional information** and **examples** to **illustrate** your explanation.
Construct a presentation for the class, highlighting any interesting information and visuals that you find.

2 Conduct a search for Australian companies that specialise in pre-production or post-production (these activities are often outsourced).
Construct a PowerPoint presentation about one of the companies and **illustrate** it with some of the work they have done.

3 Investigate online editions of special effects magazines, such as *Cinefex*. Their websites may provide limited access to their articles and give an insight into the special effects that have been added to various well-known films.
Explain the role that one company had in creating special effects and post-production for a well-known film.

PRE-PRODUCTION FORMATS

A lot of work goes into moving-image pre-production, and several important texts are developed during this stage:

- one-liner (or log line)
- outline (or one-sheet))
- treatment
- script
- storyboard.

Television and film are primarily visual media. The script and soundtrack are important, but the pictures count for more. In the view of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School (AFTRS), much pre-production work actually involves 'picturising' – putting ideas, facts and feelings into pictures.

One-liner (log line)

The story is told that Hollywood moguls insist that if an outline can't be given in one sentence, the movie doesn't get up. Reportedly, they were most impressed when someone knocked on the studio door and said, 'Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger – twins!' This became the film *Twins* (1988).

The one-liner (sometimes called the log line) is a very concentrated summary of the concept. It is usually one or sometimes two sentences long. The purpose of the one-liner is to make the premise of the production very clear in the minds of those who are going to be involved in producing it. However, the one-liner does not give away the ending.

Log lines may contain the following:

- the protagonist (not by name)
- the protagonist's goal
- the blockage or antagonist (also not by name)
- what is at stake (for example, the future of the world).



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 5.6 The main characters on board the USS *Enterprise* in the movie *Star Trek* (2009). The original television series was first proposed when Westerns such as *Bonanza* (1959–73) ruled the television screen. The one-liner used to pitch the new show is said to have been 'Wagon train to the stars'.

'The mark of a truly gifted pitcher is to present the concept whole – the miniaturisation of the idea. It must be succinct.'

Lynda Obst, Hollywood producer

Outline

The outline often accompanies the one-liner as part of the process of pitching a concept to studio executives or film finance companies. The outline (sometimes called a one-sheet) is a brief introduction to the story action. The outline provides a good indication of the structure of the whole production. It includes key events and the major decision-making points. In the industry, an outline can sometimes be around one page in length – hence its alternative name. However, some organisations require longer outlines of three to eight pages. An outline for a short film may well be less than a page, depending on what the requirements are.

Film, Television & New Media students should check the recommended length with their teacher if an outline is required.

An outline may include brief descriptions of:

- the key characters and their goals, including protagonist and antagonist
- the conflict and what is at stake
- the setting
- the opening scene
- the first turning point or disruption
- the midpoint climax
- the major climax
- the resolution.

View a sample outline by following the weblink.

The treatment

In the industry, a treatment is often called for after a successful pitch. If a project gets the go-ahead, the writer will be asked to come up with a treatment. Scriptwriters often use the treatment as a development tool. It helps them get their ideas straight, and to see the final production as it will be from start to finish.

The treatment is a broad plan of the production describing each scene (or 'block of action') in a paragraph or two. It is basically an expanded outline. Treatments are written in terms of what the audience will see and experience. They are the first attempt at 'picturising' or converting the ideas into moving images. Treatments are usually written in the present tense as though the production is happening right before the reader's eyes.

Treatments in FTVNM

In Film, Television & New Media, the treatment is different to an industry treatment. It has two purposes. The first is as a broad plan of the production – the same as for industry. However, in an educational setting there is an additional requirement. The treatment also reveals student knowledge of the key concepts and a clear intention to use that knowledge meaningfully.

Treatments read as though we are watching the production. In FTVNM they may include both story details and key concept understandings. These may be incorporated seamlessly into the treatment, or you could choose to include them in separate sections. Consult your teacher before you begin planning your treatment.

Key concepts and intent

Film, Television & New Media students demonstrate their understandings of the key concepts by providing an explanation of:

- the use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions to create representations and visual style
- the intended meanings
- the intended audience and audience response (including any interactivity – Unit 3)
- the technical choices that have to be made to suit the story
- multi-platform concepts and the technology required for participation (Unit 3)
- the unique style you have adopted and any influences on that (Unit 4).

Story details (Units 1–3, Years 11 and 12)

Narrative treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the premise
- the opening scene as it will actually play

- the disturbance to normality that begins the story
- some of the major scenes and their climactic turning points, including the main climax
- the resolution
- character introductions – usually just a few words immediately after their name the first time they appear.

Digital game details

Game treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the premise or goal of the game
- available choices, actions and obstacles to action
- character representations (depending on game type)
- levels
- the resolution.

Stylistic details (Unit 4, Year 12)

Stylistic treatments provide details of:

- the title
- the idea or concept
- the opening scene
- key scenes or shots that are important to the concept
- the resolution scene.

Treatments don't usually use phrases such as 'we see'. Action simply happens as it might occur in the production. It isn't common for treatments to include dialogue. Treatments don't usually give camera directions either. The treatment should be balanced so that it reflects the script – for example, it should not spend a long time describing the first act if this is short in the production.

A sample treatment is shown below.

The script

> 'Few people will read a script for its own sake. A script really exists to enable something else to happen. It is a blueprint from which something much bigger and more spectacular is made.'
>
> **Robert Edgar-Hunt, John Marland** and **James Richards**, authors of *Screenwriting*

The layout of a television drama or film script is very different to that of a play script. There are variations between different production houses as to the exact style used for a screenplay. Variations also exist between countries – for example, the Writers Guild of America recommends a standard format that is very slightly different from the format used by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.

A script is the written version of a film or television program. The script is the whole story set out on paper, including all dialogue, acting directions and occasionally some limited camera directions. The script represents the narrative ready to be filmed.

5.2.1 Suggested script layouts
5.2.2 Screenplay format
5.2.3 How to format a screenplay
5.2.4 Screenwriting

Show, don't tell

Moving-image media scripts cannot show internal thoughts and feelings. Unlike in a novel, there are rarely descriptive passages to take us inside the internal lives of the characters.



Getty Images/Hero Images

Figure 5.7 The writer of the script sets up the whole production – the script is the backbone. A good script will always hold things together. This is a powerful responsibility for writers, yet many scriptwriters complain that they do not get enough credit for their work.

In television and film, if we cannot see it as action on the screen, then it does not really exist. All thoughts and feelings have to somehow be externalised. In filmed adaptations of novels, this is one of the most difficult things for the scriptwriter. Pages of internal thoughts must somehow be translated into visual action.

> 'Screenwriting is telling a story using pictures. Writing a screenplay is therefore a "double procedure" that involves writing words on a page to produce events on the screen. As a screenwriter you are essentially dealing in words but thinking in pictures.'
>
> **Robert Edgar-Hunt, John Marland** and **James Richards**, authors of *Screenwriting*

Script formatting for dramas

There are some basic rules for the formatting of television and film drama scripts:

- **The font** is usually Courier (traditionally).
- **Scene headings** are in underlined block capitals. The heading is left-aligned. First, each scene is numbered. Some script styles place the scene number twice – both before and after the scene name. Then comes an indication as to whether the scene is external or internal, which is always abbreviated and in block capitals (INT or EXT). This is followed by the location, again in block capitals. Sometimes the time is also given.
- **Scene and action descriptions** are in ordinary sentence case. The text is left-aligned and normal page margins are used. Character names that appear in the scene and action descriptions are in block capitals.
- **Dialogue tabbing** means that dialogue is placed in a narrower set of margins than the scene and action descriptions. The dialogue margins are tabbed in on both sides so that the dialogue appears to be placed within a central, narrower column. When using Microsoft Word software, do not use the 'centre' button on the paragraph toolbar for this. Character names are in block capitals when indicating a character is speaking and they are placed above the dialogue. (The dialogue is not placed beside the character names as in a theatre script.) Acting directions are placed below the character names and usually also placed in brackets.
- **Camera/editing directions** are written in block capitals. They are very limited in number and usually consist of just the following: CUT, CUT TO (for scene changes), FADE and DISSOLVE. A scene changes and a new heading is drawn up whenever the location changes.

  View a sample script by following the weblink.

Script format for news, documentary and advertising

Standard news format is quite different to screen drama. It is presented as either two-column or three-column script. News, documentary and advertising script has the following basic rules:

- **Two-column script** has video heading the right-hand side and audio on the left-hand side.
- **Three-column script** has time or shot duration as the first column, then video, and then audio.
- **The video column** is written in ordinary sentence case. Shots are numbered and lined up with the voice-over or narration that goes with them. When preparing a news script in Microsoft Word, it is often best to use a table format and then make the borders invisible. The numbered shots in the video column will then be in alignment with the accompanying audio.
- **The audio column** contains dialogue, voice-over or news narration written in block caps. Block caps are used for speech because it is said to be easier to read on the auto-cue/tele-prompt. Other material in the audio column (such as sound effects) uses sentence case.

  View a sample news and advertising script by following the weblink.

Scripts in FTVNM

A script in the television or film industry does not usually have annotations attached. Often a director will handwrite notes on the script afterwards, but they are not part of the standard layout.

In FTVNM, scripts may be annotated to show an understanding of the key concepts. In particular, the intentional use of codes and conventions can be highlighted in the notes. You can also highlight your understanding of story conventions, and structural features such as climaxes and the resolution.

Just as they do for an industry director, notes on the script can also help you think about how you are going to make the production.

The storyboard

Advertising agencies rely heavily on storyboards. Creators of music videos and art films also use storyboards. Television and film producers use them



5.2.5
Storyboards

less often. When there is a complex scene to be filmed, the film director often relies on a storyboard.

A storyboard is a series of drawings representing the final images of the production. Cartoon-like picture frames show the action as it happens in scene-by-scene sequence. There are some variations in storyboard style, however most have the following features:

- **The drawing** is within a frame that represents the screen as audiences will see it. Therefore, no action can take place outside the frame, unless it is unseen. All screen shots are the same size. Shot sizes and camera angles are all drawn as they would appear in the finished production. Camera movement is depicted with arrows.
- **The text length** varies depending on the industry style and the individual storyboard. Some industry styles have a lot of text; others barely have a sentence or two. The amount of text required in an industry storyboard depends on the intended usage.

Storyboards in FTVNM

Industry storyboards can vary a great deal, depending on their purpose. However, storyboards for educational purposes are intended to show the skills and knowledge of Film, Television & New Media students. The storyboard shows knowledge of the key concepts and provides a demonstration of your ability to use that knowledge meaningfully.

Drawings/images

In FTVNM, storyboard images show the following:

- **Some degree of context and setting**, such as abbreviated elements of **mise en scène**, colour, costume and so on. These details should be enough to allow the reader to 'get the idea'.
- **Some sense of perspective or a feeling of depth** in the frame.
- **Intentional and considered use of the codes and conventions**, including camera conventions (such as angle and composition) and editing conventions (such as montage). Transitions can also be indicated (stated in-between or above the frames, or they can be included in the template).
- **Original work**, as defined by your teacher.

Storyboards indicate camera movement with arrows. If you are intending to zoom in or out, a smaller frame is drawn over the scene with arrows indicating the direction of the zoom (see Figure 5.8, left). Character movement is also indicated by arrows (see Figure 5.8, right).

Storyboard text

In FTVNM the storyboard text required will depend on the usage – there is no one way to set out a storyboard. The storyboard text will include some of the following features:

- **Scene number** is often written at the top of the sequence.
- **Shot number** is often written underneath each frame. It can also be placed on top of the frame.
- **Shot sizes** are often written in block capitals underneath each frame and next to shot number.
- **Shot duration** is measured in seconds.
- **Camera angle** is included when it is necessary to point it out, or if it is required by the template.
- **The action** in each scene is briefly described. Usually this is in one sentence only.
- **Dialogue** (brief and only if required) is written in the manner of a stage script. Characters' names are usually given in capitals and the dialogue is written in lower case. Dialogue should be brief.



Figure 5.8 (Left) A storyboard frame showing some key features. Note the arrows and smaller internal frame indicating a zoom out from a close-up shot. Reversing the arrows would indicate a zoom in. (Right) Character movement can be indicated by arrows.

- **Technical details** about how the shot will be achieved may be required. You will need to explain how you will apply the codes and conventions to maximum effect. This will include details about framing, lighting, camera movement and so on.
- **Sound effects** are given last, usually in capitals. If you are using a template, they may be placed before transitions to the next shot.

Storyboard text can appear below the image, or it can be placed at the side of each image.

Shooting script

A shooting script (sometimes called the camera script) is a set of plans or instructions to the camera crew as to how to cover scenes in a script. The director prepares the shooting script after having visualised what the screenplay will look like as a finished production. A shooting script is prepared for each scene. The director decides how they want the scene to be 'covered'. This means they will decide how they want the camera to film the scene, and the total quantity of footage required. For example, the director would visualise whether they want close-ups or long shots for particular shots, or decide whether they want the shots filmed from a particular angle or vantage point.

A shooting script also indicates the most economical order in which the shots will be filmed. For example, all of the shots to be filmed in a particular city building could be filmed on the one day, irrespective of where they are in the story. Similarly, if an actor has to shave his or her head at the start of the film and then their hair grows back throughout the film, the shots may be filmed in reverse order.

A shooting script is often the result of a final collaboration between the writer and the director. Instructions to the camera crew are very specific. Of course, for a news script the shooting has probably already been done. The script is for the editor to cut the pictures while the journalist reads the voice-over.

Features of a shooting script include the following:

- **Four- or five-column script** format with column one showing shot number, column two showing shot size, column three describing what is to be filmed and column four describing audio. Often there is also a column for director's notes and acting instructions.
- **Shots** are numbered and briefly described.
- **Filming directions** are included.

View a sample shooting script by following the weblink.

5.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Construct an outline (pre-production element), including the key features of the outline as explained in this section (see page 91). Follow the design conventions for outlines, arranging story or premise elements to gain the maximum effect on your imagined audience (such as a studio director).

2 Write a treatment that responds to the areas of activity in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	STRUCTURE	EXPLAIN
Construct a story idea using the specific codes and conventions of your chosen genre.	Structure descriptions of video and audio elements and sequence them into a pre-production product, systematically assembling the elements of the story.	Explain your intended use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions in the production, providing additional information about visual style. Explain the intended audience for your production, identifying features that will appeal to the target group, and explaining any interactive features if available. Explain intended meanings in your production.

3 Construct a script for a production you would like to make. The general rule for scriptwriting is that one A4 page is approximately one minute in screen time.
Explain your use of codes and conventions by annotating the script to give additional information using media terminology.

4 Construct a storyboard for a key sequence from a film you would like to make. This could be the opening sequence or an action scene. It could be an artistically complex scene. Follow the conventions of storyboarding as outlined in this section (see page 93).
Structure video and audio elements, arranging shots using transitions to form a systematic sequence.

5 **Structure** a shooting script for a film you would like to make that contains detailed directions for the filming crew, including schedules of location shoots. **Sequence systematically** the shooting order on the basis of location or time of day (or even weather). Select the **arrangement** and allow for **adaptations** based on actor availability or shooting conditions.
Explain the reasons for your choices.
Follow the conventions for shooting scripts as outlined in this section (see page 95).

COPYRIGHT AND REFERENCING

'Integrity' is the word most often looked up in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the *Los Angeles Times* recently reported. This suggests that lots of people are looking for guidance in this area – in many aspects of life. Media production is one area of endeavour at the pointy end of integrity and ethics debates. For media producers, one of the most demanding concerns is the issue of originality. Modern technology makes the issue even more complex. Remixes, mash-ups and internet re-transmissions are all much easier to produce now because of file-sharing sites such as YouTube.

Originality

Originality is something that most producers of media texts aim to achieve. However, in practice it is a difficult concept to pin down, and an almost impossible one to achieve in true and perfect form.

An original work is often thought to be one that is new and has never been done before. It is unique and the first of its kind. For most people, originality is also closely associated with the word 'creative'. This word has its genesis (origins) in the concept of creation – the biblical idea of the world being instantaneously created when nothing existed before.

The common definition of originality is more like that used in the patents office for new scientific inventions. Realistically, even they are based on previous discoveries.

The common definition of creativity is more like divine inspiration – something that just occurs to 'creative geniuses' without any process or hard work. The image of the light bulb suddenly turning on is what a lot of people think of. While this can happen, most of the time idea generation is a process.

Legal definitions of originality in music, art and literary texts are based on the results of a series of court cases called precedents. In law, originality does not suggest that the idea has never existed before. Originality means that the work has originated with the author and has not been copied from somewhere else – either in whole or in part. The creative thought itself may not be totally unique, but the way it is expressed is all the author's. With this definition, the potential for new stories is unlimited.

Most analysts agree that if the common definition was ever used to judge media texts, all artistic production would grind to a halt soon after. Totally new stories would be impossible to create. Hollywood may well run out of blockbuster premises immediately. The legal definition is freer and recognises that culture is a complex mix of influences. We draw ideas and influences from all over the place.



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Figure 5.9 In many people's understanding of the term 'originality', completely new and totally original ideas just pop up out of nowhere in moments of sudden inspiration. Fortunately, this is not the legal definition of originality, as we would soon run out of wholly new stories.

'Original thought is like original sin: both happened before you were born to people you could not possibly have met.'

Fran Lebowitz, American author, public speaker and humourist

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'As for creativity, I've always thought that it operates pretty much like baking a cake. The ingredients are all the different kinds of input you might open yourself up to: music, books, news, yarns at a pub, or simply going for a drive somewhere. Once all that is in the mixing bowl you're halfway there. It just takes days, months, or years of letting the KitchenAid of your subconscious do its thing.'

Anonymous blogger, Meanjin.com.au

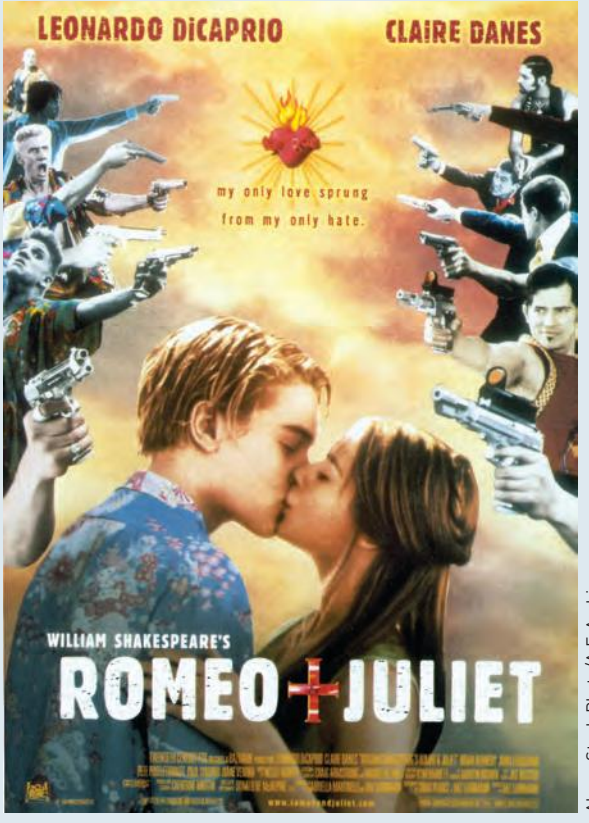
How original does it have to be?

'The principle that "originality" is more about a kind of transformation of existing ideas than the invention of entirely new ones, is one that I can relate to as an artist and author.'

Shaun Tan, Australian illustrator, author and animator

It is often said that there are only seven basic stories in all of art, film and literature. Everything is just a variation on those. The Greek philosopher Aristotle actually argued that there were really only two – comedy and tragedy! According to French philosopher Roland Barthes, 'the text is a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash'. Barthes suggests that not only are authors building on past works as they write from their side of the text, but so too is the audience, as they interpret stories from the other side of the text, based on their own past cultural experiences.

To be creative, you have to start with something in order to make something. Creativity can be seen as the ability to take existing objects and combine them in different ways for new purposes. When coming up with a concept for a video, you just have to combine things in new ways that are unique to you. You can draw on other sources for inspiration – all artists do (see 'Referencing', page 99).



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 5.10 Poster for Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996). The creativity and originality lie in the unique vision that Luhrmann brought to transform, energise and modernise Shakespeare's famous play.

Copyright

5.3.1 Australian Copyright Council

5.3.2 *Copyright Act 1968*

Copyright means the right to copy an original work. To be legally original, the work must have the following features:

- it must be an original work – that is, not plagiarised
- it must be in a final form that can be read, heard or viewed.

Copyright does not cover ideas, concepts, styles, techniques and information. A completed script that you write is automatically copyrighted. Someone else could use a similar premise (idea) without breaching your copyright – but they could not use your wording.

Copyright law in Australia is based on the *Copyright Act 1968*. The Act has been updated many times. In 2006, it was brought into line with the American Copyright Act under the free trade

agreement between Australia and the US. The main changes were as follows:

- **Circumvention.** It has become illegal to bypass the technology that some creators use to prevent copying (see DRM below).
- **Time shifting and device shifting.** It is legal for an individual to record a program to watch at a later date, or on another device. However, it is not legal to share this recording.
- **Education.** Schools and universities gained certain exemptions for non-commercial use.
- **Comedy.** Parody and satire gained exemptions.
- **After death.** Copyright persists up to 70 years after the death of the creator of a work (previously in Australia it was 50 years).

Two important aspects of copyright law are intellectual property and digital rights management.

- **Intellectual property (IP).** Creations of an intellectual nature are covered by copyright. The term 'intellectual property' might include computer programs as well as other works such as inventions and technological creations.
- **Digital rights management (DRM).** Some companies use digital rights management to protect their intellectual property. DRM is a form of technological protection built into products to prevent illegal copying. DRM is commonly used in the exchange of digital media.

Creative Commons licence

The Creative Commons system of licensing creative works was founded in 2001 by Stanford University law professor Lawrence Lessig. Creative Commons is a non-profit organisation set up in the university town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the United States – the home of the famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Creative Commons has its origins in the free and open software movement.

The Creative Commons project aims to set up a new way of thinking about copyright. The goal is to allow people to legally share and re-use creative material without having to pay enormous copyright fees. However, the creativity of the original author is still protected legally. Any use of licensed content has to be acknowledged, or the name of the creator clearly stated (called attribution). A new user also has to respect the creator's wishes about how it is to be used. Some creators allow open use of their material, while others restrict it to non-commercial use (for example).

Types of creative ownership

Creative control used to have two opposite ends: total creative control, or no control whatsoever. Creative Commons licensing allows for a middle ground where some rights are reserved.

- **All rights reserved.** Traditional commercial copyright uses an 'all rights reserved' model of operation. This means that all use of a work is regulated by the owner (the creator) or the distributor. A few exceptions exist for educational use and for comic or satirical use.
- **Some rights reserved.** Creative Commons licences allow for some protections of the creator's rights, while also allowing freer access for others wanting to use the content.
- **No rights reserved (public domain).** Work in the public domain can be said to be owned by the public. Anyone is free to use it in any way they like. No royalty fees have to be paid.



Shutterstock.com/Standard Studio; Shutterstock.com/Nazmul0; Shutterstock.com/icon99

Figure 5.11 Creative Commons licensing seeks to be a middle ground between formal full copyright and the 'open slather' of the free public domain.

Origin of the name 'commons'

Originally 'the commons' were those elements of the environment that everyone could access. These included the oceans, the beaches and the air. In other words, it was common to everyone and free to use. In some countries, such as England, common land was also set aside that did not belong to the king or other rich private owners. Ordinary people were free to access this land as well.

Today there are other commons, such as public health or education. Certain creative works can also be seen as a cultural common. Public art, nursery rhymes, folk music and historical landmarks are examples of cultural commons.

The 'tragedy of the commons' is a term coined by economist Garrett Hardin in 1968. According to Hardin, those things that are owned by nobody, but which can be exploited freely by anybody, are bound to come to a sad end. Hardin gave the example of a common cow paddock accessible to all. It would be in the best interests

of every individual cow owner to put their cows there until the paddock was totally eaten out and utterly degraded. Even the last green blade of grass would be worth it to someone. A series of sensible individual decisions then leads to the destruction of a common good.

The idea of the Creative Commons is to avoid the 'tragedy of the commons' and to preserve the benefits of accessible, commonly available cultural properties. Creators are not left exploited by others appropriating their works for their own benefit.

Types of licences

Creators of cultural content who use a Creative Commons licence can choose different licence options. There are sixteen different licences made up of possible combinations of the four conditions shown in Figure 5.12. However, only seven of these licences are popularly used.

Disadvantages of Creative Commons licences

The Creative Commons system is not without its critics. Perhaps the best way of looking at it is to not try to see it as a replacement for the existing copyright system. Instead it complements or works alongside that system for creators who want something different to the mainstream. Following are several objections to the Creative Commons system:

- **Creators do not get rewarded.** The usage is free. The main copyright system rewards creators.
- **Creators get more control.** It still gives power to creators and not those wanting to use their material (because creators still get to say how they want their work used).
- **Mainly online.** Most Creative Commons work is available online. This means it ignores any creative work that is not.
- **No withdrawal.** Creative Commons licences cannot be revoked or withdrawn. If you change your mind later about the work, it cannot be upgraded to traditional copyright.
- **Any use, really?** You may not be happy with all possible uses of your work. Some uses you might think are in bad taste, immoral, wrong or the opposite of your own beliefs.

Referencing

Many filmmakers cite Alfred Hitchcock as someone who was important to the development of their own works. Some filmmakers, including Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese, deliberately reference Hitchcock. In *Jaws* (1975), Spielberg used a similar technique to Hitchcock's famous



Creative Commons Australia: http://creativecommons.org.au/learn/licences/

Figure 5.12 The four main conditions of Creative Commons licences. There are sixteen possible licences made up of combinations of the four conditions. Licences are displayed with the symbols indicating what conditions the creator has imposed.

contra zoom in *Vertigo* (1958). In *Goodfellas* (1990), Scorsese deliberately makes reference to the title sequence in Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Quentin Tarantino is a director with a vast knowledge of film history, and he is constantly referencing other films. In filmmaking and all media arts, referencing is a common way of acknowledging the important legacy of a director or particular work.

To reference something in the visual arts and the media arts is to indicate that there is a connection or link to another art form or artist in the field. Therefore, one work refers to another. Referencing can also mean that one work is actually based on another, but it has been changed in some significant and major way to add new meaning.

Influences, inspirations and homage

Being 'influenced by' a media arts work means that what you do has been affected by the other work. This could mean that, as a result of another work, you have adopted a certain style or have become fascinated with certain themes.

Being 'inspired' by another work suggests that the work encouraged a burst of creativity in you. This may or may not be directly obvious in the finished work.

In media arts criticism, the term 'homage' is said using the French pronunciation (*om-arzh*). Homage means to pay affectionate respect to another artist's work. In practice, it tends to be similar to referencing. However, it can mean making a special tribute production.



age-fotostock/United Archives

Figure 5.13 The re-made shower scene from Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* (1998). Van Sant declared the remake of *Psycho* shot for shot was paying homage to the classic film. The industry magazine *Variety* did not give high praise: 'Imitation, in the case of Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it's hardly the most scintillating. A faithful re-make ... contains nothing to outrage or offend partisans of the original, yet neither does it stand to add much to their appreciation.'

Important works of television and film have been influenced or inspired by or pay homage to other famous works. For instance, the *Star Wars* franchise has been influenced heavily by films. In the documentary *Everything Is a Remix* (2010), Kirby Ferguson claims that George Lucas was influenced by films such as *Flash Gordon* (1980), *Triumph of the Will* (1935) and *The Dam Busters* (1955). The droid C3PO looks like the robot from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), claims Ferguson. When Luke Skywalker returns home to discover his aunt and uncle have been murdered, it is very much like a scene in John Ford's famous Western *The Searchers* (1956). In that scene, the hero returns to find his brother's family murdered and the farm burning.

5.3 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a list of your favourite productions that are similar to the task you are planning to undertake for a media production.
Explain why you have chosen them by using the following questions as a guide.
- What appeals to you about them?
- How could you use those ideas as a stimulus and transform them into something of your own?

2 **Explain** your main influences in terms of media texts. **Give information** about these texts and include **examples** of specific scenes from them that you have found influential.
Construct a list of texts that you admire, and that you wish you could pay homage to in your own media production. Include thumbnail images from them showing aspects you really like.

3 List five media texts that you would like to reference (make a direct link with) in a production.
Explain what it is about these texts that has influenced you and that you would like to reference. **Identify** the key elements in the scene and **explain** what you would change and what you would like to use.
Construct a list and include thumbnail images.

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PRODUCTION LEGALITY

The goal of production is to capture the images and sounds needed to present your story on screen. Production is not the end point in the creation process for film and television – the editing stage is still to follow. Production is the stage that provides all the raw material. Therefore, you will have to make sure that you have produced enough for the editing team to do their job in post-production.

Filming legally – FTVNM students

Filming may be taking place on the school campus or outside in the community. Because you will be on location, there are special responsibilities of which the production crew need to be aware.

Community standards

Whether on campus or out in the community, certain standards of behaviour are expected. Having a camera draws attention to you, and therefore there is also a greater level of visibility for your behaviour. You should try to observe the following standards:

- Noise levels should be as low as possible.
- Locations should be left clean and tidy.
- Offensive language should be avoided.
- Inconvenience or disruption to other people's activities should be avoided or minimised.

Legal obligations

As well as keeping all film activities within the law generally, there are some specific areas of concern for students of Film, Television & New Media.

- **Trespass.** Filming on private property without permission can leave you liable for prosecution for trespass. Always check with the owner before you enter any property.
- **Shopping centres.** Although people feel free to come and go in a shopping centre as though it were a public space, it is actually private property. Permission for filming must be obtained from centre management.
- **City council areas.** In keeping with the law, most city councils in Queensland require a permit for filming on roadways, footpaths, parks and other council-controlled land. Applications for what is termed 'low-impact filming' can be processed in about five business days. Low-impact filming is defined as one camera and a total crew of six or fewer.
- **Public transport.** Filming on trams, trains or buses requires a permit. So too does filming at designated tram stops and train stations. Filming in peak hours is not permitted. Public transport authorities also have guidelines about what can be filmed – for example, vandalism, smoking, drinking and fare evasion are all off limits. They may require a film synopsis. You will have to gain individual permission from each identifiable person you film on public transport.



Shutterstock.com/ChameleonsEye

Figure 5.14 Public transport authorities require you to apply for a permit to film on board transport or at stops. You will also need the permission of each person you film if their image is identifiable.

Fake weapons and Queensland law

Film scripts sometimes call for the use of toy guns and other kinds of fake weapons. There are strict regulations around the use of anything that can be mistaken for a real weapon. This is especially important when a member of the public is some distance from your film crew and may not be able to see that the weapon is just a toy. It should always be clear that you are involved in filmmaking. Signs should be placed around the set, and the police should be notified in advance if there is any risk of confusion.

In Australia, laws restricting the use of weapons are strict, reflecting the danger posed by fake weapons. This carries over into film and theatre, and the state of Queensland has clearly defined laws and processes involving the use of replica weaponry in films.

The Queensland Police define a replica weapon as *a reasonable facsimile or copy of a weapon, even if it is not capable of discharging a projectile or substance.*



Courtesy Channel 9

Figure 5.15 Students caused a major police incident on the Gold Coast in 2012 while filming a group production. Police with bullet-proof vests arrived on a street near a school in Merrimac, closing the four-lane Robina Parkway and the equally busy Gold Coast Springbrook Road. A member of the public had reported a bloodied gunman roaming in bushland. It turned out to be a student actor filming a two-minute horror movie.

According to Section 57 of the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990*, a weapon includes:

- (a) an antique firearm, spear gun, longbow or sword; and
- (b) a replica of a weapon; and
- (c) a replica of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a)

The legislation (Section 57) continues that:

- (2) A person must not, without reasonable excuse, carry a weapon exposed to view in a public place.
- (7) In deciding what is a reasonable excuse for subsection (2) ... regard may be had, among other things, to whether the way the weapon is carried, or when and where it is carried, would cause a reasonable person concern that he or she, or someone else in the vicinity, may be threatened or harmed.

Section 58 is highly pertinent to film production activities:

58 Dangerous conduct with weapon prohibited generally

(1) In this section–

weapon includes–

- **(a)** an antique firearm, explosive tool, captive bolt humane killer, spear gun, longbow or sword; and
- **(b)** a replica of a weapon; and
- **(c)** a replica of a thing mentioned in paragraph (a); and
- **(d)** an explosive; and
- **(e)** a slingshot or shanghai; and
- **(f)** a laser pointer.

(2) A person must not–

- **(a)** without reasonable excuse; and
- **(b)** by the physical possession or use of a weapon;

engage in conduct, alone or with another, likely to cause–

- **(c)** death or injury to a person; or
- **(d)** unlawful destruction or damage to property; or
- **(e)** alarm to another person.

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https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Technically, any item capable of 'causing alarm' can be legally considered a weapon. It is vital that filmmakers are aware of this, as the consequences of breaching the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990* can be severe. Jail terms can be imposed. The Act establishes that it is not just the item itself, but also the behaviour of the individual utilising it and how this is perceived by others that comes into question.

This legislation has a significant impact on choices of props in films. When selecting props, it is vital to consider how an item may be perceived by a member of the public who may be several hundred metres away, not just how an item might appear from close up.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 5.16 This infamous shot from *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) triggered early calls for censorship. The actor pointing and firing a weapon directly at the audience, even in a work of fiction, projected on a two-dimensional screen, caused such alarm among viewers that the film was banned in many cinemas.

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Shutterstock.com/dnd_project

A toy such as a Nerf gun is brightly coloured and does not appear to be a realistic weapon, therefore is unlikely to cause alarm. Painting this black would make it more likely to cause alarm and thus breach the legislation.



Shutterstock.com/Tatiana Popova

Weaponry in science fiction can appear highly futuristic, and therefore less realistic. However, some, like this blaster from the *Star Wars* series, no matter how fictional, still resemble familiar weaponry enough to cause alarm.



Shutterstock.com/Dario Lo Presti

A historical weapon, such as this 18th-century blunderbuss, is capable of causing alarm and therefore is still considered to be a dangerous weapon.



Shutterstock.com/vincent noel

While made of plastic and sporting the orange tip that indicates it's a toy, this replica gun may be perceived as realistic from a distance.



Shutterstock.com/Ch.Olena

This prop is highly realistic, even if fake. There is no orange tip to indicate that it's fake. It would be perceived as threatening from any distance and cause alarm.

Figure 5.17 The weapons featured above are all props, but not all are acceptable for use on student film sets, due to implications of the *Queensland Weapons Act 1990*. The more believable or realistic the prop weapon, the more likely it is to cause alarm to the public and therefore breach the Act.

Using replica weapons on set

The use of replica weaponry on a film set requires the presence of a trained and qualified armourer – an individual who is over the age of 18 and holds a weapons licence.

If intending to use replica weaponry, ensure the following steps are taken:

- The producer completes a risk assessment and seeks a permit from the local council and permission from the police.
- Neighbours are informed of the presence of weaponry on the set, in order to avoid false alarms and distress.
- The first assistant director is responsible for safety on set, in line with the producer's risk assessment.

A qualified armorer (with a theatrical ordinance licence) is required on set to oversee induction and safe storage and use of replica weaponry. Weapons are only issued when required in the script – at all other times they are kept safely locked up and accounted for by the armourer.

Best practice

Ultimately, in filming student productions, the best way to ensure an effectively risk-managed sequence is to avoid using any form of realistic weaponry – instead 'implying' weapons through use of sound, shot construction and cutting. Fight sequences can be shot in ways that require no physical contact between the stunt performers, 'cheating' with angles and cuts. Any sequence involving weapons in the story can also be shot so props are not required. Contemporary audiences are highly literate in their understanding of genre conventions and will consequently be able to effectively interpret implications of gestures, sounds, actor expressions and cuts.



Figure 5.18 Post-production special effects can add plausibility to futuristic weapons or toy guns. The maximum penalty in Queensland for discharging a real weapon (including sling shots) in public is four years imprisonment. Simply carrying a weapon capable of being discharged attracts two years in jail. If authorities misinterpret filming, a terrorism response may be possible.



Figure 5.19 A sign indicating that filming is in progress should be placed in the filming location where it can be clearly seen by members of the public.

5.4 ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare letters of application to relevant authorities (such as a local shopping centre or council) requesting permission to film. **Explain** the following information:
   - your course of study and year level
   - the title of your film
   - a brief summary or outline of the film
   - how the requested location will be shown in the film and what it will mean.
2. **Symbolise** (by a quick sketch or diagram) a filming location and mark or **represent with a symbol** where you will strategically place 'filming in progress' signs so they will be visible to members of the public.
3. **Explain**, using a flow chart, the process involved in gaining permission to use a replica weapon on a film set. **Provide additional information** about the rules when using a replica weapon on a film set.
4. **Symbolise**, through storyboarding, a fight in a Western, *film noir* or action genre film without showing any weapons. (The narrative may involve weapons.) You will need to consider how to **represent** the scene using your knowledge of **codes and conventions**. **Represent** the fight considering how you will frame shots, actor gestures and expressions, when to cut, and how to utilise sound effects in order to effectively communicate the action without ever showing a weapon.
5. **Analyse** the difference between utilising replica weapons inside a private home, versus in public spaces. **Consider** the various elements of risk associated with each. **Examine** the legalities of replica weapons in each situation. Ensure you have researched the issue to support your conclusions.

DRONES, TALENT AND LOCATIONS

Drones and filming under the law

> 'The very best ones (aerial shots), you are only subliminally aware; they are just another smoothly flowing shot. We're not trying to prove here you're a great drone pilot. You're trying to prove that you're a great creator of imagery.'
>
> **Jerry Grayson**, drone masterclass leader and decorated navy and film pilot

The fun of flying a drone is a hobby for some and work for others. Drones have many shapes and sizes for different purposes, including meteorology, law enforcement, surveying and delivering. Drones are also used for spying, rescuing and reporting. In military fields of operation, they are also used for killing. Drones are not one type of machine. Light, high-quality cameras make drones useful for filmmaking professionals, and affordability makes them an option for amateur filmmakers. Stability control even means they can be a tripod substitute.



Alamy Stock Photo/David Stock

Figure 5.20 Sponsored drone racing brought media interest to second-place Australian Nationals freestyler Rudi Browning of Brisbane. 'I love the sound! ... punch the throttle and it screams', says Rudi. As a 12-year-old, he was also vying for the $100 000 prize pool in Hawaii at the World Drone Championships. (ABC News (Australia), 2015)

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have hit passenger planes and have been used to smuggle goods into prisons. Commercial surveyors using drones report that 90 per cent of outback flight problems are wedge-tailed eagle attacks. Dutch Police and the French Air Force are using this knowledge in their defence against illegal UAVs by training birds of prey.

Australia was the first country in the world to have drone laws, introducing them in 2002. The **Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)** began reviewing 101 amendments in 2017. There are many conditions for all drone pilots to remain aware of. Filmmakers should check updated government advisories on filming laws, privacy and safety. The CASA DroneComplier web app *Can I Fly There?* is a free location check and pre-production planning tool.

5.4.1 Office of the e-safety Commissioner- drones

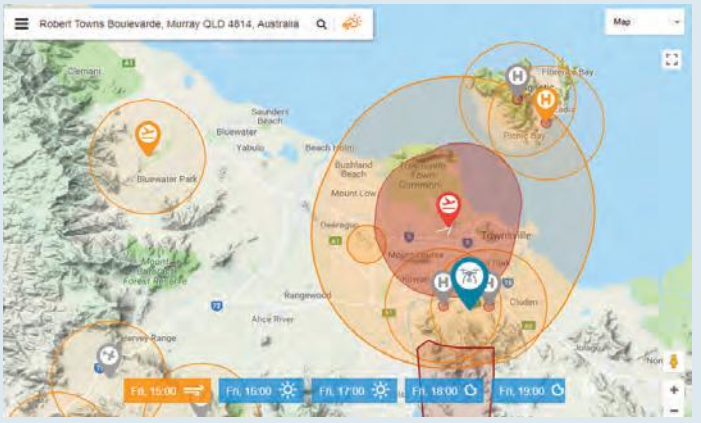






Figure 5.21 (Top) Townsville has Lavarack Army Barracks, national parks, an international airport, an air force facility at Garbutt, and a bombing range further west. Restrictions may vary within short distances in such areas, even bisecting sporting ovals. As the address bar is adjusted, pop-up alerts summarise any restriction at your proposed location, such as when near the Royal Brisbane Hospital (middle) and Townsville Airport (bottom).



Figure 5.22 CASA's drone safety phone app *Can I Fly There?* is designed for drones under 2 kilograms (excluded category), and is useful on location. It has built-in weather warnings and shows current permissions.

If an accident is caused by an uninsured drone, the drone pilot could be solely liable for damage to property and injuries to people, making it very important for everyone to abide by the current law. Use the weblink to access dangerous flyer complaint links and other resources, including a rules quiz, at the Droneflyer website.

5.4.2 Droneflyer.com.au

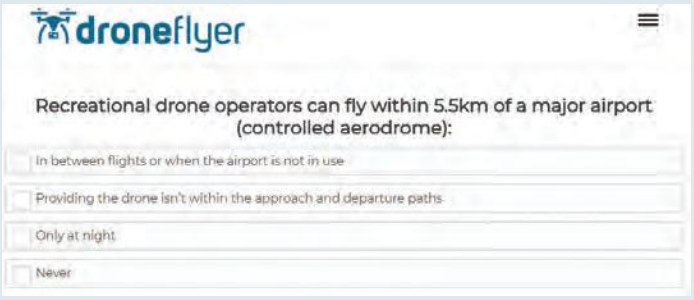


Figure 5.23 Visit the Droneflyer website and test your knowledge about drone laws.

Queensland drone regulations

Prior to aviation, private land ownership included the full height of airspace above the land. Nowadays, flying a drone over private property, even at drone-legal heights, is considered to be trespassing. Schools, sports clubs and councils are able to impose restrictions as the landholders.

There is currently no law preventing photography shot from outside the private land boundary, regardless of owners' wishes. There is also no specific legislation against photographing other people in public, as the *Privacy Act 1988* only covers organisations that turn over more than three million dollars and large database video and photo collections, not an individual citizen's photography.

However, if a person is made to feel apprehensive by idle waiting, following or watching, it may be a breach of Queensland's stalking laws, even if it is a one-time event. Recording conversations when people can expect to have privacy may also break the law.

Non-commercial UAV rules (under 2 kilograms)

- Drones cannot fly near emergencies.
- Maximum height is 120 metres, measured from the ground.
- Drones must be in line of sight of the operator; phone screens and FPV goggles do not count.
- No people apart from the operators of the drone are to be within 30 metres of the UAV.
- Drones are not to be flown over people.
- Only one drone at a time can be controlled by an operator.
- No flying in low visibility conditions or night.
- If the UAV is more than 100 grams and flying within 5.5 kilometres of an occasionally used aerodrome it must land if aircraft appear.
- If the UAV is more than 100 grams, it cannot be flown within 5.5 kilometres of a controlled aerodrome (usually with a tower).

Commercial use

- If someone pays for the drone to fly and it is over 2 kilograms, the pilot needs to be licensed (RePL) and covered by an operator's certificate (ReOC).
- If someone pays for the drone to fly and it is under 2 kilograms and no licence is held, the operator must:
  - apply for a reference number and provide identification.
  - provide details of your intention to fly at least five business days ahead (on-line form).
  - comply with all conditions for non-commercial drones under 2 kilograms.

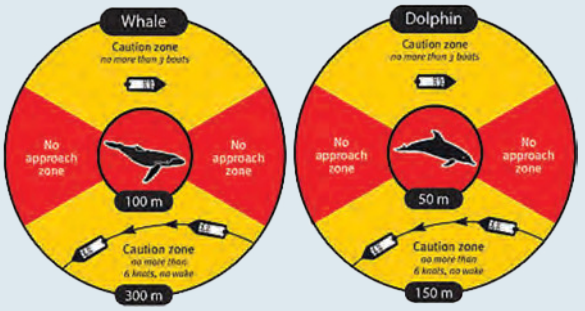


Figure 5.24 Many visitors film along the coast and must obey exclusion zones around animals that apply to all boats and aircraft. Drones themselves must also keep 30 metres away from boats, just as with vehicles and buildings. When inside a national park, a permit is required to operate recreational aircraft or land a drone at an airstrip.

Flying outside Queensland

Other countries, and even other states and territories of Australia, have different drone laws and regulations:

- Sweden has banned drone filming without a surveillance permit.
- In the US, all drones over 250 grams must be registered. Washington, DC, the national capital, is a 'No Drone Zone'.
- New South Wales has a maximum monetary penalty for individuals of $132 000 (tier 2 fine) for breaching approach zones for whales and dolphins, and also has a complicated list of different distances for various animals south of the Tweed border.

Talent and locations

Dealing with your performers (talent) and arranging your locations are great challenges enabling you to develop project management skills that are relevant beyond just filming a production.

Selecting locations

Locations need to be selected for their ability to contribute to visual storytelling. Fallback options should be used if problems cannot be solved for permissions, weather, audio or transport. *Mise en scène*, not convenience, is the priority for deciding where to shoot.

Complicated scenes with chases or many actors may need a diagram (using apps or paper) to help exclude backgrounds that break the illusion of era or mood. Dress, props, colours and buildings should support the mood of that scene. Marking character positions will help avoid jump cuts. These might occur if the shot size is not changed enough when cutting to the same subject, or if the shot does not move enough and breaks the **30-degree rule** (see page 200).





Figure 5.25 Areas can be surveyed remotely online to check for food, toilets and sun direction. (Left) The 360-degree photo shows a clear contrast to each side of the road. (Right) A site visit will locate power and taps, and also allow the location to be evaluated. Despite being in an industrial zone construction site, a small surrounding oasis of green will allow this church to look peaceful and welcoming when combined with other visual support, including the golden tint applied to the top left of the frame.



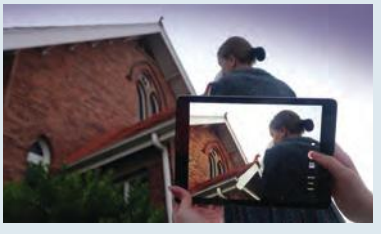


Figure 5.26 (Left) Looking at all directions at once in the wide-angle panorama shows one building out of context and surrounded by bitumen. (Right) Careful framing and audio replacement can make this busy intersection an option for a more sombre church architecture, if the large, modern buildings nearby can be framed out. Use your hands, a cardboard rectangle, or a device to plan framing at potential locations. Taking some **stills** will help with planning to speed up the shoot when the full crew is present. Mood can be further manipulated using filters in post-production.

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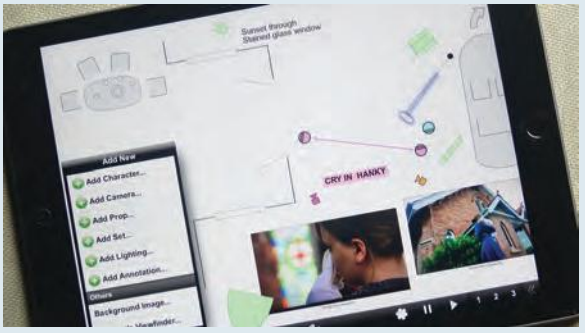


Figure 5.27 Computer software or apps can be used to draw a map of your location. This allows the placement of lights and cameras to be planned. Movements can be assigned, and layers can be created for cameras and actors to ensure the **180-degree rule** (line) is not crossed (see page 207). When mapping a camera position needed (such as for a focus pull), shots can be inserted from the location visit.

No permission needed

Filming people in public spaces and publishing those images is legal, although some people may object. Faces can be covered, or hands can be placed near the camera lens, but memory cards and deleting cannot be demanded (except under the *Defence Act 1903*). No permit is required for filming on private property with the owner's permission or in public spaces, and councils generally allow wedding photography, news, current affairs and live reporting on land under their control.

Photographing trademarked buildings such as the Sydney Opera House or a Commonwealth Reserve such as the Great Barrier Reef is allowed without permit if there is no profit from the image.

Permits

5.4.3 Permits: GBRMPA

Some areas feel like public space but require a permit to film, such shopping centres, train stations and some water catchment and council land situations. Such places and private commercial premises are likely to ask for the crew to supply insurance details.

Brisbane City Council (BCC) is Australia's largest local authority and requires student crews needing a permit to obtain a Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance from their study institution, for a minimum of AU$20 million, noting BCC as an interested party for personal injury and damage to property, with dates covering the proposed filming and **wet weather cover**. Councils usually waive any professional permit fee for students who provide proof of enrolment, a letter confirming subject studies, and course content.

Permission needed

A permit and permissions should be applied for as soon as you think you may need them. Organisations can take some time to respond, and you need to contact the right person.

Once the location is decided, apply for a permit if there is a need to restrict public access, use a vehicle in a park or footpath, use cables on the ground, leave unattended tripods or create a danger. Regardless of permits, crews must not interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of a public place or act in an offensive way (see section 6, Public Nuisance, of the *Summary Offenses Act 2005*).

- Police can take your property and footage if they believe it may have evidence of an alleged offence.
- Security guards cannot search people without their consent but can ask people to leave private property for any reason, or even make an arrest if an offence is being committed.
- Any member of the Defence Force or Australian Police Force can arrest people who sketch or photograph a military base.
- The **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** can issue a **take-down notice** for prohibited content that has been posted, or where access has not been restricted to material that would likely be rated as R18+ or MA15+.

A talent **release form** is signed by actors to agree that filmmakers can reproduce their image without them making additional payment demands. A talent release form should state the project name and media formats, and be dated and signed by someone over 18 years of age.

It is possible to be fined under the *Copyright Act 1968* for associating a building or a person's image with a commercial purpose without permission. Therefore, copyright applies to a person's face filmed in public if it is used to sell something or boost a reputation, such as in a corporate ad.

Penalties

Certain breaches of the law carry substantial penalties for creators of inappropriate content and those who store or share it.

- **Offensive images.** Demeaning acts, torture and some nudity are considered offensive for legal purposes. This also includes private parts of the body that are covered by underwear. Jail-time penalties for filming and sharing such content

vary depending on the ages of people involved. It can also be a crime to share sexually explicit images of someone who *looks like* they are under 18 years of age, even if they are not.

- **Defamatory content.** Photographs and videos can be considered defamatory if they cause a person to be ridiculed or if they damage their reputation, just as written material can. Courts can impose monetary compensation to be paid, as in the 2013 case of a former student ordered to pay $105 000 to his music teacher for comments on social media.

5.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Identify a potential filming task you may be involved in that requires drone shots, and identify the desired location elements to explore pre-production considerations. Contrive a suitable aerial shot where necessary.

SYMBOLISE	APPLY	EXPERIMENT
Symbolise the laws governing drone flight (starting with CASA) in a flow chart, **representing** restrictions for various conditions. Use software-like binary questions to **identify** options stemming from the **convention** of yes/no output from diamond shapes as **symbols** of choice. Incorporate red as a **sign** that flight is not possible at permission dead-ends.	**Apply** digital **literacy skills** to locate potential locations, searching maps, photo-spheres and online images to **distinguish** between the visual **language** potential most **appropriate** to **communicate** your intended **meaning**. **Apply literacy skills** to construct a formal email using **appropriate language conventions and grammar**, for the **particular purpose** of gaining location filming permission from the relevant authority/owner, and **citing** legal compliance and safety concerns you will address.	**Experiment** with digital tools from CASA to **discover** what restrictions apply to the **context** of your current location, using the smartphone app, and investigate its features. **Experiment** by selecting the **context** of your potential filming location and **trying out** the website-based **method** to check maps and make **problem-solving** notes for drone filming and other permissions.

2 **Symbolise** the impact of other legislation on your drone law flow chart by extending the use of the same **conventions** to incorporate emergencies, privacy, property rights and environmental law.

3 **Experiment** with the CASA DroneComplier web-based app to **create ideas** for aerial-looking **moving images** in adjacent areas of different restrictions, such as a variety of camera-mounting **techniques** that would be allowed.

4 **Analyse** posted drone videos and **make a judgement**, according to current Australian law as **set criteria**, regarding the legality of the videos. **Consider** only evidence from within the **examined** footage.

5 **Construct** a list of Queensland locations used for significant productions that required a diverse *mise en scène* (see page 107).
   (a) Copy images from the productions, **systematically** searching maps, street view and images to locate the 'real life' view of the location closest to the image. **Arrange** images side by side with a caption commenting on the likely potential identified by the **pre-production** crew when the locations were **proposed**.
   (b) Include the closest location you can find to your community in the list above, even if it is first-hand knowledge of a news story, with a comment about the *mise en scène*.
   (c) Research failures in **pre-production** of filming **plans** geographically closest to your community. **Construct** a list of the reasons for failure, such as lack of finance, official permission or near-failure due to community concerns.

PRODUCTION SAFETY

Risk management – FTVNM students

There are risks associated with filming a video. Your role as a member of a production team is to be aware of the risks and manage them. This process should reduce the risks to an absolute minimum.

Adult supervision is a key factor in the reduction of risk when the production team is a group of teenagers. You are advised to have an adult present during the filming process.

Risk management

Working out the level of risk for each scene in your video production is a worthwhile activity. Its purpose is to protect your team members and actors. The following steps are part of the risk management process:

1 **Identify hazards.** Make a list of all possible hazards at the filming site or that may be encountered during the filming process.

2 **Assess the level of risk.** Work out how dangerous the hazards are. Ask yourself what the risk of injury is and how serious that injury could be. Some risks are obvious but others, such as the age of the participants, are less obvious to those involved.
3 **Decide on control measures.** To deliver the highest level of protection to your cast and crew, it is necessary to reduce the level of risk as far as possible. This will mean putting in place some procedures to ensure everyone's safety.
4 **Implement control measures.**
5 **Monitor progress.** Make sure the control measures are working by monitoring constantly.

Consequence

Descriptor	Level	Definition
Insignificant	1	No first aid required
Minor	2	Injury/ill health requiring first aid
Moderate	3	Injury/ill health requiring medical attention
Major	4	Injury/ill health requiring hospital admission
Severe	5	Fatality

Risk Level

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Almost certain	High	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	High	High

Figure 5.28 A risk assessment matrix can help when you are working out the severity of consequences and the level of risk. It is useful to perform a risk assessment for each major scene in your film.

Safety on set

Safety conventions for crews have been established over a long time because they work to minimise the typical risks many sets have in common.

Useful items

It is a good idea to have a small set of general purpose items with you on set. These include the following:

- **Oven mitts or a handkerchief.** **Barn doors** (light attachments used to shape the light beam) must be black to control light spill, causing them to absorb heat. Carry a handkerchief or use oven mitts to adjust them.
- **Wooden clothes pegs.** Use timber pegs to secure **gels** and **diffusers**, as wood will not melt or hold the heat. Do not use any other kind of peg because there will be a fire risk.
- **Bulldog clips.** These are excellent for securing background objects but the heat in the metal and the pressure from the squeezing will give you a nasty line burn if used on hot lights.

- **Gaffer tape.** Tape has hundreds of uses and should be on hand at all film sets.
- **Fire extinguisher.** Only particular types of extinguishers can be used for a fire involving electricals, which is most likely to be the case on a set.



Figure 5.29 Among items to have on hand at a set is gaffer tape (waterproof cloth tape). Named after the film job, gaffer tape is used to secure cables on music and theatre stages. Sound crews need to tape audio cables separately, crossing power cables at 90 degrees to reduce the buzz created by induced current in the audio trip hazard cables. Tape is also used for 'marks' on the floor for actors, and camera tape has a particular meaning for the crew depending on the colour and where it is applied, such as a film can or magazine.

Personal safety

Supervising a film shoot involves taking on a level of employer-like responsibility for the safety of the cast and crew. An almost parental attitude to the welfare of actors in front of your lens should inform decisions regarding any risk and reaction. Their safety must come first.

Shooting can often take longer than anticipated and locations can be away from facilities. Water and first aid should be considered, and cast and crew should always have hats, sunglasses and sunblock for exteriors. Especially in Queensland, the sun is a serious long-term danger, and continuity will be affected if pale skin in a morning shoot is beetroot red in the afternoon!

The most catastrophic risk on a set is usually fire. The most appropriate extinguisher type for a film set likely to have electricals is the 'AB(E)' powder type, indicated by a white band.

If a home or car extinguisher is on set, it is important to realise that a 1-kilogram bottle only gives around 10 seconds of extinguishing time. A fire blanket or a bucket of sand may be appropriate for your shoot, but buckets of water should only be considered if there is no electrical risk.



Shutterstock.com/John Mackintosh

Figure 5.30 A chemical powder fire extinguisher.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services provides fire safety recommendations for crews to check before needing extinguishers, including the following advice: '… *you can extinguish the fire quickly if you are not putting your safety at risk by staying in the vicinity of the fire; and if all other persons have been evacuated from the area.*'

5.6.1 Fire extinguishers

Cast and crew should be aware of exits that are always kept clear for emergencies. Places of business, schools, public buildings and professional studios should have exits marked, extinguishers in place and evacuation assembly points outside.

Safety for lighting

There are many artistic and technical reasons to use tungsten lights rather than LEDs. No globe-based light should be used without a safety screen. A bulb blowing can send showers of glass fragments over everyone. Several television hosts have even hidden under their desks live on-air when bulbs exploded. Battery chargers can also be a risk, and power cables create more heat when



Figure 5.31 Lighting stands should be arranged to create the broadest base possible, and secondary safety chains must be used when rigging lights to a properly installed and rated studio ceiling grid.

left coiled up. Light cables should be run under the light stand so that any trip is likely to move the entire stand sideways, and not topple it by pulling at the top of the light itself.



Figure 5.32 Safety glass or gauze provides a barrier between talent and broken hot glass – do not use bulb lights without them. Incorrect diffuser set-up causes smouldering, even with fire-resistant materials, as evidenced by the light on the right. Gels are to be pegged to the end of barn doors, as on the left.

Gels, **scrims** and **spun** should be pegged to the end of barn doors so that heat from the light is not trapped. When turning on lights, the protocol should be to say aloud: 'Watch your eyes.' Floor stand lights should have a hand initially blocking them to prevent accidentally looking directly at the light, as the temporarily blinding after-image creates an immediate danger of walking into objects. Larger, professional HMI lights take longer to reach full brightness, but they produce enough ultra-violet light to cause sunburn within a few minutes and can burn retinas like sunlight. These lights should never be operated without the filtering supplied with them, and never stared at.

Some productions make use of strobe lights, fog machines or bee smokers. Allergies, asthma and epilepsy can be triggered by such physical special effects on set.

Outdoor considerations

Lighting stands in open air are more likely to need weighing down with sandbags due to wind. School bags filled with heavy books or tent pegs are other options. Large shade scrims or reflectors are very difficult to handle in bad weather and should be secured with any protruding stand ends made safe.

Three 800-watt lights will normally run off a domestic power supply, but they should be connected to different circuits wherever possible. Kettles, ovens or pool pumps should not be left running to reduce the chance of tripping the circuit.



Figure 5.33 Electrical cables should not be on the ground near water or rain. Dew can even get into extension cable joins on an early morning shoot. Plastic bags reduce moist air in the cable ends, and a loose knot helps prevent cables detaching. Adult supervision would be expected for using electricity, and a cable on the ground of a public footpath is one of the triggers for some councils to require a filming permit.

Safety of the equipment

There is a social, economic and environmental responsibility to make all equipment function well for as long as possible. Whatever type of camera is used, lift the tripod off the ground by the camera at every set-up – this ensures it is secure and will not fall off the tripod when you let go. Cameras are not to be left unattended on the tripod – detach it if no one can stay with it. Cases should be with cameras on set to protect them from continual sun or unexpected rain.

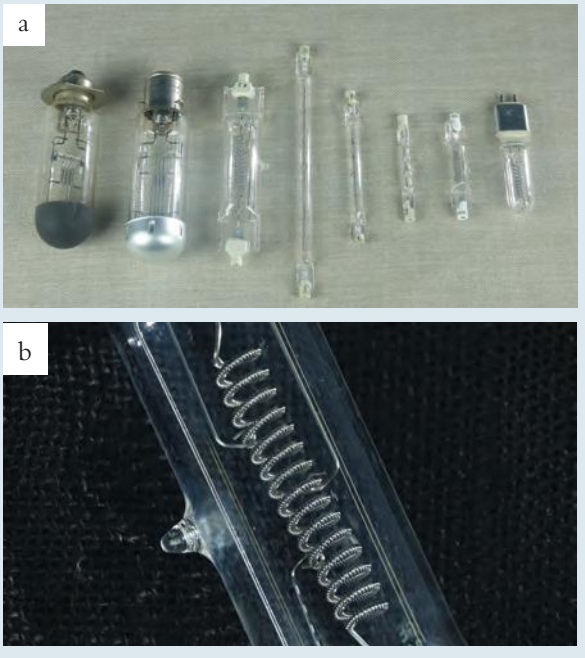


Figure 5.34 Filament bulb lights will blow if moved when hot, or if the bulbs are touched by the oil on human skin. Let them cool before packing up so the tungsten is less fragile.

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Boom mics should never be leaning where they can fall or be tripped over. Mud and sand should be wiped off all telescopic legs to protect the locking systems in tripods, booms and light stands. Cables should be rolled in figure eights or over-then-under loops – rolling cables over elbows eventually kinks them in one direction.

Well-being in post-production

Screen time must be managed for work, study or entertainment. Creative screen pursuits such as editing can be absorbing, creating health risks for eyesight, posture and sleep patterns. Set up your post-production area with an appropriate chair and desk. Keep the screen at arm's length and look away from the screen to a distant object every 20 minutes for at least 20 seconds. Optometrists say to get at least five minutes' break every hour, as two hours on a laptop causes significant increases in eye problems.

Studies show sitting for extended periods increases the risk of many diseases and early death, even if you do other exercise. Experts recommend moving and stretching for two minutes and standing for eight minutes for every 20 minutes seated. The Australian Government Department of Health produces the *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines* for young people aged 13–17 years, which recommends accumulating 60 minutes of activity per day, and no more than two hours of electronic media entertainment.



5.6.2 Physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines

5.6 ACTIVITIES

1 Conduct a risk assessment for all of the scenes in your planned film. Use the matrix shown in Figure 5.28. **Explain** the reasons for your decisions in your risk assessment. **Identify** and **locate** all potential risks and **give information** about how these can be managed.

2 **Construct** a table that lists the best-practice location behaviours and safety concerns in the situation shown in Figure 5.35.
Examine the situation intently to **systematically** identify poor practice and areas of danger, and list these in the first column of your table.
For each of the concerns you have noted, in the second column of your table list the appropriate safety **conventions** and practices that should be implemented to minimise the risk.
Based on your own **pre-production proposals**, **systematically** record any risks and remedies that apply to your **plans** – refer back to the 'safety on set' section (see page 110).



5.6.3 Safety on location: Where's Wally



Figure 5.35 Crews must manage simultaneous aspects of good production practice. There are many areas for improvement on this location shoot.

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Part B: Producing film trailers

FILM TRAILERS

A film introduces itself to the world through its trailer. Most people learn about a new film by watching the trailer – either randomly (such as by seeing it screened before they watch the film of their choice in the cinema) or by choice (such as by watching the trailer on YouTube).

The internet has given movie trailers a long life, making them important media texts in their own right. We can now just as easily watch trailers of films that are 60 years old as we can watch the trailer of a film released this week. The life of a movie continues long after its release through DVD sales, rentals, television presentation and online delivery. Across all of these, the trailer is probably the most important advertisement for the movie that studios have available.

A film trailer is a dramatically condensed version of a film created to advertise the film's theatrical release. A trailer uses selected imagery from the film to invite the audience to go to the cinemas to see the whole movie. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) mandates that a trailer must be a maximum length of two minutes and thirty seconds.

A film trailer is a 'paratext' (some analysts use the term 'circumtext'). Paratexts are texts that are grouped around the original text. They are associated with the original text, but often escape notice – usually because they are of lesser importance. However, movie trailers are now receiving serious academic attention.

5.7.1 Big Screen Touring Program Trailer

5.7.2 Cinema Australia Trailers

5.7.3 Trailers at the cinema



Alamy Stock Photo/Stephen Shepherd

Figure 5.36 The first time many people are introduced to a film is through the trailer. Often people see trailers while they wait in the cinema for the start of the billed movie. A trailer is a condensed edit of many of the best elements in a film. It aims to show the audience how good the complete film is.

> 'The first trailer was shown in 1912 at Rye Beach New York. One of the amusement park concessions hung up a white sheet and showed the serial *The Adventures of Kathlyn*. At the end of the reel Kathlyn was thrown in the lion's den. After this 'trailed' a piece of film asking, "Does she escape the lion's pit? See next week's thrilling chapter!" Hence the word trailer.'
>
> **Lou Harris**, former head of Paramount trailer division

Features of film trailers

> 'Trailers are about raising expectations. A trailer doesn't reveal the whole movie. It pitches the promise of the premise.'
>
> **Stephen Garrett**, Jump Cut trailer productions, New York

Not every trailer follows a formula, but most have some of the following genre features:

Narrative enigma

The narrative enigma is the mystery of the story. The audience must be given enough details to be excited by the story and create an imaginary film out of the fragments. However, none of the loose ends are tied up. There is no closure or resolution of any kind. The enigma or mystery can only be solved by going to see the movie.

Mini three-act structure

Just like the original film text, the trailer often uses a three-act structure. Segments of this structure can be very quick, or they can sometimes be combined.

- Opening shots set the scene for the movie and give an indication of the story. Setting can be a key part of the appeal to audiences. Opening shots also introduce characters.
- Developing complications in the trailer show the central problem that the characters must overcome.
- The resolution does not resolve the film story, but instead resolves the trailer by asking the audience to go and see the movie. Sometimes the trailer resolution is referred to as the 'kicker' – its role is to kick the audience into the cinema.

Characters and stars are introduced in action

Showing characters in story action is necessary because the climactic events have to happen as soon as possible. Recognisable stars are shown early to draw in their fans.

Faces in close-up

Use of the close-up is a common feature of trailers and gives a window into the emotional intensity of the story or the ordeals suffered by the characters.

Sharp transitions

Sudden changes prevent the audience from getting involved in the story, because they have to be reminded of the main purpose – to persuade them to buy tickets to the cinema. Transitions include:

- sound effects that are sharp and loud to create breaks in the narrative
- sudden cuts and wipes that move the trailer into the next scene
- story elements such as explosions that provide a shock and allow a jump into the next scene
- title cards that break up sequences and cover missing details.



Getty Images/Lonely Planet Images

Figure 5.37 The film trailer is an advertising text. Its main purpose is to push audiences to buy tickets and increase box office sales.

Climactic action

Dramatic events are shown from the best scenes in the film. The action is shown happening, but it is not resolved. The audience does not find out what the outcome is. Plot details are rarely given away.

Discontinuity editing

Breaks in the usual continuity editing are used to create short shocks for the audience, and to prevent them from forgetting that they must go to see the full movie. Scenes may be jumbled, and conversations may be cut up. Shots that are not

connected to each other can be alternated. The use of montage and the Kuleshov effect is often very noticeable. The important editing elements are:

- **Visual highlights of the film.** These are often separated out and do not have to be used in the same way as they appear in the story.
- **Dialogue highlights of the film.** These are commonly used to heighten the tension and intensify conflict.
- **The soundtrack.** This provides unity and rhythm for the whole trailer. The soundtrack suggests the genre and helps build a strong audience response.
- **Sound effects.** These provide realism and often add shock and wonder to the trailer. Sound effects also work as transitions and markers of the rhythm.

Voice-over

The main purpose of the narratorial voice-over is similar to that of a street-side spruiker: to sell the product. Trailer voice-overs have the following features:

- **A male voice** is used in almost all trailers. Most trailers are loud, and a deep, resonant male voice can cut through the music and sound-effect sequences. Many in the industry argue that a male voice conveys more credibility, and that helps sales. A movie that uses a female voice-over in the trailer is *Gone in Sixty Seconds* (2000).
- **A story teaser** via voice-over provides an introduction to the narrative in about 25–30 words (without giving away the ending).
- **The film title is often stated** in the voice-over.
- **Star actors** are often referred to by name.
- **Asynchronous style voice-over** is the most common when title cards are used – what the voice is saying is different from what is written in the titles. There is no point in telling the audience what they can read for themselves – except for the film title, where the voice-over intensifies what is read.

No voice-over

Many modern trailers are dispensing with the voice-over. Instead they are just using fast-paced scenes from the movie with the dialogue providing the logic or sense of the narrative. Title cards fill in the gaps.

Film trailer conventions

> 'Trailers have their own internal logic and should function separately from the movie they are promoting. If cut well, a trailer can be something you want to watch again and again. But (of course!) it should also make you want to see more.'
>
> **Stephen Garrett**, Jump Cut trailer productions, New York

The conventions of film trailers have been established over a long period of time. Important conventions are:

- **Film classification.** The trailer usually begins with the classification information. This is mandatory.
- **Company logo.** The studio logo lends credibility to the trailer and places the film in context for the audience. Usually the logo appears at the beginning of the trailer.
- **Cast.** Additional cast and credit information is given at the end of the trailer.



Shutterstock.com/REX/Kobal/Warner Bros/Paul Faherty

Figure 5.38 The famous car chase scene from *Bullitt* (1968) is said to be the best of its kind ever filmed. The chase starts the trailer for *Bullitt* and scenes from it are intercut throughout. The final outcome of the chase is not shown in the trailer. As a rule, trailers take the best and most climactic action from the original film. The action is shown happening, but not being resolved. It may also be edited in a jumbled way.

5.7 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a pre-production proposal, such as a storyboard, for a new trailer for an existing movie, game or television program. Structure climactic scenes or action from the original text into a systematically arranged sequence.
2 **Synthesise** an existing movie or game trailer into a trailer for a different genre. For example, solve the problem of converting an action movie trailer into a romance movie trailer (see 'Genres', page 15).
3 Produce a film or game trailer that follows many of the features of trailers outlined in this section. Your trailer should include a soundtrack and the main conventions, such as classification details and a production company logo.
Respond to the areas of activity in the table below to complete the task.

CONSTRUCT	STRUCTURE	SYNTHESISE
Construct an idea for a trailer using the **specific codes and conventions** of your film genre – e.g. action movie. **Arrange** the **elements** into a pre-production format such as a storyboard.	**Structure** descriptions of video and audio elements and **sequence** them into a pre-production product, such as a storyboard, **systematically** assembling the elements of the trailer. **Structure** the trailer proposal into a series of **sequenced** climactic events.	**Synthesise moving-image media elements** into a completed film trailer video. **Solve** technical or creative issues, keeping the finished product within the scope of the original **concept**. Maintain the conventions of the film trailer.

Part C: Producing music videos

MUSIC VIDEOS

A music video (sometimes called a video clip) is a video produced to go with a song. Although there is no requirement that this be a pop or rock song, it almost invariably is. This is partly because music videos are produced as short promotional films to sell CDs and downloadable songs.

Music videos are three to five minutes long. They do not follow a traditional narrative structure – instead, they reflect the structure of the accompanying music. Music videos rely on rhythm, pace and lyrical imagery for their effect. As a communication form, music video works by combining images and sounds together inseparably.

Some critics argue that music videos are really a form of advertising, whereas audiences usually see video clips as entertainment. For the filmmaker and the artist, many music videos are regarded as short artistic films. However, music companies see them as providing free advertising for their products. An American survey found 60 per cent of pop CD sales came as a result of music video exposure.



Shutterstock.com/Olyy

Figure 5.39 Music videos make heavy use of special photographic effects. The aim is to grab viewers' attention and to keep hold of it.

Music videos are aimed at an audience range between 14 and 34 years of age. This is also the age range of the big music buyers. It is no accident that many music videos are made at studios well known for their production of television commercials. Sometimes the same directors do both.

Packaged into rock programs, music videos amount to wall-to-wall commercials. Obsolescence is also built in – no sooner is the song bought than the music video is out of date. There is a new music video and another urge to buy, to stay with the fashion. Nonetheless, unlike the television commercial, the music video is not explicitly selling anything. It is a disguised commercial.

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Types of music videos

The music industry divides music videos into two main types: conceptual and performance.

Conceptual videos

Conceptual music videos are based on a central theme. They often have a plot and tell a story, but sometimes they are made up of jumbled images that work with the music.

Conceptual videos can be further divided into two types:

- **Narrative music videos.** A simple or complex narrative can turn music videos into mini films. Simple narrative music videos provide a basic situation for a fantasy but lapse into jumbled imagery in between. The spaces in the story allow the audience to create their own fantasy. Complex narrative music videos often demonstrate the genre divisions of their full-length counterparts. Music videos can be horror, melodrama, *film noir*, and so on. Complex narrative music videos move the song towards the ballad.
- **Non-narrative music videos.** A dreamlike reality can be created by non-narrative music videos as images and music combine to produce an emotional effect.

Hundreds of scenes can be cut into a music video lasting just three minutes. This constant shifting of topic resembles the structure of dreams. Like dreams, non-narrative music videos follow a loose theme rather than a story. Often the topic is approached from many angles in a short space of time. Perhaps the factor most similar to dreams is the use of images with powerful mental associations. These work like symbols, calling to mind thoughts that would normally take much longer to express.

Performance music videos

Performance music videos concentrate on the stage appearance of the musicians. The performance clip can look old-fashioned to modern audiences, because it was at its most popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Some modern artists use the performance clip as an anti-commercial statement.

It is rare for a music video not to show the performers somewhere in the clip. When they do appear, they often look directly at the camera – something movie actors avoid. Looking at the camera is a direct appeal to the imagined audience and follows the conventions of musical performance on stage.

Features of music videos

Music videos have several general features: they use poetic imagery, they use a high number of symbolic images and they have rapid shot changes.



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Figure 5.40 Performance music videos focus on the performances of the artists. Most music videos include some performance shots. Some music videos focus exclusively on the performance.

Poetic images

Music videos use poetic visual imagery to build ideas and emotion in the minds of the audience. Grabbing attention and holding on to it are the two main aims of music video makers. This has led them to search for ever more bizarre and shocking images.

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Symbolic images

Music video makers rely on images that are easily understood. The images are often highly symbolic. They create a host of associations in the minds of the audience. In three minutes, a huge number of shots are screened. None of them must be allowed to confuse the audience. Nazi rallies, scenes of witchcraft and images of romance are all easily understood by the audience in a few seconds. References to famous works of art or well-known movies will also be easily understood. Music videos rely on these flashes of understanding to keep up the rate of ideas per minute.



Shutterstock.com/Ollyy

Figure 5.41 Music can be a powerful emotional expression. Music video makers look for poetic images to create a matching emotional effect visually.

Rapid shot changes

> 'Keep the interest – that's an obsession with us. We know why people are turned on or turned off. You've got to keep their attention – create movement where there isn't any. Keep the rhythm. Eliminate any visual slack. We measure in IPMs – ideas per minute. If you keep up your IPM, you'll do all right.'
>
> **John Weaver**, Keefco (production company)

To keep the ideas-per-minute rate high, music video makers make rapid-fire shot changes. A three-minute video may contain hundreds of shots, often cut to the beat of the music.

Until the arrival of the music video, most filmmakers considered the shortest possible shot to be two seconds. Anything shorter was considered too brief to be understood. Today, music videos often have shots lasting less than one second and occasionally one-third of a second. The increase in shot speed corresponds to an increase in the amount of visual information the viewer receives.

How video works with the music

There are three ways in which music can be visualised in a music video:

1 **Illustration.** The video is illustrative if the imagery tells the story of the lyrics. It is also possible to think of the music as illustrated if the imagery is cut to the beat and the visuals seem to give a rhythm and feeling to the music. Video clips can illustrate a singer's or band's performance. Dance can also be used to illustrate the song.
2 **Amplification.** The video is amplifying if it adds new layers of meaning to the music or the lyrics. The performance can also be amplified through the use of close-ups to give a view that would not be possible if you attended the live performance.
3 **Counterpoint/Disruption.** A video can stand in contrast to the music and lyrics, and the disjointed feeling this creates can add extra meaning.

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5.8 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a list of all the factors that make music videos similar to commercials. Next, **construct** a list of the factors that make them different from commercials and more like entertainment programs.
Analyse the two lists by **considering** differences and similarities. **Make a judgement** as to whether music videos are closer to advertisements or entertainment.

2 Music videos can be divided into two main types: conceptual and performance. Watch a number of music videos and write down their titles.
Explain why you think they fall into one or the other category.

3 The images used in music videos can be divided into several categories. A study by Richard Baxter and others separated the images into categories and then counted their frequency. Look through the results in Table 5.1, then complete the following tasks.
Explain reasons for the heavy use of visual unreality in music clips.
Explain the high incidence of sex, dance, violence and celebration.

Table 5.1 Categories of images and frequency with which they appeared in music videos.

CATEGORY OF IMAGE	FREQUENCY IMAGES APPEARED (PER CENT)
Visual unreality (use of special effects to produce odd, unusual and/or unexpected images)	90.3
Sex (portrayal of sexual feelings or impulses)	59.7
Dance	56.5
Violence and/or crime	53.2
Celebration (portrayal of happy, festive occasions)	45.2
Friendship	41.9
Isolation (alone or apart from others)	41.9
Wealth	38.7
Transportation (use of vehicles)	35.5
Bizarre (odd)	27.4
Physical restraint (holding back a person or thing)	24.2
Androgyny (gender combination)	22.6
Religion	17.7
Political issues	14.5
Fitness	14.5
Animals	14.5
Maturation (growing up)	12.9
Death	9.7
Health	1.6

Source: Taylor & Francis/Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media

4 **Explain** how the words of most popular songs support the findings of Baxter's study. **Identify** what sorts of image are most often suggested by the lyrics.
Explain why you think groups often refer to wealth.
Appraise whether or not the frequency of images of wealth has **significant** audience appeal. Interpret the **significance** of the frequency of images of wealth in Baxter's study. **Make a judgement** as to whether it is **worthwhile** that these images appear so frequently.

5 Watch a number of music videos and score the frequency of Baxter's categories of images for yourself. Baxter's team scored the videos by stopping them every 30 seconds and ticking off each category that had appeared.
Construct your own table similar to Baxter's, **arranging** each category to match those in his study.

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Analyse your findings by comparing your results with Baxter's and examining similarities and differences in each of the constituent parts of both tables. Make a judgement about the degree to which things have changed over the time since Baxter's work was completed.

6 Count the number of shots or scenes in several music videos.
Explain what seems to be the normal number of scene changes.
Explain what the rate of 'ideas per minute' means.

7 Prepare an investigation of five music videos. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the nature of the clips as a whole, identifying whether they are performance or conceptual music videos. Give information about each of the music videos and the kinds of imagery.	Analyse at least 10 images from the music videos overall, examining each image and considering its effect. Interpret the meanings of each image in conjunction with the music. Make a judgement about the aesthetic/artistic appeal of each image.	Appraise the effectiveness of each music video, drawing conclusions about the significance of each of them to audiences. Rank the clips from one to five on the basis of their status or worth to the modern audience.

8 Create a music video. The video may be in the narrative or non-narrative genre.
Symbolise your ideas for the music video in a pre-production format, such as a storyboard.
Structure the images in the music video so they are systematically sequenced and united through a central theme or narrative, but also leave interpretative room for images that allow the audience to create their own meanings. The vision should interpret and amplify the meaning in the song as well as illustrating it. Make adaptations and changes until you believe you have achieved this purpose.
Synthesise your plans into a filmed and edited music video, solving conceptual and technical problems using your understanding of production techniques and moving-image media codes and conventions.

Part D: Film reviews

FILM REVIEWS

5.9.1 Film Critics Circle Australia
5.9.2 Australian Film Critics

> 'I go to the movies with every experience I can muster – not only in terms of knowing what a particular movie is, but also my experiences of life. Once I start watching a film, I let the movie happen to me. Then I try to combine myself and the movie into my review.'
>
> **Roger Ebert**, film critic, *Chicago Sun-Times* 1967–2013

The film review is a personal and critical response to the experience of watching a movie. It belongs to the expository genre. Like all expository genre texts, the film review contains a point of view and provides evidence to support that point of view. Film reviews have different characteristics depending on their purpose and audience.

In a daily newspaper or online, all the reader really wants to know is: 'Is this new movie worth seeing?' The magazine or newspaper audience is crucial in deciding the tone of the review. A daily newspaper may encourage a loose, informal style. A magazine may be even more informal.

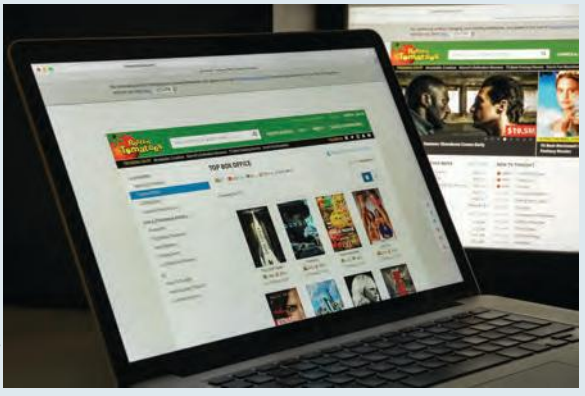
At the other end of the spectrum, specialist journals require the reviewer to provide deeper critical analysis. Readers of movie magazines such as *Metro* or *Empire* (for example), demand that the reviewer research extensively and present sophisticated interpretations of the reviewed films. The central exposition or argument may be developed over several pages.

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Purposes of the film review

Film reviews have the following basic functions:

- **Analysis.** Reviewers analyse a movie by breaking it down into its component parts. These may include film techniques, actors' performances and the story line. The amount and kind of information readers demand depends on the type of publication.
- **Evaluation.** Audiences expect the reviewer to make critical judgements about the movie. If they haven't seen the movie yet, the audience expects a judgement about quality. On the other hand, if the audience has already seen the movie, they may expect a 're-view' or second look, contributing a deeper level of understanding. This second look can also offer a specialist perspective on the film that might not have been immediately apparent to the untrained audience.
- **Persuasion.** Some reviews perform an advertising function for the movie. Studios regard positive film reviews as free advertising.
- **Entertainment.** The average person attends a cinema five times in a year. The readership of film reviews is significantly higher. It follows that many of the people reading film reviews do not go on to see the movie. To some extent, the enjoyment of reading the review substitutes for the pleasure of seeing the film. Both filmmaker and critic are in the entertainment business. Some reviewers deliberately set out to write in an exciting style to capture some of the energy of a popular film. Bad-mouthing a film also draws in audiences for reviewers; everyone loves to see reviewers really skewer a film occasionally.
- **Psychological needs.** The review also meets other needs, such as to appear knowledgeable among friends.



Alamy Stock Photo/Casimiro

Figure 5.42 A review aggregator such as Rotten Tomatoes or Metacritic collects reviews of movies, games and television programs then uses a scoring system to provide a combined comparison. They make their profit by selling advertising space and details about consumer searches and choices.

Features of the film review

The film review is a very flexible genre whose form and content vary according to the medium and the outlet. One important variation is length. Long reviews in quality newspapers can exceed 1000 words. Short reviews may be just four or five sentences. Even a short review will give plot details and an evaluation (usually in the last sentence).

Common features of film reviews:

- **Exposition.** A review is a personal critical response and therefore consists of a point of view supported by evidence from the film. This use of an argument sustained by evidence is called an exposition. The reviewer uses analysis and evaluation to carry the exposition to its conclusion.
- **Classification, cast and credits list.** Most reviews provide basic information about the film, perhaps in table format, near the start of the article. Although these details are minimal, they provide some evidence for the exposition and reader evaluation.
- **The plot.** This gives the story line or the outline of what happens in the film. Reviews usually provide the main details of the plot (except the ending) and also evaluate the plot.
- **The stars.** Filmgoers are interested in the acting stars and will often choose a movie on the basis of who appears in it. Responding to audience demand, reviewers devote some of the review space to evaluating the performances of well-known actors.
- **Other elements of the film.** Evidence to support the exposition is often drawn from a number of other film elements.
  - **The theme** of the film is the point it is trying to make, or what is learnt from the film. For example, the film may be about gender or racial issues, love or courage.
  - **The script** is the written text of the film, including dialogue and stage directions.

Reviewers may examine the effectiveness of dialogue, characterisation and the use of climaxes.

- **Acting** is important to the success of the film and a significant area of comment for reviewers.
- **Setting, costumes and make-up** help give life and atmosphere to a film. They are especially important in period films.
- **Direction** of the film is crucial in bringing all the component parts together. Some film theorists regard the director of the film as similar to the author of a novel – this is called ***auteur* theory**.
- **Cinematography** is the art or technique of film photography. It is often evaluated in aesthetic terms.
- **Editing** in film involves techniques that help build the story (see chapter 2).
- **The sound** is important both in creating a sense of reality and in intensifying emotion. **Diegetic sound** (such as a lifelike sound effect) helps create reality. **Non-diegetic** sound (such as a music soundtrack) does the opposite in helping build drama. Some realist drama has little or no non-diegetic sound.

5.9 ACTIVITIES

1 Analyse several reviews by the same reviewer. Examine them according to the following tasks.
Examine the most common film elements the reviewer chooses to evaluate; for example, does the reviewer concentrate on the stars, the camera work or the director's vision?
Consider each of the constituent parts of the review, breaking it down to decide how much of it is analysis and how much is evaluation. Mark the areas of evaluation with a highlighter pen.
Make judgements about what seems to be the personal taste of the reviewer. Using the reviews as evidence, try to work out this reviewer's various viewpoints and prejudices.

2 Analyse reviews of the same film drawn from a wide variety of publications, such as newspapers, magazines and cinema journals. Consider them according to the following tasks.
Consider what audience each review is intended for, and how you can tell this from the review itself.
Make a judgement about which areas of interest in the film are common to most of the reviews.
Consider if there is a common negative criticism of the film, or, alternatively, make a judgement as to whether one review is very different in its criticisms from most of the others.

3 Explain the plot of a selected movie in 120–180 words. Identify the key plot points leading up to the resolution. Do not reveal the ending. Use this as part of a film review.

4 Appraise one of the common review elements in a movie of your choice. For example, make a judgement about the significance of sound, editing, plot, the stars or the themes. Some examples of movies that are useful for particular review elements are:
   - Sound: *Citizen Kane* (1941)
   - Editing: Alfred Hitchcock's movies
   - Plot: action movies

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UNIT 2 STORY FORMS

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Unit 2 is all about story and the varying forms it takes across many different platforms. Story is fundamental to humanity. Some say it is fundamental to human thinking because everything is a story we construct. What you learnt about story in Unit 1 is foundational. It will be important in all the stories you construct or respond to for the rest of your course.

You will learn about the underlying structure of stories and the ways that they communicate meanings using technical and symbolic codes. You will also learn about the genre conventions of stories, and the ways these change according to contexts.

Stories are ultimately produced for audiences. It is audiences who play a key role in creating meaning out of them. By engaging with stories, audiences also gain a range of benefits in their own lives. You will learn some of the techniques of engaging audiences.

Stories are systems of meaning. The ways that meanings are represented in stories can influence the ways audiences think about things. You will learn how media representations of people, places, events, ideas and emotions are constructed. Learning how others make representations will allow you to make your own.

By the end of Unit 2, you will have made a production using genre conventions. You will have also carefully analysed and appraised the way others have used representations and story conventions to appeal to audiences.

AREAS OF STUDY

Representations: How do representations function in story forms?

Audiences: How does the relationship between story forms and meaning change in different contexts?

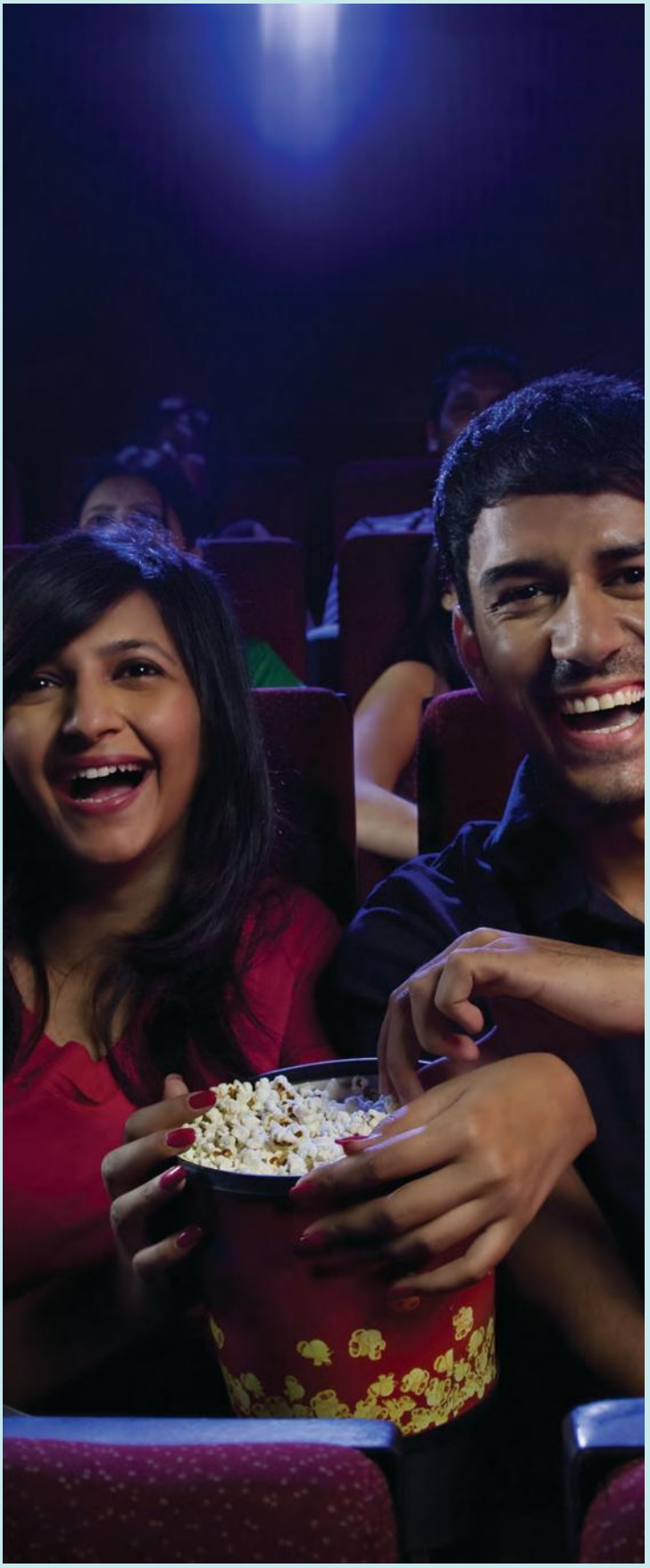
Language: How are media languages used to construct stories?

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Language conventions in moving-image media stories



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ABOUT STORY

We have been telling each other stories since the beginning of time. The media are just the most recent entrants on the storytelling scene. While each medium uses story, it is film that has made storytelling its primary role.

A narrative is often defined as a way of expressing a chain of events in a cause-and-effect relationship occurring in time and space. Put another way, a narrative is a construction that, for a period of time, tells a sequence of events with a particular **setting**. Narratives begin with characters in a situation. An event causes a change that results in a snowballing series of effects. Finally, the changes come to rest in a new situation that brings about the end of the story.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 6.1 *Casablanca* (1942) is number three on the American Film Institute's list of the top 100 films of all time. Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) owns Rick's Café Americain in Casablanca, Morocco, where refugees seeking to escape to America gather to wait for exit visas. An old flame, Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) turns up at the cafe with the Nazis on her trail. Rick helps her escape, but with unforeseen consequences. The pleasure in narrative comes from being transported into a story world where events much more dramatic than those in our own lives are taking place.



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Figure 6.2 A narrative is a chain of events in a cause-and-effect relationship occurring in time and space.

Difference between narrative, story and plot

6.1.1 In point: what is narrative structure?
6.1.2 Narrative structure – build a better narrative

In casual discussion, people use the terms 'narrative', 'story' and 'plot' interchangeably. The meanings are so similar that usually there is no problem doing this. However, in the study of narrative, it is necessary at times to define what separates each term.

- **Narrative.** This is the way the entire storyline is communicated to the audience. For instance, a film has a different narrative approach from that of a novel. Both may deal with the same story, but the way it is communicated to the audience is different.
- **Story.** Events that have happened and characters who exist but are not shown on screen are still part of the story. This refers to all the events that have ever happened in the world of the story. The story includes events that are shown on screen, together with those that are not.
- **Plot.** The part of the story that happens on screen is called the plot. This can also include material that the characters cannot see or hear but the audience can (non-diegetic material). This may include the musical score, title cards and voice-over narration (from a source other than one of the characters).
- **In combination.** These definitions lead to a narrative equation that illustrates how story, plot and narrative fit together and get presented to an audience.
  Narrative = (way audience is told) Story + Plot



Figure 6.3 Film analysts David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson show how story and plot work together. The narrative is how both story and plot are told to an audience.

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age-fotostock/Moviestills

Figure 6.4 *The Monuments Men* (2014) is based on a book that is based in turn on the story of real events. The film approaches the narrative (the way of telling the story) in a somewhat different fashion from the book. Both refer to a story world that includes events not depicted in either the book or the film. These events are definitely part of the 'back story' but are not part of the plot.

Diegesis – world of the story

The ancient Greeks originally called the narrated world of the story the **diegesis**. In modern narrative film theory, the diegesis is the whole world of the story, including the characters, setting and events. It also includes the inferred aspects of the story (those not shown). Everything on the screen that is part of the world of the story is the diegesis. All films contain elements that are both diegetic and non-diegetic. The audience sees and hears the world of the characters, but also some things that the characters cannot hear or see.

For the audience, the total film experience includes the following:

- **Diegetic elements.** Anything within the world of the story is a diegetic element. If the actors can hear it or see it, then it is diegetic. Gunshots, street noises or sounds of a band playing on- or off-stage are diegetic if they occur in the world of the actors.
- **Non-diegetic elements.** Anything outside the world of the story is non-diegetic. Anything added by the director that the audience can hear or see, but the actors cannot, is regarded as non-diegetic. For example, romantic orchestral soundtracks and voice-over narration are non-diegetic elements. Characters cannot see titles, credits and inter-title cards. They are not part of the world of the story, even though they add to the audience's experience of the narrative.

6.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Interview your classmates on one or more of the following topics:
   - Memorable moments in film narrative that have really moved them.
   - Moments of high excitement in film narrative that have almost produced a bodily reaction.
   - Times when they have suspended disbelief and been completely taken in, or times when they have had to remind themselves that it is possible or even safer to disbelieve.

   Explain your results to the class, **identifying** key moments and **illustrating** your points with examples of what your classmates have said. Provide additional information about the films themselves.

2 View a short segment from a well-known film of your choice.
   Construct a list of all the diegetic and non-diegetic elements, **systematically** going through and arranging each element into the appropriate category.
   Appraise which elements are more **significant** and **draw conclusions** as to why, based on your own reactions as an audience member.

3 Some filmmakers reject non-diegetic elements. They believe the audience should only experience the world of the story. Do you think they are right or wrong to do so?
   Explain your response, **clarifying** your own point of view but also providing information about the opposing view.

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CAUSE AND EFFECT

A typical Hollywood movie has 40 to 60 scenes. Each these scenes is about two or three minutes long and has something happen in it – a 'story event'. Usually every scene represents a minor **turning point** in the plot. Every three to five scenes can be considered a sequence. At the end of every sequence there is a small **climax** that is another turning point. A set of sequences can be considered an act, and most films have three acts (occasionally four). At the end of each act is a major climax and turning point. Finally, the last turning point and climax of the whole film comes before the resolution.

Each of these events has been a cause that has had an effect. The final cause comes about as a result of all the previous decisions of the main characters. It brings about the effect of the final equilibrium (or resolution). From the smallest unit of the film right up to the whole movie, the chain of cause and effect is the basis of plot development.

Important turning points in films are often signalled by the directors through camera work, editing or sound. Perhaps the camera pauses on an important event, or music may underscore the significance. Sometimes a camera movement such as a crane shot can establish that the scene is a turning point.

Causal agents

The cause-and-effect cycle in a narrative sets up the chain of events; one thing then leads to another in a way that seems natural and lifelike. While the effects of a causal action depend totally on the particular story and are too varied to review, the **causal agents** themselves usually fall into one of four categories:

1 **Human characters.** Characters cause things to happen through their actions. In other words, people do things that start the story. This is especially true of narratives in the Hollywood tradition (and in western literature as a whole). The psychology of individuals and their personal motivations are the basis of most Hollywood movies. In western culture, without individual character, there is no story. Other cultures do not necessarily focus so strongly on individual motivation.
2 **Human society.** A narrative can be based on opposition to a whole society. This can be seen in films such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1984), where individuals are oppressed by the surveillance culture of Big Brother. Usually, however, the society is represented in the narrative by individual human characters.
3 **Non-human characters.** Animals, monsters, spirits and aliens are common causal agents in narratives. Usually some kind of human motivation is accorded to these non-human characters. King Kong, for instance, is motivated by a combination of protectiveness, pride and even love. The shark in *Jaws* (1975) is motivated by revenge.
4 **Natural events as causal agents.** Meteors, earthquakes, tidal waves and other disasters are also causal agents in narratives, but what interests us is the effects of these natural agents on the lives of individuals who struggle to survive. Disaster movies are examples of narratives in which natural occurrences begin the chain of cause and effect.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 6.5 In *The Matrix* (1999), when Neo is offered the red pill or the blue pill by Morpheus, he must make a choice. His decision then becomes a key cause of many of the effects that occur throughout the rest of the film. The psychology of individuals, and their personal motivations and choices, is the basis of most Hollywood movies.

Conflict

Conflict is the basis of all narratives. It relates to the cause-and-effect structure because it is the outcome of causal agents. There are several categories of

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conflict in drama, some of which overlap with the notion of cause and effect.

- **Internal conflict.** Person against self is the conflict individuals have with their own weaknesses and failings – or their own emotions. Inner conflict usually pulls the main character in two directions at once.
- **Person against person.** A struggle between individuals is probably the most common narrative conflict.
- **Person against society.** Many narratives with social justice themes use this as the central conflict.
- **Person against nature.** Environmental forces are pitted against individuals.
- **Person against fate.** Fate as an opposing force most often appears in narratives as death or disability. This is clearly demonstrated in Ingmar Bergman's film *The Seventh Seal* (1957), in which a medieval knight plays chess with death.

Classical causal progress – equilibrium, disequilibrium, equilibrium

> 'An "ideal" narrative begins with a stable situation, which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established. The second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical.'
>
> **Tzvetan Todorov**, historian and narrative analyst

When a story begins, it is usually in the middle of things, before anything happens to change the natural order. This can easily be seen in the most classical narratives – fairytales. They begin with a world in which everything is in its proper place: '*Once upon a time, a king and a queen had a daughter.*'

The state of normality that opens a story is called narrative **equilibrium**. Everything is in balance when the audience arrives on the scene. Equilibrium may not be a happy state, and it can be full of unpleasantness, but it is a stable situation because nothing has occurred to unbalance things.

The action that begins the cause-and-effect chain of events is called the **disturbance or disruption**. The disturbance upsets the equilibrium and creates **disequilibrium**. It disrupts and unbalances things, sparking a sequence of reactions that throws everything completely upside down. **Complications and conflicts** follow as characters react according to their individual psychology.

Eventually a new normality or equilibrium is arrived at, as all the complications are resolved. This may be a happier state, or it may still be unpleasant. However, the ending of a typical narrative sees a return to stability and balance. There may be room for a new disruption if a sequel is planned, but the stability is strong enough to hold things in balance for the time being.



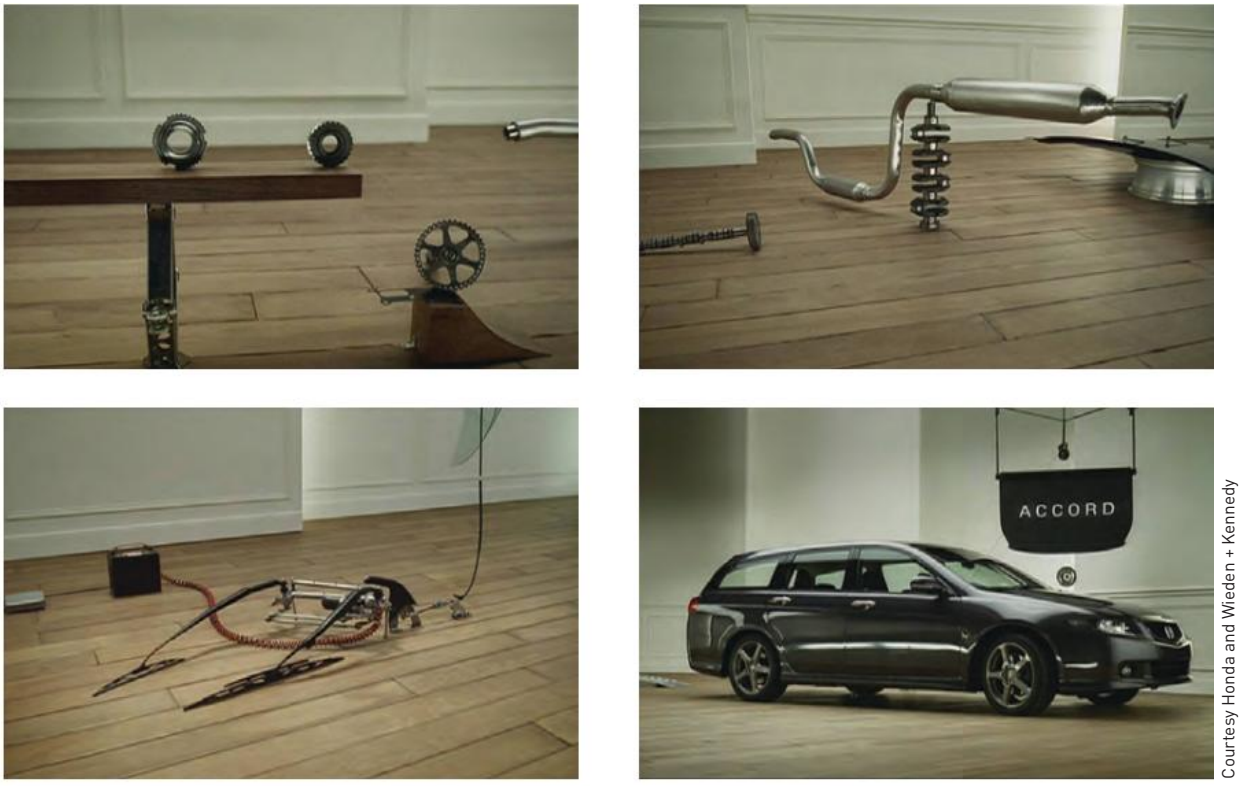
The Moviestore Collection Ltd/ Get Out: Warner Bros

Figure 6.6 Characters from *Get Out* (2017). Often, the stronger the normality at the beginning, the more shocking the disruption when it finally occurs. Accordingly, scriptwriters often begin horror movies with a highly stylised normality.

A 2003 television advertisement for Honda called *The Cog* is a good technical illustration of how a narrative works with its equilibrium and disequilibrium. *The Cog* opens with a single transmission bearing rolling down into a gear hub. This one disruption starts a chain reaction of events involving different car parts until finally a whole vehicle rolls off a tilted platform.

Heath Robinson machines (in the UK) or Rube Goldberg machines (in the US) also depict a whole chain of events occurring as a result of a disruptive single event.

6.2.1
The Cog



Courtesy Honda and Wieden + Kennedy

Figure 6.7 Narratives work a little like this ad for Honda called simply *The Cog* (2003). A single disruption from a car transmission bearing changes the equilibrium of the car parts and begins a process of chain reactions until a completed car rolls off a platform. The whole ad is real, and not computer generated. It took 606 takes before it finally worked; for 605 times before that, a small error meant the whole thing had to be set up again.

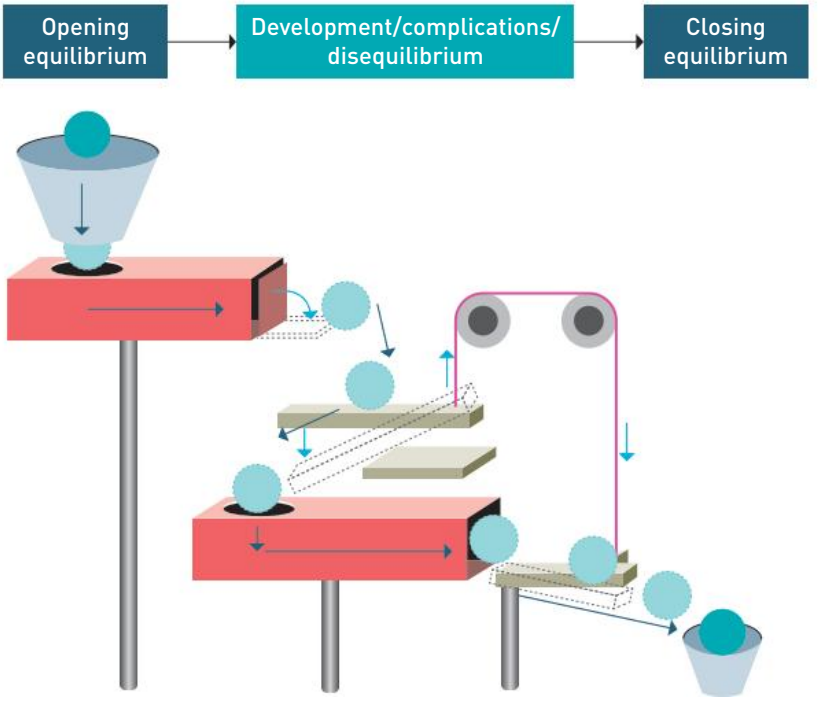


Figure 6.8 An illustration of a narrative drawn in the style of a Heath Robinson machine. The initial equilibrium is in balance until the ball of the disruption is introduced. This starts a chain reaction of complications until the final climax. The resolution comes, and a new and different equilibrium has been achieved.

6.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a movie you are very familiar with. The movie should have a good linear storyline, without many flashbacks and other complicated story structures.
Construct a flow chart of cause and effect. On the flow chart, **systematically arrange** each major scene.
Explain the effect that the ending of each scene had on the characters at the point at which each following scene begins. Continue this process through to the resolution, **providing information** about each major plot point.

2 **Construct** a list of movies and decide which of the four categories of causal agents apply to each one.
Explain your decisions with a brief statement providing some **justification** that **clarifies** your choices.

3 For each category of conflict, provide a movie example. Share your list with a partner and discuss whether there are hybrid or overlapping conflict situations in the films you have listed.
Explain your choices to the class, **providing examples** from the movies that **illustrate** each category.

THREE-ACT STRUCTURE

6.3.1 The three-act structure
6.3.2 Understand the three-act structure

Traditional narrative is based on the **three-act structure**. Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end.

First act: the opening or orientation stage

The first act, opening or orientation stage brings the audience into the narrative and introduces the characters in their current situation. It orients the audience to the story, engaging them in it. The purpose of the opening scenes is to introduce normality and then to create the circumstances that allow the disruption to begin. This establishes the central problem of the narrative and gives the characters their motivations. The orientation stage is usually quite short. In a film, it may represent only 15 minutes or so of screen time.

The exposition/showing stage of the opening

At the very beginning of a film you are like an alien in a strange land – the world of the story. You need to know about the characters and the environment they inhabit, and there is much to learn in a very short time. The few scenes right at the start of the movie bring the audience up to speed.

The exposition stage of the movie is a very short period of film time in which the audience is shown all the narrative details they need to know to begin the story. This includes background information about events that happened before the first scene. It includes showing the setting and introducing the main character. Exposition is used here to mean 'a showing', not in the documentary sense of exposition as argument. The exposition/showing scenes establish the world of the story.

There are a number of ways that the exposition/showing can take place. A narrator can relay it, as was common in early detective movies, or the audience can be shown the necessary details through flashbacks. Sometimes a title sequence will convey the necessary information.

In *Rear Window* (1954), the exposition stage is when the camera pans across the courtyard, cuts to a thermometer, and then moves into the apartment. In this time, a whole lot of information is given about the character and his surroundings. In *Memento* (2000), the exposition shows the audience that time will be structured very differently in this film. A Polaroid photograph is exposed in reverse, suggesting time running backwards.

Ending the opening

The orientation stage ends when the disruption/disturbance is introduced. This is sometimes called the first-act turning point. In Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), the orientation stage ends when Marion steals the money. In the horror classic *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), it ends when Freddy attacks Tina. In *Thelma & Louise* (1991), it ends when Louise shoots Harlan.

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Figure 6.9 *In Without Knocking* (1909) by Charles M. Russell – a powerful illustration of the disturbance in the Western genre. The orientation stage of any narrative ends when the disturbance changes the narrative equilibrium (normality) and starts a chain reaction of cause-and-effect events.

What the first disruption achieves

The disruption, at the end of the opening, gives the characters a problem to solve or a goal to achieve. In combination, these two aspects of the opening scenes are often called the set-up, and there are techniques that scriptwriters use to establish a good set-up.

- **Introducing the disturbance quickly.** A film in which normality goes on for too long quickly becomes boring.
- **Making the disturbance an action.** A good disturbance involves something being done. The action that creates change is an unusual or unexpected event.
- **Ensure whatever starts it finishes it.** Many different genres are composed of the same basic elements: suspense, violence, romance, spectacle and so on. The combinations vary from genre to genre, and again with hybrid genres. However, a simple rule of thumb is that whatever element starts the disruption must also finish it. Therefore, if love starts the disruption, love must resolve it. Similarly, if a gunfight is the disruption, violent gunfire must eventually restore order at the end of the film.

Narrative possibilities in the opening

The set-up of a narrative creates a set of narrative possibilities: directions in which the story could go. Part of the writer's task is to keep the audience guessing all the way to the end of the narrative. This is done by presenting characters with situations that could have multiple outcomes depending on the characters' actions. The characters' actions always have the possible outcomes of success or failure, all the way through to the end of the film.

Two factors that are external to the actual story can heavily influence the narrative possibilities:

- **The medium.** Whether the story is told on radio, film or television, or portrayed in a video game, the medium determines narrative possibilities.
- **The genre.** The nature of the story is determined to a large extent by its genre, even though many basic elements are found across genres. The type of disruption introduced early in the set-up narrows down the narrative possibilities considerably by helping to establish the genre.

A narrative possibility only represents something that may happen. Not all possibilities will happen. A graphic organiser developed by Claude Bremond demonstrates this process.

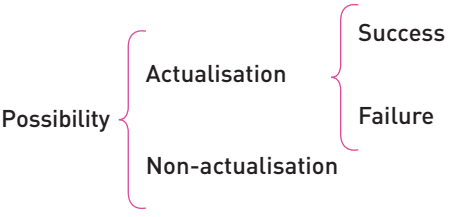


Figure 6.10 Every narrative possibility will either happen or not happen. If it occurs, the characters will either succeed or fail in dealing with it. At the beginning of the film, there are many possibilities. As choices are made and meet with success or failure, the narrative possibilities narrow down.



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Figure 6.11 The German film *Run Lola Run* (1998) deliberately plays with the idea of alternative narrative possibilities. It establishes a basic situation and then presents three possible outcomes that depend on small changes in the characters' actions.

Foreshadowing

The process of suggesting narrative possibilities may include a technique called **foreshadowing**. This involves the early introduction of an element that appears unimportant at the time but takes on

much greater significance later. Foreshadowing discreetly hints at the likely direction of the story, so when it develops in a certain way, the audience has already been cued to accept it. For example, foreshadowing occurs in the orientation stage of *Thelma & Louise*, when Thelma makes jokes about Louise packing a gun in her luggage. Foreshadowing also occurs in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) – the entire black-and-white section at the beginning can be seen as foreshadowing the characters and events Dorothy encounters in the later colour section of the film.

Second act: the development or complications stage

The second act or development or complication stage begins after the disturbance, when the lead characters accept the problem they have been given. What follows is a series of complications or additional problems that flow from the original one. Traditionally, each problem is a little worse than the one before and seems to take the lead characters further from their goal.

The second act ends at the second-act turning point. This is an event that shows the characters the enormity of what they are facing. The shower scene is probably the most climactic moment in *Psycho* (1960). The second-act turning point is when the detective, Arbogast, meets his fate. In *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), it is when Rick is murdered. In *Thelma & Louise* (1991), it is when Louise rings on the roadhouse payphone and Detective Hal Slocumb tells her they will be charged with murder.

Narrative possibilities in the development stage

As the plot progresses, the narrative possibilities begin to narrow down. In the first act, it seems as if anything could happen. In the second act, choices have been made and there are consequences. At this stage, narrative possibilities can be divided into two simple types:

- **Possibilities favourable to the main characters.** These are possibilities in the plot that allow the main characters to establish a final equilibrium that is in their favour. The writers will need to have included enough of these so that when the final climax arrives, there is adequate foreshadowing of a favourable resolution.
- **Possibilities unfavourable to the main characters.** These are possibilities that suggest the forces opposing the main characters will win. In most narratives, the unfavourable possibilities loom large. We are not interested in stories where the characters have an easy win. Possibilities for misfortune increase as tension rises.



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Figure 6.12 In classical Hollywood narrative, favourable and unfavourable narrative possibilities battle it out all the way to the final climax. By then, the main characters have their 'backs to the wall'. One narrative possibility, skilfully foreshadowed, will come good just before the resolution.

Third act: closing or resolution stage

The third act includes the final climax and the resolution. The final climax is the do-or-die event with which the characters face the ultimate test. Once their fate is sealed, the resolution happens quickly.

The final climax in *Psycho* (1960) is the revealing shot of the mother; it is at that point that Sam and Lila face the possibility of their own death. In *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), it is when Nancy overcomes her fear and faces up to Freddy. In *Thelma & Louise* (1991), the final climax is the police stand-off at the Grand Canyon.



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Figure 6.13 In the closing scenes of *Thelma and Louise* (1991), the police finally trap the two women. The closing resolves the central problem established by the disruption in the first act. Whatever caused the initial disruption is usually also present at the main climax and resolution. For example, a violent disruption begets a violent main climax. The resolution 'ties up all the loose ends'. Sometimes this can be done in a single shot.

Narrative possibilities in the third act – the endgame

The closing sequence represents the destination of the narrative – the one place it is heading to. One by one, character choices close off all but one possibility. The ultimate choice is made in the final climax. Just before this climax, the main characters must have their backs to the wall. This is their end-game moment. The most unfavourable possibility of all looks likely: the dashing of all hope of solving the central problem of the film. It is a do-or-die moment but, from the jaws of defeat, the characters snatch victory. One favourable possibility, foreshadowed earlier, manages to be their saviour.

What the closing achieves

The resolution is not merely an ending – it must close off every other narrative possibility in the film. In other words, it must tie off all loose ends. A narrative that is not fully closed off can leave room for a sequel, but there must be a sufficient sense of completion to meet audience expectations.

As with the opening scenes, there are some techniques that scriptwriters commonly use to help resolve a narrative. The first technique is by resolving the central problem. The final climax and resolution should provide an answer to the problem encountered when the disruption first appeared. As well, the resolution should answer all the other minor questions posed throughout the narrative. In film, these minor issues can even be resolved in a single shot. This happens several times in the big finish of the musical *Dirty Dancing* (1987).

The second technique is by ending straight after climax. It is rare to find a successful film or television narrative that lingers for more than a few minutes after the final climax. In many cases, the resolution and climax come together in the same scene.

Denouement

This is the final stage of the film, where all the loose ends are tied up and the final secrets are revealed. **Denouement** is a French word meaning 'untying'. It comes after the climax and just before the credits. In *Psycho* (1960), the denouement takes place as the psychologist explains the background to Norman's behaviour. The denouement is a time for the audience to untangle themselves from the narrative and get ready for the lights to come on.

Open closure

Many narratives leave room for a sequel. If this is happening, the audience must still be left with sufficient sense of closure to be able to leave the narrative at this point.

Climaxes and turning points – narrative intensity

A climax is a high point in the drama. Narratives have only a few genuine high points: generally, the initial disturbance, the second-act turning point and the final climax. However, every narrative has other minor high points or secondary climaxes.

'Imagine the feeling you would have had if *Saving Private Ryan* had ended and the credits rolled immediately after Captain Miller's hand stopped shaking, indicating that he had drawn his last breath. Bad enough that Tom Hanks has died on screen. But now we're expected to walk outside and get in our cars and head home?'

Drew Yanno, screenwriter and script consultant

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Climaxes are twists and turns that appear to change the fortunes of the characters, or obstacles that must be overcome. Most Hollywood screenwriters aim for a significant high point for every 10 to 15 minutes of screen time. As well, each scene has its own (much smaller) high point.

Secondary climaxes help build towards the final climax. This is called the 'rising tension' or 'rising action' model of narrative progression.

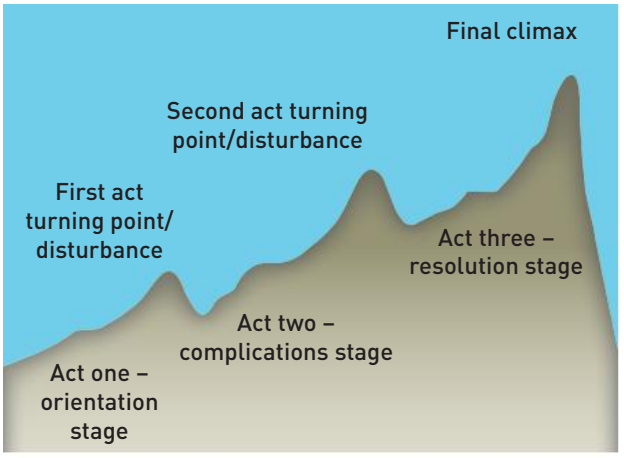


Figure 6.14 The rising tension of the traditional narrative structure is often depicted in graph form as a mountain range, with a number of smaller peaks eventually rising to the largest one before falling away sharply during the resolution stage. Jeopardy (danger) increases until the final climax. Some writers use the idea of a rollercoaster ride to depict the plot's ups and downs and twists and turns.

Some genres of film also change **register** at the moments of high tension. A register is a different scale or range that allows for a different kind of communication. Martial arts movies and musicals are two genres that do this. Musicals have the additional register of music, and martial arts movies have the additional register of hand-to-hand combat. At the most intense moments in the plot, the dialogue-driven narrative switches register and becomes either song and dance or fighting. The rhythmical interaction of the actors' bodies with the music represents a different kind of storytelling.

In musicals, these moments of spectacle are cut off from the linear narrative in some way. They work in the opposite way to how tension works in a thriller. Instead of delaying and suspending enjoyment (as in suspense), they give small doses of immediate pleasure at regular periods. These culminate in the final, irresistible pleasure of the big finish.

Movie fights are different from real-life fights because they are trying to convey a story to audiences. The fight is choreographed so that audiences can understand what is going on. This is the opposite of a real fight where the participants often try to hide their game plan; real combatants would be disadvantaged if their opponent knew what to expect.

Fight sequences do not freeze the narrative – instead, the martial arts display progresses the story. The narrative simply shifts to another register – that of physical action and movement rather than of storytelling through dialogue.

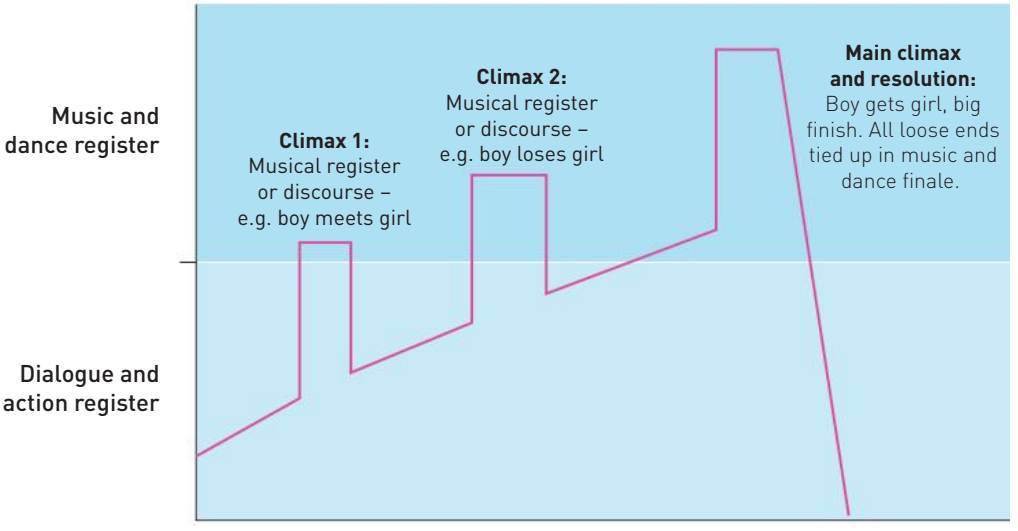


Figure 6.15 The song and dance in a musical still moves the narrative forward. Music occurs at the most intense moments of the narrative, when it seems to be the only way emotions can be expressed. Audiences do not feel the music is an interruption because the plot is still progressing.

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The hero's journey and narrative progression

> 'There are only two or three human stories and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.'
>
> **Willa Cather**, in the novel *O Pioneers!* (1913)

6.3.3 What makes a hero?

Joseph Campbell (1904–87) and his ideas on the hero's journey have been enormously influential for the writers of Hollywood narratives. *Star Wars* franchise creator George Lucas was a fan, as was screenwriter Chris Vogler, whose ideas in turn influenced the development of the Disney film *The Lion King* (1994).

Campbell studied myths from around the world during the 1930s and 1940s and came to think that they were all basically the same story. Despite variations across cultures, all the myths seemed to share a certain basic pattern. Campbell was also influenced by the work of the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who had developed the idea of archetypes: characters who constantly appear in the stories, myths and dreams of people in all cultures. Jung believed archetypes reflected the deep structures of the human mind. He argued that there exists a 'collective unconscious', which is common to all people in all parts of the world.

Building on this idea, in 1949 Campbell published his theory of a universal structure common to all myths. He called this the monomyth – the single myth that, at a deep level, lies beneath all other myths.

6.3.4 Joseph Campbell and the hero's journey

The hero's journey – Joseph Campbell

According to Campbell's universal structure, the hero's journey passes through 12 stages. These can be grouped into three broad phases.

- **The departure.** The hero receives a call to action in the form of a threat to peace or the community. The hero may initially refuse but eventually accepts the call. The hero receives help from a protector of some kind – sometimes supernatural help.
- **The initiation.** The hero crosses the threshold out of the previous ordinary world and into a special world. To do this, an ordeal must be survived. The hero faces a special supernatural world of obstacles and threats that must be overcome. A helper with supernatural powers may secretly be assisting. A final battle is fought in a life-or-death climax that allows the future resolution of the journey.
- **The return.** This is often a rebirth or resurrection of some kind, or perhaps just a return into daylight. Having achieved the goal of the quest and overcoming the threats, the hero returns to the ordinary world with special powers or gifts that can be used to help ordinary people. Sometimes the gift is no more than an awareness of the hero's newfound place in the world.



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Figure 6.16 Part of the abandoned *Star Wars* film production set in the Sahara Desert, Tunisia, used in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (1999). A huge sand dune is now bearing down on the set, and it is expected to be fully engulfed in five years. *Star Wars* creator George Lucas is a fan of Joseph Campbell's idea of the hero's journey. This approach to plot structure has now found its way into a number of big-name Hollywood movies.

> 'A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons [gifts] on his fellow man.'
>
> **Joseph Campbell**, scholar of comparative mythology

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6.3.5 Chris Vogler: The Hero's Journey Outline

The hero's journey – Vogler

Hollywood screenwriter Christopher Vogler applied Campbell's ideas to movie scriptwriting. Vogler's interpretations were especially influential during the 1990s, and many Hollywood blockbusters of the time were written with the mythic structure in mind.

Vogler's adaptation of the stages of Campbell's monomyth is set out in Table 6.1, together with examples of the stages from several movies.

Table 6.1 Vogler's adaptation of Campbell's 'hero's journey'

	MOVIE EXAMPLES		
STAGES OF THE JOURNEY	*THE WIZARD OF OZ* (1939)	*STAR WARS* (1977)	*THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING* (2001)
ACT ONE			
Ordinary world	Dorothy's dull life in Kansas	Luke Skywalker as a farm boy	Frodo in the Shire
Call to adventure	Miss Gulch threatens to take Toto	Princess Leia's hologram	Gandalf calls
Initial refusal of the call and later acceptance	Dorothy runs away from home and then a tornado takes them to Oz	Luke refuses but finds his aunt and uncle murdered	Frodo is hesitant at first but then realises the danger the ring poses to the Shire
Meeting with the mentor (teacher)	Glenda the Good Witch	Obi-Wan Kenobi gives Luke the light saber that belonged to his father	Bilbo asks Gandalf to keep an eye on Frodo; earlier he gives Frodo the ring
Crossing the first threshold into the changed world	Dorothy first sees Munchkinland	Luke commits to the quest	Ringwraiths/Council of Elrond
ACT TWO			
Tests, allies and enemies	Dorothy meets friends on the Yellow Brick Road	Luke forms an alliance with Han Solo but makes an enemy of Jabba	The fellowship is forged and the journey to Moria shapes group dynamics
Approach to the innermost cave and facing the ordeal	The Witch is dead	Luke and his crew are sucked into the Death Star and face Darth Vader	The mines of Moria and the loss of Gandalf
Reward	Dorothy gets the broom from the Wicked Witch	The rescue of Princess Leia	Galadriel, Lothlorien and rejuvenation
ACT THREE			
The road back and the gift or boon (can be treasure, wisdom, freedom, knowledge, etc.)	The wizard's balloon leaves Dorothy stranded but Glenda explains the way	Luke overcomes Darth Vader	Orcs must be faced; Galadriel's gifts aid the travellers in the next stage of the journey
Resurrection (a second life-or-death moment that is cleansing, like a rebirth, or gives insight)	Dorothy tries on the ruby slippers	The final battle when Luke is almost killed	The sacrifices of friends before Frodo and Sam's departure
Return with elixir, boons, gifts or newfound place in the world	The discovery that home is the best place after all	Peace is restored to the universe	Subsequent *Lord of the Rings* sequels

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6.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Construct a list of five films that have used foreshadowing. If you are having trouble getting started, thrillers often use the device. For example, Hitchcock used it in *Psycho* (1960).
Explain how the element is introduced and **clarify** how it becomes significant later. **Identify** and **locate** the position of the foreshadowing in the narrative chain of events.

2 View a film with a powerful title sequence (a sequence of scenes over which the initial credits roll). Suggestions include *Garage Days* (2002), *Idiot Box* (1996), *Se7en* (1995), *Spider-Man 2* (2004), *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho*. Many of the classic James Bond movies, such as *Dr. No* (1962) and *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977), are also suitable.
Explain how the titles express the mood and narrative of the film. **Illustrate** your explanation, describing **examples** from the sequence with reference to the **codes and conventions**.
Explain if the titles seem to stand for the whole story or reinforce the central problem that the disruption will introduce. **Identify** which images are first seen and what possibilities they suggest to the audience.
Analyse the connotations of the text and images. **Examine** the sequence as a set of **constituent parts**.
Interpret each image, considering its most likely associations. Make a list of all the ideas that come to mind: how many of these eventuate in the film?

3 Select a movie you are familiar with that has a straightforward linear plot.
Symbolise a roadmap (with a drawing of a road) **representing** the twists and turns of the plot in each scene of the second act (the development or complications stage) as twists and turns in the road. Begin by drawing a road or train track to represent the progress of the plot. Each major scene should represent a change in direction. Place a signpost on your map to **identify** each major event and character choice that occurs at each turning point. In the off-road and overgrown areas, you could place other signposts to **represent** choices the characters could have made but didn't (other narrative possibilities).
Explain the roadmap, **clarifying** how it represents the plot in symbolic form.

4 Tying off all the loose ends is the task of the closing section of the film.
Symbolise this idea in an illustration. Select a film and depict its third act (the closing or resolution stage) in the following way. Draw a thick piece of rope with a frayed end tied off to represent the central problem being resolved. Underneath that, draw smaller, thinner ropes to represent the subplots and minor problems. Label each of the loose ends that are tied up.
Explain how the plot is tied up, **providing additional information** for each loose end you have labelled.
Clarify how the audience is reassured that the loose end has been resolved.

5 Select a movie with a linear three-act structure.
Symbolise the narrative in a graphical representation as a mountain of rising tension. **Identify** and **locate** on your mountain the three stages, together with the disturbance, the main twists and turns, the second-act turning point, and the final climax and resolution.
Explain each of the events in the three stages to illustrate the turning points.

6 Using Christopher Vogler's Hollywood version of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey (see page 136), apply its stages to a movie of your choice. The stages can be applied to many different genres, ranging from action movies (such as James Bond films) to romantic comedies (such as *Pretty Woman* (1990)). The stages can also be applied to the other films in the *Star Wars* franchise. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the story of the movie, **identifying** the plot points that correspond to Vogler's stages. **Give information** about each of the story points at each stage and the kinds of imagery used.	**Analyse** at least three of the stages from the movie overall, **examining** each stage and **considering** the degree to which it matches Vogler's. **Interpret** the meanings of some of the images at the key stages in conjunction with the music and sound effects. **Make a judgement** about the **strengths and weaknesses** of the key stages using audience appeal as the **criteria**.	**Appraise** the significance of Vogler's version of Campbell's hero's journey, **drawing conclusions** about the **worth** of it to the overall purpose of movie storytelling. **Appraise** the **status** of your selected movie's use of the hero's journey stages, **drawing conclusions** about the degree to which the concept has been applied.

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POINT OF VIEW IN STORIES

Point of view (POV) is a term that has two meanings in cinema: narrative point of view and camera point of view.

- **Narrative point of view.** The point of view from which the narrative is told to the audience. In this meaning, point of view is a story element and part of narrative structure. It refers to the way the audience is invited to **identify** with characters.
- **Camera point of view.** The perspective from which the camera is 'looking'. Camera POV is usually referred to as a point-of-view shot. It occurs when the audience temporarily sees things from the perspective of a particular character. The camera points in the direction that the character is looking. Camera POV is a production element.

Narrative point of view

Originally, point of view was a term used in the literary analysis of novels. In novels, the distinctions are easier to understand because they are in words rather than filmed images. Point of view in television and film differs somewhat from that in a novel.

Narrative point of view in novels

There are three main narrative points of view in novels. It is easier to distinguish them in literature because written words are used, and it is possible to tell by the pronoun (*I*, *you*, *he/she*) what the point of view is.

- **First-person narrative.** Self-narration occurs in a novel when the narrator tells his or her own story. The narrator is a character in the story and exists in the story world along with the other characters. The narrator can therefore use the pronoun *I*.
- **Second-person narrative.** This is extremely rare and occurs when the reader is in the story and is referred to as *you*. This makes the reader a character in the novel. The closest audiovisual experience to this is a video game where you are an active participant in the narrative.
- **Third-person narrative.** This is the most common style of narration in novels, and many of the great classics are written in the third person. You know you are reading a third-person narrative when the writer uses *he* or *she* to refer to all of the characters – especially the **protagonist**. There are two types of third-person narrative:
  - **Limited third-person narrative.** Where the writer limits the reader's understanding to the point of view of a single character (the protagonist). The plot centres on their point of view. In film, this is known as restricted information.
  - **Omniscient third-person narrative.** Where the writer freely tells the reader a whole host of details about what every character is doing and thinking. Nothing is held back or limited. In film, this is known as unrestricted information.

Narrative point of view in television and film

In film and television, point of view is not as strictly established. There are not the same clearly defined markers in film as those that exist in written language with its specific pronouns. The film equivalent of *he/she* or *I* (in other words, the voice of the narrator) is the lens of the camera. Telling whether the eye of the camera is speaking as *I*, or *he/she* is not so easy. Film tends to just as easily fall into the third person.

First-person narrative in film

Many films use a narrator who speaks in the first person. However, this tends to be only at specific times in the film and the narrative point of view falls naturally back into the objective view. In the objective view, we are just observing the characters as they go about the business of the story. Thus, there are very few films which are truly and technically first-person narrative in the way that many novels are. First-person narrative in film is only a shadow of first-person narrative in a novel. Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) is an example of a first-person narrative film that switches from subjective POV shots to objective shots (and therefore back to third person).

> 'In film, the viewer identifies with the lens, and thus tends to *fuse* with the narrator. To produce first person narration in film, the camera would have to record all the action through the eyes of the character, which, in effect would also make the viewer the protagonist.'
>
> **Louis Giannetti**, Case Western University

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Figure 6.17 The *film noir* movie *The Lady in the Lake* (1946) is one of the very few examples of a film told in true first-person narrative. The camera shows the subjective point of view of the male protagonist all the way through. In this image, you can see the protagonist reflected in the mirror behind the female lead. But we never see him as we see the other actors. The camera 'looks' through his eyes only. The audience perspective is his alone, so we only ever see him in reflections and shadows. However, the way film works, *he* becomes *you* the viewer. That is why most first-person narrative films slip in and out of the technique and are not truly subjective first-person all the time.

Third-person narrative in film

This is the most common narrative point of view in film and television. Third-person narrative allows the filmmaker to show the experiences of a number of different characters, rather than only ever being able to show one (as in first-person narrative). Every different camera shot provides a new perspective of the characters and the action. Close-ups can show emotions. Long shots can include many characters. Lots of locations can be seen, not just where the protagonist is. In the terminology of film analysis, the third-person narrative can be either restricted or unrestricted.

Third-person restricted information

Restricted-information narratives relate the plot according to the point of view of one or more characters, without the aid of a narrator. This is the most common form of film narrative because it allows the filmmaker to keep the audience surprised by twists and turns. The audience finds out information at the same rate as the main characters do. The story seems to unfold naturally as more and more is revealed. In a film with restricted information, the audience identifies with one or two characters because the film relates the experiences of those characters. Therefore, a strong protagonist is required. *Cloverfield* (2008) is an example of a film with restricted information.

Most films do not stay in the restricted mode all the time. Quite often in a restricted film, the director may give a glimpse of unrestricted information. There are several reasons for these brief moments of omniscience:

- **To create suspense.** For example, in a horror movie, the audience might be briefly shown what is 'behind the door'. This increases tension because the audience knows more than the characters, and wants to call out, 'Don't go in there!'
- **To explain story events.** The filmmaker may need to give the audience information about what is happening outside the experience of the character. The fact that the character cannot be everywhere can be inconvenient for the telling of the story. For example, we may need to see the landing of the spaceship on Mars, or the damage done by the missile in a foreign country.
- **To help the audience identify with characters.** This happens as the film focuses on different characters' responses to their plight.

Third-person unrestricted information

Unrestricted-information narrative is less common in film. It occurs when the audience knows much more than the characters do individually. In an unrestricted narrative, it is as if we are looking at the world of the story from above. We know what is happening in multiple locations and to multiple characters. Cross-cutting, or simultaneous time, is a technique that is often used in films with unrestricted information.

It is rare for a film to be completely unrestricted. Something has to be held in reserve to keep the audience watching. Often there is a surprise twist or piece of additional information that was withheld until the end.

Character point of view

The character point of view refers to the way the narrative deals with the characters' realities or experiences. There are two main ways of presenting character point of view: objectively or subjectively. Films often slip in and out of both.

Objective character point of view

The objective point of view is the most commonly occurring in classical Hollywood narrative style. In an objective view, the audience sees the

characters from the outside. Actions and reactions are observed, but inner thoughts and feelings are just 'felt' by the audience – not by the camera. The actors can make their inner world visible to the audience by their expressions, but the inner world is not directly part of the narrative.

Subjective point of view

The subjective point of view shows events the way a particular character perceives or feels about them. The camera actually responds the way a character would. For example, if a character is drunk, the scene may appear temporarily blurry and confused. The subjective point of view is less likely to be sustained all the way through a film. Many films momentarily take a subjective point of view to allow the audience to more closely identify with a character.

There are several types of subjective point of view.

- **Single-protagonist subjective point of view.** The narrative focuses on the point of view of just one character. If that character is not included in a scene, we do not see it. All information is kept from the audience unless the protagonist knows it as well.
- **Minor-character subjective point of view.** This is similar to single-protagonist point of view, except that the narrative is told from the perspective of someone who is not a protagonist. This means that the story happens to someone else, while the minor character is there as well.
- **Multiple character subjective point of view.** These narratives tell the story from different characters' perspectives, one at a time. The viewpoint of the narrative switches between two or more characters. There are several scenarios that lend themselves to multiple-character viewpoints:
  - **Romance scenarios.** The point of view switches from one partner to another. This can work like parallel editing. Eventually the two must come together.
  - **Bitter rivals.** Instead of lovers, the split perspective is between two people who are enemies.
  - **Ensemble piece.** The scenes focus on different characters often united by being members of a family or group, such as a school reunion or military group. *American Beauty* (1999) is an ensemble point of view, based around family members and associates.

> 'The slasher-type film certainly stumbled upon a highly effective point of view structure. What you do is put a group of characters in danger ... and then kill them off one by one. Each death naturally pares the number of point of view options down, focusing the story on the remaining few. Finally the story is told from just a single point of view, the last person standing, usually the protagonist battling the killer.'
>
> **Terry Rossio**, screenwriter, *Shrek* (2001), *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003), *The Lone Ranger* (2013)

6.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Investigate some classic *noir* films to research the way that films have traditionally dealt with first-person narrative. *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *Double Indemnity* (1944) are suggested starting points. Write short responses to each of the following areas of investigation.
Explain what happens in the openings of the films and find the earliest point when first-person narration gives way to objective action shots (in the manner of third person).
Identify the number of times that the film moves in and out of first-person narration in the first act. **Explain** the possible reasons for this.
Analyse your own identification with the protagonist in the first-person narrative story. **Interpret** your reactions to determine if identification was stronger than it would be if the protagonist were in a third-person narrative. **Evaluate** the **strengths and weaknesses** of this approach in increasing audience identification.

2 Select a third-person narrative film.
Construct a list of the scenes where the protagonist is present. **Contrast** this list with one showing the scenes in which other characters are present, but the protagonist is not.
Explain possible reasons for the differences in frequency between the two lists.

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3 **Structure** a selection of subjective shots from some films or television programs, **sequencing** them in a creative order.
Analyse the character experience or feeling associated with each shot, **interpreting** the different meanings the audience may make from the shots.
4 Select a scene from a film in which a character is expressing strong emotion.
Explain your reasons as to whether you think this is filmed objectively or subjectively.
5 Find examples of films that illustrate the main types of character point of view.
Explain why you have included it and **explain** how the point of view works.
Analyse two alternative possibilities for presenting the narrative and consider how different the film would be in each case.

CHARACTER

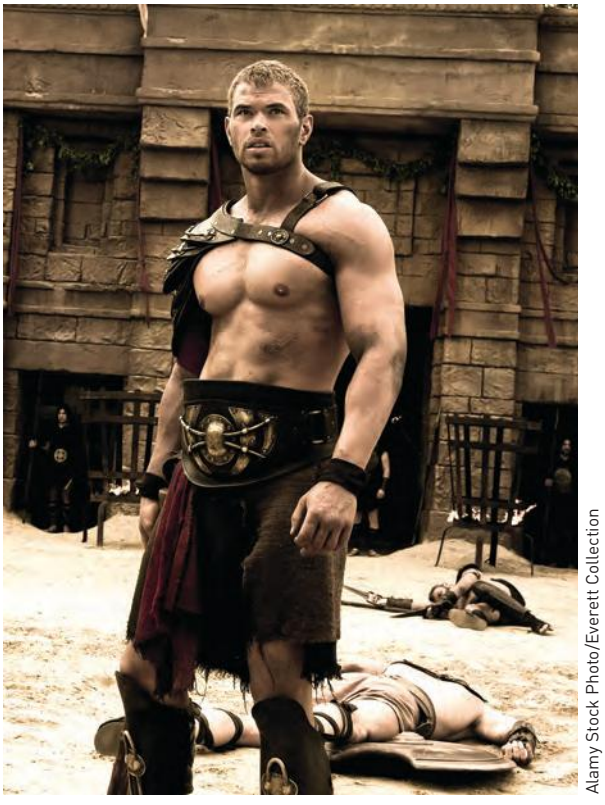
Characters are people presented in dramatic narratives. Making them come to life for the audience is called characterisation. Across all types of narratives there are basic categories of characters. These categories remain constant regardless of the topic or genre of the narrative, because they exist to perform certain essential narrative functions.

The protagonist

The protagonist is the leading character in a narrative. The term, originally associated with classical Greek drama, is based on the Greek *proto*, meaning 'first' or 'leading', and *agonistes*, meaning 'one who is engaged in a struggle'. Widely used in reference to all narratives, the term works well because it is precise in its meaning. It is a broader term than 'hero' because the protagonist may be a thoroughly unlikeable character whom we despise rather than look up to. The term 'protagonist' may apply to both hero and antihero (someone who lacks heroic traits).

Australian television and film scriptwriter Linda Aronson has identified the following characteristics of protagonists:

- The protagonist does not die unless it is at the very end of the film. (In a sense, this is even true of *Psycho* (1960), in which Hitchcock substitutes Marion with her sister Lila.)
- The protagonist is the character who faces all the difficulties.
- We are 'inside the head' of the protagonist.
- The protagonist changes and develops.
- The protagonist usually makes things happen and makes the decisions.
- If the voice-over is delivered by a character, it is usually the protagonist. Most *noir* films operate in this way. So too does *The Piano* (1993). (A voice-over protagonist should not be confused with a narrator, who is not a character.)
- The action-line protagonist and the relationship-line protagonist are the same person.
- Some films have several protagonists. An example is *American Beauty* (1999). Traditionally there is only one truly leading character, but modern usage allows for several equal leads.
- The protagonist is present during all the climaxes.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 6.18 Kellan Lutz as Hercules in *The Legend of Hercules* (2014). Rather than use the terms 'hero' or 'main character', it is more correct to use the term 'protagonist'.

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The antagonist

The **antagonist** acts against the protagonist, as an opponent or adversary. The word 'antagonist' is also of classical Greek origin, built from *anti*, meaning 'against', and *agonistes*, which has been defined as 'one who struggles'. 'Antagonist' is preferred to a narrower word such as 'villain' because it can refer to a character who is not evil or bad but simply troublesome to the protagonist. It can also refer to non-human forces.

Linda Aronson has identified the following characteristics of antagonists:

- Antagonists are stronger than the protagonist, or at least an equal match.
- Antagonists cause trouble for, or force change on, the protagonist.
- The antagonist is highly motivated, perhaps fanatical.
- We are not taken inside the antagonist's head; otherwise we might identify with them too much.
- Antagonists often die. Minor ones die early. Major antagonists do not die until the end.
- The **action line** of a narrative can accommodate several antagonists; for instance, the villains in James Bond movies have lots of henchmen. However, the **relationship line** usually has just one antagonist.



Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

Figure 6.19 Jodie Foster as Secretary Delacourt, the antagonist in the science fiction thriller *Elysium* (2013), who lives in a high-tech space station while the rest of the population struggles to survive on Earth. The antagonist's role is to make life difficult for the protagonist. A good antagonist will be stronger than the protagonist – or at least evenly matched.

Mentor antagonists

A mentor is a teacher or adviser. Some antagonists are not enemies of the protagonist, but agents of change whose intervention forces the protagonist to undertake a painful journey of personal growth. According to Aronson, who coined the term **mentor antagonist**, these people teach the protagonist new values.

Raymond (Dustin Hoffman) in *Rain Man* (1988) is a mentor antagonist whose innocent troublemaking eventually transforms the selfish protagonist played by Tom Cruise.

Foils

A **foil** may be an antagonist or just a minor character. The purpose of the foil is to show up the strong points of the protagonist, so the foil often has weaknesses that reveal the protagonist's strengths.

Two examples of foils are found in the musical *Dirty Dancing* (1987), in which Frances's (Baby's) older sister Lisa is her foil, and Robbie is Johnny's foil. Lisa and Robbie's flawed union forms a perfect foil to that of the main couple.

Creating characters

Writers need to make us care about the characters in narratives or we will lose interest in the story, says Joseph Boggs of the University of Western Kentucky. Boggs notes the following ways of creating believable characters in films (the list can also be applied to narratives in other mediums):

- **Characterisation by appearance.** Casting is important in character creation because the audience begins to make assumptions as soon as they see the physical appearance of the character.
- **Characterisation through dialogue.** What a character says and how they say it can be very revealing.
- **Characterisation through action.** What a character does helps to define them and to reveal their psychology and motivation. Ultimately these drive the progress of the story.
- **Characterisation by reaction of other characters.** Sometimes it is easier to portray a character by showing their impact on the people around them.
- **Characterisation by caricature or motif.** Simple characters can be defined by one or two features. In the manner of a caricature,

these can be exaggerated to make a strong impression in the minds of the audience. When a character is known for a particular trait or saying that is often repeated, this can be seen as characterisation through motif.

- **Characterisation through choice of name.** There is an audience expectation that certain names will represent certain types of people. This is called name typing. Writers select names that are memorable, have a good rhythm to them and also suggest certain expected behaviours.

Character development and motivation

Character development and motivation are two of the most basic principles in screenwriting. Essentially, the audience wants to see the characters go on an intellectual, emotional or physical journey – a character path or character arc. The audience also wants them to do so with good reason – character motivation.

Character development arc

The journey that a character makes from beginning to end of a film is called the character arc or path. During the course of a narrative, characters can either grow or change. A character arc can be confined to a single text, or it can carry on over several sequels or episodes.

- **Character growth.** James Bond does not change in his films. However, he does grow as he encounters obstacles and strives to overcome them. He acquires new knowledge and skills. At the end of the movie he is an even better James Bond.
- **Character change.** In many movies the character undergoes a change and ends up seeing the world in a different way. Character change can be either one of the following:
  - **Transformational change.** This is the kind of major change that comes from a character waking up to what they really want or what is really important in life. Transformational change happens for characters who have a set world view at the start of the movie. Their philosophy is later tested and found wanting. Therefore, they must change to accommodate the new reality.
  - **Incremental change.** Smaller changes can occur for leading characters if the primary goal they have is more of an action-oriented goal.

Character motivation

A character's motivation is simply what drives them to act as they do. In the case of the protagonist, their primary motivation will be solving the central problem of the narrative. Equally, the primary motivation of the antagonist will be to block the protagonist from achieving that goal. Character motivations lead to decisions and actions. The protagonist is forced to make decisions and to consider the best strategy for achieving their goal.

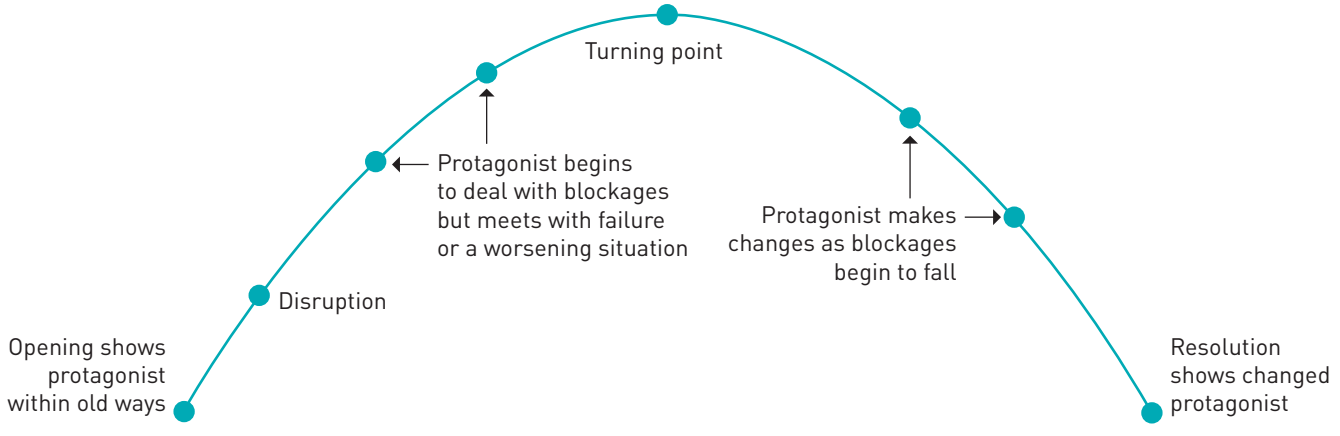


Figure 6.20 A classic character arc. It is often referred to as an arc because the uphill side represents the worsening situation the character faces, and that requires some kind of growth or change. The top of the arc is the turning point where the character begins to realise that something more is needed. The downhill side represents the growth or change phase of the character's pathway. Other ways of representing a character arc can be as a gentle uphill or downhill arc.

Types of character development and motivations

Characters come in four basic types, and these can be placed in two general categories: those who change and those who do not.

Characters who don't change

Unchanging personality and motivation

Some characters always seem to be the same, and they always want the same thing. The goal for these characters is introduced very early in the plot, and the quest continues right through to the end of the film. Once the goal has been achieved, there is little point in the movie continuing, so the resolution comes almost immediately.



Getty Images/Bryan Steffy

Figure 6.21 A series of six waxworks James Bonds from the 1960s to the present day at Madame Tussauds in London. James Bond is always the same in every film, even when he is played by different actors. His motivation never changes. Even if he is with one of his 'Bond girls', she never changes him. He returns to his main motivation in the next scene.

Unchanging personality but changing motivation

This type of character does not change or learn anything very much during the course of the plot. However, they change their tactics and their motivations throughout the film. These characters are usually heroes or villains. Their personalities do not change because they are already sufficiently heroic or villainous. Their motivations and tactics change as they encounter new obstacles.

Characters who change

Changing personality but unchanging motivation

In films, it is common for a major character to change. Life events in the movie teach them a lesson. The events are usually so dramatic that the character has no option but to make a change. The response to the events must be emotional in order to change the personality. However, the character keeps their central goal in mind the whole time. Their motivation doesn't change.

There are several ways a changing personality can keep a constant motivation:

- A character has a single goal but fails to achieve it. They become 'sadder, but wiser'.
- A character has a single goal but comes to empathise with other people, becoming 'nicer' as the plot goes on.
- The character has a single goal but gradually comes to see that it is not all it seemed to be at first. For example, they may realise that money does not buy happiness.

Changing personality, changing motivation

Changing a character's goals and motivation throughout the plot is obviously a complex process. The complexity can confuse audiences. Therefore, it is the least common of all of the combinations. To start with, the character needs to be strong and wilful. Events must be emotionally dramatic to make them want to change. And the chain of events must take many twists and turns to deliver a need for different motivations.

Propp and character roles



6.5.1 Vladimir Propp

The Russian scholar Vladimir Propp (1895–1970), who studied hundreds of fairytales and folk stories, concluded that there are only seven basic character roles. **Propp's narrative theory** calls these roles **spheres of action**.

The spheres of action that characters fulfil are not quite the same thing as character types. One character, with all their individual personality traits, can be involved in more than one sphere.

Many people apply Propp's ideas to modern popular culture, arguing that in some ways television and film are just modern means of telling folk stories. Analysts have applied Propp's theory to films such as *Star Wars* (1977), *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *North by Northwest* (1959). Others have criticised Propp's approach, arguing it is too simplistic and does not apply to a postmodern society.

Propp's character roles are as follows:

- **The hero** must embark on a journey to overcome the problem posed at the beginning of the story. The hero also restores equilibrium at the end of the story. Propp found two types of hero:

  - The victim hero is the focus of the villain's troublemaking.
  - The seeker hero is on a quest to help others who are preyed upon by the villain.

  The hero in traditional folk tales was usually male and won the princess as a prize for undertaking his quest.
- **The villain** is the antagonist who creates the original problem or disturbance and continues to place obstacles in the way of the hero.
- **The princess** is the prime target of the villain and must be rescued by the hero.
- **The donor** passes on something helpful to the hero for the journey. Sometimes this character gives the hero a magical object to help in the quest.
- **The helper** is a sidekick whose role is to help the hero achieve resolution and equilibrium. The helper may also have some special or magical power.
- **The false hero** is at first thought to be the one who will save the day but is later revealed to be a bad character. The false hero often takes credit for the hero's achievements and sometimes tries to claim the princess.
- **The dispatcher** sends the hero off on the quest. Often the dispatcher is the father of the princess.



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Figure 6.22 Sam, in *The Lord of the Rings*, fits into Propp's category of the helper. Without his support on the journey, the hero Frodo could not have succeeded in his quest to restore equilibrium to Middle Earth by destroying the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom.

Table 6.2 There is a neat fit between Propp's character types and the characters in the original *Star Wars* (1977), says Graeme Turner, Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland. 'It is possible that the modern feature film and the folktale serve similar functions for their audiences.'

PROPP'S CHARACTER TYPES	*STAR WARS* (1977)
The hero	Luke Skywalker
The villain	Darth Vader
The princess	Princess Leia
The donor	Obi-Wan Kenobi
The helper	Han Solo
The false hero	Darth Vader (again)
The dispatcher	R2-D2

Turner, Graeme, *Film as Social Practice IV*, Routledge, Abingdon (UK), 2006, pp. 99–102

Flat and rounded characters

In all narratives, certain characters are more important than others. Some are little more than extras, while others become important and familiar to us – almost like real people. These differences stem from the degree of characterisation that the writer has provided.

Flat characters have little characterisation. They are not fully rounded people, but instead represent certain character traits that are essential to their role in the story. It is very difficult to get inside the head of a flat character. They are usually antagonists or are given subordinate roles to the protagonist.

Rounded characters seem like real people. They have multiple personality traits, often including flaws and inconsistencies, just as people do in real life. They frequently come to the narrative with a personal history and a convincing psychology or motivation. While rounded characters can sometimes be antagonists, the protagonist should always be a rounded character.

Another way of considering characterisation is to think in terms of developing and static characters. The protagonist is a developing character. Other characters can also change during the course of the narrative. A developing character is any character who is affected and changed by the events in the story. This change is permanent – they can never return to the situation of the old equilibrium or normality.

Static characters remain the same for the entire narrative. This could be because they are not central to the story, or it could be because they are just not sensitive to the events that are happening around

them. A static protagonist is taken as a sign of a failed narrative, yet it is common for antagonists to be static characters.

Relationships between characters

Characters are the active agents in film and television narratives. Without them, nothing happens. How they interact with each other determines the plot. Characters fulfil important functions such as protagonist and antagonist. They may also operate within Propp's 'spheres of influence'. However, from a scriptwriter's point of view, character interactions need to fulfil the following:

- **Characters must need each other.** Some movies are completely about characters who come to see that they need each other. The romance genre is based on this inevitable realisation. However, all movies require characters who need something about the other. For example, heist movies such as *Ocean's Eleven* (2001) have characters with compatible but different skills.
- **Characters must come into conflict.** Since all drama is about conflict (see page 128), it is clear that there needs to be conflict between characters. Even allies will have some measure of conflict between them.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 6.23 In *Pleasantville* (1998), a young man and woman are transported from the modern world into the world of a 1950s black-and-white TV sitcom. Everything is pleasant and there is never any conflict. The only interest in the first part of the movie lies in the reactions of the two modern teenagers to this perfect world. However, these two outsiders inevitably bring change. The people of Pleasantville experience love and all of its associated problems. Characters come into conflict, realise they need each other, and then change into full-colour human beings.

- **Character relationships change.** The degree of change in character relationships depends on the movie genre and the nature of the central problem. However, character relationships change during the course of the plot as a simple function of reaction to the chain of events.

6.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Construct a list of films you have seen recently and decide which of the characters is the protagonist and which is the antagonist.
Explain the reasons for your decisions and **identify** the factors Linda Aronson has developed as they apply to your decision.

2 Select three of Aronson's identifying features of protagonists and antagonists, and find film examples that demonstrate the distinction.
Construct a sequenced video of these, editing them together into a **systematic arrangement** that displays the conventions of the character role of protagonist or antagonist.
Explain in subtitles over the sequence how the film examples **illustrate** the character role. Present your work to the class.

3 **Construct** a list of the types of roles that a number of Hollywood A-list actors could undertake on appearance alone. Also list roles that it would not be possible for these actors to convincingly play.

4 Select a Hollywood blockbuster film and attempt to categorise the characters according to the types identified by Vladimir Propp.
Explain your reasoning as you categorise.

5 Select a film you are familiar with and consider character development from beginning to end.
Symbolise the changes the characters undergo in a diagram.
Explain which characters change and which characters are static.
Are there any characters who you believe should change but remain static?
Explain your response.

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Figure 6.24 The Bates Motel set at Universal Studios from the Hitchcock movie *Psycho* (1960). No other medium can provide as much information about a scene as film. Some analysts say that film is over-specified when there is too much information in the scene for the viewer to take everything in. Setting is therefore one of film's most important aspects, perhaps in horror movies more than in any other genre.

SETTING

The four factors of setting

In the visual narratives of television and film, setting is one of the most important elements. The term refers to the place and time in which a narrative occurs and, according to Joseph Boggs of the University of Western Kentucky, it is made up of four factors:

- **Time factors.** The period in which the narrative takes place is one of the most important aspects of setting and is established in the opening scenes.
- **Geographical factors.** The physical location can have a great effect on the psychological impact of the story. For example, the seedy city locations used in *film noir* are important in understanding why the characters act as they do. Australian films set in the outback are also heavily influenced by their setting.
- **Social structures and economic factors.** A story can be set within a particular institution or subject to certain economic conditions. For example, the film *8 Mile* (2002) is set within a poverty-stricken urban neighbourhood.
- **Customs, moral attitudes and codes of behaviour.** The point of a narrative can be to explore the customs and morals of a particular group of people or a particular time period.

The purposes of setting

Setting is used to build on the problems and conflicts faced by the characters in a story. It can be used in fulfilling the following purposes, says Joseph Boggs.

- **Determining character.** The environment can shape individuals and sometimes even control their behaviour. In some cases, the environment can even be an antagonist in the narrative (see page 143). For example, the environment is a powerful shaper in *Crocodile Dundee* (1986) and an antagonist in *The Martian* (2015).
- **Reflecting character.** The environment a character has created around them can provide important clues about their personality. For example, the picture-perfect setting around Carolyn Burnham in *American Beauty* (1999) tells us something about her character.

- **Providing authenticity.** One of the main purposes of setting is to allow the audience to suspend disbelief. This is done by providing an authentic sense of a real place and a real time period, which is particularly important in historical dramas.
- **Providing visual impact.** In visual media such as television and film, the setting can provide the audience with a real compulsion to watch. The visual impact of Monument Valley (Arizona–Utah) has been important to the Western genre.
- **Creating emotional atmosphere.** In horror, science-fiction and fantasy films, an emotional atmosphere can be created by the setting. *The Amityville Horror* (2005) uses the house to create an atmosphere of terror.
- **The setting as a symbol.** Setting can be used to stand for something else. Usually this is an idea or a way of thinking about the world. *The Piano* (1993) uses setting as a powerful symbol of entrapment and isolation.

6.6 ACTIVITIES

1 From a range of movies you have seen, find examples in which setting is used for each one of the purposes identified by Joseph Boggs.
Explain how each movie uses setting, and **illustrate** the use with a still image from the scene.

2 Review the sequence shown in Figure 6.25. Because of the editing, the sequence makes complete sense in the film, but makes no sense if you know the geography of the area. The main character in the sequence zigzags across the Brisbane River and arrives by ferry at a landlocked school.
Synthesise a short American montage sequence (see page 152) where setting is important, but disrupt the actual geography of the setting in hilarious ways with an edited journey. **Solve** the **technical** and **creative problems** of joining unlikely locations into the sequence to create a coherent moving-image media product.







Figure 6.25 The comic coming-of-age film *48 Shades* (2006) is based on a novel by Nick Earls and is set in Brisbane. The school scenes were filmed at Brisbane Boys College (BBC). The main character Dan is picked up from the airport, driven to Toowong across the Story Bridge, then catches a quaint old ferry to BBC, and finally gets off the ferry and enters the school via the Moggill Road ovals. This makes no sense at all if you know Brisbane. For locals, the setting adds a layer of authenticity to the film and may encourage them to suspend disbelief more easily. However, familiarity may also have the opposite effect.

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MULTIPLE STORY LINES

Many films have multiple plot lines. This occurs when a number of stories are connected to the main story. Multiple plot lines are becoming more common in films as audiences seek more complex cinema experiences.

Subplots in conventional films

While in most narratives the main plot is the primary focus of the story, this is not always the case. The classic film *The African Queen* (1951) is one well-known exception.

Other plot lines within the narrative are called subplots. Sometimes they are referred to as the background story. All plot lines necessarily follow the three-act structure, each having its own disturbance, complications and resolution. Subplots are usually only foreshadowed in the orientation stage of a narrative, when the main plot is the focus. Once the lead characters' world has been changed by the disturbance, the subplots are allowed to develop.

All plot lines normally converge in the resolution stage, which is both pleasurable for the audience and economical for the writer.

Multiple narrative films

In Hollywood film history, the first film with truly multiple plot lines is thought to be *Grand Hotel* (1932). However, it was not until directors such as Robert Altman and Woody Allen began using multiple plot lines in the 1970s and 1980s that the structure became popular. Later, directors such as Quentin Tarantino made multiple plot lines a signature style. *Pulp Fiction* (1994, R-rated) was one of the most successful multiple-plot films in the 1990s. Mainstream Hollywood began to take notice. *Traffic* (2000) won four Academy Awards. *Crash* (2004) won Best Picture.

Movies today often have multiple plots. This is also true of television soap operas and some situation comedies. Soap operas rely on multiple plots to keep the audience watching over many episodes.

Multiple-plot films develop separate story threads, each with about the same level of dramatic importance within the film. These kinds of films have more than one main character. The central problem faced by each separate main character may be only slightly linked together or may not be linked at all.

Advantages of multiple-plot films

Some analysts say that television has trained audiences to respond to multiple narratives more positively. Modern audiences have become more interested in looking at things from different perspectives. A series of smaller stories can be interwoven in interesting ways.

Disadvantages of multiple-plot films

The length of time that the audience spends in the cinema remains the same, whether there is one main plot or five. Less time per story is the inevitable outcome of multiple-plot scripts. The same is true of characters. One of the most important tasks of a film is to get the audience to identify with the main character. Having to identify with multiple characters can weaken audience involvement.

Parallelism, metaphor and allegory in multiple story lines

If you go to see a movie with three plots in it, do you perceive it as one story in some way? Or do you simply think that you went to see three stories? Some research shows that, even if the plots are not connected at all, audiences somehow try to fit them together. However, many directors really do try to link their narratives, and they insert small clues within the film structure to provide viewers with the required information. The links allow the audience to construct themes or to make other kinds of connections.

Multiple plot lines can be linked together in at least three ways:

- **Parallel plot lines.** Providing plot lines that are parallel is one way to link separate plots. One plot may be set in an earlier period in history. Or the two plots may be linked by a single moment when a fateful decision created different pathways.
- **Metaphor plot lines.** One plot line can exist as a comment on, or metaphor in relation to, the other.

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- **Allegory.** An allegory is a story that appears on the surface to have a simple meaning but is actually dealing with a much larger subject on a deeper level. For example, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is an allegorical treatment of the story of Christ. Aslan represents Jesus. The story can be understood for what it is at a surface level, or it can be understood at a religious level.

Action and relationship lines in conventional films

According to television and film scriptwriter Linda Aronson, the main plot line and subplots often work together as an action line and a relationship line.

- **Action line.** The action line is the chain of events or 'things that happen' in the main plot line. The action line moves from action to action until the resolution. The events of the action line permit the relationship line to happen.
- **Relationship line.** The relationship line explores the emotional relationships between the leading characters. The characters are forced into each other's company by the disturbance and subsequent events in the action line.

'A good example of the action line pulling along the relationship line occurs in *The African Queen*,' says Aronson. 'Here, the relationship – that is, the developing love between Rose and Allnutt – could not happen without the action line … the journey down the river.'

6.7 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a film with strong action and relationship lines that work together to progress the narrative. In these films, the action line allows the relationship line to develop.
Construct a table like the one below, making sure that the action line events are arranged to make visible the relationship line developments they allow to happen.
Explain how the action line has allowed the relationship line to develop, **identifying** the changes in the relationship, **clarifying** the connections and providing **additional information** about the nature of the links between the two lines.

NAME OF MOVIE:		
Action line event	Relationship development	Connections between action and relationship lines

2 Select a television program or film with multiple plot lines. If you cannot think of an example yourself, consider *Snatch* (2000) or *Love Actually* (2003). Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the story of the movie, **identifying** the plot points in each subplot. **Give information** about each of the relationship lines and the action lines. **Identify** the type of subplots that are used in the story, such as parallel, allegory, etc.	**Analyse** the interrelationships between the plot lines, **examining** each plot and **considering** the effect that it has on the other plot(s). **Interpret** the meanings of some of the subplots at the key stages in the story. **Make a judgement** about the **strengths and weaknesses** of the combined plots using audience understanding and appeal as the **criteria**.	**Appraise** the significance of the use of multiple plot lines in the movie you have selected, **drawing conclusions** about the **worth** of it to the overall purpose of movie storytelling. **Draw conclusions** about the **worth** or **significance** of this film in the use of multiple plot lines. Has it advanced the art?

STRUCTURING TIME

Audiences make sense of a narrative according to the events they are shown. It is natural for people to fill in the gaps and to reorder events to make their own sense of the story. In a film narrative, there are three ways in which time can be manipulated, according to film academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.

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Temporal (time-based) order of events

The ordering of events is the most important way that a narrative can structure time. The ways that time can be structured in a film include the following:

- **Structuring the plot as a whole.** The ordering of events is chiefly determined by the narrative progression.
- **Flashback.** This is when the present-day events are suddenly interrupted by images of what may have taken place in the past. Filmmakers usually give the audience some sort of signal that they are going to enter a different time. Usually there is a dissolve or fade, and often there is some kind of clue in the colour or texture of the film.
- **Flash-forwards.** The use of flash-forwards is rare. Flash-forwards interrupt present-day events and show events that will take place in the future. Flash-forwards are naturally confusing for the audience. This is because they do not make sense until the story 'arrives' at the future, much later in the narrative. This is unlike flashbacks, which can be understood as memories that add to background knowledge. Filmmakers can sometimes use flash-forwards to tease the audience with clues about the resolution of the narrative.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 6.26 The genre of crime and detective films from the 1940s and 1950s known as *film noir* often uses a **circular plot structure** that starts at the end of the film, and then retells the story of the events that led up to that point.

- **Simultaneous time.** Cross-cutting from one event to another can give the impression that the events are occurring simultaneously. In the last-minute rescue scenes of silent-screen melodramas, cross-cutting had the audience on the edge of their seats. In classic D. W. Griffith films, the villain is tying the heroine to the railway track, the train is steaming around the corner and the hero is rushing to the rescue. The excitement lies in the audience's hope that the three events, apparently occurring at the same time, will converge in such a way as to create the most satisfying conclusion. A rule of simultaneous time is that events in the parallel locations must come together in some way.

Temporal duration

Very few films take place in real time. Nearly all films adjust the events portrayed so that they fit into the 90 minutes they have available to tell the story. The action can take place within a single day, over several days or even over a whole lifetime – yet it still fits into the screen time.

- **Expansion of time.** Screen time can be expanded to draw out some events, thereby creating tension. A number of codes and conventions have developed to assist this, one of which is parallel editing, or cutting from one scene to another scene happening at the same time. With expanded time, it can appear to take ages for someone in a horror movie to walk up a flight of stairs. This can be much longer than the real time it would take. Prolonging the action can prolong the suspense or draw out the emotional response in the audience. Soap operas often use this technique, with the emotional responses of several characters shown one after another.
- **Compression of time.** Screen time may also be shortened to move the story forward. A long road trip can be achieved in three or four shots using montage editing. It could be shown with a shot of the starting point, a shot of the road in between, and a shot of arrival at the destination.
- **Montage.** Hollywood directors commonly refer to montage as a series of shots that condense time. In early film, the classic American montage sequence might be a shot of calendar pages peeling off and blowing away as a character goes through a process that might have taken months or years, such as growing

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up. American-style montages (as opposed to dialectic montages) are also often used in training sequences to show a character getting more and more skilled. For example, in *Spider-Man* (2002), a montage shows Peter Parker dreaming up a costume he will wear to go with his newly acquired special powers.



Getty Images/Corbis Entertainment/Louis Delavenne

Figure 6.27 Shooting inside a car during movie production. The car is in a studio and the character appears to be driving, but is just going through the motions. Car journeys are often shortened in movies. With compressed time, long periods can be shortened to just a few shots.

Temporal frequency

The time-based frequency of an event can also be manipulated. An event does not have to appear just once – it can be returned to repeatedly, thereby gaining additional meaning. In *Citizen Kane* (1941), Susan's debut is seen several times during the movie from the perspectives of different characters.

Narrative progression and the temporal order

There are several types of plot progression. All of them rely on the three-act structure at the deepest level but, on the surface, some are unconventional. They utilise different methods of structuring time.

Linear plot progression

Most narratives still use linear plot progression. The story starts at the beginning and moves directly through time until the end. Events occur in chronological sequence and appear in the story at the time they are actually occurring (not as flashbacks or flash-forwards). Both *Psycho* (1960) and *Thelma & Louise* (1991) use this structure.

Circular plot progression

Starting at the end of a story and working backwards to retell how it all happened is probably the second-most common narrative structure. Circular plot structures were particularly favoured by directors working in the *film noir* style during the 1940s and 1950s. These films might begin with a man's dead body and proceed to tell how it got there. In *film noir*, the voice-over was typically provided by the dead man himself. Another common device was to have someone typing out their police statement.

A good example of circular plot structure is found in Billy Wilder's film *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). More modern examples are *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), *Crash* (2004), *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006) and *The Prestige* (2006).



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 6.28 *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) begins and ends with a body (the narrator's) being hauled out of a pool in a Hollywood mansion. However, the end of the film has two more scenes that form the resolution. It is common for a circular plot structure to include a few final scenes that go just a little bit further than the first scene.

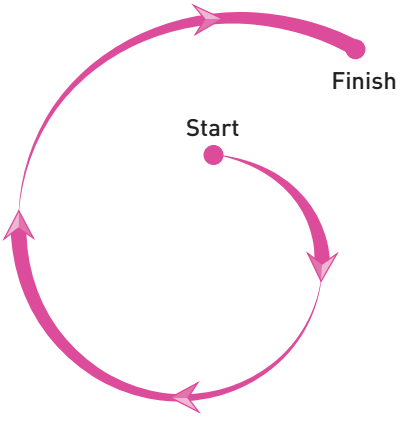


Figure 6.29 Circular plot structure typically starts and finishes with the same story event, but the resolution contains one or two extra scenes that complete the movie.

Flashback narrative

Flashback narratives consist of at least two stories, says scriptwriter Linda Aronson. One takes place in the present day of the film, while the other takes place in the past and is told using flashbacks. The two stories are connected in some way that becomes clear, and is resolved, during the final climax. Flash-forward narrative is a less common variation of this structure.

Citizen Kane (1941) was one of the first films to use flashback narrative, although it is more often associated with modern films. *Memento* (2000), *Shine* (1996) and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) all use varieties of this structure.

Multiple points of view narrative

Some narratives with a cast of several equally important characters jump between the perspectives of each one. The multiple points of view narrative often takes place in a limited time period. Each point of view occurs in simultaneous time. These stories, says Aronson, are often about reunions or sieges. Changing perspectives give energy to the story in a situation that can otherwise lack action and movement.

Films using this structure include *The Full Monty* (1997) and *American Beauty* (1999). In both these films, society puts the characters under siege conditions.

Parallel sequential narrative

Aronson uses the term 'sequential narrative' to describe narratives that chop up stories and tell bits of them in sequence, with each left on a cliffhanger. All of these stories are quickly revisited at the end and then united in an exciting final climax. Some analysts call this a braided narrative because the story strands are plaited together, like hair.

Examples of this structure include *Pulp Fiction* (1994, R-rated), *Run Lola Run* (1999) and *The Circle* (2017).

Tandem narratives

A tandem narrative is made up of several equal-sized stories that are interconnected in some way, says Aronson. Tandem narrative works best in epic films or films about big events that affect many people. Finality is often reached in a big event that draws people together, such as a wedding or a natural disaster.

Examples of films with this structure include *Crimes and Misdemeanours* (1989), *Crash* (2004) and *Babel* (2006).

6.8 ACTIVITIES

1 Time the distance between points of high drama (climaxes, twists and turns) in a film of your choice. Break the film duration down into its **constituent parts** by recording the time from the beginning of the film until the first disruption, and then recording the time between each of the main climactic points.
Analyse your results, **considering** the information revealed by marking the divisions of time. **Evaluate** the effectiveness of this division, using audience engagement and suspense as the **criteria**.

2 Select a movie with an alternative plot structure.
Symbolise this structure with a graphic representation that suits the way the narrative progresses. For instance, flashback narratives may work with two-level design; sequential or multiple-viewpoint narratives may work with a branching design in the style of a family tree, and so on.
Construct a narrative progression to **illustrate** the graphic representation using the actual events and stages of your chosen movie.
Explain your design, **clarifying** how it works.

3 Work out the real story time of a chosen movie. This could include the actual time period in which the story takes place, together with any references to past events in the lives of characters – the back story, as it is called in soap operas.
Explain your estimation, providing **additional information** about the story and using **examples** to **illustrate** how time has been treated in the movie.

4 Time an instance of expanded time in a thriller or horror movie and then compare that with a real-time attempt at completing the same activity.
Explain the results of your research and **clarify** the effect of the difference.

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DIGITAL GAMES AND STORY

One of the enduring qualities of a movie is its ability to manipulate our emotions – to make us cry, make us angry or make us happy. Can video games ever hope to achieve this level of emotional engagement with a narrative?

The fundamental difference between a movie and a game is that in a game neither the plot nor the characters are normally the stars. In a game, the environment (and how you act within that environment) is the highlight of an engaging interaction.

Plot

The plot that a game uses depends on its category. Most games feature a simple, straightforward plot. Arcade games in particular have brief, sketchy plots. In most cases, the plot exists only to establish a context in which the action can occur. Flight simulation and racing games often have no plot at all, relying solely on the authenticity and excitement of 'virtually' experiencing the real thing.

The more narrative-driven types of games, such as roleplaying and adventure games, have stronger plots. However, even here they are often simplified compared with the plots of feature films.

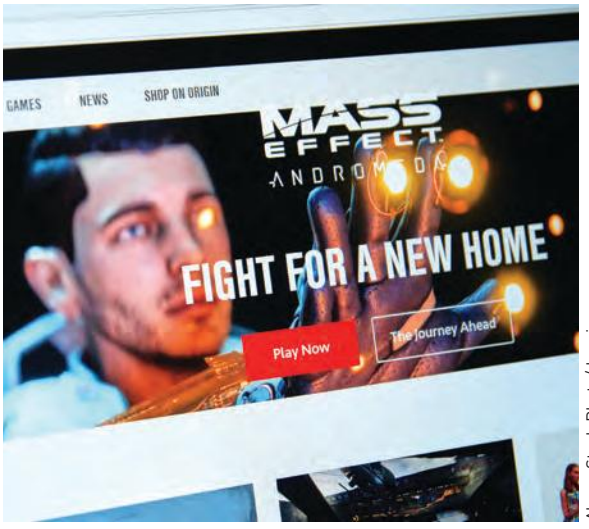
Increasingly, games are experimenting with complex cinematic narratives, with games less reliant on prescriptive user actions and allowing more environmental exploration within a structured narrative. Like movies, many of these narrative-focused games set out to manipulate our emotions. Most games that are successful at communicating emotion use fear, foreboding and horror – suitable triggers for the nature of the medium and traditional game narratives.

Digital games and the three-act structure

The plot structure for a video game generally follows the three-act narrative structure, but normally it has shortened first and third stages. Some games feature multiple conclusions.

Many games use cinematic sequences to introduce the narrative, set the mood and intrigue the player. Some games let the player trigger the first complication by extending the orientation stage, allowing the player to first explore their environment and character. Without first building a player's interest in their character, the game designer is in danger of disconnecting them from their character.

Half-Life was one of the first games to allow players to explore their character's identity. This game began with an animated sequence explaining the games environment – a secret research facility. Following this was an exploratory journey through the facility where the player could interact with other characters, building up a picture of an uneasy work environment and a sense of impending danger. Finally, it was the player who triggered the second stage of the narrative through initiating an experiment that goes horribly wrong.



Alamy Stock Photo/dennizn

Figure 6.30 *Mass Effect: Andromeda* (2017) set a new benchmark in intergalactic game narrative. The game allows team members to work together to overcome adversity, and also has an online multiplayer mode.

Games, especially roleplaying games, normally consist of a number of levels to be conquered. At the end of the final level there is a major confrontation. The standard game convention is that this final confrontation requires the use of a special process, power or trick. Some games feature stand-alone stories, while others are multi-part episodes of a larger story. In this case, the games use a three-act structure within another three-act structure.

The final complication before the third plot stage in the game *Half-Life* (1998) is meeting the alien demon. To destroy this character, the player first has to destroy its energy source on the walls and then attack it from above. *Half-Life* was unique in that it has multiple kinds of villains and heroes, who can act both for and against the player. In an ironic twist, your human enemy actually wins with your help.

Narrative progression

Game narratives build to a dramatic conclusion: an action, a confrontation or some other event to resolve the story's inner tension. The problem for an interactive storyteller is ensuring that all the characters are ready for the conclusion at the right time. As the player's actions are outside the author's control, there is no guarantee that the player will be ready for the conclusion. This is known as the 'problem of narrative flow'.

Many games stick to a simple puzzle-solving, level-by-level approach to game design in which the player's actions are linked to the plot progression. The player is unable to reach the conclusion until the right puzzles have been solved and the correct weapons have been gathered.

As more complex narratives are written, more sophisticated methods of resolving the plot and directing characters need to be developed. Traditionally, the approach of the ending has been signified through more difficult levels, culminating in the final, most difficult level. In many newer games, cinema-style conventions are used to signify that the conclusion is nearing. These include narrative clues such as story elements falling into place – building, step by step, a complete view and exposing the finale. Physical conventions include ever-darkening environments, changes in music, atmosphere closing in, greater environmental destruction, growing confusion, an increased sense of panic, changes in other characters and a general sense that things can't get any worse.

Cause and effect in game narrative

In a video game, the environment should acknowledge the player's presence. When a player initiates an action, there must be an environmental response. If the character walks into a room, other characters within the room must acknowledge this. If the character fires a shot or sets off an explosion, then the effect must be visible.

One of the most successful ways to draw the audience through the environment is with cause and effect – that is, by creating environments that allow players to form their own conclusions about what has previously occurred in that area. This can include doors broken open, traces of a recent explosion or a crashed car. These help the player understand what to expect later.

Cause and effect can also indicate the passage of time. A player can return to a previously visited area to see it now completely destroyed.

Having your player follow 'breadcrumbs' such as handwritten notes, graffiti or evidence of fighting left behind by other characters engages the player's imagination and enhances the drama of the story.

Characters

Video game characters often follow stereotypes derived from Hollywood-style action movies. Other characters, particularly from fighting and martial arts movies, are based on Japanese animation and Hong Kong martial arts films.

As the player is in control when character development takes place, they feel connected to the character. This allows greater emotional responses to be derived from actions affecting the character. Early games such as *Tomb Raider* (1996) were shipped with a complete guide to the character and upbringing. This character construction did not make it into game plots, however; it simply served to make the characters and their actions more believable.

Some games are now including extra characters to complicate the narrative and allow the main character to develop through interactions with others. New characters can also be used to reveal more about the main character's personality and background.

Characters designed to allow players to create their own personality through their actions and interactions with others are becoming common. Massively multiplayer online roleplaying games (MMORPGs) allow a character's persona to be built over months of interaction with the game and other players.

Character interaction

Character interaction in video games can be split into two groups:

- **First person.** A first-person game invites players to immerse themselves in the game – to become the main character. A first-person game should make it easy for players to believe they are part of the action. Their character must not interfere with the player's own 'illusion of immersion'. The character therefore should not act on his or her own or interact with others unless directed to do so. The character must remain in the control of the player at all times.

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- **Third person.** In a third-person game, the player is controlling a character rather than becoming that character. The third-person point of view allows far greater freedom to tell a traditional story. This is because the character on the screen is a separate entity and is dissociated from the player, which allows the designer to give characters their own personalities and to control how they behave. Roleplaying games and some action games such as the *Grand Theft Auto* series allow the player to control a unique third-person character on screen. Instead of seeing through the eyes of the character, we see the character.

Environment

There are two main environments for games:

- **Enclosed world.** In this, the character is restricted by walls or some other barrier. This means the character is limited to areas pre-programmed by the designer.
- **Open world.** In this, the character is free to roam anywhere. The world is so large the player will normally never find its limits.

Environmental storytelling

Game narratives are environment-based. The author tells the story through the experience of moving through a realistic or fantasy virtual environment. This is similar to film and television where any story is played out within a constructed environment. However, unlike viewers of film and television, the game player will have choices along the way. Players make decisions based on their relationship with the virtual world, as well as their everyday physical world experiences.

Restricting the world is a complex task for developers. Older games constrained the player within walls, corridors or rooms; newer games offer vast outdoor areas to explore.

Environmental storytelling opens up a wide range of opportunities within a game. Games are getting better at integrating narrative into unrestricted environments.

6.9 ACTIVITIES

Select a video game you have played recently. **Explain** how the environment within the story affected your perception of the narrative. **Illustrate** your explanation with specific **examples** of elements within the environment that contributed to the narrative or drove the player to make certain decisions.

DIGITAL GAMES AND MOVIES

'Hollywood is beginning to understand the world of gaming. This is the first generation of filmmakers who grew up with digital games as a major influence in their lives.'

Jon Anderson, Australian marketing manager of United International Pictures

Games have had a significant impact on the narrative, plot, characterisation and visual style of movies, especially action movies. Movies based on games encourage gamers back to the cinema. Seamus Blackley, gaming and film crossover specialist for Creative Artists, believes Hollywood and the game industry have entered a comfortable partnership after an uncertain relationship. But more Americans now play video games than regularly go to the cinema.

Many of the best-known games have taken longer to produce than a typical Hollywood movie. However, games are not in direct competition with movies – the two can benefit each other. In many respects, games and movies are quite different products. Games are generally played only once or twice. Blockbuster movies are typically seen by more people, and a proportion of those see the movie over and over again. Some great movies become classics and are watched time and again over many decades. Games have a shorter life span and do not last for decades. They also have a learning curve and much longer play times.

The effect of games on movies

The plots of many action movies mirror those of video games. Action movies often feature shortened first and third plot stages. Action movie viewers tend to dislike lengthy introductions with lots of

character development. They want to get straight into the action, which normally occurs after the first plot complication. A movie, like a game, also provides an interesting environment for characters to interact in.

The action movie plot is usually more complex and engaging than that of a video game. This is because of the use of extra characters, their interactions with the protagonist and the exploration of emotional depth within those characters.



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Figure 6.31 The movie *Doom* (2005), based on the landmark first-person shooter game, used a similar narrative construction to the game *Doom III*, with a 'straight into the action' approach after only a short introductory sequence, and a short but dramatic climax. Unlike the game makers, the filmmakers included character development and a twist at the end.

The first game-to-movie adaptation was *Super Mario Bros.* in 1993. Since then there has been a string of movies created to cash in on public loyalty to existing games.

Many critics are suspicious that scenes are being written into movies simply because they will make good video games. Two well-known examples are the waterwheel escape from cannibals in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (2006), and the pod-racing scene from *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace* (1999). Both scenes were a big feature in the movies, and both were made into games.

The effect of movies on games

Games based on movies are used to capitalise on the success of a film by extending the movie experience. Video game adaptations of movies are best suited to blockbuster action movies. Not many people would think of creating games based on traditional drama movies, such as *12 Years a Slave* (2013) or *The Imitation Game* (2014).

However, movie adaptation games do provide cinema-goers with an experiential take of a film. Users can participate in the world of the story in a much more direct way: it gives them a chance to enter the setting.

Like all good adaptations, a game based on a movie (or vice-versa) just needs a good storyline and good characters. A good creator can then bring those to life and make a great game or movie. Whatever the secret was that led to the success of the original has to be there in the adaptation.

6.10 ACTIVITIES

1 Construct a list of movies that have plots similar to those of video games.
Symbolise the story of a selected movie that is similar to a digital game in a flow chart or a climax mountain (see page 135), **representing** the major plot points from the beginning to the resolution.
Explain how the movie is similar to a game by **identifying** the similarities at key stages.

2 **Explain** the plot of a video game.
Construct an outline for a movie that uses a similar narrative. You can try adding new characters and scenes, and 'fleshing out' existing characters and situations, giving them more depth and detail.

3 Select an existing movie.
Construct a treatment for an interactive version, having at least three different endings.
Explain in the treatment the different ways in which you could navigate through the story.

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7

Audiences and moving-image media stories



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ABOUT AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

There are many touching stories from the early days of cinema when **audiences** saw their first film narratives. Legend has it that patrons ran from the theatre or dived under their seats the first time they saw a train come towards them in the Lumière brothers' film *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (1895). When a bandit fired a gun directly at the audience in *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), the audience literally tried to dodge the bullet. And in the memoirs of the silent film actress Lillian Gish, she tells of what happened when old soldiers from the American Civil War first saw the battle scenes in D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915): 'Their sobs shook the seats.'

It's probably true that audiences are more hardened and skilled at viewing films these days. But the howls of protest on those rare occasions when the projector breaks down, or when someone presses pause on the DVD player, prove that the power of narrative has not diminished in the past 100 years.



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Figure 7.1 Early audience for a silent film. There are many stories in cinema history of the innocent reactions of these first-time viewers. Modern audiences are more hardened and skilled than the audiences for the first cinema narratives. However, the power of story remains just as strong. Some academics argue that story is an essential aspect of human thinking.

Taking pleasure in the text

Would you list 'watching movies or television shows' as one of your hobbies? Why do so many people in modern society spend so much time with the media and its stories? Most would just simply say they enjoy it so much. Enjoyment or pleasure is possibly the main motivator for media use. Movies, television shows and other narratives are fun and make people happy, with even sad stories allowing people to feel uplifted in some way.



7.1.1 Australian trends in online and on demand viewing

7.1.2 Screen Australia: fact finder

Benefits of engaging with narratives

No one has had to be taught to enjoy narratives, so even very young children are immediately fascinated by stories. Some academics argue that stories are actually the natural way that humans think. According to this theory, stories were always essential to human existence and survival, so we should not be surprised that modern audiences need them as much as cave dwellers did. The following are some possible benefits of engaging with narratives.

- **Escape from the self.** Entering a fictional world allows you to take on the lives and experiences of other people. To do this, you must detach from your own reality and enter the world of the story. The intensity with which you focus on the story allows you to forget about yourself. You lose self-consciousness.
- **Safe peril.** Modern audiences enjoy horror movies in the same way that audiences thousands of years ago enjoyed stories of great peril and suffering. All good stories have an ending, and this allows the audience members to safely return to their real-life existences.



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Figure 7.2 One of the pleasures of engaging in stories is to place yourself in 'safe peril'. Within the story world, we can experience great danger. If all turns out well for the character, then we can enjoy their triumph. If it doesn't, we are still safe, even if they aren't.

'Stories enable us to mingle with risk takers – to live life even more fully. Just as story heroes survive risks, the audience is similarly invulnerable. Even if the story protagonists are doomed, the audience member is safe.'

Melanie Green, Timothy Brock, Geoff Kaufman

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- **Extraordinary events.** Life for most people is safe and ordinary but, in a story, an individual can experience intense emotions and life-and-death situations. Film stories are condensed or exaggerated versions of reality with an unusually high concentration of emotional stimuli.
- **Guiding behaviours.** Audiences learn from stories. The fate of a character can show what can happen in real life, or the solutions that a character finds in a story can provide suggestions about how to solve your own problems.
- **Emotional or physical resilience.** A romance movie may help audiences deal with their own sense of loss, or an action movie may prompt an individual to start their own training program. Watching other people overcome difficulties and survive can supply us with the resources to do the same ourselves.
- **Identity play.** Entering a story world allows us to try on different identities. We can temporarily take on the lives of others.
- **Social values and beliefs.** Stories contain values and beliefs, but engaging in pleasurable narratives is thought to decrease the awareness of the presence of these values. Deep involvement with stories reduces counter-arguing – arguing against some of the values and beliefs in the story. If a reader continually consumes the same type of stories, this may increase the likelihood that they will take on the values of those stories.

The process of engaging with narrative texts

Audiences are thought to respond to media narratives on two levels:

- **Emotional responses.** Audience members can feel the emotional plight that the characters are in. They may have sympathy or empathy towards them. At the end of the story, they may be in a better mood themselves because they have enjoyed the experience.
- **Intellectual judgements**. Audiences also make judgements about the narrative and assess the actions of the characters.

Engagement happens via belief or confidence in the story world. After that, engagement happens through the processes of transportation, identification, immersion in realism and a sense of presence.

Belief in the story world

Belief is a voluntary contract the audience enters into with the maker of the story. A modern film, for example, provides all the assistance anyone could want, with believable actors, surround sound and realistic special effects. In return, the audience agrees to go along with the story and enter into the world of the film.

When the suspense becomes too much, or the fear becomes overwhelming, people remind themselves of the contract they entered into. 'It's only a film,' they say, or, 'Everything will be all right. The main character never dies – even in horror movies.'

Traditionally, the process of believing in the world of the story was thought to be through the active suspension of disbelief. Some modern analysts are now arguing that, instead, we actively create belief.

- **Suspension of disbelief.** Believing in the world of the story, no matter how fanciful, requires what is traditionally called suspension of disbelief. From our earliest years, we will happily settle down to listen when we hear: 'Once upon a time …' Few children will ever question that a frog could turn into a prince with just a kiss, but they also know not to try it in the real world.

  Everyone suspends disbelief when they view a film or television story. Adults know that the police rarely arrive 30 seconds after a fight breaks out. And even primary school children know that few life forms, let alone large amphibious monsters, could have survived in the black lagoon. But for the sake of the story, everyone puts aside these concerns from the real world.
- **Creation of belief.** Other analysts argue that we begin with default belief, not disbelief. Audiences enter a story wanting to believe. According to this view, audiences tend to believe whatever they are told. Information from within the story is accepted as true and can only be 'unaccepted' with a great deal of difficulty.

> 'A media viewer doesn't have to take the risk of changing jobs, spouses or locales to experience another kind of life, but rather can vicariously experience such alternative life choices through the lives of the characters who inhabit the [story] worlds.'
>
> **Melanie Green, Timothy Brock, Geoff Kaufman**

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Transportation

Transportation is the process by which a viewer becomes 'lost' in a story. The audience member loses focus on the actual world and turns their full attention to the world of the story. They become unaware of the passage of real time. By the time they return from the story, they are somehow changed by the experience. You might have experienced it most deeply when you go to the movies in the daytime. You get immersed in the story and then are disoriented when you come out of the cinema and it is night-time. You probably went through transportation into the narrative in three stages:

1 devoting almost full attention to the narrative stimulus
2 perceiving experience from a point within the story world
3 losing consciousness of the outside world.

A scale to measure the degree of transportation into a narrative has been developed by Green and Brock (see page 163).

Identification with characters

Once audience members enter the story world, they need to locate themselves within a character. This is usually the person from whose point of view the story is told (the protagonist – see chapter 6). Adopting the point of view of a character is called **identification**.

Identification happens when audience members lose awareness of the world around them, and instead enter into a close connection with a particular character. Identification is like being in someone else's shoes and seeing the world through their eyes.

The way the text is constructed encourages us to identify with characters. For instance, the camera can encourage us to see the world through a character's eyes. This can be done even if they are not the protagonist nor even a very likeable character. In *Psycho* (1960), the audience identifies with Norman Bates when he pushes the car containing the body into a swamp. We feel his panic when the car starts to sink but momentarily stops; like Norman, we want the car to sink.



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Figure 7.3 Solomon Northup, aka Platt (Chiwetel Ejiofor), is released after being sold into slavery in *12 Years a Slave* (2013). When the audience enters the story world, they locate themselves by identifying with a character. Identification happens when audience members start to see the world from the point of view of the character.

Realism

> 'It seems plausible that stories we consider authentic and true to life are the most engaging. But it is also plausible [the reverse hypothesis] that engagement with a story then leaves us with a sense that the story was authentic.'
>
> **Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic**

If the audience thinks that a story is realistic, they are more likely to be transported into it. The judgements that the audience makes about **realism** are related to their enjoyment of the story. These judgements fall into two basic categories:

- **Real-world or external reality.** Audiences make judgements about external reality based on comparisons they make between the story world and the laws and rules of the real world.
- **Narrative or internal reality.** Audiences also make judgements about the elements within a story and whether or not they are consistent and believable. The story has to have its own logic. It must take place within a coherent world. The motivations of the characters must be believable.

Audiences can accept stories that do not have complete real world or external reality, as long as the internal reality is very strong. For example, science-fiction movies involving time travel do not have external reality; however, this genre allows for a break from external reality.

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Figure 7.4 Yoda in *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005). In a *Star Wars* movie, no one would expect a character to use handguns instead of light sabers. Even though handguns have real-world or external reality, they do not have narrative or internal reality: handguns would not be consistent with the story world.

Presence

Presence is the sense of 'being there' in the story. The term is commonly used in virtual reality and in video games, where the user actively participates in events. Some human–computer interactions can create experiences that are almost like those in real life. Users tend to forget the medium itself and just focus on the experience – they are no longer aware they are in virtual reality or a video game.

In a story, the sense of presence is created by transportation and identification with the perspectives of the characters.

7.1 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a list of the benefits that audiences receive by engaging with narratives, and then **construct** a parallel list of television shows, movies or games that provide this benefit.
Explain the reasons why you have **identified** particular narratives to match the benefits, **giving additional information** that demonstrates you understand the connections.

2 In pairs, discuss occasions when you have found yourself actively refusing to suspend disbelief. These could be occasions when you told yourself, 'It's okay, it's only a movie', or they could be occasions when you were unable to get into the story right from the start.
Explain the situations to your partner, providing them with some **examples** as well as **clarifying** some of the reasons why you think your disbelief could not be suspended.

3 How transported were you in the last film or television program you viewed? Answer the questions from Green and Brock's transportation scale, which can be accessed via the weblink. Place your response to each question on the scale from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much).
Explain the details of your survey findings, beginning with the survey concept and then giving some **additional information** about the text and yourself as a viewer.
Analyse the results, **examining** each **constituent part** of the questionnaire and collating the results into a quantitative (numerical/percentage) finding.
Appraise the role of transportation in a narrative, **drawing conclusions** about its significance as a factor for audiences in the enjoyment of a story.
Discuss your responses with other class members who may have viewed the same text. **Report** your findings back to the class as a whole.

4 **Appraise** the degree to which you have found realism in the story or a character in a film, television show or game, **systematically examining** your reactions to the following text characteristics (which have been developed by Green and Brock):
- plausibility or believability
- realism or 'factuality'
- connection to real-life experience of yourself or others.

Make a judgement about the worth to you of each.
Explain your findings, giving reasons that **clarify** your decisions.

5 Select a film, television show or game in which you have really liked the main character.
Analyse your identification with that character by examining your responses to the following questions (which have been developed by Green and Brock).
- Did you understand why character X did what they did?
- Did you feel any of their emotions?
- Did you feel you were inside their head?
- Did you want them to succeed?

Make a judgement about the **strengths and limitations** of that character in evoking identification in the audience.

7.1.3 Green and Brock's transportation scale

7.1.4 Green and Brock questionnaire

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AUDIENCE EXPECTATION

> 'The sale of cinema tickets depends upon the public knowledge of the cinema experience — the expectation of a particular kind of entertainment. It runs as a kind of ground base, ensuring that cinema is a known constant in the anticipation that surrounds ticket sales.'
>
> **John Ellis**, former TV producer and now Professor of Media Arts, University of London

How do you choose the movies you will see? You don't just pick titles randomly – you must have some idea of what you are wanting to see, even though you aren't really familiar with the stories. There must be signals and clues that come with the film to allow you to develop expectations about what you will see.

Audience expectations are the beliefs audiences have about a future media experience. Expectations of a story are based on feelings of looking forward to the narrative in advance. These expectations are based on a number of factors: codes and conventions of genre, narrative image, stars and word of mouth.

Factors influencing audience expectations



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Figure 7.5 The Sun Pictures Cinema in Broome, Western Australia. This is the world's oldest open-air cinema still in operation. The audience still sits on the original 1916 canvas seats. In any cinema, the entertainment depends on the twists, turns and surprises of a good story. But it also depends on aspects of this story being known to the audience beforehand. Without these expectations, the audience would not have bought tickets in the first place.

Codes and conventions of genre

Can you tell the genre of a movie just by looking at its poster or DVD cover? Certainly you can from the trailer. Filmmakers have to make their movies accessible to the audience. One of the ways to do this is to build on audience expectations of genre. Audience knowledge about genre has been built up through hundreds of previous experiences. Tapping into these experiences allows filmmakers to build their audience.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 7.6 A poster for the television series *The Walking Dead* (2010–). Audiences approach the show with genre expectations based on past experience with the zombie genre. Many critics have commented that *The Walking Dead* brings a fresh approach to the conventions of the genre.

If audience members have prior knowledge of a genre, they will enjoy a new text more deeply because they are familiar with its genre. Innovations and differences in the new text will then be gratifying for the audience because of the novelty.

The overall enjoyment of the story comes from the relationship between the audience's expectations and the new text's treatment of them.

Expectations about genres are related to the frequency with which they are seen. For instance, if you see a lot of horror movies, you will have quite well-defined expectations of that genre – however, you may have very poorly defined expectations of romantic comedy. A lack of expectations about a genre can also lead to a prejudiced view of it. When producers speak of a film 'finding its audience', they often mean that the film is appealing to a group of people who are familiar with its conventions. This audience will recognise its appeal and come to it with strong expectations.

Narrative image

According to television and film theorist John Ellis, the creation in their minds of a narrative image is a key aspect of audience expectations. 'Payment for a ticket is not an endorsement of a film. It is an endorsement of the narrative image of the film, together with the general sense of the cinematic experience,' he states.

- **Narrative image.** This is an expression of what people think the film or media narrative is like prior to seeing it. Narrative image is rather like brand image. It is a publicly circulating idea about the story. Audiences gain an idea of the narrative image of a story, and this helps them make a decision about whether to see it or not. The narrative image of the film is not a summary of the film or its storyline – it is a tantalising promise of what the film may deliver. The narrative image of a media text is a kind of bait for audiences. It creates in the minds of the audience a desire to know more. It builds audience expectations.
- **Narrative enigma.** This is the mystery of the story. It is the question of what happens. The narrative enigma is a key part of enticing the audience to see a film or television program. Solving the riddle of the narrative enigma is one aspect of audience expectations. Film trailers are carefully constructed to maintain the narrative enigma so that audiences feel they must see the film. The enigma is the reason you never see the ending of the film in the trailer.

Stars

> 'Stars have a similar function in the film industry to the creation of a narrative image: they provide a foreknowledge of the fiction, an invitation to cinema.'
>
> **John Ellis**, former TV producer and now Professor of Media Arts, University of London

If one of your favourite stars is in a movie that is just opening, are you more likely to go and see it? **Stars** are important in most people's choice of movie. Therefore, stars are an important part of audience expectations.

John Ellis defines a star as 'a performer in a particular medium whose figure enters into subsidiary forms of circulation, and then feeds back into future performances'. The creation of a star relies on their appearance in other forms of media. If nothing is discussed about them in other media, they are not a star. The image they develop in other media, as their fame spreads, then feeds back into future movie roles.



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Figure 7.7 A stamp featuring John Wayne and the name of the Western movie that made him a star – *Stagecoach* (1939). John Wayne, the actor, stood for an idealised version of American manhood from the 1940s until the 1960s. In this sense, he also operated as a semiotic sign. Whenever he played a role, he filled that character with his own meanings as a star.

Stars as signs

Well-known stars operate like signs in a semiotic sense – they stand for something much larger than themselves. Often, stars have a desired characteristic or a manner of behaviour that society admires. Usually the star has this characteristic to some degree, but audiences also bestow it upon them. This characteristic is as much a representation of the audience's yearnings as it is an aspect of the stars themselves.

John Wayne, an actor in many classic Westerns, is an example of a star that stands for something much larger than himself. As well as being himself, with all his own very human failings, he came to represent an ideal of American manhood in the 1940s through to the 1960s. He appeared to be a tough, pioneering man with a keen eye for justice. He could shoot, ride horses and do all of those essentially 'manly things'. This was performed for an audience whose own reality was very different – they were often office-bound and suburban. When John Wayne appeared in a film, he brought his special meanings as a sign to his roles, thus adding more to these characters than was written in the script.

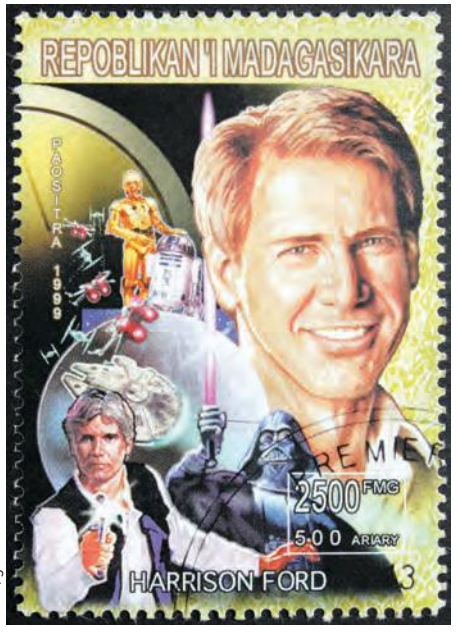


Figure 7.8 Actor and film producer Harrison Ford portrayed on a postage stamp from Madagascar. The stamp depicts aspects of Ford's star image: previous screen roles, the person himself and his awards.

A star's image is made up of a combination of factors:

- previous screen roles
- publicity in mainstream media, fan magazines and social media
- personal appearances, speeches, gossip and so on
- the real person.

A star does much more than simply step into the place of a character in the script. The star fills out the character and brings along his or her own image to add meaning to the role. Casting actors thus becomes an important part of characterisation.

7.2 ACTIVITIES

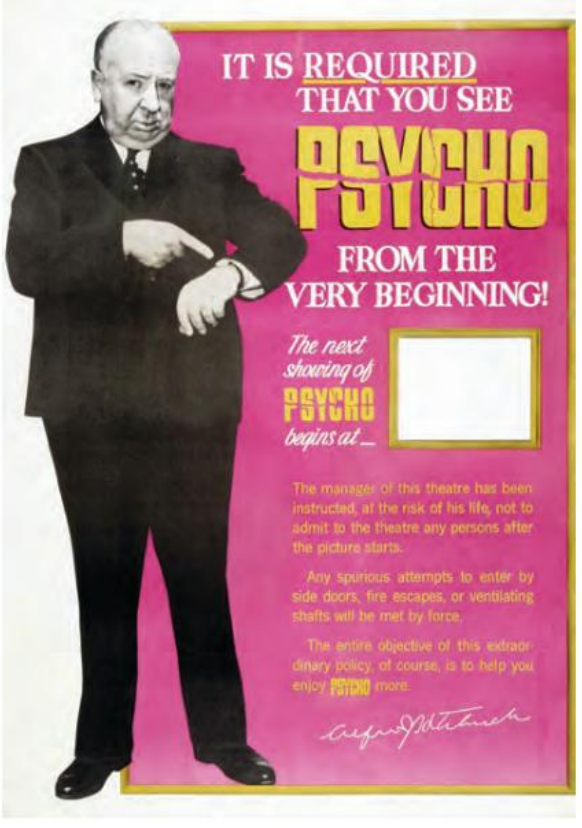
1. Select some movies that are currently playing and, in pairs, discuss which ones you would like to see. **Explain** to each other why you made these choices and what expectations you have, recognising the **qualities** and **characteristics** of the films that have created interest in you as an audience member. **Construct** a list of what you already know about these movies, and where you found out about them. Present the findings from your discussion to the class.
2. Write down some movies you have seen recently that clearly belong to a specific genre. **Explain** whether you enjoyed the way it kept within the expected genre structure. **Explain** where it surprised you or deviated from the usual genre conventions. Were you able to predict the course of events or did it change your expectations?
3. Select some films you have not seen. **Explain** how you see their narrative images, and their narrative enigmas as you understand them to be. **Identify** what it is the movie seems to promise. **Identify** what information is withheld from the potential audience. Now form a pair with someone who has seen the movie. Discuss whether your description of the narrative image matches the film.
4. Look at the depiction of 'star image' in Figure 7.8. Select some of your favourite stars. **Symbolise** their star image in a similar way in a poster, identifying and depicting the important aspects of their image. Your design should represent some or all of the following:
   - the star as a character in one of their key movies
   - the star as a sign
   - the star just as a person
   - aspects of their public image or celebrity status
   - awards
   - contribution to the industry.

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AUDIENCES AND DIFFERENT PLATFORMS AND CONTEXTS OF RECEPTION

When *Psycho* (1960) was first released, a cardboard cut-out of Alfred Hitchcock pointing at his watch was placed in the lobby of all the cinemas. No one would be allowed to enter the cinema once the film had started. Hitchcock was, of course, trying to control the conditions of reception. He wanted to build a strong sense of anticipation and fear in the audience, even before they saw the movie.

7.3.1 Subliminal messages in film



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 7.9 A theatre lobby standee (self-supporting cardboard display) placed in all cinemas showing *Psycho*. Hitchcock went to great lengths to control the conditions of reception for *Psycho*. Around the US, he purchased as many copies of the original book as he could so that no one would be able to read the ending. He closed the doors of the cinemas just before the film started so that no one could enter. This prevented disruption, and also led to a greater sense of anticipation.

The **contexts** of reception and consumption are the surrounding circumstances in which a media text is consumed. The context includes the following:

- **Surrounding environment.** The space chosen to consume the text can influence its reception. For instance, the formal space of a darkened cinema offers a different experience from that offered by the informal environment of a family lounge room or a teenager's bedroom.
- **The technology used.** The kind of experience a media text can offer depends on the technology used to present it. For example, the experience of watching a movie in an IMAX cinema is quite different from that of watching a movie on a small screen on the back of a seat on an aircraft.
- **The time of day.** Media texts are often designed to be consumed at certain times of the day. For instance, free-to-air prime time television takes place within the context of the period during and just after the evening meal.
- **Background knowledge of the audience.** Part of the context of reception is also carried within the minds of the audience. What they perceive of the narrative image and narrative enigma can determine their state of mind when they consume the text.
- **Audience experience and empathy.** The life histories and recent experiences of the audience can affect the way they interpret a film.

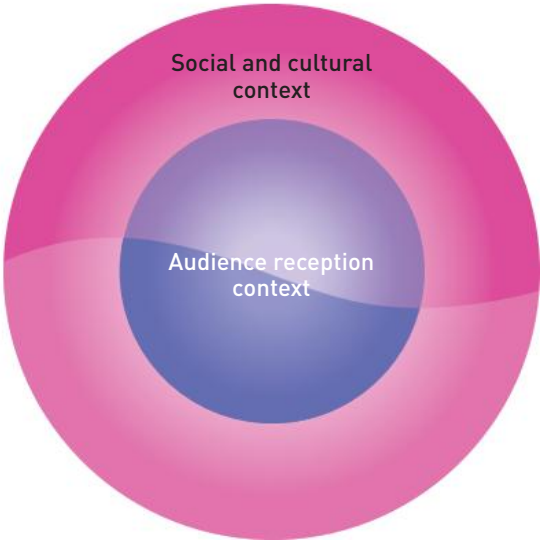


Figure 7.10 A media text does not exist in a vacuum. It is consumed in a reception context, which exists within a wider social and cultural context. Meaning arises out of a combination of the text and its surrounding contexts.

For example, an audience member who has recently gone through a relationship break-up will view a romantic comedy differently from the way someone in a happy relationship will view it. An audience member who has empathy (can put themselves in someone else's shoes) is likely to have a different response from one who cannot empathise.

Platform and context

Formal cinema contexts

Movie theatres were once so highly decorated they were called picture palaces. They were built in lavish style to resemble the grand luxury theatres of London or Vienna. Many even had first- and second-class sections, and special viewing balconies with ornate decorative features. Heavy brocade curtains reinforced the feeling that watching a movie was a great event. Of course, like a Hollywood film set, much of this ornate decoration was one-dimensional and fake, made from plywood, plaster and chicken wire.



Courtesy Empire Theatre



Courtesy Empire Theatre

Figure 7.11 The Empire Theatre, Toowoomba, was built as a movie theatre and showed films until 1971. The movie theatre was originally part-owned by E.J. Carroll, who later founded the cinema chain Birch, Carroll & Coyle. Before the arrival of television in Australia in the 1950s, and the arrival of the multiplex in the 1970s, movie theatres commonly presented themselves as 'picture palaces'. This sense of luxury promoted movie-going as a special event. Viewing a film in this context was a heightened audience experience.

Even today, the multiplex cinema is well appointed. Seeing a movie is still a bit of an occasion. Ceremonial food (popcorn, soft drinks and choc-tops) accompanies the event. There are lots of little touches inside the cinema that also add to the sense of special occasion. The traditional curtains are just one of those.

The effects of a cinema context can be assumed to include the following, allowing for individual exceptions:

- increased transportation into the narrative (see page 162)
- increased identification (see page 162)
- increased presence (see page 163).

Some theorists have argued that the intensity of the cinema experience can reduce the distance between imaginary representations and actual perception. The reasons for the enhanced experience of the narrative include the following:

- **Total attention.** Being surrounded by almost complete darkness heightens the attention an audience can give to a film. The level of involvement that the cinema offers can be intense.
- **Voyeurism.** Some film analysts have described the cinema experience as being like a Peeping Tom or voyeur. The voyeuristic aspect of the cinema is the sensation of sitting in a darkened theatre looking at a lighted screen that 'secretly' allows entry into the world of other people. These people never acknowledge the audience and appear unaware that the audience is even there. The use of this term in cinema studies is not meant to suggest that audiences are 'perverts'. Instead, it is used to show that we are viewing aspects of people's lives that we would not ordinarily have permission to see.
- **Larger-than-life effect.** Cinema screens are huge: at least 9 metres by 21 metres. IMAX screens can be as large as 20 metres by 26 metres. A face in close-up is many times its normal size. Cinema sound quality can be equally overwhelming.
- **Social experience.** The cinema is unique among modern media experiences in that it is always social (except for those extremely rare occasions when you might be the only person in the cinema).

The drive-in

They are rare these days, but Queensland still has several drive-in cinemas. They were popular in Australia from the 1950s until the late 1970s, especially in country areas. Reasons for the decline in drive-in cinemas in Australia include:

- the drop in whole-family attendance at movies
- the rise in real-estate prices, making big land areas unaffordable
- increased availability of VCR and DVD rentals, and then video-streaming services
- daylight saving causing later start times (in southern states).

The drive-in offers an experience that is midway between the private context of television and the formal, social experience of the cinema. The privacy of the car allows for companionable family viewing (even if the baby is crying). It also allows dating couples to be alone together. Yet merely the fact of being out and the size of the screen create a sense of occasion.



Courtesy Five Star Cinemas

Figure 7.12 Special viewings, where people come in classic cars and rockabilly costumes, are regularly held at the Yatala Drive-In, between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Drive-in cinemas were popular in Australia from the 1950s until the late 1970s. As a reception context, the drive-in is halfway between the private-space viewing of television and the public space of the multiplex cinema.

Television

Television is most associated with domestic and family life. Television is a constant presence in everyone's living room and many people's bedrooms. Television is viewed within the context of domestic routines, such as meal preparation and household chores. It can also be a site for negotiating family relations, as arguments develop over which programs are watched, or even who holds the remote control.

The effects of a television context can be assumed to include the following, allowing for individual exceptions:

- incomplete transportation into the narrative
- moment-by-moment identification, depending on other activities
- distracted presence.

Features of the reception context of television include the following:

- **Distracted attention.** The domestic surroundings of television mean that the viewer often experiences distraction. This can simply be the visual distraction of the (usually partially lit) room, or it can be the distraction of conversation and other activity.



Shutterstock.com/sirtravelalot

Figure 7.13 Television (and other small-screen devices) is characterised by a distracted reception context. People are often engaged in routine tasks while they watch and their attention is divided.

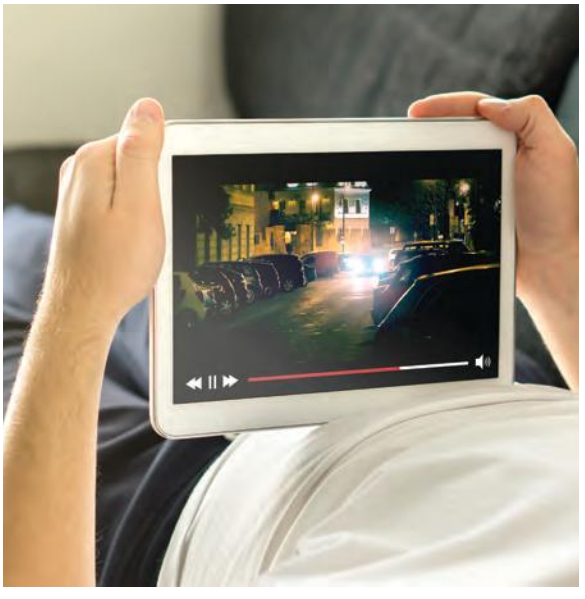
- **Smaller than life.** The activity around the television set can often appear larger than the screen itself. People themselves may take up more physical space as they walk past the screen going about their ordinary activities.
- **Channel context.** The same program can feel different if it is viewed on different channels. One obvious difference is the intrusion of ads on the commercial stations. There are also subtle brand differences and target audience differences between the stations. These can alter the viewing context.

The mobile phone

The smallest screen of all is the mobile phone. The mobile phone is often called the fourth screen, coming after cinema, television and computer screens.

The effects of a mobile phone context can be assumed to include the following, allowing for individual exceptions:

- 'snacking' style transportation into the narrative
- limited identification
- limited presence.



Shutterstock.com/Tero Vesalainen

Figure 7.14 The viewing context of the tablet or mobile phone creates 'snacking' style viewing that lasts only a few minutes. Transportation is distracted, and identification and presence are limited. However, the so-called 'fourth screen' offers constant personal availability.

Digital games

Originally, video games suffered from limitations in technology. The gaming aesthetic, in its original design, was of a pixelated appearance. The gaming environments of *The Legend of Zelda, Mario Bros.*, *Pac-Man, Prince of Persia* and *Gauntlet* all carried a simplicity akin to Saturday morning cartoons. Even the narratives were simple. Thus, early video games were perceived as a culturally immature medium. Cinematic literacy is the new currency of contemporary gaming, transforming the medium into art. Games can now offer viewers the same visual clarity as the cinema screen while delivering an equally engaging experience.

Actors perform character roles in motion-capture suits to provide more realism in gaming environments. Composers write symphony musical scores, complete with character motifs. However, the shift in dynamics from medium to art form can also be linked to other new emphases.

Viewer engagement is much more complex and active since the game controller places gamers in the heart of action. However, experiencing the environment of a video game can be so powerful that games can be said to have a psychological effect on viewers. Video games are cleverly designed now to manipulate experience in the viewer. Narratives produce situations that offer increasing but manageable levels of difficulty Players derive satisfaction from solving the problems offered in the narrative.

The video game experience for the audience includes the following:

- immersion
- identification in some narrative-based games and first-person shooters
- kinaesthetic involvement
- strong presence.

Audience background as context

Certain aspects of the audience can influence the reception that a media text gets. These can include the background knowledge of the audience members, and the personal experiences and empathy of the audience members.



Shutterstock.com/Featureflash Photo Agency

Figure 7.15 Can-can dancers from the Paris Folies Bergère at the premiere of the Baz Luhrmann film *Moulin Rouge!* (2001). Popular songs from a number of different eras have been included in the soundtrack of this musical. When the audience hears them, their background knowledge, memories and associations are triggered.

Audience background knowledge

Now that you're older, have you watched *The Simpsons* (1989–) and understood its layers of meaning much better than you did as a child? This is a reception context change based on audience background knowledge. Audience background knowledge consists of several factors, including the following:

- **Knowledge of culture.** If you have a good knowledge of other movies, television programs and books, you will be able to take in more of the meaning in a text. This is especially true in a text with a lot of intertextuality, such as *The Simpsons*.
- **Intertextuality.** (see page 17) This is one way that *The Simpsons* uses audience background knowledge to enhance meaning. Intertextuality can be thought of as the textual equivalent of cross-referencing. It refers to the ways in which any one text is woven into the whole culture and operates as a link to many other texts. It is also a reading practice carried out by audiences. The ability of the audience to use their familiarity with other texts is a skill built up as cultural knowledge develops. By drawing on references to other texts, audiences are able to derive more complex and enjoyable meanings.
- **Knowledge of the codes and conventions of media texts within your own culture.** This is another important aspect of background knowledge and explains why it is sometimes difficult to understand many of the meanings in films from foreign cultures.
- **Knowledge of history, politics and so on.** The more general knowledge you have, the more you are able to make sense of a range of media texts.
- **Knowledge of an event or setting.** A film set somewhere you know well will 'click' or resonate with you in a special way. The same thing applies if you are familiar with or were involved in a particular event. For example, *Animal Kingdom* (2010) is based on real events in Melbourne in the late 1980s: the so-called Walsh Street murders. Older audience members who were in Melbourne at the time will remember those events. This will affect their expectations of the storyline, their identification with the characters, and their overall reception of the movie.



Getty Images/Dream Pictures

Figure 7.16 Different national cinemas have different codes and conventions. Unless you have the background knowledge, your reception of foreign films may be minimal. For instance, a musical segment appears in almost all Bollywood films irrespective of the genre. Even action or crime genres can have musical breaks.

Audience experience and empathy

Have you ever wondered why some people cry during sad movies, while others remain totally unmoved? There are a host of reasons why this could happen, including:

- gender differences in the expression of emotion (or in the freedom to express emotion)
- varying degrees of transportation
- different degrees of identification
- different experiences, capacities and types of empathy.

Audience experience

Everyone comes to a film or television program with their own set of life experiences and a unique life history. The reception of the narrative depends on recent as well as long-term experience.

Audience empathy

If you feel you can 'walk a mile in another's shoes' then you have empathy. Empathy is different from sympathy, which just means being able to feel sorry for someone. Sympathy does not mean putting yourself in another's shoes. Narrative transportation and identification require a degree of empathy. Empathy has four dimensions, according to Professor Mark Davis of Eckerd College, Florida.

- **Perspective taking.** This is the ability to take on the point of view of another in a film or television program. Perspective taking is an intellectual ability that allows you to see how things would look from another person's perspective.
- **Fantasy empathy.** Putting yourself into the shoes of a fantasy character is a form of identification. It differs slightly from perspective taking because it requires you to think you *are* that character in the narrative. Fantasy is also an intellectual ability. Some studies have found that people who are high in fantasy empathy ability can have trouble sleeping after seeing disturbing movies.
- **Empathic concern.** Feeling concern for another's distress is an emotional response. Some studies have shown that viewers high in this kind of empathy are more likely to experience negative emotions when the protagonist in a film undergoes some kind of suffering.
- **Personal distress.** This is a feeling of distress or discomfort in the presence of another's suffering.

What is not yet clear in narrative research is why people high in empathy can watch sad or terrifying movies and yet rate the experience as enjoyable.

7.3 ACTIVITIES

1 The modern multiplex still tries to make the cinema experience a special one.
Symbolise a plan of your local multiplex and **represent** on the plan all the features that create a sense of occasion.
Explain each of them, **clarifying** their likely effect on the audience and **demonstrating** why you think the cinema went to the expense of including them.

2 Research images of famous cinemas from the early days of the movie theatre (before television).
Construct a list of features that seem to have disappeared, and a separate list of those that appear to have survived.
Explain why you think this is so, giving reasons that **clarify** your answer.

3 In pairs, discuss the difference in the experience of viewing the same movie at the cinema and again on your television or computer screen.
Explain your experiences to each other and **provide examples** to **illustrate** them. Share the outcome of your discussion with the class.

4 Search for the closest drive-in cinema to you. Find out what they are offering to enhance the viewing context and to make the experience more attractive.
Survey the class to find out what they would need to encourage them to go to the drive-in.
Analyse the results of the class survey or discussion. Consider the information in responses to each individual discussion point. Combine the outcome of these responses and **make a judgement** about the viability of each based on cost effectiveness and audience appeal.
Construct a list of enhancements to the viewing context that the existing owners may not have thought of, and which you believe would attract a larger audience.

5 **Construct** a list of ways a filmmaker could compensate for the distracted viewing context of television. Consider specific **codes and conventions** (such as shot size) and also aspects of the story structure.

WAYS AUDIENCES 'READ' TEXTS

Except for cinema audiences, media audiences are largely invisible and unidentifiable. This makes them different to the audience that might turn up to the theatre or a music concert. People who consume media also rarely identify themselves as part of an audience. They tend to consume alone and in the private spaces of their home or car, not thinking that they are connected to (often) millions of others.

Audiences create meaning

Over many years, we have come to change the way we think about how audiences (or readers) make meaning from texts. The location where meaning is created has gradually moved down from the producer to the text and now to the consumer.

- **Ancient and medieval times.** Meaning was considered divine and 'set in stone'. Texts such as the Bible were the word of God. As an all-powerful producer, God's writings were unquestioned – the audience just had to work out what the producer meant. The Church claimed it could help them get it right.
- **Modern times.** Meaning was thought of as being in the text itself. A close reading of the text would allow audiences to get the full meaning. It didn't matter too much what the author thought or what other critics might think – the meaning was available in the text if you looked hard enough.
- **Post-modern times.** Today we consider that the meaning is created by the audience or the reader. In post-modern times, it is accepted that the meaning a person draws from a text is a combination of their own interpretations and shared cultural meanings within the text.

How do audiences 'read' texts?

If meanings are produced by audiences (or readers) and all of them are different, how can anyone know what a text might mean? Theories about audiences or readers suggest that there is much common ground in communication as well. This is because we make our 'readings' from within our culture in which some meanings are shared – for example, in western culture that red means danger. The theories suggest it is possible to take a number of different and even contradictory viewpoints or readings of a text at the same time.

Encoding–3.5 theory

British Cultural Studies theorist Stuart Hall proposed that at least three main audience reading perspectives are possible:

- **Preferred or dominant readings.** These are the readings that are closest to those intended by the producers of the text. If your life experiences and ideas are similar to those expressed in the text, there will be nothing to clash with. For example, if you were a police officer watching a crime drama, you would probably find it easier to arrive at a preferred reading. In reality, however, a complete and exact preferred reading is impossible.
- **Negotiated readings.** These are made when mental negotiations are needed to overcome some disagreement with the text. For example, a woman watching a movie with a male hero has to put herself in his place. This takes a degree of mental negotiation. Someone with a recent speeding ticket may enjoy a crime drama, but still experience minor resentment toward police officers. Everyone has to mentally negotiate a reading to some extent.



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Figure 7.17 A woman watching a movie with a male hero may have to identify with him or put herself in his place, and therefore has to undertake a degree of mental negotiation.

- **Oppositional or resistant readings.** These are made when the audience member finds their own life experiences are at odds with the views in the text. For example, crime dramas are often read oppositionally in prisons. For the inmates, the 'bad guys' are the 'good guys'. Prisoners might cheer when the criminals get away and boo when the police catch them.



Getty Images/Thinkstock

Figure 7.18 Prisoners watching television in a US prison. A crime drama may be read oppositionally in prison, where the police may be seen as the bad guys.



Alamy Stock Photo/Photo 12

Figure 7.19 An American watching *Desperate Housewives* (2004–2012) in Los Angeles would understand the program rather differently compared with an Australian watching it in Oodnadatta. The Australian would probably make a more negotiated reading, entering into more of a fantasy land.

Cinematic stances

When a viewer engages with the screen, they are positioned into a particular kind of cinematic stance or viewing position, says Associate Professor Damian Cox of the University of Queensland. Cinematic stances come from the mental processes the viewer is undertaking. A viewer's engagement with the screen text is complex, and dependent on their cinematic stance at the time. Shifting across the different cinematic stances is quite normal when viewing – this is part of the uniqueness of the viewing experience.

Viewers might suspend disbelief to emotionally invest with story, but moments later will put that aside to think about the camera or an actor. As a result, each viewing event offers a rich set of experiences and understandings. There are four cinematic stances that a viewer might shift across, according to Cox.

1 **Belief–disbelief.** The viewer strikes a balance between an inattention to the fictionality of the screen text, and an inattention to disbelief (the movie is not the real world). Viewers are convinced of the reality of the screen text and quarantine the fact that it is nonsense. And yet they don't scream '*Look out!*' to characters on the screen – because they still register that it is fiction.
2 **Phenomenological.** In this stance, viewers see the screen text as a representation of real life experience or phenomena. Viewers may see the film as showing what happened in real life – for example, in a biographical or historical film. Or they may see the life problems it depicts as resembling those faced by themselves or people they know. This creates emotional investment and fascination. In the film *Touching the Void* (2003), for example, music, cinematography and editing combine in particular ways to represent what it is like to feel the hypothermia and dehydration that the main character is feeling. The scenes viewed on the screen are not actual experiences, but they are perceived as being *like* those experiences.
3 **Artefactual.** This is an acknowledgement of the degree to which a film is a construction: in other words, the conscious recognition, on behalf of the viewer, of the practices of editing, cinematography and *mise en scène* that combine in various ways to produce the moving image. In some cases this could involve appraisal, where the viewer spends time attributing value to something like performance, an actor, directing, the composer of the film etc. In addition, it could involve contemplating other filmic properties, such as colour temperature, saturation or fidelity.
4 **Intentional.** This is where the viewer perceives the film text as serving a cultural function. Generally this would involve a conscious acknowledgement of the connections between the film and everyday life, or the way in which ideology functions in the text. Thus Steven Spielberg's production *The Post* (2017) becomes a commentary on the relationship between US President Donald Trump and the American press. Nicholas Meyer's *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (1991) becomes a commentary on the Cold War in the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

How audiences read a narrative text

As you watch a film or television narrative, you pick up clues and build a mental picture (or mental model) of the whole story as you go along. This is the micro-world of the story, which includes the spatial setting and the chronological sequence of events in the plot. Each time a new event occurs, the viewer updates their mental picture of what is going on. At the same time, the viewer is going back over what they already know about the story.

'It is tempting to invoke the metaphor of a train moving along its tracks. But in this situation ... the tracks are not assembled until the train passes. In front of the train would lie unrelated pieces of rail, wooden ties, and railroad spikes. Behind it would be an intact railway. Under the train, representing the present moment in the narrative, the pieces are being put together and the track is being constructed as the narrative unfolds.'

Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic



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Figure 7.20 Union Pacific Railroad train crossing a wooden trestle bridge, circa 1868. The train represents your mental picture of the story. Ahead, the track is still being assembled. Events and narrative clues are represented by lengths of rail and wooden sleepers still to be put in place. Behind the train, the rail of the narrative is fully assembled and smoothly in place.

According to narrative specialists Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic, in order to view and understand a narrative text, audience members need to undertake the following steps:

1 Transport themselves into the story world.
2 Construct a mental model of the story as the events and clues are gradually built up.
3 Develop mental models of each of the characters and what they are like.
4 Position themselves at the centre of the situation.
5 Take on the perspective of the characters.
6 Follow through until the resolution.

7.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Gender can be one factor contributing to a person's negotiated understanding of a media text. Explore this with the cooperation of your classmates.
As a class, view a film with a strong message about gender, such as the classics *Thelma & Louise* (1991) or *The Piano* (1993). Survey questions might include:
- How did female members of the class feel about the characters? How did male members react to these characters?
- Which parts of the movie did males/females like the best and the least?
- With whom did the males/females identify? (To identify with someone is to put yourself 'in their shoes'.)

Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain survey **information** about the text you will use, the purpose and conditions, including sample questions. **Explain** survey **information** from class members on their readings of the film based on their gender identity. **Explain** the respondents, including information about age ranges, etc.	**Analyse** quantitative (numerical) results, **considering** them in percentages for each constituent part of the survey. **Analyse** qualitative (interview) results by **interpreting** responses and emotional reactions to events, **examining** any similarities or differences based on gender as a criterion.	**Appraise** results in order to interpret viewer responses to the text. **Appraise** results by **drawing conclusions** around the **significance** or **status** of gender-based responses.

2 Attempt to make a deliberately oppositional reading of a media text. An oppositional reading is one that is opposed to the view the producers intended. Follow the guidelines set out below.
   - Find a media text whose point of view you strongly disagree with. This could be a movie from an earlier era that is sexist or racist. It could be a television documentary promoting a negative view of young people and their subcultures.
   - View the media text. Note down your reactions at different places in the text.
   - Deliberately try to side with the group or point of view the producer is criticising.

   Explain how you arrived at the oppositional reading, referring to your reaction to specific parts of the media text, clarifying your responses and **providing examples** that **illustrate** your responses.
3 View a movie or television program filmed and set in Queensland.
   Explain your opinion on whether this helps you to 'go along with the story'. **Identify** times in the movie when the Queensland setting seemed to add something for you personally. **Clarify** how you think someone viewing the film in another country would react.
4 Consider a movie or television program where you have some obvious need to negotiate your reading. For example, it could be that the main character is a different gender to you, or it could be that you disagree with some aspect of the narrative.
   Analyse your reactions as you negotiated your way through this, **interpreting** them in relation to constituent scenes. **Make a judgement** about what was important to you: the story or your reservations. **Evaluate** the difficulty or ease of negotiating – did it require effort, or did you do it almost unthinkingly?
5 **Construct** an illustration of a selected film or television narrative as a railway line with a train. Label the progress of the plot along the track as each event happens. Place the train at a suitable point to **represent** the mental model someone is building up of the story as they progress through the narrative. **Explain** how your illustration works for that particular text, **providing information** and **examples** to help with **understanding**.

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8

Representations in moving-image media stories



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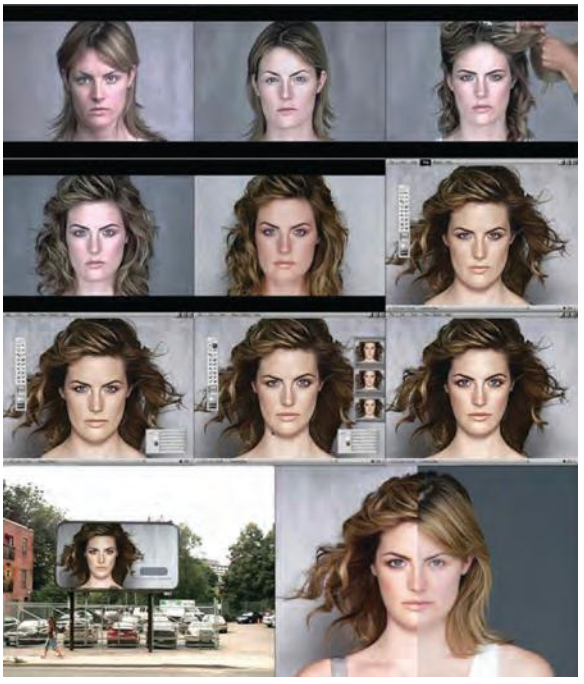
ABOUT REPRESENTATION

Ninety-five per cent of characters killed in films and television entertainment shows are men. In action movies, horror movies and Westerns, most of these males are dispatched without any mourning.

8.1.1 Diversity in broadcasting
8.1.2 TV broadcasting data and research

On the other hand, after decades of modern feminism, more than 30 per cent of advertising still portrays women as slim, blonde and less than 30 years old. A different standard applies to men. At least half the men were portrayed as being over 30, according to a survey by the Broadcasting Standards Council in Britain. Male actors are frequently dark haired, in contrast to the typical blonde woman. In advertising, only 11 per cent of men are slim and muscular, the remainder being a variety of body weights. While a male ideal definitely exists, men are 'allowed' a greater range of body types. And in an interesting tradition, again according to the Broadcasting Standards Council, women are almost never shown in the driver's seat when men and women travel together.

It is not only gender analysts who are crying foul over characterisation in the media. Members of commonly portrayed professions are also irritated.



© Unilever

Figure 8.1 Shots from the Dove Evolution campaign showing how an ordinary woman was transformed into a glamorous media image. The media representation is not the same as real life; instead it is a selected, constructed, even Photoshopped re-presentation of it.

While 20 per cent of male television characters are involved in law enforcement, this applies to only 1 per cent of real-life men. Police officers say the result is that the media often give the public unrealistic expectations.

The media do not present reality – they represent it by offering a selection of reality. In the case of television, the scriptwriter, camera operator, editor and producer all make selections and changes. Newspaper stories go through a similar process of selection involving the journalist, subeditor and editor.

Media products, consisting of only a selection of manufactured ideas, are not the same as lived experience. This manufactured version is based on the values of the producers and, in turn, the values of the larger society and culture. The media version is said to be not a presentation but a 're-presentation'.

A media **representation** is a depiction, a likeness or a constructed image. It is how the media show the world as they see it – it is their version of reality. It is useful to think of a media image as being constructed in the same way that a building or bridge is constructed – out of lots of parts, and by teams of people. A media representation is created through a series of choices and selections made by the producers. It is constructed or built out of these choices, and then re-presented to audiences. Each media form has its own way of constructing representations, and therefore there will be differences in representations across media forms because of this factor alone.

Media representations can be thought of as resembling reality, rather than actually being real. However, it is possible for an individual to decide that some representations may be closer to their own experiences than others. Audiences interpret media representations and create their own meanings from them based on their own experiences of the world.

Representation can also refer to the processes the media use to create media products. In this usage, it refers to how the media text is constructed and how meaning is communicated.

Types of representations

Representations can be grouped into categories that regularly appear in the media. A representation can depict:

- individual people as themselves (such as the prime minister in a news story)

8.1.3 What is representation?

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Figure 8.2 (a) The representation in this image of a family from the 1950s suggests the woman's place is in the home. The man's role is to provide financially and allows a minimum of involvement in family life. (b) A 1990s image of a family includes the father within the family circle and suggests through body language and clothing that the mother is an equal partner in all things, probably including employment. However, the family is still represented as a conventional nuclear family. (c) This modern image of a family suggests that single parenthood may be a likelihood, while maintaining the possibility that the rest of the family is elsewhere in the house. The portrayal of the father as a potential single parent is an innovation on the typical portrayal of a woman as the single parent.

- individual people as characters (such as the US president in the 1996 film *Independence Day*)
- social groups (such as age groups, gender groups or racial groups)
- institutions or organisations (such as the government)
- ideas (such as law and order or unemployment)
- events (such as European settlement of Australia or the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001).

A representation can be a single image, a sequence of images or a whole program, written words, spoken words or song lyrics.

How representations work

Representations invite audiences to understand them and agree with them in certain preferred ways. However, depending on the audience, different interpretations are to some extent possible.

Representations work in the following ways:

- **A representation consists of repeated elements.** The more we see these elements repeated, the more the representation will appear to be natural or normal.
- **We are invited either to identify with or to recognise the representation.** Producers of the media representation may have a view of the world that is similar to our own. If their representation fits in with our view of who we are, we may choose to identify with it. This happens, for example, when a movie invites us to imagine ourselves in the role of an appealing character. On the other hand, the producers may see a person, idea or event as somehow foreign or different from them. We will then be invited to recognise the representation from our own experience. A program might invite us to identify with the lawyer hero, for example, but will ask us only to recognise the law-breaking young thugs.
- **The media make categories of people, events or ideas.** Categories include labels such as 'the unemployed', 'the aged' or 'businessmen'. The war in Iraq, for example, becomes 'another Vietnam'. Representations are generalisations about categories and why events, ideas or people belong in them. These categories then become part of our thinking processes.
- **Representations contain a point of view.** The meaning in a representation will be selected and constructed, already containing built-in value judgements. All representations contain the point of view of the people who made them.
- **Representations have a mode of address.** Hidden behind the apparent naturalness of the representation will be some assumptions about who you are. For example, a news item about youth may address you in a manner that assumes you are a middle-aged businessperson rather than a young person.

Selection, construction and omission

Representations are presented to an audience after a process of selection, construction and omission. Selection of some elements over others means that only certain aspects of the chosen actuality are depicted. Omission of other elements means that different sides of the story are not presented. Omissions are sometimes referred to as 'silences'. It is the choice of the people producing the representation whether or not to leave out certain elements. Often they do this because those elements do not support the point of view they want to convey.



Getty Images/Los Angeles Times/Luis Sinco

Figure 8.3 The representation and the reality can be two quite different things. This 2006 campaign poster in the US was prepared by feminist culture jammers Guerrilla Girls (see 'culture jamming'). 'We took Kong, gave him a sex change and a designer gown, and set her up in Hollywood, just a few blocks from where the Oscars will be awarded,' they said. As for the Oscar: 'We redesigned the old boy so he more closely resembled the white males who take him home each year!'

Construction of a representation is always a human activity. It is not possible for a representation to be assembled without human involvement. Therefore, the representation will always contain a human point of view or perspective. Producers construct representations to suit their own purposes and to appeal to audiences.

Questioning representations

To be more critically aware of a representation, the following six questions need to be asked:

1 Who made it?
2 When was it made?
3 What are its purposes?
4 Who benefits from the representation or whose point of view does it support?
5 Who does not benefit or whose point of view is not considered?
6 Who or what is not shown?

Analysing representations

There are at least four main ways of analysing representations, according to sociologist Eoin Devereux. These are:

- **Codes and conventions.** Representations can be understood by analysing the technical and symbolic codes that are used to communicate (see chapter 13). For instance, the representation of women in the 'girl power' phenomenon of the late 1990s and early 2000s can be analysed by looking at the symbolic codes of costume, and also the technical codes of shot angle and shot size.
- **Discourses.** Understanding the discourse that a representation is part of can help explain how it works (see 'discourses', chapter 9). For instance, it is easier to analyse representations of race or religion if you understand the discourse of such political issues as immigration or the 'war on terror'.
- **Framing.** A representation can be framed within a certain viewpoint or it can be shown only within a certain context. For example, in Australian commercial television, poverty is usually framed as an individual problem or perhaps just 'bad luck'.
- **Narrative analysis.** Often a person or an event can be packaged as belonging to a certain kind of familiar story or pattern. In this way, for instance, whole nations can be represented as 'bad guys' or 'good guys' because it fits the pattern of many Hollywood movies.

Stereotypes

The word **stereotype** comes from the printing trade. Stereotyping was the creation of a solid metal printing plate that exactly duplicated a

tray of movable type, the letters of which had to be placed one by one. Until the invention of the stereotype, this movable type had to be reset if a second printing was needed. The stereotype revolutionised printing, allowing cheap editions of books to be made.

A stereotype now means an oversimplified, clichéd image, repeated so many times that it seems to have established a pattern. It is a highly judgemental type of representation. In the same way that the image on the metal printing plate is fixed and repeated from the original, so the modern stereotype is often applied whatever the circumstances.

One well-known female stereotype is the dumb blonde, and a common male stereotype is the foolish, incompetent father. The history of the media provides a long list of stereotypes, including the housewife, the nuclear family and the action hero.

Stereotypes and representations

Stereotypes are an extreme form of representation. They are constructed by a process of selection. Certain aspects are focused on and then exaggerated. At the same time, an evaluation is made and the audience is invited to make a judgement, which is often based on prejudice. Repetition establishes stereotypes and, over time, allows them to appear 'natural'.

In the extreme, stereotypes can become caricatures resembling cartoons. Jokes, cartoons and comedies rely on stereotypes because they are instantly recognisable – a kind of shorthand that everyone understands.

Many groups in society have stereotypes associated with them. These contain limited and distorted views. For example, in a study of the image of scientists, Dr Roslynn Haynes of the University of Tasmania came up with six stereotypes that have existed since the 1500s. These are:

- the evil scientist or alchemist (Dr Strangelove)
- the noble scientist (Einstein-like characters, common in 1950s films)
- the absent-minded scientist (Professor Brainard in *Flubber* [1997])
- the inhuman researcher (Rotwang in *Metropolis* [1927])
- the adventurer (Dr Grant in *Jurassic Park* [1993])
- the crazed scientist whose projects get out of control (Dr Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll).

Stereotyping is often evident when there is a power imbalance between members of society. Relations between men and women, for example, can encourage the development of stereotypes on both sides. In the same way, disadvantaged minority groups often have stereotypes associated with them.

Counter-stereotypes

Many groups of people suffer from negative portrayals in the media. Since the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, certain minority groups have been able to demand more of a voice and a more positive portrayal. In Australia, various ethnic groups and, to some extent, Indigenous people have met with some success in demands for more positive portrayals.

Counter-stereotypes and representations

A **counter-stereotype** is a portrayal that deliberately sets out to change an earlier representation or seeks to portray a group in a positive light. There is debate about whether counter-stereotypes are a good or bad thing. Some argue that they can empower or help minority groups. Others have argued that counter-stereotypes hinder the progress of minority groups because the positive portrayals often hide the real difficulties that these groups encounter.

Counter-stereotypes can also encounter audience resistance and work to uphold the traditional portrayal. The humour of the character Token Black in *South Park* (1997–) is partly based on this factor.



Alamy Stock Photo/Comedy Central/Everett Collection

Figure 8.4 The characters Eric Cartman and Token Black from *South Park* (1997–). There is debate about whether counter-stereotypes help or hinder minority groups.

There are two main factors behind the rise of counter-stereotypes:

- **Economic power.** When a group gains sufficient spending power to convince advertisers to target it, media representations often change in response. For instance, the African-American market in the US is strong enough to have encouraged more television and film producers to portray the lives of African Americans and depict them as three-dimensional characters.
- **Political power.** Some groups have been able to use legislation or community pressure to achieve a more positive representation. Women's groups initially used the political process but are now recognised as an important economic force as well.

8.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Images, ideas and representations have a history. Search through old television programs (on DVD or YouTube) or old magazine advertisements to find representations that no longer fit today's cultural and social context. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the imagery in the representation, **identifying** key aspects of the representation. **Provide additional information** about **examples** from the program or ad that seem outdated. **Identify** the use of particular **codes and conventions** in the representation.	**Analyse** each **constituent part** of the representation, considering its connotations and denotations, and interpreting their meanings. **Evaluate** the 'fit' with today's representations and values, **considering** the **strengths and limitations** of the representation in today's terms.	**Appraise** the worth or status of the representation to audiences of the time, considering what you know about society at that time. **Draw conclusions** about the **significance** of the representation as an example of changed community values.

2 Modern representations may come to look as dated in the future as 1950s representations do today. Examine some modern representations using the six questions detailed in this section (see page 180). **Explain** your responses to each question, **demonstrating** your understanding and referring to **particular characteristics** of the representation.
Analyse some representations (such as images of youth) across different media and compare the results in each media platform or medium. Representations could be chosen from Table 8.1. **Examine** each **constituent part** of the representation to **interpret** the meanings and **consider** how they change depending on the platform.

Table 8.1 Suggested media representations for analysis

REPRESENTATION CATEGORY	SPECIFIC EXAMPLES
People	Politicians, movie or rock stars, sports personalities, historical characters
Groups	Occupations, families, youth groups, political groups
Places	Tourist destinations, city versus country, local regions, overseas countries
Ideas	Law and order, the future, political points of view, the environment

3 Select a theme and explore its representation across several different media or over time. Themes could include age, gender, race or social class.
Analyse the representations, **examining** each **constituent part** of the representation to **interpret** the meanings and **consider** how they are portrayed across different media or across time.
Explain the results of your investigation, giving examples to illustrate your points.

4 Search online and find examples of stereotypes.
Explain the way they express their point of view through various features. **Identify** the **particular qualities** and **characteristics** that are used to communicate the point of view. For example, a five-o'clock shadow (darkly stubbled cheeks) on a cartoon character suggests criminal associations.

5 Review the current cast of television characters across a range of programs and evaluate whether any of them is a counter-stereotype.
Analyse their role in the program, and **consider** the **constituent parts** of the character and the connotations of these.
Explain your decision, **clarifying** the meaning of the role.

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6 Research the development and changes in a particular representation over several stages in a historical period. Prepare a five-minute oral presentation. Present your findings to the class in the form of a lecture or seminar.
Analyse the representation at each stage over the time period, **interpreting** the viewpoints and ideologies they contain. **Consider** the social and cultural contexts that created the representations.
Explain your findings, including television or film excerpts to **illustrate** points as you make them.

7 Select one of the following topics, and then create an advertisement in a medium of your choice (such as a magazine or radio advertisement). Note that your advertisement does not have to be for a product directly related to the representation. For example, a television advertisement for chocolate bars used a rowdy classroom of primary schoolers sneaking chocolate under the desk while a kindly but incompetent teacher attempted to begin the lesson. In this example, a negative representation of a teacher was used to sell a totally unrelated product.
Synthesise an advertisement based on a selective, positive representation of a group that mainstream culture has failed to represent fairly. A model for this could be the positive advertising representations of women in positions of power or with successful careers. Try this for another under-represented group, **combining elements** into a video and **solving problems** as you create.
Synthesise an advertisement for a magazine of your choice based on a selective negative representation of a group that has always enjoyed safe, positive representation from mainstream culture. For example, doctors are often represented as wise, concerned, self-sacrificing care givers. Businesspeople have also tended to enjoy positive representation, as have teachers. Try this for another over-represented group, **combining elements** into a video, **solving problems** as you create.

8 Dress as a well-known stereotype and photograph yourself. Repeat the process for several other stereotypes until you have a folio of five or six images.
Explain each stereotype and indicate its defining features. Point out where you have seen the stereotype before.

REALISM AND REPRESENTATIONS

The human brain is set up to believe that 'seeing' and 'existence' or 'reality' are the same thing. This gives us a special problem when it comes to our understanding of media representations. Seeing something in the media is not the same as being there, even though we may feel we have experienced it.

Mediation is the process through which the difference between the media representation and the real world is created. Mediation happens at each stage of media production as representations are selected and constructed. This is the human factor in creating representations.

It is only through our knowledge of the constructed nature of media representations that we can separate out the media portrayal from actuality. According to Torben Grodal (author and professor emeritus of Film Studies at the University of Copenhagen), to do this we need three understandings:

1 an understanding of the media representation (gained by watching a film, for example)
2 an understanding of what the 'real' world looks like (from daily life)
3 an understanding of the differences and similarities between the representation and the real world.

Realism is the degree of perceived closeness between the media text and the reality it depicts. The degree of similarity between our knowledge of the real world and what we see in the media representation will determine whether or not we see the representation as realistic. Thus, the role of the audience is crucial. They need to connect with the media text and reference it to their own lives. Each audience member has to decide if the media text is real enough for them. The realism of a media text is a very important part of our relationship with it. It applies to news when we ask, 'How true is it?' It also applies to films or television dramas when we ask, 'How lifelike is it?' Some media texts, such as animations, can look completely unrealistic and yet be accepted because other aspects are believable.

Hyper-reality is an idea proposed by Jean Baudrillard (1927–2007), a French philosopher. He suggested that eventually we might become so unable to distinguish the media image from the real thing that the two would blend together into something he called hyper-reality. In hyper-reality,

people may find themselves so closely involved in the media world (or the virtual world), that they lose connection with the physical world.



Getty Images/Marcio Machado

Figure 8.5 More real than real, Disneyland is often suggested as an example of hyper-reality where it seems more desirable to live in the fake world than the real one outside.

How representations are seen as realistic

Representations are gradually accepted by society by being repeated often enough, and by appearing to be realistic.

Naturalisation

If something is repeated often enough, we will come to see it as normal and realistic. This process is called **naturalisation**. For instance, in the Middle Ages when it was thought that the Sun rotated around the Earth, the idea seemed completely normal and supported by observable 'facts'. The idea was repeated so often that it was completely naturalised and to suggest anything else was seen as traitorous.

Naturalisation is often assisted by power relationships. The more a media text is aligned with the views of the powerful in society, the more readily it will be accepted as realistic. Sufficient backing from other powerful sources will allow even quite unrealistic representations to be accepted as realistic. Other media texts that contain the same depictions can also lend support to the naturalisation process – there is strength in numbers, and audiences may be convinced.



8.2.1 Suspension of disbelief

Suspension of disbelief

Belief in the story world is necessary when watching a moving-image media production. This is the **suspension of disbelief**. Whatever reservations people have about the story, they tend to put them aside just to let the story progress. This can also mean accepting the representations that are depicted in the story. It is necessary to do this to some extent in order to keep watching.



Shutterstock.com/bbernard

Figure 8.6 The media do not provide a direct 'window on the world' that shows exact reality. Instead, audiences are persuaded to suspend disbelief. Then, through the processes of mediation and naturalisation, audiences come to accept that media representations are realistic, although not real.

Types of realism in media representations

Media texts can display several different types of realism that allow them to be accepted by audiences:

- **Surface realism.** If the basic details look similar to those of real life, audiences will find it easier to match their own ideas of reality to what they see in the media text. If it looks right and sounds right, then it is easy to assume that it must *be* right.
- **Descriptive realism.** When a lot of effort is put into describing things, the sheer volume of detail can convince people. Film, for example, is easily able to do this. There is so much detail even in a single shot that audiences can feel like they are actually there.
- **Emotional realism.** If the reactions of the characters to the events they are going through are similar to what audience members might feel in their own lives, audiences will accept the representation. The characters have to be believable.
- **Narrative realism.** What happens in the story will determine whether audiences accept the

representation. There is no use in having a believable setting and believable emotions if the chain of events is unrealistic.

- **Content realism.** News and documentary programs often present this kind of realism. They show reportable events happening in real locations.
- **Technical production realism.** The more the technical production is able to make the representation resemble the lived experience of audience members, the more realistic it is assumed to be. Examples of this include:
  - **Shot sizes and angles.** An eye-level shot may be seen as more realistic than an extreme high angle shot, simply because it is more like human experience.
  - **Transitions.** A zoom may seem less realistic because the human eye cannot perform this action. A fade to black may be accepted because it is similar to blinking or falling asleep.
  - **Sound.** Noise from what is assumed to be the real world will be accepted more readily than an orchestral score accompaniment.
  - **Lighting.** Natural-looking lighting will heighten the audience members' sense of realism.
  - **Computer generated imagery (CGI).** Even fantastical creatures and events can be given believability using CGI.

Blurred realism

Blurred realism refers to the way in which documentary techniques and fiction filmmaking are coming together stylistically. Fiction filmmakers are using certain techniques in an attempt to bring a sense of documentary-style authenticity to the representation. The techniques include available lighting (instead of 3-point lighting), handheld camera work, surveillance-style footage, loosely scripted dialogue and shots edited in a rough manner without any thought given to match-on-action or continuity.

The handheld camera, poor focus and haphazard composition normally reserved for documentary was strategically employed in *The Bourne Identity* (2002) and *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004). Many critics argued that the substitution of this crude and awkward cinematography brought the audience a step closer to 'being there' – having a actual lived experience of events. The formal style of classic cinematography was seen as distancing for the audience.

The use of surveillance-style footage in *Paranormal Activity* (2007) operated in a similar fashion, shifting the nature of the otherworldly from possible to plausible. The intensity of the climax is certainly informed by the assumption that surveillance footage features unmodified events. For viewers, the climax is not just about the revelation of a ghost for the purposes of story but a documentation of a legitimate paranormal event. Ghosts are suddenly 'real'.

Realist aesthetics are increasingly appearing in cinema, indicating that filmmakers are acknowledging the persuasive power in this kind of convergence. Realist aesthetics originate from documentary and have functioned as a part of the documentary form for many decades. Viewers are already familiar with many of these techniques and their associated meanings.

When realist aesthetics appear in fiction films, viewers have a tendency to interpret the communication with a sense of seriousness usually given to news or documentaries. As a result, their emotional investment becomes more intense. More and more filmmakers are discovering the advantages that realist aesthetics bring to the practice of storytelling and successful audience engagement.

8.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Make a list of films or television programs that have been set in locations that you are familiar with.
Explain whether your familiarity with the area makes the media text more or less realistic for you.
2 Refer to each of the listed types of realism.
Construct a list of media texts that relied on that type to convince the audience.
Explain your reasoning for including the text in your list.

REPRESENTATION AND REAL LIFE

How far away are media representations from real life? In the words of communications professor David Morley at the University of London, media representations are '… chronically overpopulated by professionally successful, physically fit, white, sexually attractive middle and upper-class people'.

Just what is considered to be 'real life' is enormously difficult to define, even if it seems a

relatively simple idea. The discipline of philosophy has grappled with the question of 'reality' for thousands of years. A modern view of this question is that reality and real life are mediated in the same way that the media are. We do not experience life as some objective experience, but instead we have our view of reality passed on to us (or mediated) by other people – parents, school, friends and so on. Every day that we interact with other people, we have our idea of reality constructed.

If it is hard to define reality, then comparing media representations to it is going to be a very difficult process. This difficulty is compounded because actual life exists just because it does, whereas media representations exist for very specific purposes. Representations are created to appeal to audiences, to entertain and to sell products. The two do not share a common purpose.

Making comparisons between representations and reality

Our real-life experiences are much more limited than our media experiences. Most media consumers never experience war, step inside a courtroom or undertake a car chase. Yet we are all familiar with the media representations of these things. How close to reality they are, most of us cannot say. In the same way, unless an Australian has actually been to the US, they have no way of knowing whether their favourite television show is close to real life, or far from it. It is the same with representations of the past; unless you lived in that time, you would have difficulty in comparing representation with reality.



Getty Images/The LIFE Images Collection/ Ronald L. Haeberle

Figure 8.7 American helicopters in 1968 during the Vietnam War flying over rice paddies looking for Viet Cong guerrillas. It is impossible to go back to the past, and there is no way of matching media representations to our own experience unless we have actually been there. Large amounts of what we know, which isn't first-hand experience, come from the media.

Just because it might be difficult to compare representations with reality or lived experience doesn't mean it isn't worth trying. There are other ways of gathering information about the world than by consuming media texts.

Statistics

The world represented in the media can be compared with the world according to collected facts and statistics. Statistics provide useful indicators about how people are living in the real world. Those who gather the data are completely outside media organisations and therefore have other purposes for the information. Statistics use collated data expressed in numbers collected from multiple (sometimes hundreds or thousands) of individual experiences.

There have been many studies of how the media world differs from the actual world. Often these are done by content analysis. The content of the media text has been compared to statistics from the real world in thousands of different areas, including the portrayal of women, men, different occupations, people of different age groups and so on.

One long-running study has been George Gerbner's Cultural Indicators Project. It began in 1967 and ran for more than 30 years. Every year it analysed one week of television viewing and scored the programs for hundreds of different aspects of life. The following are among its findings:

- In the 1970s, women made up only 27 per cent of the television world, increasing to about 35 per cent by the 1990s.
- In the 30-year period of the project, women were twice as likely to be portrayed as wives as men were to be portrayed as husbands.
- Older people in that 30-year period were four times less likely to appear on television than be present in real life.
- Poor and working-class people were 10 times less likely to appear on television than be present in real life.
- Doctors, lawyers and judges were vastly over-represented.
- Violence happened on television much more often than in real life, occurring four to six times an hour.
- Just 1 per cent of television characters were shown to have a mental illness, but 70 per cent of these were violent (real rates of violence among the mentally ill are low).

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Researchers Jake Harwood and Karen Anderson (2002) have investigated how often characters of a certain age range appear on US prime-time television compared with their frequency in the actual population according to United States Census data (US Census Bureau, 2010). Their findings are shown in Table 8.2.

Anecdotes and oral history

Another way of comparing media representations with reality is to investigate the stories of people who have direct experience of the events. Anecdotes are personal stories, and oral history is the collection of information through interviews, memoirs, personal recollections and so on.

Academic social analysis

Media representations can also be compared with the detailed investigations of society carried out by university academics or social commentators from various institutes set up for such purposes.

Table 8.2 Comparison of prime-time television character populations in selected age ranges compared to actual US populations in similar age ranges. Teenagers and young children are substantially under-represented. Characters in their 20s through to their 40s are over-represented.

AGE RANGE	PRIME-TIME TELEVISION PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF THE ACTUAL POPULATION ACCORDING TO US CENSUS DATA (AGE RANGES DO NOT MATCH EXACTLY)
0–9 years	1.9%	24%
10–18 years	9.7%	
19–34 years	40%	40%
35–44 years	27%	
45–64 years	18.7%	26%
65 years and over	2.5%	13%

8.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Compare the media portrayal of reality with statistics from a reliable source, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (see weblink). Choose an area of actuality for which statistics are widely available, such as female participation in the workforce or percentage of the population in certain occupations. **Analyse** the representations or portrayals of reality. **Examine** each **constituent part** of the media depiction and compare it with the statistical reality. **Make a judgement** about the **strengths and limitations** of the media portrayal based on the statistical research.

2 Interview a friend or family member who can remember a particular event, or even a suitable decade (such as the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s), and ask them to compare their memories with a film or television program that is set in the same decade.
Explain your findings, providing **additional information** about the event or topic, and **illustrating** it using your interviewee's examples and stories.

8.3.1 Australian Bureau of Statistics

REPRESENTATION OF GENDER

> 'Changes in television images have not always paralleled actual changes in society. Particularly with regard to the depiction of women, we can see how social values mediate between changes in the real world, the images that become available on television, and viewers' choices of television images to watch.'
>
> **Andrea Press**, Professor of Media Studies and Sociology, University of Virginia

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Mainstream media, and especially Hollywood, are often some distance behind changes in society. There have been many examples of this apart from how mainstream media depict gender. For instance, most of the anti-Vietnam War movies did not come out of Hollywood until the early 1980s, whereas the anti-war protests took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the war ended in 1975.

William F. Ogburn's theory of cultural lag states that different parts of modern culture do not change at the same rate. Some parts are changing rapidly and other parts slowly. But since everything is interrelated, a rapid change in one part will eventually require a change in the other parts.

Changes in gender portrayal

The breadth and depth of the various media make it difficult to generalise about gender portrayal, but content analysis provides a guide. Content analysis has been applied most widely to television but has also yielded some results for other media. The following are some of the findings, together with some of the opinions of media analysts.



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Alamy Stock Photo/Sony Pictures/ Everett Collection

Figure 8.8 James Bond (Sean Connery) in *From Russia With Love* (1963) and James Bond (Daniel Craig) in *Casino Royale* (2006). The James Bond films, which span decades, provide an opportunity to study changes in gender representation. The representation of the male hardly changes across 19 films, but the female portrayal is another matter. By the 1990s, Bond's boss is a woman and his love interests have included a martial arts expert and a nuclear scientist.

Pre-feminist era

Active and courageous women were portrayed in the media of the pre-feminist era. Many had careers or were portrayed as independently wealthy. However, the difference was that their world was limited because they were women, and stories often focused on how difficult they found the injustice of that.

1930s–1940s

Before the Second World War (1939–45), a great deal of film and magazine representation focused on women's role in the home. As the first celebrities of the Golden Era of Hollywood, women were also glamorised as fashion icons or sex sirens. There were also exceptions to these common representations. Screwball comedy films were popular around the time of the Great Depression (1929–33). They featured independent, somewhat madcap and often wealthy women who had encountered a working-class man. However, the 'battle of the sexes' that followed usually ended in the woman being tamed by marriage. Examples include *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) and *His Girl Friday* (1940).



Alamy Stock Photo/World History Archive

Figure 8.9 The pin-up girl of the feminist movement, Rosie the wartime factory worker from *Rosie the Riveter* (1944). She has been rated the 28th most influential representation ever created, and it is suggested that Rosie helped jump-start the women's liberation movement.

> 'Television has represented the American woman as a stupid, unattractive, insecure little household drudge who spends her martyred, mindless, boring days dreaming of love – and plotting nasty revenge against her husband.'
>
> **Betty Friedan,** author of *The Feminine Mystique*

During the Second World War, women entered the workforce in large numbers to support the war effort. Hollywood depicted women as 'keeping the home fires burning', but they were also depicted in factories and as combat nurses overseas. An example is the US wartime propaganda poster *Rosie the Riveter* (1944) publicising women at work in heavy engineering factories.

After the war, the media became obsessed with returning women to their 'proper place' in the household and converting men from daring soldiers to reliable breadwinners. The femmes fatales and amoral men of *film noir* called this effort into question.

1950s–1960s

While the coming of television created a different representation of women, the representation of men remained relatively constant. Advertising demanded that television appeal to the dreams of the moneyed middle class. Advertisers also didn't want anyone offended lest they decide not to buy their products.

Hollywood was forced to fight television for audiences. In the movies, the glamour of actresses such as Marilyn Monroe helped attract the crowds.

In the 1950s and 1960s, content analysis shows that only about 20 per cent of prime-time television characters were women. Few women on television were shown to be independent. Their existence was mostly bound up with their children and their husbands. They were most often pictured in the private space of the family home and were rarely involved in public affairs. An example is the television show *I Love Lucy* (1951–57). Try as she might to escape her housewife role, the sassy Lucy always ended up being humbled.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 8.10 Marilyn Monroe in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) helped Hollywood attract audiences back from television. But in the 1950s and 1960s, the portrayal of women was possibly more limiting than earlier representations.

Popular films of the era included the Westerns *High Noon* (1952) and *Shane* (1953). Television programs included *Bonanza* (1959–73) and *77 Sunset Strip* (1958–64). All of them focused on male heroes who were confident and in control. While women had important roles, they were often portrayed as frightened or in need of protection.

Little changed on television and in film during the 1960s, despite the changes happening in society and the rise of second-wave feminism. One content analysis study of television advertising found that 75 per cent of all ads showing a woman were for products used in either the kitchen or the bathroom.

The feminist era

1970s–1980s

Cultural lag meant that for much of the 1970s in television and film, little changed in the representation of women, despite feminism. For instance, in the movie *Superman* (1978), Lois Lane had a career as a reporter but the focus was still on the male hero. Women's representation as sex objects continued throughout the 1970s. Nevertheless, the actual numbers of women on prime-time television did increase. Content analysis studies show that women were more than twice as likely as men to be shown in the home. The launch of the magazines *Cleo* (1972) and *Cosmopolitan* (1973) took women away from the housewife images of most other magazines.

By the early 1980s, things had begun to change. On television, *Cagney & Lacey* (1981–88) starred two women as the central characters in a crime drama. In film, the character Ellen Ripley set a new standard for a female science-fiction hero in *Aliens* (1986). Meanwhile, a 1985 content analysis of television ads shows that men and women were appearing as central figures about an equal amount of the time. Women were appearing in work roles, and men were beginning to appear in family roles.

Table 8.3 Upward trend in women's share of prime-time TV characters in the 1970s and 1980s

YEAR	PERCENTAGE
1971	18.3
1974	27.8
1987	35.0

Men's representations also began to change after nearly 60 years of very narrowly limited depictions. The film *Three Men and a Baby* (1987) showed men in nurturing roles. Some action-movie heroes seemed to show greater sensitivity as well. But hyper-masculine action heroes such as Rambo also appeared in the 1980s.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 8.11 The character of Ripley in *Alien* (1979) and its sequel *Aliens* (1986) marked a turning point for the representation of women in film. As the protagonist of the films, and a fearless warrior, Sigourney Weaver's character battled on an equal basis with the men. Ripley set a trend for female characters in science-fiction films that followed.

1990s–2020s

8.4.1 Gender Bias without Borders 2015 report

> 'It could be said that in the 1990s, to a certain extent, program makers arrived at comfortable, not-particularly-offensive models of masculinity and femininity, which a majority of the public seemed to think were acceptable.'
>
> **David Gauntlett**, Professor of Media and Communications, University of Westminster

In the past 30 years there have been big changes in the media depictions of both men and women. A post-modern kind of feminism called third-wave feminism is a strong influence.

Thelma & Louise (1991) cast two women in the leading roles as fugitives in the traditional road-trip movie genre – the villain in the story being sexism. This had not been seen before. From the 1990s, films such as *The Long Kiss Goodnight* (1996) and *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001) cast women in leading roles in action movies. On television, crime dramas such as *Law & Order* (1990–2010) and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000–15) have both male and female leads.

A content analysis of magazines has found that women's bodies are still more often objectified than men's and more often shown as body parts. A recent analysis of prime-time television has found only 3 per cent of women were portrayed as housewives during prime time. Direct comparisons are not available, but in the 1970s 30 per cent of women were portrayed as housewives in daytime television.

In a 1995 content analysis of British television ads, men were shown for the first time cooking more often than women. Following a backlash from female consumers, advertisers were reluctant to show women doing housework. Only 7 per cent of ads showed women cleaning. However, many other aspects of gender representation were unchanged. Women were nearly always young and attractive. Only 10 per cent were aged over 40. Men were still more likely to be in paid employment.

A study by Jim Macnamara of the University of Western Sydney found that in the 2000s, 69 per cent of representations of males were unfavourable compared with just 12 per cent being favourable. When men were represented positively, it was often because they had 'embraced their feminine side', says Dr Macnamara.

8.4.2 Boys to Men: Media Messages about Masculinity

Male and female stereotypes

Male stereotypes

The following male stereotypes were identified in a report called *Boys to Men: Media Messages about Masculinity* by the Children Now organisation:

- **The joker.** This type can be seen in movies such as *Ghostbusters* (1984) or *Back to the Future* (1985).
- **The jock.** Often seen in horror movies as among the first to die, the jock demonstrates his power and strength to impress women.

- **The strong silent type.** This character is in charge, acts decisively, doesn't show emotion and always gets the girl. He is commonly seen in older action movies.
- **The big shot.** Seen in gangster movies but also in movies about business and the law, he is defined by his professional status.
- **The action hero.** Since the 1980s, the action hero has become a hyper-masculine caricature. He is aggressive and uses violence to achieve his goals.
- **The buffoon.** This figure appears as a bungling father figure in television ads and sitcoms.



Alamy Stock Photo/Atlaspix

Figure 8.12 Since the 1980s, the action hero has bulked up to become a hyper-masculine hero with an unrealistic penchant for brute force. This is a change from earlier representations of male heroes.

Female stereotypes

The main female stereotypes include the following:

- **The dumb blonde.** The blonde has a long history in the film and television industries, and there are various theories as to how the stereotype developed. She is seen as coming out of the myth that women can have beauty or brains but not both. The bimbo is a variation of the stereotype.
- **The femme fatale.** This deadly woman uses her sexuality to destroy men in order to further her own ends – it is not usually love she is after.
- **The girl next door.** This is the stereotype of the sweet and trusting young woman who is portrayed as the ideal marriage prospect.
- **Gold diggers and trophy wives.** These stereotypes perpetuate the myth that women marry for money and are reliant on men to support them.
- **The career woman.** Since the 1980s, the stereotype of the career woman has become increasingly common. She is successful but can also be ruthless.
- **The housewife.** Long the favoured stereotype on television, the housewife exists only to support her husband and children.
- **The soccer 'mom'.** This is a newer stereotype of the housewife. She has an overpowering desire for her children to succeed. She drives them everywhere and still has time to go to the gym.
- **The super mum.** This woman fits everything into her life: kids, career, husband, commuting and personal development.

You can view a gender representation timeline by following the weblink.

The Bechdel test

What became known as the Bechdel test first appeared in 1985 in the comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*, by American graphic artist and comedian Alison Bechdel. In the comic strip, one of the characters says she will not go to see a film unless it meets three criteria:

1 The film has to have at least two women in it.
2 The two women must talk to each other.
3 They must talk about something besides a man.

An online database devoted to applying the Bechdel test to movies has so far tested over 7500. Although it might seem easy to meet the criteria, around half of those films have failed to pass all three criteria. The Bechdel test has become well known worldwide since 2010. In Sweden in 2013, a cinema chain and cable television channel began using the test to rate some of their films. By 2017, two-thirds of the top 50 highest grossing films passed the Bechdel test.



Alamy Stock Photo/dpa picture alliance

Figure 8.13 The Bechdel test has become a famous means of testing whether a film is equality-friendly. Only about half of more than 7500 films so far tested fulfil its criteria. Cinema experts are divided about the value of the test.

Why many films are failing

Film critics list the following reasons many films fail the Bechdel test:

- **Fewer women behind cameras.** University of Southern California research shows that for the top 100 highest-grossing movies in 2012, just one in six directors, writers or producers were women. Figures for 2017 show barely any change.
- **Male-dominated blockbusters.** Many of the highest-grossing movies are action movies with male leads. Hollywood tends to replicate the formula to be sure of earning more money. Critics say that this does not give the audience much choice, forcing them to go to standardised movies.
- **Relationship to society.** Many feminists argue that women still face obstacles in society, and that films are reflecting that disadvantage. Only 11 per cent of lead characters (protagonists) in the top 100 highest-grossing films of 2011 were women, according to a study by the Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film. By 2017, this figure had risen to 24 per cent.

Limitations of the test

Many films with strong female leads, or films aimed at women, have failed the Bechdel test. *The Hurt Locker* (2008) was directed by Kathryn Bigelow, the first woman ever to win an Oscar for directing – but the film failed the Bechdel test. The film *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), directed by a woman and with a strong female lead, also fails – because all the conversations in the film centre around the hunt for one man: Osama bin Laden. The 3D science-fiction film *Gravity* (2013) has a strong lead female astronaut, but it fails the test because there are no other female characters. *Mulan* (1998) fails the test despite the main character leading an army of warriors, because most of the other characters are men and the women talk about Mulan's marriage.

Following are some limitations of the test:

- **Surface testing only.** Many films, television programs and video games could pass the Bechdel test if some small modifications were made. It could be as simple as inserting one scene. This does not represent a major change in the way women are depicted.
- **Passing on a technicality.** Many critics say that films or television programs that are not feminist at all can pass the test. The test is not able to investigate deeper issues around the portrayal of women. The test is not able to check for violence against women, or how women are treated more generally.
- **Too much focus on gender not character.** The test does not really look at character arcs or paths. The role of the characters in the movie is not examined.
- **Binary judgement.** The Bechdel is a pass/fail test that doesn't take complexity into account.

Table 8.4 Bechdeltest.com database statistics showing the breakdown of results after the criteria have been applied.

FILMS PASSING THE BECHDEL TEST ON ALL THREE CRITERIA	FILMS FAILING ALL THREE CRITERIA IN THE BECHDEL TEST	FILMS FAILING CRITERION TWO (THE WOMEN DON'T TALK TO EACH OTHER)	FILMS FAILING CRITERION THREE (THE WOMEN TALK ONLY ABOUT MEN)
56%	10%	23%	11%

8.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Use the Bechdel test to assess some of the top films released this year. Respond to the areas of investigation in the table below.

ANALYSE	APPRAISE	EXPLAIN
Analyse the films, dissecting and interpreting the speaking roles to **evaluate** them using the Bechdel criteria. **Make a judgement** as to whether or not the films pass the test – and whether they pass the test fully or pass just some or none of the **criteria**.	**Appraise** the films according to whether they have **worth** independent of the Bechdel test, and whether women still play **significant** roles on-screen or in production.	**Explain** the reasons for your decisions, giving **additional information** that demonstrates the process you went through, and **illustrate** with examples.

2 Try conducting a 'reverse Bechdel test' in relation to the portrayal of males in films, television programs and video games. Analyse current movies, but also consider the following movies as possibilities: *Psycho* (1960), *The Terminator* (1984), *About Last Night* (2014) and *Juno* (2007).
Appraise the **worth** of the Bechdel test as a tool that can work in a variety of situations by **systematically examining** its applicability.

3 **Construct** a collage charting changes in either the male action hero character in films or the representation of the housewife/mother figure in advertising. You will need samples from each of the key eras of media development: the pre-feminist, feminist and post-feminist eras.
Explain the changes in labels attached to the collage, giving **additional information** about each stage.

4 Choose one of the following topics and discuss it in pairs.
- Has the advertising industry overreacted in its portrayal of men? Consider representations of men in the kitchen, men as sex objects and men portrayed in beer ads.
- To what extent has the exploitation of women's bodies in advertising decreased since the pre-feminist era? Or has it become worse?

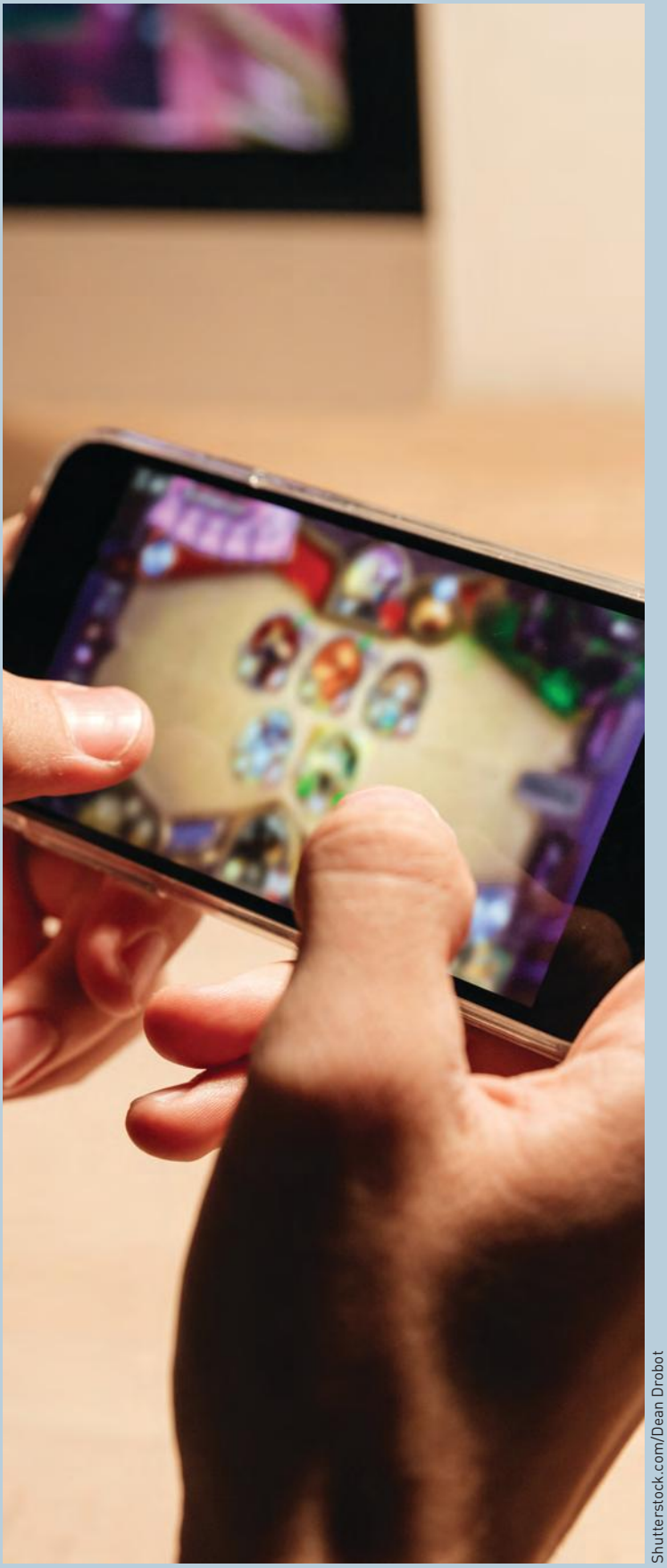
Explain your viewpoint to your partner, **clarifying** your perspective with **additional information** and **specific examples**. Present the outcome of your discussion to the class.

5 Write a report on the representation of gender in a specific medium of your choice, such as television, film or new media.
Explain the representations you have chosen, **identifying** key features and **recognising** the **qualities** that each of them has.
Analyse how each of the representations operates, breaking them down into **constituent parts** and separating out the **codes and conventions** used. **Interpret** the connotations of each part of the representation.
Appraise the status of the representation by collecting real-world statistics to **compare** actuality with the media representation. **Draw conclusions** about the **accuracy** and **worth** of the representation.
Synthesise an edited montage of the representation of males and females over time, using imagery from a collection of movies, and **solving conceptual, creative or technical problems** as they arise. Scan DVD covers, create movie stills using a capture program or download images to build the moving-image media production.

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9

Making and responding – Story forms



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Part A: Production – for story



Figure 9.1 All the gear packed up and ready to film. Production is one of the most enjoyable aspects of Film, Television & New Media. Each production will boost your skills. The finished product will be something you will want to show your friends and family. It will also be a record of your school days long into the future.

CASTING AND DIRECTING ACTORS

Whatever the nature of your production, you are going to need actors, models or subjects, sometimes known as 'talent'. Call them what you will in the medium of your choice, but whatever you name them, you will need people to perform in front of a camera.



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Figure 9.2 Whatever your production, you are going to need actors. Casting the right people takes a lot of the pressure of directing off you. If the actors are right for the part, you can just let them find their own presence in the role.

Casting

Casting is said to be 75 per cent of the success of any film – at least, that is what the actors say. Scriptwriters say just three things make a film: the script, the script and the script. Whichever you believe, the acting is an important part of any audio visual production.

Many student productions do not spend enough time and care on the casting. If you get the casting right, the actor becomes the character and there is much less need for coaching input from the director. Following are some general suggestions for student productions:

1 **Cast adults in the roles of older people.** Where possible, it is best to cast age-appropriate actors. See if you can source them from family or friends outside the school. It is possible to get your school friends to play the part of a young gangster or a detective, but when maturity is called for, you need someone mature.
2 **Suit actors to their parts.** You have the whole school to choose from. You also have your outside contacts. There are so many different personality types and different physical types. You will be able to find someone who has in them the essential element that makes them suitable for the part.
3 **Cast actors who will turn up.** A big problem for student filmmakers is the actor no-show. If you are lucky, the no-show happens early in the production. If you are unlucky, the actor pulls out after the production is well underway. You may need to redo the whole thing. Try to avoid this at the casting stage by choosing people who are reliable.
4 **Have understudies.** Make sure that some of your minor actors are available to take a bigger role if there is a no-show from a key player.

Auditions/screen tests

School drama productions have auditions, so why not your media production? A social media advertising campaign could alert a lot of people to your audition. You could also put up posters around the school, or just distribute flyers among your friendship circle or within the drama department.

- **Advantages.** Auditions give you the broadest talent pool. If you have abundance, you can pick and choose. Auditions also let you know who is committed enough to turn up. That is a good

indicator of their willingness to turn up for the production as well.

- **Disadvantages.** Auditions are often very public events. You may not want to make such a big splash.

You will need the following for your audition/screen test.

1 A camera and perhaps a monitor so that you can watch the performances and see how your actors look on screen.
2 Script 'sides' for the actors to read from. Script sides are cut-down versions of scenes that allow the potential actors to demonstrate their skill, but do not require them to read long and complex parts.
3 A quiet and easily accessible location.
4 A handout for each of the actors, giving them details of the shooting dates, the locations and a short summary of the production.

Remember, there is no such thing as a bad actor, only actors who are not right for the particular part. Make sure you are grateful and courteous to all of those who turn up for the audition.

Acting for a casting audition is really putting yourself on the line, and it takes a certain amount of courage. Let people know as soon as possible of the outcome of the audition.

Talent scouting

The most common method of casting for student productions involves approaching people directly and asking them to act in your film.

- **Advantages.** Approaching people directly is a much more discreet way of casting your production. You get to control who knows about it, and you don't have to deal with all comers.
- **Disadvantages.** The chances of someone turning out to be unreliable are somewhat increased if you have to ask them to act in the first place. You may also have to deal with their refusal if you approach them directly.

You may find the following helpful if you are approaching someone directly:

- a flyer or card for the production with an image or design that shows the concept at a single glance
- a story synopsis or treatment
- details of the shooting dates and locations.

Directing your actors

> 'The innate realism of photography makes us expect psychological realism from film actors, so [the director] will need to understand the craft of acting and even become something of a drama coach.'
>
> **Michael Rabiger**, director and editor

Having their faces projected all over a big screen on your school's premiere night is a risky thing for your actors. They are really quite brave to act for you. The first thing you should do for your actors is to make them feel safe. This means all your comments should be positive and encouraging. Your aim is to get the best out of them, and you cannot do this if you make them feel bad. Effective directing is solely focused on getting the best performances.

Your actors might fit into the following categories.

- **Drama students.** These people are trained and often quite experienced at performance. However, they might be more used to theatrical performances. Film performances need to be played down from stage performances because the camera is much closer.
- **Enthusiastic friends and family.** You may need to direct these people to just be natural in the role, without overacting or 'putting it on'. Try to get them to forget they are acting.



Figure 9.3 The director explains to the actor how she wants her to perform the scene. Good directing makes the actors feel safe from harsh criticism, but also gives them guidance about the role they have to play.

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- **Reluctant performers.** If you have cast these people well, then their natural qualities will be true to the character. Otherwise, you may have to get them to ramp things up a bit.

Acting basics for directors

There are some things about acting that all directors should know, says Michael Rabiger. One way to find out about them is to try acting out the script yourself. When you are preparing for the production, do not read your script at your study desk. Read it aloud, moving around as you think the actors will need to. That way you will have an idea of how to direct them.

A director helps their actors to achieve the following:

- **Focus.** Losing belief in what they are doing is the enemy of all actors. Actors have to stay in character and keep thinking their character's thoughts. If an actor loses focus, try getting them doing something real in the character's world, such as looking at their watch (in character) or handling a prop. This small shift can regain focus.
- **Interior monologue.** We all talk to ourselves in our heads. We talk inside our heads as our own voice, our own self, but the actors need to talk as the characters they are playing. If the actors talk to themselves as their characters, they become more believable.
- **Interior life.** Once the actors are talking to themselves as their characters, they can develop an interior life of feelings and reactions. This interior life becomes visible as things that they do: small mannerisms and actions that reflect the inner life. These are what the camera likes: small external signs of what a person is really feeling.
- **Objectives.** A character is interesting when we see them try to gain their objectives or have their needs met. Everyone has needs at every single moment of their lives. The job of the actor is to work out what their character's needs are in each line of dialogue and action. This will mean a lot of preparation for a good actor. They will have to go through each page of the script and work out what they think is their character's objective at that point.
- **Business.** These are all the real-world physical activities that the actor does that reveal their inner life. It could be fiddling with a prop on the table or searching for something in a room.

What to say to your actors: dos and don'ts

The following list of dos and don'ts for directors is based on lists prepared by a number of acting coaches and short-film makers.

- **Use action verbs.** Give an actor a description of how you want them to act by using action verbs. Most of these verbs contain an action and also an emotion. 'To accuse' is an action verb – however, it also has emotions associated with it. The emotions are held by the accuser and the accused. The verb 'accuse' also has a physical movement associated with it, such as a pointed finger.



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Figure 9.4 Many acting coaches advise directors to give their actors a 'playable' direction by expressing it as an action verb. 'To accuse' is an action verb that gives the actor an emotional base to come from. The interior emotion also suggests a bodily action – in this case an intense stare. An action verb also has a target: the other actor.

- **Never act it out or read it for them.** This is called giving a line reading. You are then just asking the actor to imitate you. Even if they are a good mimic, it will still look and sound fake. This is because it does not come from the actor's interior monologue and interior life. Try one of the following instead:
  - Ask the actor about how the character is feeling when they are in the scene.
  - Give the actor an action to do that will help them summon the mood.
- **Do remind actors about previous scenes.** Media productions are often shot out of sequence. To get your cast in the mood, you will need to remind them of where their character has just come from. Actors need to be oriented at the start of each scene.

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- **Be constructive.** Do not say, 'Ethan, you are waving your arms about like a madman.' Whatever you are thinking privately, let this come out as something like, '*Keep the same strong intensity, Ethan, but express it more with your eyes than your hands.*'
- **Give permission to fail.** Always let your actors know that there can be another take. 'Freedom to fail' is one of the most powerful tools a director can use. This takes the pressure off the actors and they often give better performances as a result. In the same way, lines do not have to be word for word. Pressure to get the lines right can also be very destructive.
- **Build your own authority.** Make sure the actors know that you are the only one commenting on their performance. Do not let other crew make careless comments. There is too much chance they will say something off-putting or insulting.
- **Do not let it be bad.** If a performance was not good enough, have the courage to ask them to do it again. You can try the following to help break a stalemate:
  - Ask the actor to play it in completely the opposite way. For example, a tragic scene could be played as a comedy. After that, come back and play it straight again. The change of rhythm may have given it new energy.
  - Ask the actor to do something physical. Often making a physical action will bring out the meaning of the lines in a better way.
- **Do not let them act alone in a crowd.** If an actor is uptight, they often over-learn their lines and deliver them by rote, like chanting. They are not responding to the other actor, but simply delivering their lines on cue and acting as a lone individual. Instead, they should be reacting to what other characters are saying. The actor needs to draw their reactions from the other characters and react at the moment that something happens, just as in real life. This comes from their interior monologue and interior life as the character.



Figure 9.5 It is good to start each scene with a briefing from the director. Have the actors discuss your pre-production and listen to the way you see things. Also remind the actors of what scene their character has just come from. This is especially necessary in film production, where scenes are shot out of order.

9.1 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a flyer or social media advertisement that you can use to approach actors and potential crew.
Explain in the flyer a story synopsis of your film.
Symbolise some imagery to illustrate it.

2 Take some photographs of people you might use as potential actors and include them in a document.
Explain what it is about each person you have photographed that would suit the role you have in mind. Provide **additional information** about the physical and personality attributes that allow them to take on the part of the character.

3 Form a small group and appoint one person as director or acting coach. Select a scene from an existing script. Have the remainder of the group act out the scene and then ask the acting coach to **give feedback** using the guidelines listed in this section.
Explain (as acting coach) how the actors could have played the scene, giving **additional information** that will help actors **clarify** the requirements of their performance. Now try the scene again.

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SHOOTING STORY-BASED PRODUCTIONS



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Figure 9.6 The whole purpose of the production stage is to collect the raw materials. This means sufficient coverage and sufficient variety in types of shots.

Coverage

When you are filming, you will need to take the needs of the editor into account. It is very common for problems to arise in editing because there is insufficient coverage. Sometimes extra scenes are needed, or the order of scenes is changed. This often requires extra footage.

The following techniques may be helpful for providing the editor with sufficient footage:

- **Master shot.** Film a continuous master shot of important scenes so that there is complete footage of the whole scene in long shot with minimal camera movement.
- **Establishing shot.** Begin with a clear establishing shot that sets the characters within the scene. This could be accomplished with your master shot or you may have to take an additional shot.
- **Focus on talking characters.** Dialogue usually drives action, so collect shots of each character as they deliver their lines.
- **Reaction shots.** Sometimes editing requires reaction shots. How people respond to dialogue can be just as interesting as the dialogue itself. Collect shots of other characters' faces as the lines are delivered.
- **Noddies.** In news and documentaries, a reaction shot is often called a 'noddy' – so-called because they frequently show the reporter nodding in response to the comments by the interviewee. Noddies are often inserted between questions as a way of hiding cuts. Only nods are acceptable because journalists are professionally discouraged from over-reaction as it distracts from the interviewee. A noddy is filmed after the interview, when the interviewee has gone away. To provide accurate eye-levels, an assistant holds something (such as a pen) at the approximate height that the interviewee's eyes were at. The reporter then makes eye contact with that object.
- **Cutaways.** This is a shot of something other than the main action, which can be inserted to hide a jump cut or to condense action. These shots are therefore cuts away from the main action to something related but different.

The take

Once you have planned and set up everything, you are ready for the take.

A take is a continuous recording of a scene or shot and begins with the following calls made by the assistant director (AD):

1. *First positions* means everyone should get ready and finalise their preparations.
2. *Sound* begins the sound recording if there is a separate sound recorder.
3. *Turnover* or *Camera* is the signal to begin camera recording. The AD announces the scene and takes numbers. They hold up the clapperboard or slate with the numbers written in clear view of the camera. The clapperboard should be shot in close-up so that the scene numbers appear on the file thumbnails during editing. The camera operator calls *Mark it* once this is achieved. (Note: As film is expensive, often the clapper loader announces the slate number and take before the film rolls.)
4. *Action* is called when the camera has framed the actors and the scene is ready to begin.
5. *Cut* is called at the finish of the scene. It is traditional to wait a few seconds after the end of the last line to allow room for any necessary trimming required in the editing process



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Figure 9.7 There is a calling protocol around the use of the clapperboard or slate at the start of a take. Shooting the clapperboard in close-up at the start of each take means that it will appear in the file thumbnails, making it easier to keep track of various takes in the editing stage.

How many takes?

The short answer to the question of how many takes is 'however many it takes'. Digital video means that once the actors and crew are assembled, the costs of production are relatively low. You will only be restricted by people's personal schedules.

Often the first take is the most lively and spontaneous. However, later takes can benefit from the extra practice. It is a good idea to have at least two takes that the editor can work with. If possible, these two should offer slightly different performances. Perhaps the actors can vary their pace or say things in a slightly different way. This allows the editor more room to manoeuvre in post-production.

Avoiding jump cuts – 30-degree rule

Editing requires cutting between lots of different shots of a character or scene. Camera operators in the production stage need to keep in mind that good editing avoids jump cuts by using the 30-degree rule.

- **Jump cuts.** A jump cut occurs when a cut is made from one shot to another of the same subject without any real change in camera position or shot size. It is called a 'jump cut' because the result is usually a perceptible jump that breaks the sense of continuity (see Chapter 2).
- **30-degree rule.** Classical Hollywood editing style suggests that the camera should be moved at least 30 degrees away from its previous position when shooting the same subject to avoid a jump cut and appear seamless. Some editors also demand that the camera should change shot size as well – for example, from a mid-shot to a close-up. The essential idea is to avoid the two shots looking similar to each other.

Vox pops

If you are making a documentary, you may be tempted to include vox pops. The term 'vox pop' comes from the Latin phrase *vox populi* meaning 'voice of the people'. Vox pops are quick reaction comments from people in the street. Like the opinions of ordinary people, they are useful as a group reaction. Therefore, they are tightly edited to just a few quick words from each person.

A vox pop is not a legitimate survey. Even so, the professional standards of journalism demand that the weight of opinions the audience sees on screen should be broadly representative of those actually expressed when people were asked.

Locations

There are three main locations used in shooting: indoors, outdoors and studio. Each has its own characteristics. Before you begin shooting, you are advised to do a reconnaissance or 'recce' (pronounced *rekky*). It can be a good idea to take test shots with a smartphone so that you have an idea of what problems might occur on the day.

Indoor shooting

Indoor shooting requires care with the following:

- **Space for shooting.** The camera needs to be far enough back to take in the action.
- **Lighting.** Is there sufficient light, and can adequate power be brought into the rooms to run video lights? Windows can be both useful and a problem. A window can be a light source, but if it is behind the subject of the shot it creates a problem with **backlighting**.
- **Sound.** Some rooms can have problems with sound bouncing around. Clap your hands together to see if there is an echo. Overcoming echoes requires bringing in a lot of sound-absorbent material. Blankets, doonas, cushions and the like can all help reduce sound reflection. It can also be a good idea to record a 'room-tone' track. This is a soundtrack of the room with no one talking. It might capture, for example, the sounds of fans, insects or refrigerators. A room-tone track is usually about 30 seconds to a minute long. It can be used to cover total silences and gaps created in editing. (See also 'atmos track' in outdoor locations.)
- ***Mise en scène*.** Indoor locations can allow a more careful attention to *mise en scène*. Arranging furniture and background objects is all part of set dressing. Do not just accept the location exactly as it is. You can improve the *mise en scène* by being artful.

Outdoor locations

Outdoor locations pose challenges as well. You will need to consider the following.

- **Backgrounds.** You will need to check what else may be included in the framing. Outdoor

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settings are much less controlled, and there may be distractions that can come into shot.

- **The public.** Passers-by can cause problems by coming into shot, or by heckling.
- **Security.** Theft is much more likely in public spaces. You will need to have someone monitor the unused equipment and cases. Alternatively, use cable ties to lock them to some available fixtures.
- **Equipment leftovers.** It can be easy to accidentally leave camera cases or spare tripods in shot when shooting outdoors.
- **Lighting.** Outdoor locations can also pose lighting problems. Harsh midday sun can cast sharp shadows on actors' faces. Shade under trees can create dark areas. Light can be directed into areas of shadow with reflector boards.
- **Sound.** Recording dialogue can be more difficult in outdoor locations. Boom poles and directional mikes can make it easier. However, there is a lot more uncontrolled sound outdoors. It can also be a good idea to record an 'atmos track'. An **atmos track** (or atmosphere track) is a recording of the natural sounds of the location. It is often placed under dubbed dialogue.

Studio locations

Studios used in productions by FTVNM students vary in size. Some may just be a room with a small green screen in one corner. (A green screen is used as a background upon which other images are overlaid electronically in post-production editing programs.) Other studios may be larger and have specially fitted equipment. Studio filming requires consideration of the following:

- **Green screen reflection.** The paint used on many green screens is highly reflective and can cast a greenish tinge over the actors. Various fixes are available for this in post-production. However, adequate lighting (particularly backlighting) can reduce the problem.
- **Clothing choices.** While green screen and blue screen colours are chosen because they are the most removed from the tones of human skin, green or blue clothing will cause problems.
- **Sound.** Many school-based studios have problems with echo. This is because there is often very little absorbent material such as curtaining, furniture or set stands. Often unwanted sound can be transferred from other parts of the school. Air-conditioning systems can also cause noise problems.



Courtesy Wubishet Leckenby

Figure 9.8 Many large high schools have studios. A studio can create a more controlled filming environment. However, it can also come with particular problems depending on how and where the studio is constructed. One of the most common problems is intrusive sound from other sources outside the studio.

Recording sound

Good sound will give your production a professional touch. Take the same care with your sound as you do with your visual footage.

All sound recorded on set or on location is called production sound. It includes dialogue, natural sound from the environment and any other sounds made as the actors perform.

Other sounds can be added in the post-production process, but live production sound is always the most realistic.

Microphones

Microphones (often shortened to 'mikes') are a means of converting sound into an electrical or digital signal. Microphones are often categorised

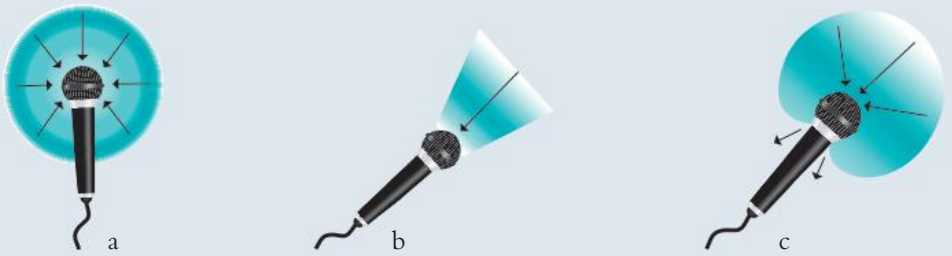


Figure 9.9 (a) An omni-directional microphone can pick up sound from every direction. Its directional sensitivity is roughly spherical in shape. It is good for picking up general sounds from all around, but not so good if you just want to focus on one sound. (b) Uni-directional microphones pick up sound from one direction only – the front. Uni-directional mikes are good for blocking out all other sounds except the one you are focusing on. They are not good if you want to pick up from multiple sound sources or collect ambient/atmospheric sound. (c) Cardioid microphones pick up sound in a pattern that is roughly heart-shaped (hence the name). They are a good general-use microphone, but they are not as effective when there are many sources of unwanted sound.

according to the directions from which they can pick up sound. Different directions have different purposes.

Omni-directional microphones

The prefix *omni* means 'every', so these microphones have a spherical pattern of sensitivity. They can pick up sound from every direction more or less equally. Omni-directional microphones are good for recording situations where several actors are delivering dialogue standing close together in a quiet environment. They are also good for recording atmospheric or ambient sound from all around.

However, omni-directional microphones are not good for picking out the sound of one person's voice when there is a lot of surrounding sound. For example, a reporter on the side of a busy freeway would not use an omni-directional microphone because the sound of traffic would be at least as loud as their voice and the microphone would not 'reject' any of the freeway sound.

Uni-directional microphones

The prefix *uni* means 'single' or 'one'. A uni-directional microphone picks up sound in one direction only – from the front. Uni-directional microphones are good in situations where you need to focus on one sound source to the exclusion of all others. This could be when a character is talking and you need to focus only on them. A uni-directional microphone can also be used to cut out traffic sounds or other loud noises near where someone is speaking.

Uni-directional microphones are not good where there are multiple sound sources (unless you are recording them shot by shot). They do not work well if several people are speaking unless you move the microphone towards each one as they speak.

Cardioid microphones

The word cardioid means 'shaped like a heart'. A cardioid microphone collects sound in a restricted pattern that is like an upside-down heart. It is a kind of uni-directional microphone, but with a broader pick-up area. Cardioid microphones are a good compromise between omni- and uni-directional mikes. They are good for general use.



Figure 9.10 (a) Road case and microphones suitable for FTVNM students to borrow. Good sound can make all the difference to your productions. (b) Sennheiser MK 816 microphone and a selection of wind baffles – from top: a 'zeppelin', a 'dead cat' and a 'windsock'. (c) Sennheiser MKH 816 and 416 microphones. These have a super cardioid recording pattern.

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Techniques for audio recording

- **Using headphones.** It is advisable to use headphones when recording sound so that you can hear what the microphone is picking up. This will also prevent a situation where cables may be accidently unplugged and no sound is recorded. The headphones will allow you to pick up problems. Select headphones with closed ear pads so that you do not hear sound from outside or leak delayed sound back onto the location.
- **Sound levels.** Switch on the sound level display so that you can see sound is being recorded at adequate levels. This will also serve to warn you if the sound accidentally stops recording while you are filming a scene.



Figure 9.11 Use the sound levels display function on the camera so that you know you are definitely recording and that your sound levels are appropriate.

- **Placing microphones.** The position of the microphone depends on the needs of the camera. The most important position for the microphone is out of view. Beyond that, a microphone is ideally placed between 30 centimetres and 1 metre away from the person speaking. It can be placed above or below the level of the mouth. Placing it level with the mouth can cause explosive breathy sounds.
- **Atmos track.** An atmos track is a recording of the natural ambient sound of the location. It might include leaves rustling, traffic or birds. For an indoor location, the atmos track (sometimes called a room-tone track) is a soundtrack of the room with no one talking – just the silence of the room but with the same number of people in it as when you were recording the dialogue and action. An atmos track is usually two or three minutes long in case it needs to be placed under dubbed dialogue.
- **Recording narration.** A voice-over track should not have any accidental sounds in the background, nor should it contain any echo. Unless you have access to a soundproof studio, the best place to record a voice-over track is inside a car. This is because the interior is sealed and there are lots of absorbent surfaces, such as seat covers and carpets. If you cannot record inside a car, then use a small room. Choose a room that has carpets, curtains and plenty of furniture. You can also build a small enclosure around the microphone and your narrator's head and shoulders. Blankets and cushions are good materials to use.

9.2 ACTIVITIES

Demonstrate your learning by creating a narrative video.
Structure a short narrative video. **Sequence** audio and visual elements to systematically reveal to the audience the key features of the story type you have chosen.

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SHOOTING DIALOGUE FOR STORY-BASED VIDEOS

Scenes involving dialogue are fundamental to most productions in television and film. Shooting and editing these scenes well is crucial to the success of your video.



Alamy Stock Photo/Rob Francis

Figure 9.12 The sound recordist holds the boom pole and microphone just above the characters and out of the frame of the camera. This can become a feat of endurance depending on how long the take is, and how heavy the microphone and pole are. In a single-camera shoot, a master shot will be recorded first and then each character will be shot in mid-shot or close-up as the scene is repeated.

Shooting dialogue

The traditional way to shoot a scene with dialogue between characters is called the master scene technique. It is also known as the shot/reverse-shot technique. This technique involves three basic shot categories:

- a master shot
- individual shots of each person, which are used for shot/reverse-shot editing
- cutaway shots.

Preparing to work using master scene technique will require you to begin with an analysis of the scene goals and elements. Once you understand these, you can shoot the three basic categories of footage.

1 Scene elements and goals

The first step in the process is to analyse or break down the scene into its core filmic elements. These filmic elements are the people and objects that are most important in the scene. For example, if a conversation is between a man and a woman, then there are just two filmic elements. Perhaps the conversation becomes an argument. If you add a letter and a knife used to open the letter, then there are four filmic elements that will need to be individually shot. When the video is edited, these elements can be cut together to tell the story in the most dramatic and exciting way.

Each scene has a particular dramatic purpose in the narrative. You will need to determine the goal of the scene you are shooting. Once you know this, you can decide where the high points of emotion or intense drama are. Directors traditionally place their close-up shots at these high points.

2 Master shot

The master shot is a continuous shooting of the whole scene, showing all the elements as they appear together. Usually the master shot is some kind of long shot, depending on the amount of space required around the characters. It should show the characters in the scene, and the space they have around them.

The master shot has three main purposes.

1 To act as an establishing shot, because it shows all the characters in the setting or landscape. After the establishing shot, the shots can move progressively closer to their subjects.
2 To provide coverage, since it is usually shot continuously from beginning to end of the scene. This means it can provide a back-up if any of the other shots do not work for some reason, allowing the editor to cut back to the master shot to hide any problems.
3 To provide the basic soundtrack. It is possible to cut to the soundtracks from the closer shots if required, but the master shot provides the baseline.



Figure 9.13 Students shooting the master shot of a dialogue scene with four elements – two characters, a letter and a knife used to open the letter. The beginning of the master shot can be used as an establishing shot to open the scene.

The master shot also determines the side of the line of action (180-degree line) that all other shots will be filmed from. The closer shots of characters (the shot/reverse-shot sequences) will need to remain on the same side of the line as the master shot, unless special techniques are used to allow a change.

3 Shot/reverse-shot

After the master shot, the director then re-stages the scene several more times using a variety of closer shots such as medium shots and close-ups. Medium shots do not convey as much intensity and emotion as close-ups, so the close-ups will be used at the high points of the scene. Close-ups may also be used to show objects when they become significant. The director refers to the marked-up script, which shows the pivotal moments when the close-ups are required.

The shot/reverse-shot technique is often used in conversation when a character makes a comment and the director wants to show the impact on the other character. This is called a reaction shot.

At other times, reverse shots may be used to position the audience in the space inhabited by the characters. These kinds of shots could involve both characters. For example, a medium shot or close-up may also show part of the shoulder of the other person. This allows the audience to see the characters in relation to each other. This type of shot is called an over-the-shoulder shot, a two-shot or occasionally (because it is not a cleanly framed shot of a single character) a dirty single.

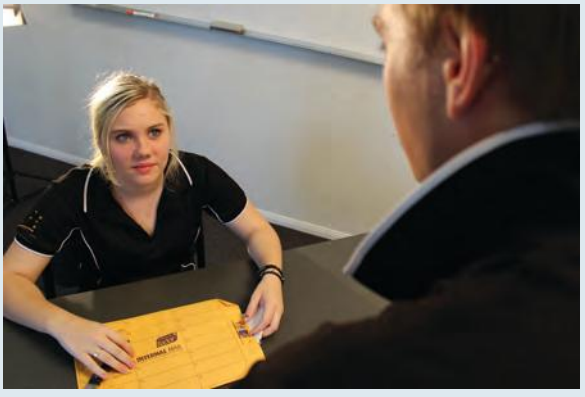


Figure 9.14 An over-the-shoulder shot (two-shot or dirty single) can be used to show the characters in relation to each other. These shots help to position the audience in the space.

4 Matching eyelines

Master shot technique requires the scene to be shot several times with the single camera focused on each of the different characters or objects. Often the other characters are present for the re-staging, but sometimes they are not.



Courtesy Matt Nettheim

Figure 9.15 Shooting *The Tracker* (2002) on location in Arkaroola in South Australia's remote outback. Note the use of light-reflecting Grifflon to soften the harsh direct sunlight on the actor's face.

There are two important factors to consider when matching eyelines:

1 **Sightlines.** The direction and focus of the actor's eyes must be accurately lined up to precisely where the audience believes the other partner in the conversation is situated. You can help the actor do this by holding something at the point where the other actor's eyes would have been. Or you can use one of the crew as a stand-in.

2 **Camera angle and placement.** The camera angle or camera placement should reflect the approximate height or place at which the audience expects the other character to be. For example, if one character is a lot taller than the other (or is standing while one is seated), the height of the camera should be adjusted to reflect this.

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Figure 9.16 Students matching eyelines in a dialogue scene. Camera placement and angle should approximately match the eyeline of the character whose point of view we are seeing. When matching eyelines between characters, the height of the camera may be adjusted to reflect the position or height of the other character.

5 Cutaways

Cutaways are shots from within the scene that cut away to something other than the characters themselves. A cutaway could be to an object that has significance in the scene, or to other non-specific characters, such as a group of bystanders.

Cutaways have the following functions.

- **Highlighting significance.** Cutting away to an object in a scene can suggest that it is going to be important. For example, cutting away to a knife lying on the table may foreshadow its involvement later in the action.
- **Adding detail.** A cutaway can add details to the action. For example, a cutaway to a clock can add tension and provide the audience with additional information about time pressures.
- **Patching edits.** Cutaways are extremely useful for covering gaps in continuity or for compressing time. They can also be used to hide the jumps when sections of dialogue are cut out.



Figure 9.17 A cutaway to an envelope and a knife that will be significant later in the scene.

Editing dialogue

Dialogue is one of the main building blocks of storytelling in film or television. Both fictional narratives and documentaries rely on dialogue, and sometimes also narration.

- **Cutaways.** Shots away from the main action (such as reaction shots) can be used to condense long dialogue passages. Use three shots to do this.
  - Show the person speaking.
  - Cut away to the person listening. Let the speaker finish their sentence while the audience is distracted by the reactions of the person listening. Then get rid of all the dialogue you wanted to condense.
  - Cut back to the original person speaking but beginning with the new section of dialogue.
- **Overlapping dialogue.** It can be boring to just show one person talking and then cutting to another. A good technique is to cut to the second person while the first person is still talking. Let the first person's sentence finish while focused on the second, then allow the second person to respond. When overlapping dialogue is used at the end of a scene, **J-cut** and **L-cut** techniques can be used.
- **Reaction shots.** If you were observing people talking, you would dart your attention from one to the other from time to time. Try to estimate just when you would do that yourself, and that is probably when your audience would want to glance at the other person.
- **Progress the action.** Dialogue needs to progress the action or the story. Get rid of everything that doesn't do that, even if you like it.
- **Genre.** Cut dialogue according to genre. Some genres, such as romantic comedy, are very

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dependent on dialogue. Others, such as action movies, have quite sparse dialogue.

- **Cut in the pauses.** People make small pauses all through their speech. Use these to your advantage if you want to condense the dialogue. Cut on the small pauses and quickly move to another part of the dialogue. Using the space between words allows you to move things along more quickly.

Screen geography

Screen geography is the layout and direction of the action within the frame, and the point of view of the camera as it films. When editing and filming, attention must be paid to screen geography so that the movement within each frame matches that in the next frame. A car chase in which one car is following another must have the shots of each car moving in the same direction. If the leading car is moving from left to right of the frame, then the following car must use the same screen geography. This sounds easy, but if the camera has the wrong point of view, it can accidentally show a car moving in the opposite direction.

When simultaneous time is shown, it is common for the action in the two parallel locations to move in opposite directions. This suggests that the two sources of movement will converge at some point. Consider the classic simultaneous time situation of a car and a speeding train racing toward a level crossing. Ideally the car will move in one direction across the frame, the train in the opposite.

The 180-degree rule – 'crossing the line'

According to the 180-degree rule, an imaginary line exists called the axis of action. Imagine two people in conversation – the imaginary axis of action can be considered as a line between them. perhaps the line of eye contact. If you are filming these two people talking, you should always place the camera on the same side of the imaginary line. It can be moved to any position to show one person, then the other, but it should always stay on the same side of the line. Crossing to the other side will disrupt the screen geography, as a character will appear to be facing the wrong way.

Crossing the line can be done effectively if there is a neutral shot in between. This could be an overhead shot or a shot directly down the axis of action. After a neutral shot, it is acceptable to cross the line and film from the other side.

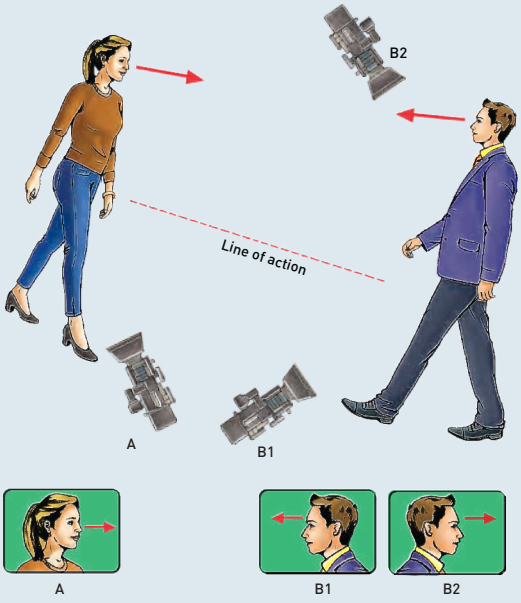


Figure 9.18 Screen geography requires that the camera stay on the same side of the dotted line whenever its position is changed. The line can be crossed, but only if a neutral shot is inserted between the two positions. For instance, the camera can be in the positions A or B1. Position B2 will see a character suddenly flip and face the other way.

9.3 ACTIVITIES

1 View the museum scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958).
Analyse the scene for its construction, using master scene technique, breaking down the scene into the **constituent parts** of classic use of the technique. **Consider** how many elements there are. List them, and then **interpret** the role they play as part of the whole sequence.
Explain how Hitchcock uses the elements to create associations in the minds of the audience.

2 **Structure** two short video sequences demonstrating your understanding of the 180-degree rule (crossing the line). Shoot and edit one sequence without crossing the line. Shoot and edit another sequence correctly crossing the line using one of the available techniques.

3 **Synthesise** your own dialogue scene using master scene technique, **solving creative** and **technical** issues as you use the different filming and editing techniques. Include other scene elements as well as the main characters, **combining** them into a polished moving-image media product.

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POST-PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Now that you have the raw materials from the production stage, it is time to take the project through to post-production. Post-production is often just referred to as 'post'. One of two things will happen in post:

- your hard work will pay off, *or*
- your production mistakes will come back to haunt you, and you will need to find solutions fast.

The editing process

The basic steps involved in digital editing have been established over many years. Similar processes existed for traditional film editing and linear video editing.

1 Establish the project folder

You will need to set up a project folder to store all your production files. Ideally, this is kept on the local hard drive of the computer you are using to edit. This is because it will be much faster for the files to operate if they are based locally rather than on a USB or remote server. Check to see that you are not saving the folder to a network drive. Video files are too big to travel efficiently over a school network. You will soon clog up the drive and be unable to edit.

Laptop users can label the folder by the project name and save locally.

Shared edit suite users will need to clearly label the folder with your name(s). Save the folder to the local drive.

2 Gather your media

Import all the production files you have into the project folder. The following steps will help you to organise your files and folder:

1. Make a back-up of all the raw files immediately. Store this on a separate drive that you can keep in a safe place.
2. Rename the camera files. Label all the production files in a logical way. The name should tell you what they are at a glance.
3. Create sub-folders to categorise your media. Use whatever sorting system is useful to you. A simple system is to sort by scenes. Some editors use the following system of folder names:
   - video files
   - audio files
   - assets (such as titles, sub-titles and various effects)
   - final exports.

3 Log your footage

Ideally you should view all footage and make a record of what is there. This is called logging. Naturally you will just want to start editing straight away. However, the logging process is a good way of seeing what is there and what is missing. Logging also lets you check for faults. It shows you the material you cannot use. Going over the footage also helps to stimulate new ideas. Getting all the images into your head is part of the imaginative process.

A video log is usually a written document with several columns giving descriptions of the shots and the action they portray. Suggested format and headings are shown in Table 9.1.

4 Make an edit decision list (EDL)

An edit decision list (EDL) is a written document that is based on the video log. An EDL puts the shots in the order in which they will appear and gives an indication of titles and transitions.

An EDL is a planning document often with three columns indicating the shot number, description and type of edit.

Table 9.1 A video log is a good way to get all the shots into your head and thereby helps creative problem-solving to occur when you need it to.

FILE NAME	SHOT NUMBER	SHOT SIZE	ACTORS	ACTION	NOTES

Table 9.2 A simple layout for an edit decision list.

SHOT NUMBER	SHOT DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF EDIT

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5 Begin constructing your story

Editing is a process of shaping and constructing a story. Place the clips on the timeline in the order of the edit decision list. A rough cut can be made first, and then you can refine it later.

Most editors cut for story first and then cut for time. The most important thing is to tell the story as it should be told. You can trim it back later on to meet the time requirements.

6 Add titles

An important part of the editing process is the creation of titles and credits. The opening title design sets the tone for the whole production. Titles within the story can be an important way of helping the audience to understand complex events. Credits are a way of acknowledging all the people who helped. They also let your teachers know what roles you undertook.

7 Mix audio

Adding music and sound effects to your dialogue tracks is one of the later stages of editing. Layering these under the main dialogue track requires some skill. You will need to adjust the levels to make sure that the dialogue is not being drowned out. Adjusting the tone and level of a soundtrack is called 'sweetening'.

8 Add effects

Digital editing systems are capable of a vast range of effects. Many students also use specialised programs to create more complex effects.

9 Export

Export your finished production in the format required for assessment. You may like to make a second export using a higher definition format as well. Save back-up copies of your export. If you are working in a group, give a copy to each member.

Getting a production to the right length

A production rarely comes in at the right length. When it does, enjoy your good fortune. Most productions are too short or too long after the first edit has been done.

When it's too long

A video that is too long runs the risk of boring the audience. Even if the production is really well done, all stories seem to have a natural length and your audience will be annoyed if you over-extend the narrative.

When the production is too long, the best place to start trimming is at the beginning. There are two reasons for this:

- At the start of the production, you would have thought you had plenty of time. Scenes were probably allowed to run a little longer than absolutely necessary.
- Audience attention must be grabbed immediately. The pace must be quick. You can speed things up here, and probably end up improving the audience appeal a great deal.

Go through each scene and reduce it by an agreed amount. Even small cuts made to each scene can add up to substantial changes in the overall length. You will probably end up with a much better production as well.

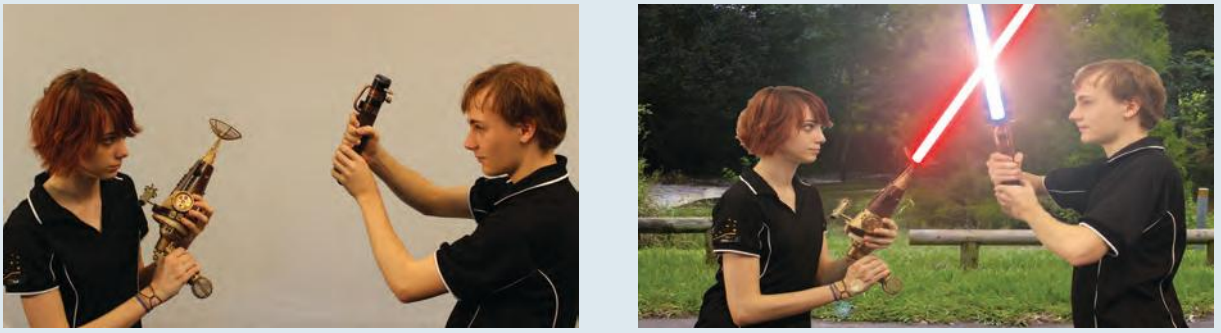


Figure 9.19 Characters fight it out with 'light sabers' and lasers. Once the basic story has been constructed on the timeline, you can add special effects.

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'Murder your darlings' is a well-known writers' adage, meaning that you should be ruthless with your favourite parts of the story (your 'darlings') if they turn out to be unnecessary. This famous phrase can equally be applied to video and film. Ask yourself whether the scene is really adding to the film's plot. If it is not essential from a storytelling point of view, then it can easily be cut out altogether.



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Figure 9.20 It is rare for a production to come in exactly at the right length on the first edit. Mostly they are longer; sometimes they are shorter. Cutting the production down is easier than adding to it. However, either can be achieved if you allow enough time to do it before the due date.

When it's too short

A video that is too short is a lot harder to fix than one that is too long. If you did not get enough footage in the production stage, you have an even worse problem.

When trying to make a production longer:

- **Do not flashback whole scenes.** Audiences find repetition irritating. However, when a video is too short, it is very common to search for a solution such as a complete repeat of the first half. Often this can mean running the whole sequence in reverse motion and then ending up with a scene saying it was all a dream. Generally, this technique does not work. It is too obvious.
- **Extend the tension.** Find scenes where there is a climax in the action. Try to draw out this scene a little longer by holding the tension longer. You can do this by using parallel editing/simultaneous time. If you lack footage, quickly film some reaction shots in close-up with neutral backgrounds.
- **Add a montage.** At an artful point in the production, you may be able to create a montage out of various found pieces of production footage. Edit this together in a new and lively way that adds something extra to the story at that point. The audience will not notice the intrusion.
- **Re-film a new scene.** Using one or two available actors, quickly film a short segment in a neutral daytime setting, or choose a dimly lit indoor or night-time setting with shafts of light on the actor's face only.

Titles

Stylish titles are an important part of the impression that a film or video makes upon its audience. Putting extra work into your titles can add a lot of value. The terminology of titles includes the following:

- **The title card** is a non-moving title that is held on screen for a length of time. Often the term refers to a title over a black screen, like the title cards in old silent movies.
- **Supers** are titles that appear over moving action or scenes. 'Super' is short for 'superimposition'.
- **Head credits** are the names of famous actors placed at the beginning of a film, before or after the main title.
- **Inter-titles** are title cards that appear within the production, often between scenes. They are often used to let the audience know that time has passed – for example, 'Three days later'. Inter-titles were very common in silent films.
- **End credits or tail credits** are the long list of credits and acknowledgements at the end of a production.
- **Scrolling credits** are usually scrolled vertically to allow equal time for each person, and to make it easier for the audience to read.
- **Crawling titles or crawling credits** are horizontally scrolling text.



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Figure 9.21 Official lettering on stands used at the Berlin premiere of the James Bond movie *Skyfall* (2012). Choice of font is something of an art in itself. The limits are imposed by the audience's sense of good taste. However, it can be advisable to avoid fonts with very thin outlines, as these can flicker on screen.

Getting good titles

Following are some general suggestions for creating good titles:

- **Short film, short title.** Opening titles on short films should be as brief as possible. Feature-length movies can afford to drag things out. Short films seem pretentious or above themselves if they extend the opening titles too long.
- **Opening title design.** The titles at the beginning should work to set the expectations of the audience. It can be effective if the title design gives away clues about the genre. The opening title should also hint at the central conflict or premise. One of the best examples of this is the opening titles of *Jaws* (1975).
- **Supers over steady shots.** Camera movement underneath a superimposed title is very noticeable. Use shots where the camera is on a tripod, or where there is very little movement. However, superimposing over a gentle pan or tilt usually works.
- **Spelling and typos.** All textual mistakes look much worse when they are on a screen. It is also difficult to change them after they have already been included in an exported film. Titles should be thoroughly checked before they are finalised.

Timing your titles

If titles are incorrectly timed, they can annoy the audience. Slow titles can even feel as though they are slowing down the film. However, titles that flash off the screen before people finish reading are frustrating. There are some rules of thumb for achieving good timing for titles:

- **Counting.** A common rule is that ordinary text can be read at three words per second. To get the correct length for your titles, simply count the number of words and divide by three. The quotient is the number of seconds you should leave the title up for.
- **Reading.** This technique requires that you read the titles aloud. Speaking them aloud is a little slower than reading them silently. Wait a brief moment after you have finished reading aloud and then cut the title.

9.4 ACTIVITIES

Synthesise the video you made in section 9.2 ('Shooting story-based productions') into a fully resolved story, **solving** post-production **technical problems** and **creative** and **conceptual issues** as they arise.

MANAGING GROUP PRODUCTIONS

Media production is often a collaborative process. At this stage in Year 11 Film, Television & New Media, there is an opportunity for you to work in groups, depending on your school's approach. Mostly this can be a positive experience, but there can be some pitfalls.

What does it mean to work in a group?

It is possible to work individually or in groups in media production in Units 1 and 2. Groups or teams are very common in media industry practice.

A production team is composed of two or more individuals who are working on a clearly defined media production task that requires them to work interdependently, or even to work in formal roles. Ideally, everyone in the team has some control over their area of work. They should also be responsible and accountable for coming up with the media product.

Choosing a group

There is no single method that works to form the perfect group. However, there are three methods that media production groups have commonly used. Each can be equally successful if things go well, but each also has disadvantages. This is shown in Table 9.3.

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Table 9.3 Advantages and disadvantages of different group formation methods

GROUP FORMATION METHOD	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Friendship	Good group support system Automatic team spirit Improved communication Free exchange of ideas Well known to one another Raised achievement if all are committed to gaining good results Reduced conflict	Disputes can cause loss of friendship Too much time chatting or laughing Greater conformity in thinking Reduced innovation Reduced achievement if all not committed to results
Skills-based	Good specialisation in roles Strengths come to the fore Higher-quality work Commitment based on expectations of quality Innovation based on specialised knowledge	Loyalty to each other not automatically there Need to get to know one another Coordination problems Over-focus on techniques and skills reduces overall achievement
Randomised	Hidden talents can be there Ideas are stimulated by new encounters Less conformity in thinking	Loyalty to each other not automatically there Personalities unknown Greater potential for conflict Coordination problems Unknown standards of quality

Stages groups go through

A popular explanation of the stages that groups go through in their development was developed by psychology emeritus professor Bruce Tuckman.

1 **Forming.** Groups organise themselves and members get to know each other. They decide on routines and tasks. Often this is an easy stage as everybody is being friendly and there aren't really any differences of opinion yet.
2 **Storming.** In the storming stage, different ideas compete, and there are discussions and arguments about what to do. This can be a painful, argumentative stage when ideas are rejected, or conflict develops. Successful groups move through this quickly. Some groups stay locked in the storming stage throughout the project.
3 **Norming.** The team develops a 'norm' or generally accepted idea or plan. Everybody agrees to get behind this and work towards a common goal.
4 **Performing.** Some groups reach this stage and perform at a high level. Usually in these groups everybody is self-motivated and there isn't a need for continual monitoring of performance.

According to Tuckman, groups can go in and out of any of these stages. They can also remain stuck in one stage (usually storming). Often a change in membership or a new problem will cause the group to shift back into one of the earlier stages for a while.

Group size

A production team is best if it is made up of a relatively small group of people. The smaller the group, the more likely members are to contribute. Coordination problems in large groups often end up reducing the quality of each individual's input. This can be referred to as the Ringelmann effect. In 1913, French agricultural engineer Max Ringelmann tested the strength of men in a tug of war. An individual man could pull around 85 kilograms. A group of seven men, roughly equal in strength, managed to pull 450 kilograms – a huge difference. In this situation, a group can achieve much more than an individual. However, note that seven times 85 is actually 595. Ringelmann had proved that, while groups are effective, coordination or process problems reduce the output. The aim of good production teamwork should be to reduce the losses and maximise the benefits of group effort.

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Figure 9.22 In a series of experiments, it was found that one person could pull 85 kilograms. Seven people of approximately equal strength could pull 450 kilograms – not the expected 595 kilograms (that is, seven times one person's effort). This is the so-called Ringelmann effect: the loss of output caused by group coordination problems.

How can you ensure a successful group?

According to organisational psychologist Eduardo Salas, there are five main things that a good productive team should have:

1. **Leadership.** Whether it is leadership by one person all the way through or by different people at different times during the production, there needs to be leadership. Some groups may have multiple leaders. Leaders help understand the task and motivate others to get started.
2. **Adaptability.** This is the ability to change your approach according to different circumstances. For instance, if post-production video editing reveals that there isn't enough footage, an adaptable team can come up with solutions.
3. **Performance monitoring.** Making sure that each member has completed their tasks as the group goes along is an important factor in success. Checks needs to be performed before deadlines mean that they are too late.
4. **Back-up behaviour.** Group members need to be supportive to one another. If someone can't seem to get things done, they will benefit from friendly back-up. Back-up should follow performance monitoring.
5. **Team orientation.** This refers to team spirit and the ability of the group to stick together when things get tough.

What stops groups reaching their potential?

Production groups can fail to reach their potential because of faulty processes. There are three main areas of faulty processes.

- **Coordination problems.** Group members don't get things completed on time, or there are misunderstandings about what is required.
- **Social dynamics.** Members of the group can become offended or create difficulties by being too argumentative or obstructive.
- **Motivation.** One or more group members can lose motivation, leaving other members to struggle.

Social loafing

Have you ever done something physically difficult, such as lifting heavy furniture or pushing a bogged car, in a group? Perhaps you've put in a bit less effort than you would have if you'd been doing it by yourself? Perhaps you thought someone else was stronger and could do more of the work? All you had to do was look like you were lifting or pushing. That describes social loafing.

Social loafing is the slackening of effort that can happen when people have the attitude that 'someone else will do it'. This lack of effort is often unconscious. Social loafing is one of the main reasons that some groups do not reach their potential performance.

Encouraging social labouring

If you know that other people who are important to you are depending on you, and if you know they are watching you do something you are good at, you will often perform better than if you'd been doing it alone for yourself. This is the opposite of social loafing, and has been termed 'social labouring' by sociologist Rupert Brown.

There are several ways in which you can encourage social labouring in your media production groups:

- **Make the group important to its members.** A group of friends or people who know each other well can be more likely to work above and beyond the effort level of an individual. This is because the group members care about the others' opinions. They also don't want any bad feeling about loafing lingering after the production is over.
- **Have a group identity.** If the group isn't a friendship group and doesn't have a strong team spirit to start with, then try to find ways to give the group a special identity. One way of achieving this is by setting up a production company.
- **Increase specialisation and give members credit for their skills.** If members believe

that their good work or good ideas will be recognised publicly, they may be more inclined to work harder. Giving them specific roles to perform and then giving them credit for those roles can help increase social labouring.

- **Keep groups reasonably small.** It is harder to be a social loafer when your contribution is indispensable because you are part of a small group.

9.5 ACTIVITIES

1 **Experiment** with different ways of choosing groups, **trying out** different formation techniques to **discover** the best combination before you settle on your final production group. Suggested ways of forming the experimental groups include the following:
   - **Skills-based**. Decide on a small number of the important specialised roles required for production. Divide the class according to those students who would like to specialise in those roles, or those who have the necessary skills. Form groups by randomly selecting one person from each group.
   - **Randomised**. Line up the class in numerical order based on the digits in their house number/street number. Groups of the required number are then formed by dividing up the line of people.

2 **Explain** what the task demands are for a production group by brainstorming a list of everything that has to be done. You can try allocating elements on this list to different group members, but it can be equally useful just to keep the list and tick tasks off as they are completed.

3 **Symbolise** in a flow chart some useful processes that can work to ensure group success, **representing** each process and labelling the flow chart.
Explain each stage in the process.
Some suggested stages include:
   - Swap contact details.
   - Provide a back-up person for each role.
   - Allocate someone who will monitor how everyone is performing.

4 **Synthesise** a production company name and logo as a means of building team identity. **Solve** the **conceptual problem** of developing an appropriate idea and then **combine the elements** into a moving-image media production.

Part B: Producing genre stories



Alamy Stock Photo/Todd Bannor

Figure 9.23 A student film crew at work. Each member of the crew has a specific task.

GENRE STORIES

Genres are built up out of sets of narrative codes and conventions that filmmakers have used to create the types of films that audiences have expected. Films from the early days of Hollywood until about the 1970s tended to stick to just one set of genre conventions. This is known as the classical period of filmmaking. From the 1970s until the present day, many directors have blended genre conventions to create hybrids. Audiences have become more sophisticated in what they expect.

As a result, identifying moving-image storylines as a particular genre can be difficult. The categories are arbitrary. They are shifting over time, and new stories often fall between the neat definitions.

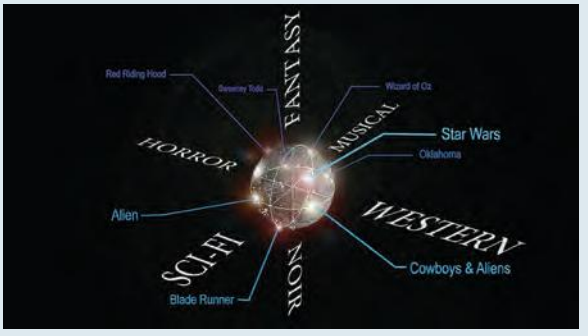


Figure 9.24 Our current 'genre universe' has expanded from what it was during the classical period of Hollywood filmmaking. Hybrids allow the sphere of media possibilities to grow. New platforms and ideas cluster around the genre traditions but also emerge in the gaps between them.

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Genre (with a soft 'g') is French for 'a type, kind or gender'. It is connected to the English words of 'genetics' and 'generate'. Even before this, it stems from the Greek word 'genesis' (*gen* meaning 'to be born' or 'to produce'), so it is also useful to think of film genres as a family tree. Science fiction and horror both have a common literary ancestor in Mary Shellley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818), and Japanese Samurai films are closely related to American Westerns. Each generation interbreeds in new ways to form hybrids, starting new branches and evolving through innovation.

Science fiction

Science fiction (often called sci-fi) is futuristic **speculative fiction** based in part on the knowledge that we have in the present day. It often addresses the question of humanity's purpose in the universe. Science, religion and art pose the same questions as science fiction. Personal stories are used to explore a philosophical big picture, usually on a grand scale, sometimes involving the whole universe.



The Moviestore Collection Ltd/MGM: Space Odyssey



NASA

Figure 9.25 Artwork from *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and an actual NASA 2010 photo showing a spaceship docking. Science fiction is speculative fiction that describes imagined scenarios that may not always remain impossible, unlike horror and fantasy. Alternative histories or extrapolated futures are based on current inventions or theory.

> 'Yeah, but your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not they *could*, they didn't stop to think if they *should*.'
>
> **Dr Ian Malcolm (character)**, *Jurassic Park* (1993)

The many forms of the science-fiction genre provide a place to debate the ethics of technology already developed. It has also been the inspiration for many scientific inventions, interacting with history in a way that other genres don't.

H.G. Wells imagined atomic energy as a new kind of bomb in 1914 at the start of the First World War. Physicist Leo Szilárd read the book in 1932, and invented chain reactions as he waited and crossed at a traffic light in 1933. He convinced Albert Einstein to write a letter to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, in 1939. They argued it was too dangerous to let Germany invent the bomb first. Two bombs were dropped on Japanese cities in 1945, at the end of the Second World War. This science fiction had created its own conceptual chain reaction of imagination and shaped history.

Features of plot and production

Science fiction tends to have the following features:

- **Scientific principles.** Plausible technology is imagined, such as Mary Shelley animating Frankenstein with electricity. This is similar to Luigi Galvani's experiments on frog's legs.
- **Ethical dilemmas.** Questions are posed about the implications of scientific developments. For example, in the short-story collection *I, Robot* (1950), Isaac Asimov's 'Three Laws of Robotics' are debated – robots mustn't hurt humans, but robots may also be biological and expect rights. The dilemma posed by this are explored in *The Island* (2005) and *Blade Runner* (1982, 2017).

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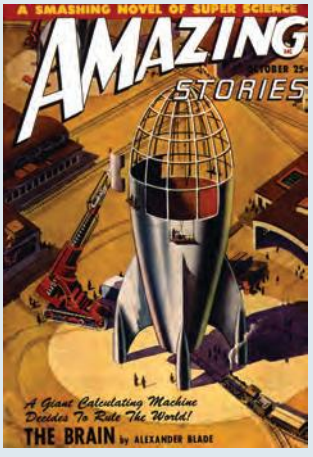
- **Grand implications.** Science-fiction stories often concern themselves with events that threaten the very future of humanity. Individuals often are responsible for the fate of all other humans, as in *Sunshine* (2007).
- **Visual effects.** *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) by Georges Méliès established special effects. Expensive, realistic spectacle made Hollywood the home of high-end science fiction. Others used quirky plots and more internal space action – for example, *Doctor Who* (1963–) and the radio series *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (originally broadcast in 1978).
- **Rich soundscapes.** Bernard Herrmann developed the electronic **theremin** instrument as a spooky classic sci-fi code in films such as *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951). *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966–69) had 'spot effects' associated with each device – even doors. *Star Wars* (1977) had laser sounds that were created with a spanner striking powerlines. *2001: A Space Odyssey* used the orchestral piece '*Also sprach Zarathustra*' to portray the awe of space through classical music.
- **Borrowed genre features.** The *Star Wars* films (1977–) have significant fantasy elements allowing spiritual mysticism to be a serious plot element. 'Tech-noir' is a common hybrid.

Common themes

Certain common themes occur repeatedly in science fiction:

- **Fear of 'the other'.** Fed by different versions of America being invaded.
- **Slavery.** Suppression of entire classes reflect the US experience.
- **Fear of technology.** Escaping monsters and replacements for the workforce.
- **Predestination.** Interfering with genes or time travel creates paradoxes regarding free will.
- **Individualism.** Those who deviate from the norm are often punished but ultimately benefit others.
- **Faith.** Belief in human ingenuity, inferior primitive spiritualism or superior techno-transcendent spiritualism.

Origin influences and context



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Alamy Stock Photo/Mike Booth

Figure 9.26 Rockets from 1930s comic books evolved to shape designs from cars to kitchens as the space race between the US and Russia gathered importance into the 1960s.

Table 9.4 Four recognisable science-fiction story types.

SCI-FI TYPE	SCI-FI STORY	GENRE INFLUENCE	BORROWED FEATURES	FILM EXAMPLE
Horror	Natural order disturbed	Horror	• monster escapes or creation turns on creator • sequential victims • fight to the death	*Alien* (1979)
Political	Invasion	Western	• dispute over territory • lifestyle under threat • individual with unique skill • inspired community defence	*Independence Day* (1996, 2016)
Glorification	Fantastic future	Fantasy	• technology blurs with the mystical • problems are solved • noble acts • peace or future hope	*Gravity* (2013)
Dependence	Post-apocalyptic future	Noir (circular narrative) Road movie (duo on a journey)	• societal collapse • resource depletion • individual self interest • erosion of morality	*Minority Report* (2002) *The Book of Eli* (2010)

Warnings against 'playing God' persist along with invasions, mostly from the US's contemporary threats, including the 1950s **McCarthyist** fear of communism, and the current fear of terrorists. Originally, *War of the Worlds* (radio, 1938; film, 1953) featured an alien attack from Mars, but the film remake (2005) shows the enemy hiding 'underground' in waiting, like a terrorist sleeper cell.

Social attitudes to 'nature vs nurture' change the representation of The Force in the *Star Wars* series over time. In 1977 it was 'stretch out with your feelings' to discover the force, but in 1999 potential was measured via a blood test. In the original version of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), planetary annihilation was via atomic self-destruction, but it was environmental damage in the 2008 remake.

Science-fiction stories and characters

Codes and conventions produce four recognisable science-fiction story types, as outlined in Table 9.4.

These story types also have recognisable recurring characters:

- the messianic one
- the anointed one
- the professor
- the freelancer
- the princess
- the automatons
- the community representative.



Alamy Stock Photo/Courtesy Everett Collection/© Warner Bros

Figure 9.27 The *Mad Max* series (1979–) uses a recognisable story type in an Australian context to warn of 'dependence' with road movie elements.

Film noir

Film noir is French for 'black film' and refers to moody US films made after the Second World War. They often feature detectives, private investigators or insurance snoops. They were often filmed at night, or in shadowy interiors.

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Features of *noir* films

Films shot in the *noir* style have the following features:

- **Deep focus** to lend an air of realism and to cut down on the need for different scenes.
- **Complex compositions** with several actors in the shot.
- **Complex *mise en scène*** with crowded furniture or claustrophobic buildings to allow for surprises and entrapment.
- ***Noir* motifs** such as lights shining through venetian blinds, swirling cigarette smoke, mirrors, spiral staircases and so on.
- **Low-key lighting** with sharply defined areas of light and shade. Low-key lighting casts threatening shadows and allows surprises to be hidden.
- **Backlighting** that directs shafts of light towards the camera, putting the character or object of interest into silhouette.
- **Complex plots** with lots of intrigue and twists and turns. Often the plot is so complex that narration has to provide explanations.
- **First-person voice-over** that allows the audience to identify with the main character and provides the explanation for complex plots. In classic *film noir*, the voice-over is almost always male.
- **Urban settings depicting dangerous and mean streets** in a highly stylised way. Interior settings are sinister and shadowy, full of slightly scary furniture.

Film noir plots

Film noir movies usually have plots based around murder and crimes of passion. Chance events play a large part in the story. A single chance event leads to snowballing complications. A strange twist of fate brings the male character into the clutches of a beautiful but deadly female character. Together, they often commit a crime. The male ends up dead.

It is very common for *noir* films to have a circular plot structure. They begin at the end of the story – often at the point of defeat or death for the male character. The male voice-over explains how events came to play out in such a way as to end up at this final point. The whole movie is like a flashback. The last scene adds some extra final details to the story that we didn't see at the beginning.

Noir characters

There are two types of characters that are very common in *film noir* movies:

1. **The hard-boiled cynical male.** This character is usually a loner who appears to be the typical tough-guy detective or investigator. He's seen all the crime and corruption that the world has to offer, and he's disillusioned and detached. But that doesn't stop him being a smart-talking wise-guy.
2. **The femme fatale.** The French term 'femme fatale' means deadly woman. She is a beautiful and seductive 'spider woman' who entraps the male and uses him for her own ends. She isn't after love so much as money and power.



Alamy Stock Photo/Granger Historical Picture Archive

Figure 9.28 Gloria Swanson and William Holden in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Male characters in *film noir* movies are often cynical and street-wise, but a chance event causes them to fall into the clutches of the deadly femme fatale. The movies are famous for their shafts of light shining through venetian blinds into shadowy sinister interiors. Deceit and entrapment are common themes.

Horror

Horror movies are films whose main aim is to create feelings of dread and terror. To do this, they often tap into deep fears that most people in the audience will have. For the audience, the horror movie is an experience of fear that is bounded by the safety of being able to say, 'It is only a movie'. This allows some critics to call them 'safe nightmares'.

Features of horror movies

Most horror movies tend to have several features in common:

- **Monstrosity.** Horror movies focus on the monstrous, or depict supernatural or psychological monsters.

- **Disruption of the body.** Most horror movies feature some kind of bodily horror. This can be expressed in the victims of the monster as their bodies are disrupted by the 'monster'. Or it can be expressed in the body of the 'monster' in the form of gross bodily features or gross behaviours.
- **Playing upon phobias.** Horror movies exaggerate phobias that many of us have until they become almost unbearably horrible. There is a horror movie for almost every single human phobia, from snakes and spiders to fear of being alone. There is even one for fear of the dentist.
- **Trespass.** A specialty of horror movies is to invade socially accepted boundaries and to break taboos.
- **Violence.** Because horror movies rely on shock and fear, the easiest way to get this is to use extreme violence. Violence disrupts the normality, but violence also restores it.
- **World upside-down.** After the 'monster' attacks, the world becomes a crazy place. The logical basis of normality is turned upside-down.

Horror movie plots

Horror movies focus on disruption to normality – therefore, the normality has to be established very strongly at the beginning of the film. The monstrous or the monster disrupts the normality and then what follows is a battle between the normal or natural and the hideous or supernatural.

There are two kinds of resolutions to horror movies: the secure ending where normality returns, or the insecure ending where there remains a suggestion that the monstrous might return.

Horror movie characters

Three main character types are common in horror movies:

1. **The monster.** This character can invite the audience to be sympathetic or repulsed. However they are represented, the monster is always the main character in the story.
2. **The victims.** Even though the audience does not have to spend much time with the victims, they are important. They aren't important as individuals so much as they are in total numbers.
3. **The final girl.** In many horror movies from the 1950s until the 2010s, the monster was male, but the lone survivor was female. This sole survivor was dubbed 'the final girl'. The final girl appears because the audience is more likely to live their own fear through a female – rather than a terrified male, argues Carol Clover, the originator of the term.



Alamy Stock Photo/RGR Collection

Figure 9.29 Actor Robert Englund is made up as Freddy Krueger for the filming of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984). Monstrosity in the horror movie is often focused on the body. Settings tend to have an exaggerated normality, as suggested by the name 'Elm Street'. Later horror films are often set in suburban locations, but early horror films tended to be set in exotic foreign locations such as Transylvania.

Westerns

A Western is a film set during the frontier period of the American West. They are usually set in the period from the end of the American Civil War (1861–65) until the First World War (1914–18). Most often they are set before the 1890s. Westerns are about the conquest of territory and the imposition of law and order. Battles are mostly between Europeans and Native Americans, or between cattlemen and homesteaders.

Features of Westerns

The *mise en scène* of the Western genre is familiar to audiences around the world, and includes Stetson hats, horses, steam trains, stagecoaches and so on. A number of other features regularly appear:

- **Frontier landscapes.** The frontier was the edge of European settlement in the US. Western landscapes are dry and often harsh.
- **Violence.** The Western starts and finishes with a violent event.
- **Clear oppositions.** There are clear divisions between good and evil, lawlessness and order, civilisation and nature. The strong versus the weak is another division. Often the hero is somehow opposed to society, or at least an outsider.

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Western plots

After studying hundreds of Westerns, foundational genre analyst Will Wright has identified the most common plot structure:

- A stranger comes into town on horseback, often with exceptional skills in marksmanship or fighting. But these skills are only used when justified.
- Villains threaten the townspeople or the homestead settlers. The villains have contempt for the ordinary people but have respect for the stranger.
- The stranger attempts to avoid serious conflict with the villains, but finally a friend is threatened.
- The stranger takes on the villains and defeats them using justified violence. Society applauds the stranger, but their acceptance is rejected and the stranger rides off into the sunset. An alternative ending involves a marriage into the community.

Western characters

There are three main characters in Westerns:

1 **The hero.** Often a stranger to the area, the hero is a superb gunfighter and horserider with excellent physical skills. The hero has a strict moral code because that is what separates them from the villains.
2 **The villain.** Like the hero, the villain has excellent physical skills and is an equal in almost every way – except morally. The villain is motivated by base emotions such as greed or ambition.
3 **The Native Americans.** Early Westerns used Native Americans to create dramatic climaxes. Contemporary Westerns tend to portray Native Americans as virtuous protectors of the environment and as having a noble way of life.
4 **Female characters in Westerns.** Earlier Westerns portrayed two types of female characters: virtuous women (such as ranchers' daughters and schoolmarms) and the not-so-virtuous women (such as saloon girls and barmaids). Contemporary Westerns offer a much broader range of character roles. Examples where females have leading roles include *True Grit* (2010) and *The Missing* (2003).



Alamy Stock Photo/Granger Historical Picture Archive

Figure 9.30 Gary Cooper as Marshall Will Kane in *High Noon* (1952). *High Noon* was made just as the Western was starting to decline as a genre. Like many Westerns, it portrays a good man standing up against a villain while the cowardly townspeople do nothing. Many critics see it as an allegory for the McCarthy anti-communist witch hunts in America in the 1950s.

Gangster movies

Gangster films are associated with the *film noir* genre and the Western. Gangster movies are about crime, aggression and violence in an urban environment. They are similar to *noir* films in that they portray a world that is corrupt and cynical. They are similar to Westerns in that they focus on battles for control, power and territory. However, in a gangster movie, the main character is not someone who is of high moral standing. The main character is very much a 'bad guy'. The common settings for gangster movies are big cities, and the prohibition era in the US. Contemporary gangster movies may also be set in the drug underworlds.

Features of gangster movies

Gangster movies tend to have common features: violence, lawlessness, a cult of the individual, and a focus on success and wealth.

Violence in gangster movies is a key feature. The level of violence is taken above that of most other movie genres. It provides shock value, but it also establishes that the world of the gangster is not the normal world we know. Violence starts the plot and provides the resolution.

Lawlessness is a result of the gangster living in a world with no morals. Greed and power are the only goals. The gangster will do anything to achieve success. Society is placed in chaos as a result.

Individualism is extreme in the world of the gangster. Gangsters are embodying the American dream of the 'self-made man'. It's just that they are on the wrong side of the law, unlike legitimate businesspeople.

Success and wealth are the sole goals and everything else is subservient to those ambitions. The ends justify any means in the gangster film, but the audience knows it will inevitably end in death.

Gangster movie plots

Violence starts the gangster movie, occurs at all the main complications and climaxes, and violence finishes the movie. The violent death of the lead character usually provides the resolution.

Often the gangster movie follows the bloody career of the lead character, as in *The Godfather* (1972). Brutality increases throughout their career until, by the end of the film, they are totally immoral and overly confident. Their downfall comes as a result.

Characters

The character types that most commonly appear in gangster movies are.

- **'Mr Big'.** The story is told from the point of view of the lead character, who is scheming, ruthless and brutal. There is also often something tragic or sad about these characters.
- **Families.** The gangster genre has its origins in stories of the American Mafia. As a result, there are often family loyalties that are almost tribal. There is a clear chain of command all the way up to Mr Big. Honour comes from upholding the family prestige and territory.
- **The hoodlums.** Surrounding Mr Big, there is a whole pack of burly henchman. None of them has the intelligence of Mr Big.
- **Female characters.** Early films in the genre mostly gave women minor roles as wives and girlfriends. Rarely did they play lead roles as main characters in the gangster movies. However, one of the most enduring female gangster roles is that of Bonnie Parker played by Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967).



Alamy Stock Photo/Pictorial Press Ltd

Figure 9.31 Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty as Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow in the 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde*. Even today, the character of Bonnie remains one of the most powerful and enduring female roles in the gangster genre. In this genre, the lead characters meet violent deaths.

Road movies

In a road movie, all the action takes place during a journey, and the car is almost a character in some sense. The road comes to represent life itself as the characters escape from their previous lives and discover something about themselves. The road journey becomes a rite of passage, a fugitive flight or a quest.

Features of road movies

Common elements in road movies are:

- **Music.** The landscape rolling past as music with significant lyrics plays on the car's sound system is a major part of the road movie experience. Usually the lyrics and music are suggestive of the characters' emotional states.
- **Landscape.** A lot of time is given over to landscape shots. These work in a similar way to the music – they reflect the emotional state of the characters. A common progression is to start in an urban environment and to end up in a desert as an outlaw.

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- **Movement.** Road movies involve a physical movement (in the car) and a spiritual movement (within the characters).
- **Freedom.** The road provides freedom and adventure, away from the social constraints of friends, partners and parents.
- **Violence.** In road movies about fugitives, violence is important at the start and at the end. In rite-of-passage or quest road movies, violence plays a much less significant part.

Road movie plots

Road movies usually progress through stages of dramatic action, and then punctuate these with periods of driving and music. The driving scenes allow the characters and the audience to come to terms with things. Often each episode of dramatic action is like a hurdle or challenge the characters have to overcome.

Endings to road movies fall into one of four categories:

1 The characters have changed so much they can never go back, and often die. *Thelma & Louise* (1991) is of this type.
2 The characters just keep driving into the sunset.
3 The characters return home somehow 'grown up', as seen in rite-of-passage road movies.
4 The characters have a new home waiting for them. *Sideways* (2004) is very similar to this type.

Characters

There are only a small number of main characters in road movies. Minor but influential characters are met on the road, but the main characters must fit into the front seat of a car or ride on a motorbike.

- **A duo.** Most road movies feature two main characters, almost always of the same gender. Road movies are like 'buddy movies'. If the duo characters are of the same gender, there is more chance of them interacting with others along the way. They might form relationships that bring new scripting opportunities.
- **The vehicle and the road.** The car (bus, truck or motorbike) is a character as well. The vehicle is usually of interest in some way. In *Thelma & Louise*, the car is a 1966 Ford Thunderbird convertible. In *Easy Rider* (1969), the motorbikes are Harley-Davidsons. Similarly, the road is often iconic. Route 66 crosses the US from coast to coast, and has had more movies made along it than any other road.
- **The cop.** The characters in a road movie are usually running from something. Often it is a crime. The cop provides a blockage and a reason to keep running. The cop can also provide the resolution as the outlaws come face to face with the law.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 9.32 In the classic Australian road movie *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994), the bus is almost a character. Iconic landscapes and highways set to driving music separate the action climaxes that occur at each stop along the way.

Romantic comedies

Romantic comedies are comic films about two people finding each other, falling in love and eventually getting together. Falling in love itself does not provide enough of a story, and so there are complications that work to keep them apart until the end of the movie. The comedy comes from the banter between the two, and the comic situations they get into. Often the lead characters start out as antagonists, and the journey they take is from dislike to love.

Features of romantic comedies

Several of the following features appear in romantic comedies:

- **Stars.** Romantic comedies focus on people and personalities, and so the stars who play those people are very important. This is more so than in other genres.
- **Repartee.** This is the witty dialogue that takes place between the characters. It provides most of the comedy. The verbal banter between the 'odd couple' (a mismatched couple) keeps the characters apart till the end. Yet the audience can see they belong together.

- **Physical comedy.** When objects or physical events cause the comedy, it is called physical comedy. Most romantic comedies rely on verbal comedy, but there is often a dash of physical comedy as well.
- **Music.** The soundtrack to romantic comedies helps to progress the plot in the same way as it does with musicals. The music lets the audience into the inner world of the characters.
- **Romance.** These films depict romance as something that transforms people's lives. Romantic love usually ends in marriage, even in modern films.

Romantic comedy plots

The basis of the romantic comedy plot can be summed up as 'person A meets person B, person A loses person B, person A gets person B'. When person A first meets person B, the world is disrupted for both of them. The audience wants them to be together from the start. The scriptwriters have to keep them apart. Complications prevent them from uniting.

At some point, one of the characters makes 'the grand gesture'. This is a declaration of love that changes the direction of the film. Shortly after this, the resolution allows the couple to defy all odds and come together.

Characters

Romantic comedies are built around differences between characters who, despite everything, eventually come together. Masculinity versus femininity is an obvious contrast. However social class or personality can also provide points of difference. Nevertheless, it should be obvious to the audience that the characters should be together. This means they must appear to need each other. One might have some personality trait or inner quality that the other seems to desperately need.

- **The female lead.** Most of the female leads are independent and strong. They aren't particularly vulnerable, because they have to be able to deliver some pretty tough banter.
- **The male lead.** The audience has to like the man, because they have to want him to be with the female lead. Often, he is involved in some worthwhile pursuit that the audience will agree makes him a good marriage prospect.



Alamy Stock Photo/Mim Friday

Figure 9.33 A promotional poster for the movie *La La Land* (2016). This movie sits on the boundary of romantic comedy and musical. There is physical comedy, a mismatched odd couple and plenty of banter. From the musical genre, the movie takes the use of music and fantasy to progress the plot and express feelings. *La La Land* also plays with the traditional idea that the couple ends up together, a more contemporary approach to the classical happy ending.

Documentaries

Documentaries present facts about a subject to construct an argument. They use real events, people or places to present certain realities. Pioneer British documentary maker John Grierson defined documentary as the creative treatment of actuality (or reality).

Features of documentaries

There are five main features of documentaries:

1. **Observation.** The audience watches events unfold and so they become eyewitnesses.
2. **Interview.** Documentaries rely on interviews to progress the argument. The interview can be either allowed to run in full or cut in with other footage. Sometimes the reporter or documentary maker is visible, but can also be unseen or even unheard.
3. **Dramatisation.** All documentaries use drama to keep the audience interested. Many of them just build this into the observations and interviews. Some documentaries include dramatised re-enactments of events as well. These are effective when it would be impossible to directly film observation sequences. Examples of this include situations where crime or corruption needs to be shown, or when the events are in the past.

4 ***Mise en scène.*** A documentary maker must use things that already exist rather than fully dress the set. However, the documentary maker can still use *mise en scène* (see 'Languages', chapter 15) to carefully compose the shot, and only let the audience see what they want them to see.

5 **Argument.** What the documentary is 'saying', its point of view, is called the exposition or argument. This can be clearly expressed and direct. It can also be hidden by allowing the audience to think they are drawing their own conclusions.

Types of documentary

Documentaries have gradually changed over time. The following types have developed:

- **Fully narrated documentaries.** Sometimes called 'voice of God' documentaries, these have a strong narrative voice that explains the exposition. Usually this voice-over is of an unseen person – hence 'voice of God'.
- **Cinéma vérité.** This term is French for 'truthful cinema', but it is not necessarily any more truthful than any other style. It relies almost totally on observation and interview. There is no narration.
- **Self-reflexive.** Sometimes the documentary maker themselves is a star. Michael Moore is an example. When the documentary maker appears in their own documentary as someone who is actively participating, the style is called self-reflexive.
- **Mixed.** These documentaries use all of the elements, including narration. Usually the narrator speaks from within the scene, at least for some of the time. This is a more modern approach to documentary making.

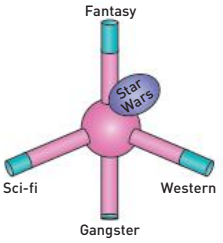
9.6 ACTIVITIES

1 Refer to the genre universe diagram in Figure 9.24 (page 214) and select three media texts (a game scenario is also suitable) to view to the end of the first act. The conclusion of these productions can be explored in a later activity. Respond to the activities in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	ANALYSE	SYMBOLISE
Construct a **systematic** list (see sample in Table 9.5) of **technical and symbolic codes** used to represent characters, locations, institutions, objects etc. **Construct** short phrases with verbs (see 'noted features' in Table 9.5 below) of **specific conventions** in the list that deal with relationships with others, objects, cultures, environment and self.	**Analyse** each **convention**, **technical** and **symbolic code** you have listed, **considering** the **constituent parts** of the list individually, and **making judgements** on genre attribution according to known features. **Analyse** the chronological notes by **dissecting** into groupings of genre influence. **Analyse** the relative contribution to the **moving-image media product** story from other **contexts** by using a quantitative (numerical) percentage based on the number of noted features.	**Symbolise** the percentage influence on your selected texts by **representing** it visually using a simple three- or four-pole diagram. **Symbolise** influences clearly by **identifying** appropriate adjacent genre poles to match your findings. **Symbolise** using **images** of the genre universe, a quantitative measure on your diagram of the 'gravity' each genre applies to the story. **Symbolise** by sketching where the production sits to **signify** genre contribution in a three-dimensional **representation**.

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Table 9.5 Sample allocation of a moving-image media text in the genre universe using technical and symbolic codes.

MOVING-IMAGE MEDIA TEXT	NOTED FEATURES	GENRE SOURCE	%	PLACE IN GENRE UNIVERSE
e.g. No. 1 *Star Wars Episode IV – A New Hope* (1977)	• starts in space • laser weapons • androids • hologram • escape in a spaceship	Sci-fi	25	 **Figure 9.34** Example of a four-pole diagram. **Experiment** with other forms of graphs to **discover** a **variety of techniques** to convey the complex web of influence.
	• princess is captured • hermit is revealed • mysterious message from beyond • mind-control tricks • array of strange creatures • enchanted weapon • antagonist no longer human	Fantasy	35	
	• gunfight invades territory • bandits patrol the desert • frontier farm attacked • gunslinger for hire • bar-room brawl	Western	25	
	• call to tradition/father's occupation • family dynasty • gang plots against weaker victims	Western or gangster	7.5 7.5	

2 Refer to your list (constructed for the previous activity) on placement in the genre universe. Introduce a science-fiction element if none of your examples have any. It can be applied to any genre. You need knowledge of the first act of the film (knowledge of the rest of the film doesn't matter). The *Star Wars* example indicates the resolution could be expected to portray the 'town' saved by 'a community', inspired by someone with 'special skills', using futuristic weapons (like a Western) yet with a mystical twist (like fantasy). Use your genre knowledge to **design** possible resolutions and **explore** story consequences based on the **evidence** observed for your 'noted features' and 'genre source' lists.
Respond to the activities in the following table.

SYNTHESISE	ANALYSE	CONSTRUCT
Synthesise a resolution for each of the three movies (or the game) to **solve** the **creative problem** of satisfying audience expectations of the genre balance, based on the first act. **Synthesise** a **combination of moving-image elements** in acceptable conclusions from the conventions of one of the contributing genres. **Synthesise conceptual** connections of cause and effect between the first act using **evidence** from your 'noted features' list and consequences in the climax/resolution.	**Analyse** by **considering** the list of character types from science fiction in relation to *any* **moving-image media product** you know. **Analyse** the level of science-fiction alignment in this text by **making a judgement** against the recurring character types listed in the science-fiction section to assign characters to their best match.	**Construct** three **possible resolutions** for each of the three texts you are working with, **systematically** substituting a different character type from the science-fiction list as the antagonist each time. **Construct** a short **artist's statement** as a proposal to a producer, **reflecting** on particular audiences likely to react against the representation of the antagonist, and **recommending** the most widely popular **plan**. **Construct** a **comparison** for the producer with accepted character **conventions** to indicate whether stereotypes are being challenged or reinforced if your plan was **put into effect**.

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3 **Experiment** with possible story outcomes around a recent invention and how it may **interact** with society, **creating ideas** for the best possible use of this technology and the worst possible use.
Apply literacy skills in a letter to the inventor, **communicating** the potential social consequences (good or bad), and **distinguishing** between the current viewpoint and potential future attitudes.
Appraise your own letter as a basis for a science-fiction text, **drawing a conclusion** as to the worth of your prophecy to an audience.
Synthesise a two- to four-minute genre sequence within a mainstream genre or hybrid genre of your choice. Include the **codes and conventions** of your chosen genre. **Solve technical** and **creative problems** to combine genre elements into a moving-image media product.

Part C: Australian stories on film

AUSTRALIAN FILM INDUSTRY

In a history spanning more than 100 years, Australian filmmaking has had good times and bad. Always there has been a sense that it is a fragile industry.

Film historians Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka define Australian cinema as being made up of three parts:

1 a national industry or business
2 a cultural experience that contributes to a sense of national identity
3 an exportable set of images and ideas about Australia that are projected overseas.

Historical context

Pre-1920s boom

Australia was one of the biggest filmmaking countries in the world in the years before 1914. What's more, we went to the movies more often than any other nation in the world. Local movie production hit an all-time high in 1911 when 51 movies were released. This number has never been equalled in the years since.

Before the First World War (1914–18) there was a global market for films, and travelling exhibitions showed films from all over the world. A German exhibition showed the first films in Australia in 1896, but soon Australian films would also travel the world.

Silent films have no language barriers. At first, presenters read a commentary in the language of the host country. After about 1906, filmmakers began to explain the plot using inter-titles: text on the screen in between scenes. These inter-titles were easily substituted in different languages.

During this era, no English-speaking film industry outside of Hollywood was as ready to go global as the Australian film industry. Unfortunately, Australian companies failed to seize the opportunity. The first Hollywood studio distribution office opened in Australia in 1915. By 1918, all the Hollywood majors had offices in Australia. The cheaper US competition killed off the Australian industry before it could properly develop.

The Australian film industry does have the honour of having produced what is regarded to be the world's first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906). The criteria for a feature film are that it be a work of fiction and a continuous story, and that it be longer than 60 minutes. Some historians argue that the world's first feature-length film was the Salvation Army's *Soldiers of the Cross* (1900). Made in Melbourne at the 'Limelight Department' studios of the Salvation Army, the presentation was a collection of slides and filmed sequences that lasted more than two hours. Its depiction of the life of Christ included such explicit violence that several women in the first audience were said to have fainted.

Probably the best-known Australian film of the era is a working-class romantic comedy called *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919). Based on a popular poem by C. J. Dennis, it retells the story of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* from the point of view of an Australian larrikin. The film uses stereotyped Australian characters in a similar way to the movie comedies of *Dad and Dave Come to Town* (1938), *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972) and *Crocodile Dundee* (1986).

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From the collection of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (a division of the Australian Film Commission).



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Figure 9.35 A shot from *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906) before (left) and after (right) restoration. Most film historians regard *The Story of the Kelly Gang* as the world's first feature film. Only fragments survive, but restoration work carried out in 2006 has reassembled about 25 per cent of the film.

1920s–1940s: the 'grim years'

The Golden Age of Hollywood were grim years for Australian filmmakers. For 20 years after the arrival of the Hollywood distributors in Australia, local film production sank to rock-bottom levels. The Great Depression (1929–33) made the challenge of finding financial backing even more difficult.

Australian identity was an important theme during this period, and historical events provided a way of exploring this. *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1927) spotlighted Australia's convict history.

Family relationships were another notable feature of Australian films of the period. More than half of all Australian films made in the 1920s and 1930s deal with family issues. The hillbilly Rudd family of the *Dad and Dave* series of comedy films is typical of Australian films of the time. Beginning with *On Our Selection* (1932), Dad is a strong country father figure while his son Dave is a stereotypical comic simpleton. Mum is a fairly weak character, always agreeing with Dad, but one of the daughters is a strong female figure. The figure of the strong bushwoman is common in Australian films of the period. This follows a tradition in bush literature and seems to be a uniquely Australian theme.

Film production was boosted by the arrival of the Second World War (1939–45), when most production efforts turned to newsreels and government documentaries. In 1944, Charles Chauvel produced the feature film *The Rats of Tobruk*, starring the famous Australian actors Chips Rafferty and Peter Finch.



Alamy Stock Photo/Mary Evans/Ronald Grant Archive/Cinesound Productions

Figure 9.36 From *Dad and Dave Come to Town* (1938). Lovable country bumpkins (hillbillies), the Rudd family tapped into recurring themes in Australian comedy that would also provide the humour in *The Castle* (1997) and *Crocodile Dundee*.

The Overlanders (1946), a UK and Australian co-production, told of a great wartime cattle drive from the Northern Territory, under threat of Japanese invasion, 2400 kilometres to Queensland. Chips Rafferty played an Australian bushman not unlike Crocodile Dundee. There is also a bushwoman who is an expert horserider. The film plays up the importance of mateship and community spirit in overcoming the odds. It also shows an Australia where agriculture was still the most important industry.

1950s–1960s: 'barely there'

The arrival of television spelt the end of regular movie-going around the world. Where Australians had gone to the cinema once or even twice a

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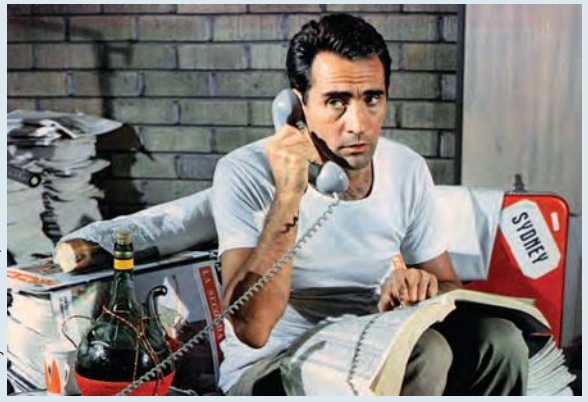
week, in the 1950s and 1960s cinema attendance plummeted, almost killing off the local film industry.

US and UK control of Australian movie distribution and exhibition meant that there was little support for local filmmaking. Only a handful of films were made during the entire 20-year period, and from 1959 until 1966 no films were made at all.

The pioneering bush spirit and mateship remained strong themes in those films that were produced in the 1950s, such as *A Town Like Alice* (1956), *Smiley* (1956) and *The Sundowners* (made in 1959 but released in 1960). The locally made films were often international co-productions in which Australia was merely a location – a mildly interesting backdrop. An example is *On the Beach* (1959), set in Melbourne after a worldwide nuclear holocaust.

Despite these difficulties, some films were innovative. Charles Chauvel produced *Jedda* in 1955. The seed for the film was sown when an American reporter told him overseas audiences wanted to see something uniquely Australian and suggested Aboriginal culture as a subject. *Jedda* was the first film to explore the theme of Indigenous culture in any depth. It was also the first Australian film to be shown at the Cannes Film Festival in France.

They're a Weird Mob (1966) was popular because it allowed Australians to see themselves on the big screen for the first time in many years. According to Stuart Cunningham, Professor of Media and Communications at QUT, the film is important for three reasons: it gave a focus for the movement for government funding of the film industry; it was the first 'multicultural' Australian film; and it kick-started the 'Ocker' movies of the 1970s film revival.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 9.37 *They're a Weird Mob* tells the story of an Italian immigrant to Sydney who gets into trouble trying to understand Australian slang. By the end of the film he is speaking the lingo like a local.

1970s–1980s: revival

The Golden Age of Australian film arrived in the 1970s and 1980s. Calls for a 'genuinely Australian' film culture and a questioning of UK and US dominance led to unprecedented government support for a national film industry. Local television programs such as *Skippy* (1967–70), *Bellbird* (1972 and 1977) and *Homicide* (1964–77) proved that Australian audiences wanted to see Australians on screen. In the early 1970s, the Whitlam government set up the Australian Film Commission and the Australian Film and Television School (now AFTRS). Most states established their own film commissions as well.

To qualify for funding, films had to contribute to the national identity. As a result, the films of the 1970s tend to be of a certain type and also:

- Tend to be art films rather than Hollywood-style movies because they needed to find a special niche in a competitive market.
- Often have a period setting, or focus on historical events, because they had to prove they contributed to Australia's national identity.
- Have good production values and a 'beautiful image' because many of the film crew also worked in advertising.
- Follow the style of television naturalism, with its soap opera–style close-ups and reverse shots, because many crew also worked in television drama.

Finding the right national identity proved to be a challenge. Australian filmmakers 'tried on' a sequence of different national identities – a number of them incompatible with one another. These included:

- **Ocker films.** The 'Ocker' films of the early 1970s featured loud, rude, beer-swilling males. They took advantage of the relaxation of censorship in the 1970s. The characters were young suburban working-class men and the films relied on stereotypes about typical Australian language and vulgar behaviour. An example is *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* about an Aussie 'yobbo' in London.
- **Art films (1970s).** Art-house films targeted a segment of the market that Hollywood could not capture. The films were often period dramas drawing on historical themes and set in the bush. Examples of films in this style are *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) and *Sunday Too Far Away* (1975).



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 9.38 *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* follows an oafish young Aussie man and his exploits in London. Ocker films of the 1970s took advantage of a relaxation of the censorship laws.

- **Art films (1980s).** In the 1980s, a tax law called 10BA allowed investors to write off film production against their tax at special rates between 133 and 150 per cent! Investors flocked to filmmaking and the budgets for films doubled in two years.

Profit and loss calculations dominated filmmaking. Overseas sales became essential, and films had to be tailored to the tastes of overseas audiences, sometimes at the risk of compromising their 'Australian-ness'. For instance, the US actress Meryl Streep was cast as Lindy Chamberlain in *Evil Angels* (1988).

The 'bush myth' appealed to overseas audiences and so continued to dominate as a theme. Films from this era include *Gallipoli* (1981), *The Man from Snowy River* (1982), and *Crocodile Dundee 1* and *2* (1986, 1988).

1990s–2010: mature phase

The 1990s marked the disappearance of the 'bloke' from the movies. In 1988, *Crocodile Dundee 2* topped the Australian cinema box office. In 1992, the frontrunner was *Strictly Ballroom*, and by 1994 it was *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. This change roughly corresponded to the end of the Bob Hawke era (Hawke being the last of the 'blokey' prime ministers).

Australian society had become more complex and multicultural over these years. Films moved away from the traditional male-dominated Anglo-Celtic outback legends. By 1995, close to 40 per cent of the filmmaking workforce was female.

Globalisation also had a considerable impact on the Australian film industry. Many Hollywood directors produced their films in Australia because the lower exchange rate meant lower costs. Australian expertise was also respected. A number of prestigious films were produced here, including *Star Wars Episodes II* and *III* (2002, 2005), *The Matrix* (1999), *The Matrix Reloaded* (2003) and *Superman Returns* (2006).

The drain of Australian talent to Hollywood became a two-way flow. Australians came back from overseas to produce films at home. George Miller filmed *Babe* (1995), *Babe: Pig in the City* (1998) and the photo-realistic animated musical *Happy Feet* (2006) in Australia. Baz Luhrmann came back to film *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), a movie that transformed the musical worldwide. The big studios became more willing to source films from Australia.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the main characteristic of Australian film was diversity. Films were much more personal and 'quirky'. This can be seen in *Muriel's Wedding* (1994) and *Shine* (1996). Australian life was explored from many more viewpoints than had ever been attempted before. The complex interweaving of lives in *Lantana* (2001) is an example of this.

For most of this 20-year period, Australia produced films at a steady rate that ensured at least the survival of an Australian film culture. In the 1990s, an average of 27 films were produced each year. In the 2000s, the number fell slightly to an average of 22.

> 'One of my criticisms is that we are ignoring our modern Australian literature at our peril because that's where the good stories are. In the '70s and '80s practically everything was adapted from a book – *Breaker Morant*, *Caddie* or *Picnic at Hanging Rock* or *Careful He Might Hear You*, or *My Brilliant Career*. All adapted from great novels.'
>
> **Tony Buckley**, editor, producer and author

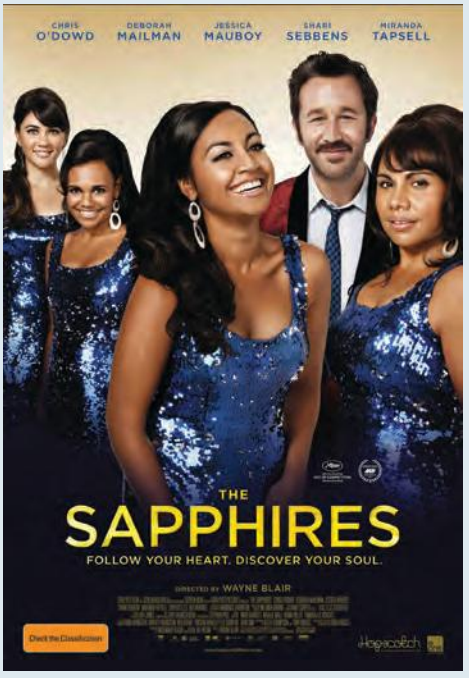
2010 onwards – national identity in an era of globalisation

In the 2010s, debate about Australian films focused on whether it was important to continue a national cinema. Some argued that a transnational cinema would provide employment for Australian film crews. Transnational production would involve international movies being filmed in Australia, with Australian input.

Film producers also argued that Australian films were struggling to connect with audiences. Making films that appealed to a broader segment of society became the aim of many of the film-funding organisations in Australia. A somewhat broader range of topics came about as a result of this. Sometimes assembling a strong cast and crew helped, as with *Healing* (2014) starring Hugo Weaving and filmed by Andrew Lesnie (who filmed the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy). One film that drew a large audience was the teen war film *Tomorrow, When the War Began* (2010) – based on the novel by John Marsden. Another with broad appeal was *Red Dog* (2011), which set a record as the eighth-highest grossing Australian film ever made. The Vietnam-era musical comedy *The Sapphires* (2012), about four young Indigenous women who form a Motown-style band, also drew large audiences. However, at between 3 and 4 per cent of the total takings, box office share for Australian films remains stuck at levels well below that of the 1990s. No Australian film has made it to number one at the box office since 1992.

Increasing globalisation of distribution and production companies has provided Australian films with a stronger investment base. Potential overseas markets make Australian films more economically viable. Diversity and difference has become much more acceptable to audiences worldwide. Indeed, money can be made from being different. One film that gained a positive overseas reception was Tim Winton's *The Turning* (2013). The film managed to depict a local identity within a series of stories of universal appeal.

Appealing to global audiences runs the risk of ignoring the needs of the home audiences. Stories that are uniquely understood in Australia do not necessarily travel well. The difficulty for Australian filmmakers lies in finding a balance. Globalisation also forced Hollywood to change. The percentage of revenue earned from Hollywood's local US market declined to less than half its world revenues. Hollywood had to be more tuned in to what other nations wanted to watch.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive



Getty Images/AFP/Robyn Beck

Figure 9.39 (Left) The Australian poster for *The Sapphires* (2012), a movie about four young Indigenous women who form a band in the Motown tradition and end up touring Vietnam to entertain US and Australian troops. (Right) The 2013 US DVD cover for the same movie downplayed the Indigenous girls and put the focus on their white manager (played by Irish actor Chris O'Dowd). The original Sapphires wrote to US anti-racism advocates the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People asking for their support in getting the cover changed.

Australian identity

Australians have spent more than a century debating national identity. Australian language analyst John Douglas Pringle called the search for identity 'that aching tooth'. Historian Donald Horne, on the other hand, argued that there never has been and never will be a unique and definable Australian identity.

In a 2003 reprint of his 1958 book, *The Australian Legend*, Russell Ward wrote that national character is a people's idea of itself. While it is often romantic and out of touch with reality, it does influence how people behave. Ward believed Australians see themselves as:

- practical, inventive and good at improvising
- rough-and-ready in manners
- quick to criticise authority or show-offs
- willing to 'have a go'
- believing 'near enough is good enough' for most tasks
- swearing, gambling and drinking often
- capable of hard work if required, but don't normally see the need
- preferring leisure over hard work (despite statistical evidence of heavy work habits)
- not keen on intellectual ideas and culture
- believing 'Jack is as good as his master' (meaning everyone is treated the same, regardless of status)
- believing in a 'fair go'
- sticking by their mates through thick and thin.

Even in 1958, many disagreed with Ward's ideas of the typical Australian. They pointed to the fact that he appeared to have ignored women and girls entirely and had focused too much on the time-honoured working-class man – the stereotypical bushman. Today there are many other competing ideas of national identity.

Sport is influential in Australia's national identity – from Don Bradman and Phar Lap to the 2000 Sydney Olympics and the World Cup. After dwindling in the 1970s, the Anzac legend was revived in the 21st century as important to modern Australians. Indigenous culture has a place in national identity after having been ignored for most of the past 200 years. Multicultural Australia has replaced the older idea of Anglo–Celtic Australia. The idea of a 'fair go' for all is still seen as important.

The beach is an icon of modern identity today in the same way that the bush was in the 19th century. The surf lifesaver has replaced the bushman as one of our most important role models. The suburbs, too, are being recognised as uniquely and positively Australian. Increasing interest in environmental issues has changed the character of the bush myth, but the love of nature has remained.

There is no more agreement about the Australian identity now than there was when Russell Ward wrote in the 1950s of the typical Australian. But one element is common to almost all interpretations – the importance of landscape. Even though most Australians live in cities, they still think of Australia as a landscape.

Australian filmmakers have explored a number of themes and discourses over the past hundred years of filmmaking in this country. Some of these themes have featured strongly in certain periods in history. For instance, Australian identity films often crop up during times of national crisis and change.



Shutterstock.com/Darren Tierney

Figure 9.40 The beach has replaced the bush as an icon of Australian identity.

> 'Australia is only physically an island ... its history is enclosed within a larger western history. The examination of our narratives is not an argument for their uniqueness, but rather for a kind of Australian accent which is audible and distinctive when placed in relation to that of other English speakers.'
>
> **Graeme Turner**, Professor of Cultural Studies, University of Queensland

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Other themes do not seem ever to go away and have been revisited again and again throughout the period.

Each filmmaker has dealt with the theme in a slightly different way – and audience members have had different understandings of the theme in different time periods and locations. Watching a 1970s film at the time it was made is not the same as watching it now.

Sometimes Australian filmmakers have had an eye for overseas markets and used stereotypes they think would appeal to international audiences. Paul Hogan did that with *Crocodile Dundee* (1986). At other times, a film may be directed to a local Australian audience, perhaps attempting to change opinion or engage in a debate. *Jindabyne* (2006) engages in a localised Australian debate.

Surprisingly, the most revisited themes of the Australian cinema are not the same as those in Australian television. Also, the themes do not necessarily represent the same concerns that Australian people have in their daily lives. However, they do represent our imaginations. They are like conversations – with different points of view expressed as the discourse progresses.



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Figure 9.41 Kate Winslet in *The Dressmaker* (2015). Common themes in Australian films include the landscape, the larrikin and victory in defeat.

Common themes or discourses

Mateship

Mateship depicts a code of equality, solidarity and friendship – usually among males. It isn't unique to Australia, but it probably became important in early colonial times because the harsh environment meant sticking together was essential for survival.

The idea of mateship has become significant in the Australian cinema, where male-to-male relationships often seem as important as male-to-female ones. Two forms of mateship are common in the cinema:

- **Inclusive mateship.** This type of mateship is shown in *Gallipoli* (1981) and *Kokoda* (2006), and is seen in a positive light as a response to overwhelming hardship, often during war. It is the mateship that allows survival in hostile environments, as in *The Overlanders* (1946). In these films, a strong woman can sometimes be 'one of the boys'. This kind of mateship can also be multicultural, as in *Footy Legends* (2006).
- **Exclusive mateship.** This type of mateship is usually demonstrated when a group bands together to exclude anyone different. In films produced between 1970 and 1990, this form of mateship was usually directed against women – as in *Shame* (1988), a movie said to be based on a series of real-life assaults.



Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives GmbH

Figure 9.42 Mateship, as depicted in Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* (1981), has been a recurring discourse in Australian film since its earliest days. Films have shown positive and negative representations in a debate that shows no sign of losing its strength.

The Aussie larrikin

The tradition of the larrikin is strong in Australian cinema. A larrikin is someone who mocks authority in a playful and comic way. A larrikin doesn't go along with the usual polite norms of society and loves to 'upset the applecart'. The best-known film larrikin is Crocodile Dundee. *Kenny* (2006) is another example.

The Aussie battler

The tradition of the battler in Australian literature and film extends back to Henry Lawson. The Aussie battler is an underdog who struggles for survival with great determination against enormous odds.

Early 20th-century films showed battlers overcoming environmental or economic odds. Films of the 1970s and 1980s often showed the battler pitted against society and conformity. It is not unusual for the battler to be a woman struggling against social pressures, as in *My Brilliant Career* (1979) and *Muriel's Wedding* (1994). The films *Tom White* (2004) and *Three Dollars* (2005) feature middle-class battlers in the 2000s who struggle with job retrenchments and mortgage repayments. The movie *1500 Steps* (2014) depicts a battler's triumph.

Victory in defeat

Australian films tend to place the protagonist as the 'victim' of events rather than as the shaper of them, which is in contrast to US films where the protagonist usually drives events and 'makes things happen'. This can possibly be traced back to Australia's roots as a penal colony and to the Australian experience of defeat at Gallipoli. Similarly, the inhospitable Australian environment often makes us the victim of events beyond our control, such as floods and droughts. *Gallipoli* and the Boer War movie *Breaker Morant* (1980) are examples of films where defeat is in some way recast as victory.



Getty Images/Universal Images Group/Photo 12



Australian War Memorial (127971)

Figure 9.43 The most iconic American and Australian photographic images from the Second World War – (left) Joe Rosenthal's *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* and (right) Damien Parer's shot of a wounded soldier on the Kokoda Trail. Both images are the most famous of the war for each country. Some historians say that rather than focusing on the joy of victory, highly symbolic Australian images of war have focused on sacrifice. This can also be seen in the Australian images showing Simpson and his donkey at Gallipoli in the First World War and 'Weary' Dunlop on the Burma Railway in the Second World War.

Outback landscapes

Most Australian films have been about the landscape in some way, says writer and film-maker Ross Gibson. Landscape has almost become a character in our films and is often shown to have shaped the natures of the human characters.

Part of the reason for this, Gibson suggests, is that non-Indigenous Australia is a young country that has few myths of belonging. The culture and most of its people are relatively recent transplants who have had to come to terms with their new environment. For modern Australians, the outback has become a recognisable national symbol – filmed to look awe-inspiring and grand, or inhospitable and sometimes eerie or haunted.

Another explanation for the outback motif is that international audiences expect it when they see an Australian film. For them, it has become the one symbol that has a unique Australian identity.

While there are many different portrayals of the Australian landscape, two landscape discourses are common:

- **The bush as paradise.** Many films celebrate the bush as a place where the natural world allows people to reach their full potential. In the bush, there is a purity and honesty not found in the city. People can build proper relationships with nature and with one another. This can be seen in *The Man from Snowy River* (1982) and *Crocodile Dundee* (1986).
- **The bush as unknowable and hostile.** The overwhelming sense of emptiness in the outback can often inspire fear. Films often portray the Australian landscape as an awesome opponent or as the source of some mysterious terror. These

movies show how the outback twists and disturbs people in some way. Examples include *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), *Japanese Story* (2003) and *Wolf Creek* (R-rated, 2005). In each case there is a sense of something overpowering or supernatural in the bush.

In 1992, the Mabo decision on native title established that Australia was not an 'empty land' at the time of European settlement but was in the possession of its Indigenous people. This changed the portrayal of landscape in Australian cinema, especially in the 2000s. There is now an increasing recognition in modern Australian cinema of the Indigenous presence in the landscape.



Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives GmbH

Figure 9.44 Peter Weir's eerie film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) is part of a tradition of Australian films using the emptiness of the outback to create a sense of fear.

Country towns

Small country towns have come to represent all that is bad in Australian culture (and all that city people can pretend they are above): racism, sexism, violence, homophobia and aggressive male dominance. Examples extend from *The Cars That Ate Paris* (1974) to *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994) and *The Dressmaker* (2015). This trend in the cinema is the opposite of that in television soap operas, where small towns are generally portrayed in a positive light, reflecting a yearning for traditional close-knit communities.

Suburbia

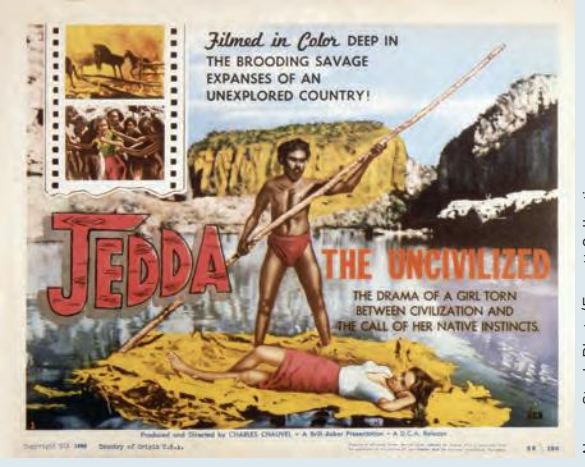
Australian film has demonstrated mixed attitudes to suburbia. It can be seen as a supportive and very personal place that is somehow essential to Australian life, as in *The Castle* (1997). It can be a threatening and dysfunctional place of unemployment and petty crime, as in *The Boys* (1998) or even *Idiot Box* (1996). It can be a place of cultural tension, as in *Down Under* (2016), profiling the Cronulla riots. Suburbia can also be seen as an appallingly dull and conformist place that has to be escaped from, as in *Muriel's Wedding* (1994). In this manner, suburbia is often a source of humour.

Multiculturalism

Immigrants have come to Australia from all over the world. Films have explored the migrant experience in various ways in different eras. The first Australian film to deal with non-Anglo–Celtic immigration was *They're a Weird Mob* (1966). The film took an assimilationist approach; it showed how an Italian migrant to Sydney fitted in, learnt Aussie ways and became an 'ocker'. *Silver City* (1984) told of the bigotry that often confronted post-war migrants. Since the 1990s, a number of films have presented a multicultural rather than assimilationist view. Examples include *Head On* (R-rated, 1998), *The Wog Boy* (2000) and *Looking for Alibrandi* (2000). Questions of Australian identity still arise in these films, however, as in the experience of the Vietnamese characters in *Footy Legends*.

Indigenous culture

For the first 50 years of Australian cinema Indigenous Australians were notable by their absence. Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* (1955) was the first



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Figure 9.45 Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* (1955) was one of the first films to acknowledge Indigenous people and place them in starring roles. Today it is seen to engage in a discourse of assimilation. It suggests Indigenous people should be absorbed by European culture.

film to give Indigenous people starring roles. Jedda was an Indigenous girl raised by a white family. At the time, the government took an assimilationist approach to Indigenous people – believing their culture should and would be absorbed by European culture.

The 1970s revival of Australian film and the political upheavals of the time led to a renewed interest in Indigenous Australia. Indigenous activist and academic Marcia Langton says films of this era tend to portray Indigenous Australians as romantic figures, often with special mystical powers. Examples include *The Last Wave* (1977) and *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978).

Between the 1970s and the present, several factors changed the film discourses around Indigenous Australians:

1 Multiculturalism as government policy rejected the assimilationist approaches of the past.
2 Indigenous filmmakers such as Rachel Perkins, who directed *One Night the Moon* (2001), Tracey Moffatt (*Bedevil*, 1993) and Ivan Sen, director of *Beneath Clouds* (2002), produced feature films.
3 The 1992 Mabo decision overturned the founding myth of *terra nullius* ('empty land'). This changed filmmakers' relationship to Indigenous characters in their films. It also changed the cinema's attitude to landscape.
4 There was a growing international interest in collecting Indigenous art.
5 Indigenous actors, such as Jessica Mauboy, Deborah Mailman, Ernie Dingo and David Gulpilil, became well known.
6 The 1997 report into the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children removed from their families was released. The Stolen Generations is the subject of the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002).

Dead Heart (1996) was one of the first new films to address the social crisis in Indigenous communities. *Samson and Delilah* (2009) is another. During the 2000s there has been a greater emphasis on Indigenous people telling their own stories. Films such as *Ten Canoes* (2006) have a positive story of Indigenous Australian culture to tell, drawing on Indigenous oral storytelling traditions. *Kanyini* (2006) attempts to show from their own point of view why Indigenous people are struggling. Other films such as *Jindabyne* (2006) and *Sweet Country* (2017) have used dramatic narrative to engage in the debate about the Indigenous experience and reconciliation from the perspective of non-Indigenous society.



Alamy Stock Photo/ United Archives GmbH

Figure 9.46 James Gulpilil in *Ten Canoes*. Set in the Dreamtime, Rolf de Heer's film is the first full-length feature film spoken entirely in an Indigenous language.

Uncommon themes or discourses

Some themes or discourses that are common in the cinemas of other nations are notable by their absence in Australian film.

Grand romantic love

Unlike the French or American cinema, there are few great romantic love stories in Australian cinema. This is not because Australian films reject love stories, but because love seems to be rarely explored in any depth. As subplots in movies, love and passion are often shown to be doomed or beset with problems. One Australian love story is *A Town Like Alice* (1956), which tells of a couple kept apart by the Second World War. Another is *Paperback Hero* (1999).

Social class

Australian films do not often address social class or economic inequality. Rich and poor rarely come together in one film, and any form of serious social class conflict within the film is even rarer. Brief encounters with class differences are usually smoothed over, with people found to 'all be the same underneath'. This occurs in *The Castle* (1997), when Darryl and the Queen's Counsel lawyer find a bond in shared fatherhood.

Where class does appear as an issue, it tends to be in films about work – showing the divisions between the boss and the worker, as happens in *Spotswood* (1991).

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Politics

Australian films have tended to steer clear of political stories. American director Oliver Stone, for example, often makes movies with political stories as the basis of the narrative. Australian directors have usually shied away from such topics.

9.7 ACTIVITIES

1 Present to the class a review of your favourite decade of Australian filmmaking.
Explain aspects such as the mood of the decade, and key social and political events of the time. You should **illustrate** your presentation with several clips from films of the era, and **clarify meaning** with a brief overview of each of your chosen films.

2 **Construct** a collage of film clips or still images from Australian films to explore points of view around one of the common discourses of the Australian cinema. Follow the steps to complete the collage:
- Select a theme or discourse (such as 'mateship' or 'landscape').
- Collect clips or stills from films that have contributed to the discourse. You could choose films that have taken similar or opposing points of view, or ones that show some sort of progression over time.

Explain the contribution of each of the films to the theme or discourse, detailing what meanings you can find in each clip.
Appraise the relevance of the theme to everyday life in Australia, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of the theme or discourse as an enduring concern.

3 Select an Australian film that you are very familiar with. Find another movie underpinned by this discourse and **contrast** the differing meanings it creates. For instance, contrast the discourses about Australian identity, culture and mateship in the film *Footy Legends* (2006) with the underpinning discourse in a film such as *Australian Rules* (2002).
Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Examine the key Australian themes or discourses that form the basis of each movie, **identifying** the meanings within the discourse.	**Analyse** particular scenes in the two movies, **examining** the **constituent parts** that create the meanings in each.	**Appraise** the **significance** of each film and its treatment of the theme, **drawing conclusions** about the **status** of each of them in comparison to its counterpart movie.

Analyse the presentation of a discourse in Australian movies with the treatment such a discourse would be likely to receive in a Hollywood movie. **Examine** each movie, **evaluating** its **strengths** and **weaknesses** according to the **criterion** of its effectiveness in dealing with the theme.

4 Has the Australian film industry planted a stereotypical view of Australia in the minds of overseas audiences? Discuss in pairs.
Explain your point of view, referring to particular films. Provide **additional information** about some films that have presented opposing views. **Interpret** how either set of films might be perceived overseas.

5 Independent filmmaker and freelance writer Matthew Clayfield says, 'Australian feature films are so preoccupied with what they believe – incorrectly, in my opinion – to be the obligation of Australian cinema that they ultimately fail to speak to anyone at all. They say "this is Australia and these are Australians", when really it's not and they're anything but. They create broad cultural caricatures that may look and sound Australian but have nothing important to say about this or any other country at all.' Discuss this statement in pairs.
Explain to the class the viewpoints that each of you discussed, **illustrating** the explanation with reference to some films that support or refute the argument.

6 A Sydney advertising agency asked groups of people to take seven photographs of things they hold dear about Australia. They then analysed these images to discover some core beliefs that Australians hold about what it means to be Australian. Attempt this yourself.
Construct seven video shots that you think could represent life in modern Australia.
Synthesise these shots into a sequence with an audio track using your knowledge of **moving-image media practices**.

7 In a small group, think of 10 or so Australian films you have seen between you.
Symbolise the locations of these films on a map.
Explain what common aspects you notice. Report to the class.

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UNIT 3 PARTICIPATION

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Participation is the topic of Unit 3. You will learn how people now participate in the media in unprecedented ways. Today you can be an audience member, a user and a producer all at once.

Different technologies allow participation in different ways. You will learn how traditional and emerging technologies can provide different platforms for engagement. These can either enable or constrain involvement.

You will learn how to appraise different media platforms and the audience experience that they offer. Audiences become connected in diverse ways and their experience of participation can differ considerably. Audience participation is affected by the contexts of both reception and production.

Participation is also influenced by media companies or institutions and the contexts in which they operate. You will learn how different social, political and economic factors can affect the ways media institutions operate, and how they allow audiences to participate.

By the end of Unit 3 you will have completed a case study of audience participation in moving-image media. You will have proposed a multi-platform story that invites audiences to participate. You will also have produced one aspect of this story as a moving-image media production.

AREAS OF STUDY

Technologies How do technologies enable or constrain participation?

Audiences How do different contexts and purposes affect the participation of individuals and cultural groups?

Institutions How is participation in institutional practices influenced by social, political and economic factors?

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Technologies and participation



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TECHNOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION

Think back to your grandparents' day. The very thought that an ordinary person could start their own newspaper or make their own video channel would have been laughable. That was something only billionaires could do.

Today, this is possible because of the rise of digital technology. Computers and the internet have made it possible for media to be produced relatively cheaply. Academics speak of the democratisation of media production. It is no longer something that only the rich can do.

This means there has been a change in power relationships. Where once the owners of the media had all the power, now it is spread at least a little more evenly. Each of us has the power to participate to some degree.

Participatory culture

The rapid increase in new media technology encouraging users to generate their own content has created what media scholar Henry Jenkins has termed a 'participatory culture'. Jenkins believes this culture has the following characteristics:

- low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement
- strong support for creating and sharing one's creations
- members who believe their contributions matter
- members who feel some degree of social connection with one another.

Skills gained in participation

Henry Jenkins suggests there are a number of operational skills needed to successfully engage in a participatory culture:

- **Use and reuse media.** Participants need the ability to play, perform, simulate and reuse media content.
- **Follow flows of information.** Users need the ability to follow the flow of stories across multiple sites and media types.
- **Negotiate with others.** Social network members need the ability to network, distribute, negotiate and respect diverse opinions. They need to appreciate other perspectives and be able to collaborate successfully with others.
- **Evaluate sources.** Users need the ability to make judgements about the reliability and credibility of different information sources.

'Creative literacy' is a term coined by researchers to describe the ability to creatively use technology for positive social purposes, instead of just using it to retrieve information.

Why people participate

It has been suggested that most people who participate in new media are not doing it simply to attract a mass audience. Reasons for participation include:

- **For attention or fame.** Everyone enjoys attention, and new media sites allow people to put themselves out there for the world to see.
- **To connect and 'hang out'.** Many online friendships are created from existing real-world friendships. New media, the internet and social networking sites can provide a sense of community and belonging. They are spaces not controlled by parents or teachers. Many other places to hang out, such as shopping centres, are becoming more tightly controlled for teenagers.
- **Self-disclosure and ritual.** Social networking sites and the internet generally provide an unparalleled opportunity for self-disclosure, opinion and communication with small groups of friends or the entire internet. Instead of talking on the phone for hours as teenagers used to do, they can now spend hours on social networking sites and instant-messaging each other. They can



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Figure 10.1 Profile pictures chosen for social media sites are often carefully curated. The individual is represented in selected ways that sometimes explore different identities or a more perfect identity. Sometimes this can make others feel insecure, especially if they do not see the look as managed or staged.

undertake the rituals of forming friendship and social hierarchies, displaying the hierarchy for other friends or would-be friends to see.
- **Building and exploring identity.** Social networks allow users to build and explore their identity – whether authentic or fictional. Most people, especially teenagers, are concerned with the way they believe people perceive them and the way they perceive themselves.

Collective intelligence

Collective intelligence is the term for the sharing of knowledge across thousands or even millions of people, as occurs on the internet.

Knowledge communities such as wikis capture and organise collective intelligence (also known as 'the wisdom of crowds'). While wiki contributors may be knowledgeable, it is networking itself that brings power through organising knowledge and making it accessible. The whole intelligence collection ends up far more powerful than the sum of the individual knowledge.

Other social-networking sites, especially those that are professional-, industry- or business-based, allow ordinary users to pool their intelligence to solve complex issues and questions, and to build vast bodies of collected and organised knowledge.

Technology, consumers and users

New media has changed the old patterns of media production, distribution and consumption. Earlier media used a one-to-many model whereby a small number of producers broadcast their work to a large number of consumers. New digital media can often use a many-to-many (sometimes called peer-to-peer) approach. In this model, lots of people are producers and they communicate with other groups of people (usually smaller groups). However, the one-to-many model of communication exists in new media as well.

The prosumer

Once, audiences were thought of as consumers of media. They consumed but did not produce. American futurist Alvin Toffler combined the words 'producer' and 'consumer' to come up with the word 'prosumer'.

Critics argued that the term 'prosumer' still seemed to emphasise consumption. A prosumer seemed to sound just like a really professional consumer or super-consumer. It seemed that another word was needed.

The prod-user

The term 'prod-user' was coined by Queensland University of Technology academic Axel Bruns. It has its origin in the two words 'producer' and 'user'. Combination words like these are called portmanteau.

'Prod-user' refers to the modern situation whereby someone can be both a producer and a consumer/user of media. In earlier times this was a rare combination. It might have happened if by chance you worked at a television station. Digital media have made this producer-user combination much more common. A prod-user is someone who, for example, views videos on YouTube, but also uploads their own videos through their own channel.

Features of prod-usage

Axel Bruns has isolated four features of the prod-user in action:
- **Open participation.** Content is created by prod-users using collaboration and peer-to-peer sharing. These peers may be real-life friends, or they may just collaborate online.
- **Fluid group organisation.** People work together on projects, doing the parts they are good at. There does not need to be formal role allocation.



Alamy Stock Photo/Gary Lucken

Figure 10.2 YouTube represents the classic case of 'prod-usage' – the tagline 'Broadcast Yourself' makes a direct call to the producer-user. Someone with a YouTube account who uploads videos and also consumes the videos that are generally available is considered a prod-user.

- **Always in draft stage.** Often the content made by prod-users is unfinished and in a state of perpetual updating. Bruns points to Wikipedia as an example of this aspect of prod-usage. A topic entry may be created by one user but can be overwritten by another and then another.
- **Unclear copyright.** Because there are often so many users involved in producing content, copyright becomes a difficult issue to establish. This complexity does not mean, however, that there is no copyright protection.

User- and loser-generated content

As users participate in the media, they generate content. Whether this is a positive or negative for them can be a matter of perspective.

- **User-generated content.** The modern internet allows people to participate in the production and distribution of their own media. When this is uploaded via prod-usage, it is called user-generated content. Blogging and the creation of wikis have become some of the most popular forms of user-generated content.
- **Loser-generated content.** Unfortunately, the internet offers lots of people the opportunity to benefit from the work of others. Content that is generated and shared (often with good intentions) and then exploited for profit by the greedy is termed loser-generated content. By the same process, a lot of young people are involved in working for relatively small returns or profit shares while big companies take the majority of the money. For instance, the microblogging platform and social networking website Tumblr was sold for $US1.1 billion in 2013, but the users who provided the content received none of that.

10.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Research a well-known musician who began by posting their performances on YouTube.
Explain how the various stages of their career happened, **providing information** about the sequences of events.
Construct a timeline documenting their progress from unknown to fame and document it on a timeline. On the timeline, place **illustrative examples** of the building of the fan base.

2 Survey the class to see how many people would fit into the category of prod-user. Include some of the following questions:
- Have you uploaded videos to an online sharing site? If so, how many views have you had?
- Do you provide online commentary on videos or games?
- Do you contribute to an online discussion group?
- In what context do you participate – school, home, with friends, etc.?
- What enjoyment do you get out of this kind of participation?

Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the survey **information** about the purpose and conditions, including the sample questions. **Explain** the respondents, including **information** about age ranges, gender, etc.	**Analyse** quantitative (numerical) results, **considering** percentages for each **constituent part** of the survey. **Analyse** qualitative (interview) results by **interpreting responses** and **examining** any similarities or differences. Try fluoro-highlighting all similar responses and seeking trends.	**Appraise** results to **interpret** user behaviour in the different contexts. **Appraise** results by **drawing conclusions** around the **worth** of user enjoyment of participation.

3 **Appraise** social media, **drawing some conclusions** about the degree to which it has brought positives or negatives into your life. How **significant** an influence has it been in your life?

4 Make a list of the ways in which you have used the collective intelligence of the internet to solve a problem you have had in the past week.
Appraise the significance of any dangers in relying on the internet in this way.

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PLATFORMS AND PARTICIPATION

'You have to put great story first. Where the pathways diverge is you have to understand the best practices for where you are airing that content. A reality segment for television is very different from one for YouTube or Snapchat. Each platform has a sweet spot. The common mistake is failing to understand that each platform has its own best practices.'

Charles Segars, CEO Ovation TV

Platforms

When media producers start planning a new program, they will often include a plan to deliver it across several **platforms**. This is the best way to ensure they increase audience involvement.

A media platform is a means of delivering media content to audiences. It is a means of allowing audiences to engage with categories of media, such as film, games or social media. A platform can be regarded as an information or content space.

Categorising platforms

Platforms can be regarded as mediums, or online sites or services.

Platforms can be technological mediums

The traditional mediums such as film or television can be regarded as platforms in their own right. They are the technological means of delivering content to audiences. Television has two platforms within the medium – subscription television (often called pay TV) and free-to-air television. However, within that, each channel or service provider may also be regarded as a platform or content deliverer.

Digital games are a newer medium that can also be seen as a platform. Within the larger games platform, there are several interrelated platforms or means by which audiences can engage with the content. These include the console platforms, the PC platform and the online platform.

Mobile phones and the internet are also mediums that are often referred to as platforms. The means of delivering the content can be seen as the medium itself, just as it is with film or television.

Platforms can be online sites or services

On the internet, there is a complex web of interrelated sites and services that are also referred to as media platforms. These include social-networking sites, discussion forums, video-sharing sites and services such as Stan or Netflix.

Appraising platforms

Originally a platform meant a raised area of flooring, like a stage. That stage was just a venue for presentations. The stage or platform did not really work to censor the content. However, the stage might have shaped how actors could use the space. The platform or stage could determine how a performance could be presented (or staged).

This original meaning of platform still helps when thinking about media platforms. Much more than a stage, a media platform shapes how people can use it. A media platform can also restrict the nature of the content more easily than a stage. José van Dijck, professor of media at the University of Amsterdam, says that people can appraise media platforms using six areas of investigation: ownership, technology, users/usage, content, business models and governance.

1. **Ownership.** The ownership of a platform affects its functioning. Many moving-image media platforms started as non-profit organisations for enthusiasts. Later they were swallowed up by profit-seeking global giants such as Google. The pressure to build profits can affect the experience that is given to users. Algorithms owned by private companies may direct the user experience towards increasing the profits for owners.
2. **Technology.** Platforms are made up of software and hardware that code original content into a media experience. Via an interface, they direct the users into certain behaviours. According to van Dijck, the important aspects of technology in platforms are data/metadata, algorithms, computer protocols, interfaces and defaults.
   - **Data/metadata** includes personal profile details and tags used to locate data.

- **Algorithms** are the computerised instructions that make the platform work. Algorithms provide all sorts of information to the owners on the behaviour of users.
- **Protocols** are governing rules of computer coding that force users to follow certain pathways that can't easily be avoided. For example, protocols may force the joining of certain 'taste communities' (see page 62) or groups, or to share information with others.
- **Interfaces** direct users to operate in certain ways. There can also be a hidden interface behind the visible one. A hidden interface might link to software and hardware that the owners know about, but the users don't. Lots of studies have shown that a platform's interface architecture can cultivate styles of user behaviour.
- **Defaults and presets** direct users into certain behaviours. Defaults that are hard to change will result in most people doing what the owners intend them to do.

3 **Users/usage.** Users are often both audiences and producers. Users can also be builders of communities, and they can use platforms to develop their own individuality. Their ability to have a sense of control in a platform depends on a whole range of factors. Users can be constrained by certain features of the platform, such as coding features or ownership strategies. Sometimes there can be a battle between users and owners over information control. Technological knowledge can sometimes enable users to turn off defaults or change presets so that they have greater control. Privacy can be a major issue for users.

4 **Content.** Both users and owners have the same interest in wanting to have good content. However, users want a wide variety of content in all kinds of formats. Millions of people have millions of individual wants. In contrast, platform owners usually want to standardise things to make delivery easier. For example, YouTube has a standard length for video uploads. Algorithms work better if content features are standardised.

5 **Business models.** Traditional media earns money from selling the product and selling advertising. For example, cinema tickets give producers money from the sale of the movie product. Television ads provide revenue for television stations. Platforms on the internet have struggled to find profitable business models. Audiences are used to accessing platforms for free, and they are reluctant to pay. Business models are often a balance between users' trust and the owner's focus on profits. Owners usually monetise the platform through some form of the following:
   - **Advertising.** Despite declines in revenue, advertising still generates a huge amount of income. Customising ads to suit audience profiles has made online platform advertising a lot more profitable.
   - **Subscriptions.** Audiences can be charged a monthly fee for service access. Some platforms have free services funded by advertising, and a premium subscription service with no advertising – dubbed a 'freemium' business model. Subscription models suit streamed content rather than downloads. Streaming is more like a service than a product.
   - **Download fees.** These are the online equivalent of the fee-for-product approach used in cinemas. A download is more like a product. However, content that is streamed is harder to sell with this approach.

6 **Governance.** In the early days of the internet (and even the very early days of many other mediums), there were few rules. Today, most platforms have been taken over by large multinational corporations. They have established rules by which the platforms are 'governed'. These rules can be around privacy, property rights, acceptable behaviour or identification. Often the rules are maintained by automated algorithms.

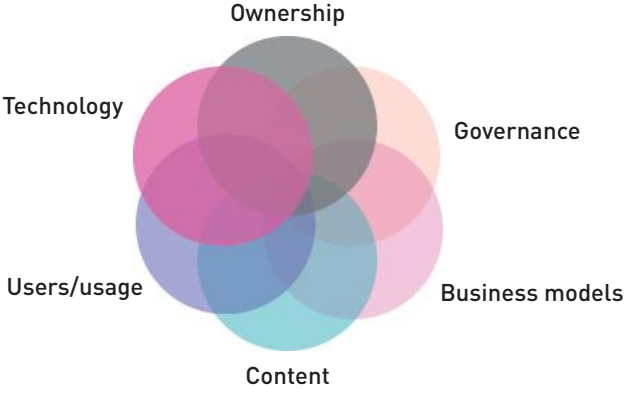


Figure 10.3 Appraising a media platform using six broad areas of investigation. The University of Amsterdam's José van Dijck has come up with a structure that illustrates how many aspects of a media platform are interrelated. However, only content tends to be the visible area of most platforms. The rest is in the fine print or hidden away in the platform architecture.

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Affordances and participatory culture

Different media technologies and platforms can do different things and have different capabilities. These capabilities are referred to as **affordances** by media analysts. For instance, paper-based newspapers have the affordance of print and still image, but they do not have the affordance of video.

Affordances are 'action possibilities' that are made available by the nature or design of something. The term was made up by adding to the verb 'afford' by US psychologist James Gibson in 1966. Gibson was using 'afford' in the sense of 'supply' or 'provide', rather than in the sense of having enough money. His new word originally referred to what an environment or landscape provides or furnishes (or affords) for its inhabitants. In 1988, designer Donald Norman applied the concept to human–machine interactions and the design of particular technologies, such as furniture, cars and computers.

When applied to design, 'affordance' means what the nature of the design allows the user to do. Affordances refer to the way a user is enabled or constrained. The design itself 'suggests' how the human can interact with it. For example, the design of a spoon appears to naturally allow for the holding of small amounts of liquids. A spoon's long stem allows for holding with human hands. These are its intended affordances or suggested action possibilities. A spoon does not have certain other affordances, such as allowing for the cutting up of a 'steak and three veg' meal. However, it might also have hidden or unintended affordances, such as allowing for the opening of a bottle as a party trick.



Shutterstock.com/Elnur

Figure 10.4 Faced with an empty space and just a chair and a ball, would you sit on the ball and throw the chair? Not likely. Designer Donald Norman argues that this is because the designed-in affordances suggest that the most likely action possibility is the one nearly everyone takes.

Norman argued that, in theory, if a human was presented with a chair and a ball, they could sit on the ball and throw the chair. However, the design of those objects, their weight and shape, and their history of use, suggests that everybody would sit on the chair and throw the ball.

When applied to media technology, affordance refers to the ways the audience is most likely to interact with the technology. The affordances of media technologies are the ways in which audiences are enabled or constrained when they use them. For example, radio has the affordance of being audio only. The lack of vision means that audiences can be looking at something else while they are listening to the radio. This enables radio to be used while driving. However, radio also constrains audiences because they cannot see anything. As a result, radio is sometimes called 'the blind medium'.

Looking at technology in terms of affordances allows us to examine how individuals interact with technology, and how design both enables and constrains people. Affordances are an interaction between people's subjective mind-sets and the objective features of a technology. This makes the idea of affordances a good compromise between the theories of socially constructed technology and technological determinism (see page 70).

Types of affordances

There are three different types of affordances, according to William Gaver who further developed the theory.

1 **Perceptible affordances.** These are obvious and suggest a direct action that the user can take. For example, the buttons on a website suggest pushing (clicking). Sliders on mobile phones suggest swiping. Perceptible affordances rely to some extent on previous experience. For example, digital games have affordances that often rely on previous game experience.

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Alamy Stock Photo/Ammentorp Photography

Figure 10.5 Staff at a design studio use standing desks to improve their posture while working. If you had told office workers 50 years ago that they could work standing at their desks, they would have ridiculed you out of the place. However, it is possible, and is even good for you. Affordances are also related to our mind-sets – we have to be willing to see them. This is especially true with hidden affordances.

2 **Hidden affordances.** These are possibilities for action that are there in the medium or platform but aren't immediately obvious. For example, some digital games have hidden affordances that allow players to make mods (modifications), or to create cheats or work-arounds. So-called 'Easter Eggs' in games are similar to hidden affordances, revealing a secret level or an insider joke. Hidden affordances can also be as simple as drop-down menus. They are not immediately visible but are there for those who are familiar with the protocols.
3 **False affordances.** This is when it looks like something should be able to be done, but it can't be. A button that does not work or a broken hyperlink are examples. The padlock near the beginning of *Half-Life 2* (2004) is another, because at this stage the player has no weapons to shoot it off. Some argue that the 'close door' buttons on lifts are false affordances – they never seem to make any difference to the speed of the door closing.

Traditional and new media affordances

Each medium has different technological capabilities. These affect the ways in which the content is delivered to the audience, and the ways in which they engage with the content.

When considering affordances, try imagining a live sporting event or a music concert, suggest American sociologists David Croteau and William Hoynes.

- A **radio station** could broadcast the event live. You could hear it, but you could not see what was going on.
- A **newspaper or magazine** covering the event could write about it and have still photographs, but you could not hear anything or watch a moving image. The print coverage would only be available in the next edition, not at the same time the event was happening.
- **Television** could show live action and sound, but there would be no text other than perhaps rolling titles and credits.
- **The internet** can do all of the above. As well as that, you would have the ability to interact with other fans through online messaging, tweets and discussion forums. All of those activities on the internet are supported by the medium.

The development of media technologies had two distinct phases: 'traditional media' and 'new media'.

Traditional media affordances

Media that developed before the internet era can be termed 'traditional media'. Traditional media often has the following affordances, according to Croteau and Hoynes.

- **One-to-many communication.** The media content is sent out from one source (such as a television station) and is received by a large audience.
- **Known senders and unknown receivers.** The sender of the media content is well-known (for instance, the Nine Network), but the audience at large is unknown to each other.
- **One-way medium.** Traditional media only offer a one-way communication within the medium. The television cannot provide a means of interacting back with the station. It is true that interaction between the audience and the sender of the content can occur – however, this usually involves another medium, such as the phone, written text or the internet.
- **Producer distinct from consumer.** Traditional media have a clear distinction between the producers of media content and the audience. Producers are usually big media organisations. The audience is usually a vast collection of ordinary people.

New media affordances

The arrival of the internet, together with digital instead of analogue media (see page 80), meant that digital media content could be spread across a number of different devices. These new devices

Table 10.1 The affordances (capabilities) and limitations of different media technologies of representation. Based on a table prepared by US media academics David Croteau and William Hoynes.

MEDIUM	LIVE?	TEXT?	SOUND?	PICTURE?	VIDEO?	INTERACTIVE?
Print	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Radio	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Film*	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Television*	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Sound recording	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
DVD*	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Internet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Film, television and DVDs can show text, but they are not primarily text-based. Croteau and Hoynes use 'interactive' to mean that the medium itself allows two-way communication, without having to resort to another medium to achieve it. Smart televisions are seen as a combination of internet and television.

offered a range of new affordances. In contrast to traditional media, new media has a very different set of affordances:

- **Many-to-many communication.** Individuals can communicate with each other as pairs, small groups or large networks.
- **Known senders and receivers.** Often, known senders of media content will be able to track their audience using cookies or other means of reading the 'digital footprint'. Some sites require registration. At other times, the internet-delivered content may allow anonymity both for sender and receiver.
- **Interactivity.** New media content often allows for interactivity using the same medium or platform that it is delivered on.
- **Prod-users.** New media allow for people to be both producers and audiences for media. Ordinary people can participate in the creation of media content.

Technological affordances and changes in social conventions

Public speakers once had to shout to be heard. Politicians used to stand and address crowds on old wooden packing crates for carting soap (soap boxes). They developed a certain loud and dramatic style to capture audience attention. Actors on the theatre stage would shout and over-act so that their audiences could hear them in the back rows and see the over-blown emotions they were expressing.

The affordances of the studio microphone and the camera changed these behaviours and changed the ways that audiences are able to interact with the content.

The media technologies produced new forms of appearing in public. The performer could be heard as if they were talking intimately, right next to the ear of the audience member. They could be seen as if in close contact. A newsreader could appear to be looking audience members right in the eye. The bellowing singing style of opera could be replaced with the soft crooning style of modern iTunes songs – only possible with speakers or headphones.

Mobile phone technology has additional affordances that have changed people's behaviour. Personalisation of the handset has allowed audience members to see the phone as part of their individual self. Caller ID means that some of the greeting rituals of landline phones have changed.

The internet has a whole range of affordances that have changed social behaviour. For example, the anonymity of the internet has meant that people can talk to each other in different ways than they would if they were in face-to-face contact. This can be both positive and negative. It can encourage online flaming or bullying. It can also allow people the security of anonymity and the ability to seek help or counselling without revealing their identity.

Platforms and affordances

Each media platform has its own unique characteristics. Each offers the audience a different set of affordances, even when something from one platform is delivered by another. For example, a movie delivered on a video-sharing platform such as YouTube has the affordances of YouTube, not of the cinema.

Video-sharing sites as platforms

As delivery platforms, video-sharing sites such as YouTube have some of the affordances of television as a platform. However, they have slightly changed those affordances, and developed new ones as well.

- **User-generated content.** Platforms such as YouTube allow users to upload video in a range of different file formats. User-generated content on these platforms is a significant proportion of all content. However, a majority of content is professionally produced material.
- **Short-duration video.** Ninety-eight per cent of videos on YouTube and similar platforms are less than 10 minutes in length. Around 20 per cent of videos are 1 minute or less in duration. Around 17 per cent of videos are between 3 and 4 minutes' duration.
- **On-demand video.** Television has 'flow' (see page 248), but video-sharing sites have an audience-driven flow. The audience is able to click on a set of equivalently accessible alternatives, one after another. However, the user is responsible for the flow, not the channel or station as with television.
- **Navigation.** The technology employed by sites such as YouTube is able to create searchability based on metadata such as tags. Tags can direct viewers towards videos when they perform searches.
- **Archived database.** Video-sharing sites are really huge video libraries.
- **Erratic collages.** The audience member or user can click on one video after another, but the pattern of the flow is often individual and unsystematic. This is unlike television, which is composed of a flow of programming organised according to set schedules.
- **Commenting, tagging and responding.** Comment features allow users to respond to videos and give opinions. They can also interact with each other in groups. Videos can be recommended to friends.
- **Channels and interest groups.** Communities of participation can be drawn together around channels and interest groups.
- **Scalability.** Being scaled means having significant size. Media content with scalability is highly visible to diverse sets of audiences around the world. Much media content on video-sharing platforms has limited scalability. Some media content gains huge scalability, but for the wrong reasons, or for unintended reasons.
- **Replicability.** Computer files can be copied a lot more easily than printed matter or videotape. Online media platforms are often based around replication or copies. These can be shared, changed or re-imagined. YouTube is full of replicated content.

Film as a platform

As a delivery platform, film requires complete audience attention. People make a conscious decision to go to the movies. Once there, they enter a darkened theatre, which (usually) prevents them from concentrating on anything other than the film. In a darkened cinema, audiences are more prepared to suspend disbelief and be drawn into a story.

The cinema experience is both collective and individual. In the cinema, the audience experiences the film as isolated individuals but also as part of a large and unknown crowd. In this anonymous gathering there is plenty of scope for mass behaviour, such as laughing or booing, but there is also opportunity for private reflection.

Some critics see the movies as a voyeuristic. The film experience transforms the audience into 'peeping Toms', says Laura Mulvey, UK film theorist and feminist. The film events take place while the audience, invisible in the dark, observes all the characters' secrets.

Cinema offers the best quality – even today. High-quality sound systems and a large screen reinforce film's power as a primary medium. Television images are made from pixels or electronic dots. In contrast, film has grain. Being created from light, film images more closely resemble what the eye sees in the natural world.

The sheer scale of the cinema screen is one of its affordances. The large-screen format of the cinema affords a greater sense of story taking place in a full-scale and well-developed world.

Movie images are 'over-specified' (filled with visual information). Film allows for a great deal of detail to be placed into the image due to the size of the screen. This has led some critics to refer to cinema as 'over-specified'. Each single shot can contain a huge amount of specific detail.

Cinema is good for narrative. Film is a platform where the narrative self-unfolds. The audience is not required to move around or take any particular action while the story plays out. Film is an excellent platform for storytelling, with an ability to explore plot, character and setting over a typical 90-minute duration.

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Digital game platforms

It could be argued that digital games are the most interactive platform. Unlike the cinema, where the story experience unfolds irrespective of what the audience member does, a game player must take physical and mental action for the experience to occur. The game platform has the following general features:

- **Interactive play.** Digital games involve the player in gameplay with digital representations of objects, characters and environments. The player has to play within certain rules, or sometimes against those rules. Games are generally either player versus player, or player versus environment.
- **Interactive story.** Many modern games have well-developed stories with characters, settings and narrative structures. According to media theorist Henry Jenkins, the interactive nature of games means that the compelling moments in a game story become more like 'experiences' for game players.
- **Contestation.** Henry Jenkins argues that contestation (rather than just competitiveness alone) is at the heart of most games. Contestation is goal-oriented struggle or contest against blockages or sometimes enemies.
- **Simulated spaces.** The environment in a game is a space for action. Much of gameplay involves opening up new spaces, whether they be levels or just new places for new experiences.
- **Performance.** Gameplay is like a performance, even if it is a private one. Players are always actively engaged in enacting on-screen actions.
- **Choice sequences.** The famous game designer Sid Meier says that 'games are a series of interesting choices'. The involvement of the player is driven by choices as each sequence is played out.
- **Identity play**. Modern games often allow players to assume different identities. This is especially the case with massively multiplayer online roleplaying games (MMORPGs).
- **Immersive.** Games allow a kind of intellectually absorbed interactivity between the player and the game system. This is often referred to as 'immersion'.
- **Perpetual play.** The time taken to play out the full game-story in many digital games can run well above 100 hours. Some games do not have an actual end and are more like long-running hobbies. These can be played over months or even years.



Getty Images/SSPL

Figure 10.6 The first television still image (a face) was transmitted in 1925. Moving images were first transmitted the following year. Even today with HDTV, television compares unfavourably with the sharp images obtained on film. This adds to the ordinary and domestic nature of television.

Television as a platform

As a delivery platform, television has the following general features for the user.

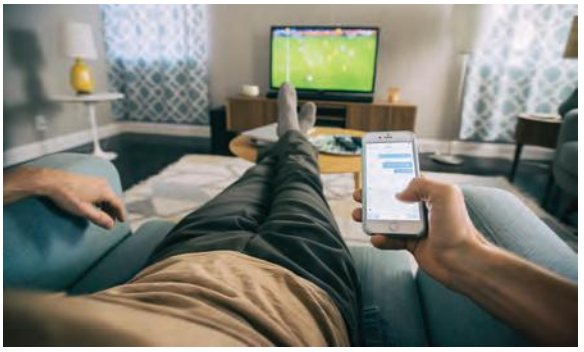
Television has 'liveness'. Television often works best when it is broadcast as a live event. Sports events, breaking news or live presentations are what separate television from film, and to some extent from online video-sharing platforms.

Television is primarily a domestic platform. Television needs to be ordinary because it is a constant presence in everyone's living room. It is a domestic medium that is viewed while people are doing a variety of other things. Television is a regular part of our daily life.

Flow of content is what defines traditional television. Television has a voracious appetite for program content, because there is a constant flow of programming. This has led many academics to speak of television as being defined by the idea of 'flow'. Programs are not so important individually (as movies are, for example), but for being part of a series that is itself part of a timeslot that is part of a vast flow of content. Free-to-air television is like this. Pay television, with its dedicated channels, is an even more continuous flow.

Television viewers are inattentive viewers. Research shows people pay attention to the television screen only 65 per cent of the time. By installing a small camera behind the screen,

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Getty Images/Superb Images

Figure 10.7 One of the most important characteristics of television viewing is inattention. Studies show that viewers are engaged in a wide variety of other activities at the same time as they are watching television.

researchers found viewers involved in a range of activities apart from watching the television set. The research also showed that many people do not bother to watch programs all the way through. The average amount watched was 80 per cent of the whole program. The term 'channel surfing' originated in the restlessness of television viewers.

Television programs contain different, unrelated items, just as a newspaper or magazine does. However, almost all program material on television has a series format. A series is a group of thematically related programs, such as the animated comedy series *The Simpsons* (1989–). The series format of television programming was developed in the 1940s to 1950s as a way of answering the need for a ceaseless supply of new programs. The content of a show could vary from episode to episode, but the format remained the same and could be repeated over and over again. As a result, television became a medium of 'difference within a flow of sameness', churning out repeated patterns of programming.

Timeslots are a feature of traditional television. On free-to-air television, the viewing day is divided into a number of time zones. The most important time zone is peak time or 'prime time'. Prime time is from 7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m., and it is during this time that the television audience is largest. Prime time gradually tapers off until most viewers have left at around 10.30 p.m. Specialist programs are shown after 10.00 p.m. Pay television is divided according to channels of content. However, within those dedicated channels, the broadcast day is still divided into distinct rhythms. This is called dayparting.

Binge-watching is a feature of television as a new media platform. Since the early 2000s, there has been an increasing movement towards what is called 'citizen scheduling'. Audiences are streaming news, sport and entertainment programs directly from the internet and watching them whenever it suits. They will often watch a whole series all in one go. This growing group of people have effectively freed themselves from the limits of the timeslot.

Mobile media platforms

Mobile media include mobile phones, smartphones, laptops and tablets connected to the internet. According to communication specialist Andrew Schrock, mobile media have the following platform affordances:

- **Portability.** The whole point of a mobile device is that you can move around with it. The physical characteristics of the technology have gradually developed to support this. The size of the devices, the length of battery life and the weight all contribute to the portability affordance. Portability can be considered as being high or low. Smartphones have high portability. Wearable technologies have even higher portability. Laptops have relatively lower portability.
- **Availability.** Mobile media technology means it is now possible to be in permanent contact with total availability. However, people use this affordance according to their own personal comfort zone. Many people turn their phones off when asleep. Many turn off certain notifications, such as those from Facebook.
- **Locatability.** Since about the year 2000, GPS data has been available for mobile media services. The affordance of locatability has been taken up by people using apps such as Google Maps. They are able to see where they are, and where businesses and services are. In some apps, they can see where friends are. Locatability as an affordance has been taken up much more slowly than the others. However, the 2016 augmented-reality game *Pokémon Go* used it to advantage.
- **Multimediality.** Taking photos or videos with your phone is now an everyday activity. Mobile devices are multimedia devices capable of recording images and sound with increasing quality. These can then be used to communicate with others. It is this affordance that has led to the rise of citizen journalism (see page 297).

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10.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Choose a medium that hosts moving-image media, such as the internet, film, television or digital games. List all of the available platforms within that medium.
Explain what defines each platform and what separates it from others, giving **information** and **examples** to **clarify**.

2 Select three designed objects that are interesting because they are both practical and stylish. Have a look at designed physical objects, such as furniture, sections of (or whole) cars or appliances. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the designed appearance of the object and its appeal on the basis of style. **Give information** about its general 'looks'.	**Analyse** component design features, **examining** each and **considering** the individual affordances they offer. **Consider** the logic behind the design and its fit to usage. **Examine** the potential for hidden affordances. **Analyse** the **strengths and limitations** of the design using simplicity and ease of use as **criteria**.	**Appraise** the **significance** and **status** of the design, **drawing conclusions** about its overall worth when compared to other similar objects (e.g. other cars).

3 There are three separate design affordances to the car door handle shown in Figure 10.8 (not counting the key lock). Two of the affordances are nested in the one design feature.
Explain and what each of them is, and explain how they anatomically suit the human hand and its actions.
Analyse the **component parts** of this 1960s car door handle and **consider** its limitations compared to one from the present day. You may need to research why this type of door handle has been abandoned by car makers, and use your findings as **criteria**. Consider whether the actual affordances were the same or different in each era.
Explain how the design affordances meet the end goal of allowing access to the car.

4 Select one of the six areas of investigation when appraising platforms suggested by Professor José van Dijck (see page 242). Investigate a chosen platform using the investigation area you have selected. Research as much detail as you can about the platform.
Appraise the impact your area of investigation has had on the development of the platform, and the audience experience of it. **Draw conclusions** about its **significance**. Present your findings to the class in a presentation that includes appropriate images.



Shutterstock.com/Nagel Photography

Figure 10.8 This door handle from a 1960s car has three separate design affordances to suit the human hand, excluding the key lock. (Clue: two of the affordances are nested within the one design feature.) Can you spot them? Why don't modern cars use this door-handle design?

5 The affordances of media platforms can change over time as technology improves or merges. Look at the table of affordances prepared by Croteau and Hoynes in 2014 (see page 245).
Appraise the contents of the table and **make a judgement** as to whether there have been any significant changes in the **status** of any of the platforms. **Support** your answer with **evidence** from research (such as recent online product catalogues).

6 Make a list of social conventions that the mobile telephone has changed. Build the list from what your parents have told you, or from group discussions in your class.
Explain any of the changes you think have occurred over the past 20 years, and **give examples** of what it would have been like before and after the mobile phone.

7 Have you watched the same program (such as a movie) on different media platforms?
Explain your experience and describe how the platform differences made for a different experience.
Appraise the **significance** of any of the media platform affordances in either enabling or constraining your experience.

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INTERACTIVITY

Interactivity as a term in media communications burst onto the scene in the mid-1990s as the internet expanded into popular use. Before that, interactivity was just thought to be something you did face-to-face in conversation with a person. However, the idea of interactivity being some sort of two-way communication dialogue is common to both usages.

Interactivity types and media types

Interaction involves communication through an ongoing exchange of messages. The exchange is like a dialogue. The nature and type of feedback that is received from each participant changes as it goes along. There is some measure of control over the content received, and the order in which it is presented.

There is also a perception aspect to interactivity. Not only does the user's input affect the screen, but the user perceives themselves as having control over what they see. For example, a digital game player perceives that they are changing the outcome of a game, but a television viewer does not think they can alter the progress of the story in any way.

There are three levels of interactivity, says Sally McMillan of the University of Tennessee.

1. **User-to-user interaction.** This type of interactivity allows for people to interact with each other, using the media platform to allow it to happen. Some forms of digital games, chat rooms and instant-messaging platforms are examples of user-to-user dialogue. Users adjust their messages in response to feedback from others. Each participant can be regarded as having equal power (in theory, at least).
2. **User-to-content (or documents).** User engagement with media content is a very common type of interactivity in new media. This could be internet interaction with a created story or 'document' – or even a document creator. It can also occur in traditional media, even if the means are more limited. User-to-content interactivity is not as equal as user-to-user. The sender of the original content or document has more power than those who interact with it afterwards.
3. **User-to-system interactivity.** Human interaction with the computer as a machine is especially important in new media. The user and the computer are in continuous communication as they work. Computer interfaces allow this interaction. Interfaces are the 'dials', 'knobs' or other designed computer commands that provide the connection between human and machine. For example, the Windows screen on a PC is an interface. Control in the user-to-system level of interactivity can be variable depending on the situation. Either the 'user' or the 'system' does the leading.

Traditional and new media interactivity

Interactivity is one of the key points of difference between traditional and new media. However, both forms of media have some degree of interactivity associated with them.

Traditional media interactivity

None of the traditional media can match the interactivity of the new media. However, even newspapers have space for interactivity in the form of letters to the editor. Magazines also have spaces for readers to write in.

Television is increasingly providing the same kind of space. It is common on current affairs and discussion programs. Viewers can film themselves asking questions or providing comments, and then send the clip to the show for comment by the panel. Many programs also include Twitter commentary in their broadcasts. Phone-in voting on talent-spotting programs is also a form of interactivity.

Citizen scheduling, time shifting or binge-watching are also simple forms of interactivity. Creating your own programming schedule gives you a greater degree of control. However, interactivity on television often amounts to just being given a menu of choices for programming on demand.

Content creation is not exclusive to new media. Traditional media have sometimes relied on active audience members to supply the content. Talkback radio operates on this principle. Some critics have argued that radio is the original interactive platform.

New media interactivity

New media are collaborative mass media systems. The audience is often the creator and source of media content as well as its receiver.

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How real is interactivity? The term 'interactive' is used by new media 'cheersquads' in a political way, argue cultural studies academics Aphra Kerr, Julian Kücklich and Pat Brereton. It emphasises the users' control over the medium, but it plays down the medium's control over the users.

The new media audience is involved and has some degree of control over both presentation and content. Often this is just at the level of navigating through a set of hyperlinked options. Professional content creators still dominate new media in the moving-image media platforms. However, interactive media can change how we understand the nature of stories. Producers once used to have total control over how a story was presented. Now, there is at least the opportunity for producers to hand some of this over to the audience.

Degrees of interactivity and participation

Interactivity can take many forms, and there can be many different degrees of interactivity. Some platforms allow more interactivity than other Some mediums allow considerably more interactivity than other. Some could be considered to be dialogues between equals, whereas some are almost monologues.

The direction of the interaction is an important consideration. Interaction can be mostly one-way, two-way or multi-directional. Another consideration is the degree of control that users or audience members have.

A model with four sectors of interactivity has been devised by Professor Sally McMillan of the University of Tennessee. An adapted version is shown in Figure 10.9. The four sectors are as follows:

- **Sector 1: Content on demand** – shows limited contribution but higher levels of control. Netflix fits into this sector. The audience has control over preferences and can customise the programming.
- **Sector 2: Co-created content** – has active contributors with high levels of control. Interactive fiction programs, interactive documentaries and some video blog sites fit into this sector.
- **Sector 3: Packaged content** – illustrates the traditional mass media model with one powerful sender and multiple non-contributing receivers. Traditional television stations fit into this sector.
- **Sector 4: Content exchange** – represents a situation where both receivers and senders can create content equally. However, group decision-making tends to mean that individuals have low control. Large multiplayer online games might appear here.

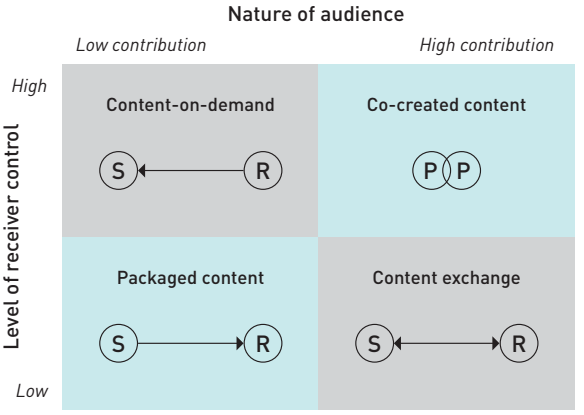


Figure 10.9 A model of interactivity in media, adapted from a model created by McMillan. Packaged content (such as traditional television programs) has the least audience contributions, and audiences have the least control. User-controlled interactive programs or certain console-based digital games have some co-created content and the most contributing audience with the most control.

Interactivity is not necessarily distributed equally among the population of users, says internet entrepreneur Ross Mayfield. The vast majority do not interact very much, and some contribute a lot. Mayfield argues that a lot of internet interaction (including moving-image media sites) is just low threshold participation. All the user has to do is click occasionally. At the other end of the spectrum, users are highly engaged with the available interactivity. Mayfield illustrates this with his Power Law of Participation graph (see Figure 10.10).

However, Mayfield argues that even low threshold clicking allows data to be gathered. This permits media organisations to adjust their responses to consumer demand. Mayfield calls this information gathering 'collective intelligence'. The work at this end is collective because it comes from being in such a large group. At the top end, there is collaborative intelligence. These audience members are highly interactive and may be co-creators of media content. Their work is collaborative, but there are only a small number of them.

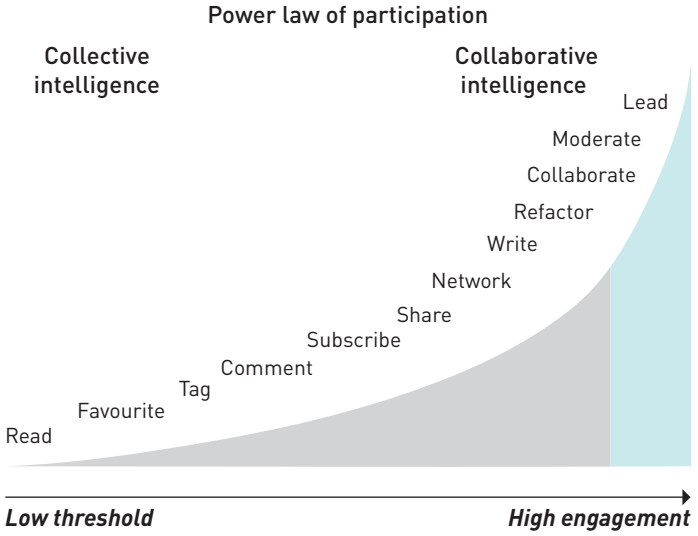


Figure 10.10 Internet entrepreneur Mayfield's example of a 'long tail curve'. The curve shows the varying degrees to which many users interact with new media. Both ends of the curve are engaged. Mayfield sees the lower end as being 'in training' for the upper end.

10.3 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** using your own experience, and giving personal **examples** to **clarify**, how you have used each of the three different levels of interactivity outlined by Sally McMillan (see page 252): user-to-user, user-to-content, user-to-system.

2 Provide a list of television programs that have offered some form of interactivity.
Explain the options that were available to the audience and **provide information** about audience use of these interactive features.

3 Using YouTube as an example, draw up a curve similar to Ross Mayfield's Power Law of Participation (Figure 10.10). Survey the class to find out where they are on the curve according to their YouTube interactions. Ask for the opinions of those at the head of the curve as to when in their lives they were at each stage moving up.
Analyse the results, **considering** the details of the findings as percentages. **Examine** the findings for any trends in the use of YouTube. **Make a judgement** about how applicable this might be for the students in the school as a whole. Present your findings to the class.

4 Redraw Sally McMillan's model of interactivity (Figure 10.9). In each sector, **provide an example** of a media platform that fits with the characteristics of that sector.
Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the media platform and its functions in brief. **Give information** about how audiences use the platform.	**Analyse** affordances of the platform, **examining** each and **considering** the capacity for participation. **Consider** the power relationships between the technology and the audience. **Examine** the potential for subversive ways of participating. **Analyse** the **strengths and limitations** of each platform using interactivity as the **criteria**.	**Appraise** overall **worth** of the McMillan model as a means of expressing platform interactivity.

5 List all the forms of interaction you can think of for traditional media and then for new media.
Appraise the extent to which new media and traditional media can offer an interactive experience for users. **Make a judgement** about whether or not this potential for interactivity is **significant**.

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TECHNOLOGIES AND CONTEXTS

When the time of production, social organisation, government regulations and all other factors of a technological environment are combined, they create what is called the 'context'. Context refers to all the natural, cultural and social aspects of an environment that help shape the final nature of a technology. Any media technology is very much a part of its context.

Contexts

Technology is like all human-made objects. It is the material embodiment of human interests, needs and relations in manufactured form, according to the 19th-century economist and political theorist Karl Marx. Today, many modern academics hold to the socially constructed view of technology. They argue it doesn't just arrive 'from above'. It is created by the society around it. In a different context, different types of technologies could arrive. Technology is a product of its context.

There are four main types of context:

1 **Time.** The period in which a technology is developed will shape it. For instance, television was developed in the 1930s–40s. Its form is suited to family-oriented viewing where people sit down together to watch.
2 **Natural environment.** Geographical and landscape features can play a part in the development of a technology. Vast distances between towns in the US played a part in the focus on the development of the landline telephone.
3 **Cultural context.** This includes language, history, shared beliefs and the economic system. In the US, a free-market capitalist culture with a focus on profits has played a part in the development of subscription-based media platforms.
4 **Social context.** The social context is the surrounding social environment of the organisation in which the technology is developed. For example, the fact that the internet was developed originally in a military and university context played a part in the nature of the technology.

Looking at the context helps us understand how a technology developed in a particular way. Many studies of technology look at failed inventions, or working inventions that did not get off the ground. For example, the winner of the so-called 'videotape format wars' of the mid-1970s and early-1980s was not the best system of recording. The dominance of VHS over Betamax is said to be due to the longer playing time of VHS suiting the social need for recording movies. VHS was also the rental videotape of choice for certain entertainment industries.

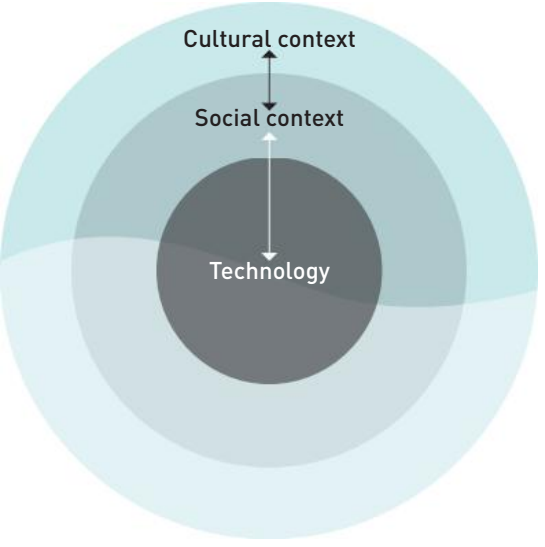


Figure 10.11 The development of a technology occurs in a social context surrounded by a cultural context. The social context is the group of people in the organisation where the technology is worked on. The cultural context is the surrounding culture; for example, English-speaking US culture of the 1990s.

How context shaped the internet

During the design and development stages of the internet, the design choices were a product of the type of people and organisations involved in the project. If it had been developed in a different surrounding culture, by different people, then the internet itself would probably not operate in the way that it does.

The internet is a global system of interconnected computers and computer networks designed for communication. It consists of government, academic, business and domestic networks. The internet uses standardised communications protocols to allow almost any

computer anywhere in the world to connect. Other end-user services are hosted on the internet, such as the World Wide Web, email services, Usenet, chat rooms, bulletin boards and RSS. The internet is open to anyone with a connection and a computer.

The social context

The internet developed in a relatively closed community right up until the early 1990s. The community was a tight-knit group of mostly US computer scientists and defence scientists. The members of this group were united in a common interest: research and knowledge development in the field of computers. They mostly worked in computer labs at universities or for the United States Department of Defense. They often attended conferences together and were in communication with each other via early forms of email.

This group of computer science academics and defence specialists had the following characteristics in common, argues Carol Gould of City University New York.

- Belief in the free exchange of scientific ideas and knowledge.
- Respect for other group members as equals (peer-to-peer communication).
- Belief in equal right of access to information and freedom of information.
- Little involvement in commercialisation, business or profit-making because they worked for government departments or universities.

The cultural context

The Cold War sparked the development of the internet. The Cold War lasted from the end of the Second World War in 1945 until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The Cold War was the constant state of intense political and military hostilities between the United States and the Soviet Union (Russia) that led to the build-up of nuclear weapons by both countries. Fortunately, it never turned into a 'hot' war directly between the two super-powers.

In order to keep the military communications systems intact in the event of a nuclear war, the original computer networks were connected like a web. If one part of the network was destroyed, the rest could keep functioning.

The history of development

Early tinkerings at defence

The beginnings of the internet were in the mid-1950s. Networking was extremely limited. Early computers were large and cumbersome, and required a whole room to store one computer that had less processing power than a smartphone. Computers also needed round-the-clock maintenance to keep going. They were very expensive to run.

In these early days of computing, no one had personal computers. As a result, time-sharing was developed. Time-sharing allowed more people to access the machines from separate terminals. Access to computers at any time was made available through limited networks that tapped into other computers in different locations.

Military beginnings

When John F. Kennedy was the President of the United States, Fidel Castro was a communist dictator in Cuba. He invited the Soviet Union (communist Russia) to set up a nuclear missile base in Cuba in 1962. From there, nuclear missiles could easily strike anywhere in the US. President Kennedy threatened the Soviet Union with war unless the missiles were removed. The Soviets complied, but for a moment the world was faced with the real prospect of nuclear war. The US military realised that one Soviet missile could have taken out the entire defence communication of the US. Because of this, the US military began setting up a communications network with no one centre. If one part of the network went down, the others could take over. The idea of the internet was born. To develop the network, the government handed the work over to computer scientists and professors at universities.

Start of the internet

In 1969, a United States Department of Defense computer network called ARPANET was set up. It allowed defence contractors and universities undertaking military research to tap into defence computer systems. The department allowed all kinds of research projects to take place, as long as they were in the field of computer science and related in some general way to defence.

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Choice of TCP/IP

During the early years of ARPANET, computer networks often failed and connections were difficult to maintain. Two kinds of network switching were available: circuit switching and packet switching.

- **Circuit switching.** This system was available from the telephone industry and assigned a separate dedicated circuit for the time of each communication – like a landline phone call. Using telephone circuit switching would have made it very easy to charge for each moment of internet use in the same way as phone calls are charged.
- **Packet switching.** Computer scientists at ARPANET chose a format known as TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol), also known as packet switching. Information is transmitted in digital form as tiny 'packets' of data. Text, image, video or audio files are broken up into small packets and transmitted bit by bit from one machine to another, where they are reassembled. Each packet represents only a tiny part of the huge amounts of information being sent.

Packet switching, or routing pieces of data simultaneously through multiple connections, overcame telephone system limitations, making the modern internet a possibility. It also made it difficult to charge for individual communications as they were all bundled up together.

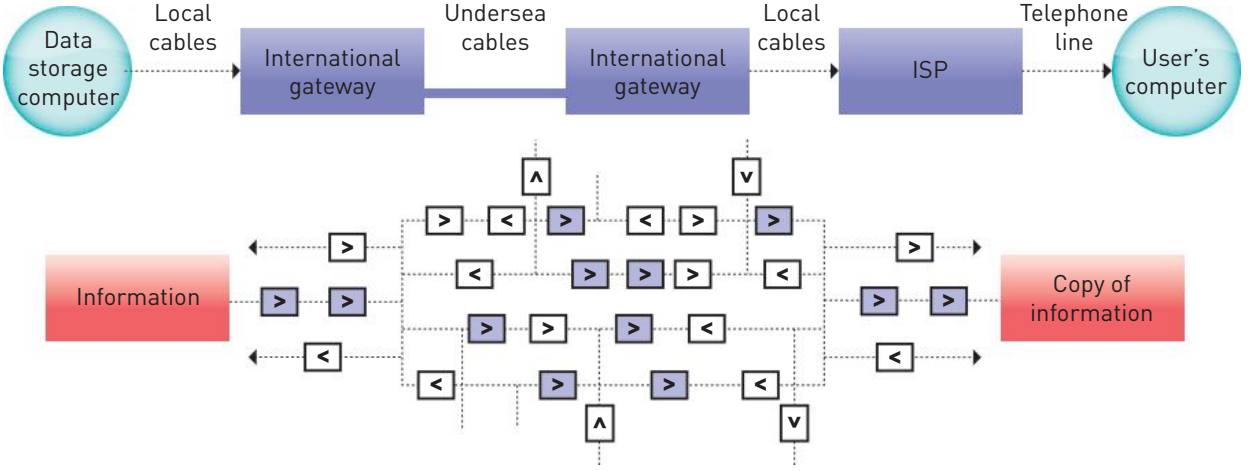


Figure 10.12 The internet communicates by sending tiny 'packets' of information from one machine to another. Each packet of information is virtually indistinguishable from its neighbours and is identified by only two elements: the header (which contains the delivery destination and sender's address) and the packet number (which the destination computer needs to put everything back together again).

Defence lets go

In the 1980s, the Computer Science Research Network was added to the global network. This gave researchers remote access to costly supercomputers housed at large US universities. Each of the universities then added its own networks to the system, further increasing its power. The United States Department of Defense separated its networks from the civilian university networks because of security concerns. Up until this time, commercial interests had been prohibited from the internet.

Business comes in

In the early 1990s, commercial interests gained access to the system, which opened the internet to the general public.

World Wide Web

While the World Wide Web (WWW) was developed by Tim Berners-Lee and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in 1991, it was the 1993 creation by Marc Andreessen of the Mosaic internet browser using simple-to-write HTML (hypertext markup language) that spurred the internet's popularity.

The internet now runs on networks operated by major telecommunication, internet, computer and media companies as well as academic networks. No single organisation in any one country has overarching control.

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Figure 10.13 Often cited in the media as the first web image ever displayed is this 1992 image of a rock group from the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) called *Les Horribles Cernettes* (The Horrible CERN Girls). They sing about high-energy physics! Although the group's line-up changed over time and they finally disbanded in 2012, according to their website the band is still loved by 20 000 physicists worldwide.

Technology different due to context

The context that existed at the time of the development of the internet changed the way the technology operates. Technology philosopher Robert Gertz says the influence of the context is visible in three main ways:

1 **Accessibility.** Information is openly accessible to anyone. Users can readily view information and they can equally contribute. The idea of a system that treated users as equals was a product of the academic community's involvement. No one's data got more priority in packet switching than anyone else's. This is called 'net neutrality'. The concept is that the internet is a public utility and that anyone has the same access – from amateur YouTube content creators to multimillion-dollar production studios. Net neutrality means there is one system for all – not a restricted one based on your ability to pay.
2 **Openness.** The computer scientists and academics made sure that the early ARPANET was open to meet the needs of all types of communications and networks. It was open in a technical sense to different kinds of hardware and software. It was also open to all kinds of information. No hierarchies existed. No piece of information was treated as more important or given greater priority than another piece. Thus, personal emails are given the same priority as important government documents. This is as a result of the academic community's desire for open collaboration in scientific development.
3 **Decentralised.** There is no central computer on the internet, and no hierarchical layers of computers. There is also no central regulation of the system. Decentralisation suited the military because it meant no one could sabotage the system by taking out a central computer. Decentralisation also suited the academic researchers' need for diversity and inclusion.

If other choices had been made in a different social context, the network could be very different. It could be much more commercial, requiring payments more often. Or it could be much more oppressive and intrusive, with centralised organisation and greater power to a small number of authorities. For instance, personal finances, social media postings, petitions, consumer habits and online friendship connections could all be tracked by a central authority. Citizens could be rewarded for compliance. Telephone circuit switching could mean that certain data could be discriminated against or given greater priority. Payment could be extracted. The documents of powerful people could be seen as being of prime importance.

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Figure 10.14 A propaganda poster for a Nazi radio receiver called the *Volksempfänger*. One of the early theorists of media influence, Theodor Adorno, stated that 'in fascism, radio becomes the universal mouthpiece of the Fuhrer'. Had the internet developed in a different social and cultural context, it would not have been as open, accessible or decentralised.

10.4 ACTIVITIES

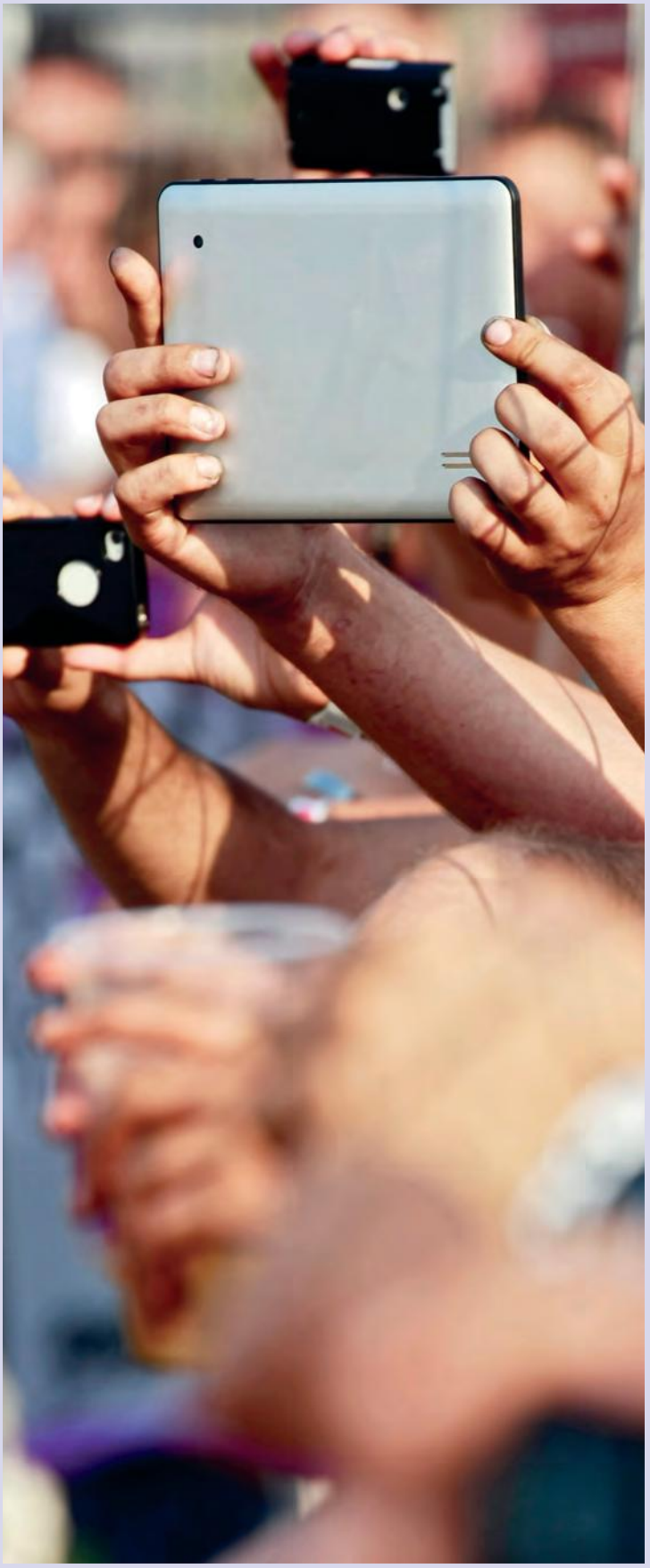
1 Imagine a different scenario for the development of the internet. Begin with a different social context and a different cultural context. Describe each.
Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	CONSTRUCT	APPRAISE
Explain how an imagined possible internet could have developed and **provide examples** of three different characteristics that could have stemmed from the imagined context. Provide some **additional information** about each of these imaginary characteristics.	**Construct** proposals for a science-fiction scenario that illustrates the examples you have explained. Use the **specific conventions** of the genre. Pitch your proposal to the class.	**Appraise** the extent to which the scenario you have suggested could already be in place somewhere today.

2 Research the biography of some of the important figures in the development of the internet, such as Tim Berners-Lee or Marc Andreesson.
Appraise their biographies and **make a judgement** about the extent to which their personal life histories may have affectted the way in which the internet developed. **Draw conclusions** about the overall **significance** of these personal details to the global internet as we know it today.

11

Audiences and participation



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HOW CONTEXTS AND PURPOSES AFFECT PARTICIPATION

Consider an advertisement aimed at women that might have run on a single network channel on prime-time television in the 1960s. The advertisers could count on that ad reaching 80 per cent of all women in the country. Even if only a small percentage of people responded to the ad, the profits were huge.

Today, it is estimated that to reach the same number of people, the ad would have to run on a hundred different media platforms – and that is without taking into account the various ways that audiences can avoid ads these days.

The mass audience has fragmented into a million different groupings and small communities. Fragmentation means that a large mass audience is no longer able to be taken for granted.

Mass audiences still exist. The success of such programs as *Game of Thrones* (R-rated, 2011–) proves that a huge world audience is possible. However, the executives of media organisations have realised that the secret is an engaged audience.

Audience contexts

There are three broad contexts that affect how audiences are able to consume media products: audience availability, structure of the media environment and group viewing.



Alamy Stock Photo/Patrick de Grijs

Figure 11.1 In the 1960s, an ad on a prime-time television show could be expected to reach up to 80 per cent of the population. To get the same effect now, it would need to be on a hundred media platforms.

Availability to consume

Audience availability refers to the time that people have to view media products. People use the media when they have the time and the possibility of access. Most people's lives are busy, and therefore their available time for media consumption is limited.

Often the window of opportunity that people have to view media is more significant as a factor than the type of program. Some studies have shown that people watch at set times of the day. They may choose to download their favourite show at this time, but it is also often the case that they just watch whatever is available at this time.

Viewer availability is usually stable on a day-by-day, week-by-week basis. Availability can depend on work or school commitments, as well as other personal commitments.

Media structure

Whether or not the audience has access to a range of media platforms determines the way that they can use media products. For example, if you are not subscribed to a video-on-demand service, such as Netflix or Stan, you will not be able to access a range of content. In remote areas of Australia, many Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people face limited media choice.

A high-choice media context, such as a city, allows users to actively access a whole range of media platforms. Users can consume their preferred media content quite easily.

Movement across platforms is something that is encouraged by multi-platform media storytelling. **Migratory consumption** is the consumption of media products by starting on one platform and 'migrating' to others. Migratory consumption is encouraged by commercial organisations as a way of encouraging consumers to move to new platforms and different aspects of the story. Participating in migratory consumption is necessary to follow the flow of content across multiple media platforms.

Group contexts

Media consumption is often a social event. Family members and friendship groups often view together. Digital games are often played socially. This context often transforms individual choices about media consumption into what is called 'socially negotiated choice'. If you are consuming media in a group, you may access content that the group prefers, even if it is

not your preference. For example, a sports-oriented person may be convinced to view soap operas if they are in the company of a group who are viewing them. Without this viewing context, they may have chosen to watch sport instead.

The presence of co-viewers has a considerable impact on the viewing patterns of audience members. This is the case even if they would be relatively uninterested in the content when they were in an individual viewing context.

Agency versus control

If you can act as a free agent, then you have **agency**. If you are controlled, then you have no freedom of choice. An important area of investigation in the study of the media is the tension between agency and control. Audience agency versus institutional or technological control has been important in media studies since the 1960s and the work of Marshall McLuhan.

- **Audience agency** is the ability of an audience member to make choices in the selection of content, and the meanings they gain from those choices. For a movie-goer, agency might refer to their ability to create their own set of ideas about what the movie means to them. For a digital game player, it might refer to the actions they take in the game.
- **Control** refers to the power that is wielded by media producers and technologies over audiences. This may refer to the narrative control that a movie producer has in determining the path of a story. It could also refer to the control that a news organisation has in setting the types of news stories that will appear in the news bulletin. Technological control is exerted over audiences by the design of the technology. There are certain things that it can and cannot do (see chapter 9).

School is a good place to see the tensions between control and agency playing out. The school structures constrain students. There are lots of rules, and students are even told what clothes they can wear. However, students also have agency. They can decide what subjects they study, and how hard they will work. They can wear the uniform in slightly individualised ways, and they can interact with others as individuals. There is a constant tension between agency and control.

11.1.1 Subliminal advertising prank



Shutterstock.com/DGLimages

Figure 11.2 Schools are the site of tensions between agency and control. Students are free agents to some degree. They can choose subjects (from a list), and they can decide whether or not to work hard. In other respects, there is a high degree of control. The tension between agency and control at school is similar to what happens with audiences and the media.

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In the relationship that the audience has with the media, there is a similar tension between agency and control. Audiences have much greater agency today than they did in earlier generations. Movies, television, radio and newspapers in the 20th century did not offer much opportunity for audience agency. The agency available was that required for 'meaning making'. People could make their own meanings around what was screened in front of them, but there was no way they could alter the progression or nature of the story.

In modern times, there is a different tension between agency and control. It is played out in complicated ways as both audiences and institutions battle for agency and control.



11.1.2 Subliminal messages in songs

- **Agency – illusion or reality?** Many media platforms offer audiences a degree of agency, allowing them to make selections and choices. However, at times this is illusory. The producers are directing audiences by tightly controlling the choices they can make – often for profit.
- **Hackers subverting control.** Some media users are highly skilled at manipulating the media systems to give themselves more freedom of agency. Mods (modifications) in digital games are an example of this.
- **Different agency.** Some audiences have more agency than others. For example, older audiences may be less proficient with the technology required to exert agency in some digital games. Equally, younger audiences may not have the cultural knowledge and experience to exert agency over multiple subtle meanings with a movie. The socioeconomic and cultural background of an audience can affect its agency. For example, there could be a language barrier or there may be a lack of access to a medium due to the cost of subscription fees.

11.1 ACTIVITIES

1 In small groups, discuss your own experience of the effect of audience contexts on your interactions with the moving-image media.
Explain how each of the contexts might affect your own viewing experience. **Provide examples** of what you might do differently depending on the context.
Analyse a situation where context has affected the media interactions of group members. **Consider** whether there is a pattern in the behaviour of people in that context or similar ones. What similarities and differences can you see with the contexts described in the section on group contexts?

2 Survey the class to find out how much time they have available in a typical day to consume moving-image media. Also find out the times most people are available to consume media.
Analyse the information to determine the typical times and duration of availability for an average student. **Interpret** the findings to **make judgements** about the availability for media consumption that the typical teenager has.
Appraise the likely impacts this would have on the potential media consumption patterns of the average student and **draw conclusions** about how media companies could adapt their products accordingly. Present the information to the class.

3 **Investigate** the variations in the degrees of agency that might exist for members of different age, social or cultural groupings. Respond to the areas of investigation in the table below.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how media audiences can be made up of different age, social and cultural groupings. **Give information** about the three groupings. **Provide examples** of the ways in which the agency of members of these groups could be affected by circumstances.	**Analyse** aspects of media agency that are different for each group, **examining** each and **considering** the advantages and disadvantages faced by each group. **Analyse** the **strengths and limitations** of each group with agency and control as the **criteria**.	**Appraise** relative empowerment of each group in relation to their media use, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of their overall relationship to the media.

4 **Appraise** the extent to which the terms and conditions (T&Cs) of a selected media platform allow for either user agency or institutional control. Systematically examine the T&Cs and **make a judgement** about the extent to which they allow user agency. **Interpret** wording of the document to **draw conclusions** about relative power.

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USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and gratifications theory (UG theory) is about what audiences do *with* media, as opposed to what the media does to audiences. However, the UG approach is an older theory that has come into its own again with the arrival of new media.

Following the disappointments of the effects studies, some researchers in the 1960s and early 1970s (such as Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz) went in a totally different direction. They argued that audiences used the media to satisfy certain basic psychological needs. This shifted the focus from the producer and the text of the media message to the needs of the audience as consumers.

UG and media audiences

Uses and gratifications researchers made the following statements about media audiences:

- **Audiences are active.** Audiences are not just sitting there passively accepting the media. They are using media actively and they are using it to achieve certain personal goals.
- **Audiences have choice.** Which media platform and program is used to achieve a particular gratification is totally up to the audience member.
- **Audiences can get satisfaction anywhere.** The media are in competition with each other and other sources of satisfaction. The audience can use any source of gratification.
- **Audiences have self-awareness.** People understand their own motives when they choose to use the media.
- **Only audiences can judge value.** Even if a program seems to be complete garbage to someone else, an audience member can be watching it for quite worthwhile purposes, such as to de-stress and relax.

Gratification of needs

The uses and gratifications approach argues that the audience uses the media to gratify (or satisfy) certain psychological needs. Blumler and Katz identified four areas in which the audience can achieve gratification:

1 **Diversion and escape.** People often seek to relax and escape their personal pressures. The media can help them achieve this goal.
2 **Companionship.** The media can enhance personal relationships by giving people something to talk about. For example, laughing about a comedy you and your friends saw on television last night provides social gratification. Interactive television can be more individualised and less social. However, it can also promote shared viewing. Companion apps around live entertainment shows are often designed to promote group interaction. Interaction with the millions of others watching the show can be encouraged.
3 **Personal identity.** Audiences can use the media for reasons of personal identity in several ways. People can use their media choices to build up a sense of who they are, and who they are not. For example, teenagers often use their choice of music to build a sense of identity and exclude other music because it does not fit. People can also use the media to find reflections of their own lives. For example, soap-opera viewers often say the shows help them with their own problems. People can also use the media to reinforce their own beliefs.
4 **Surveillance or information gathering.** Everybody likes to keep an eye on what is going on around them, partly because knowledge about things will help people accomplish goals. News, weather reports, advertisements, stock reports and music video shows all keep audiences in touch with changes and opportunities. Interactive online sources allow this desire for information to be more selective and discerning.

Further categories of media uses have been added by UG theorist Professor Alan Rubin of Kent State University:

- passing time
- enjoyment
- relaxation
- excitement.

UG studies

Uses and gratifications theory is able to explain why different people respond to media texts in different ways. They are using the text for different purposes.

A simple UG study might undertake the following steps:

1 **Establish sample group.** A sample group of media users is established with the aim of finding out why they use a particular media

text. For instance, the study could focus on players of games such as *World of Warcraft* (2004–). Often two or three hypotheses are formed that will be tested on the sample group.

2 **Qualitative questionnaires and interviews.** The group would be asked descriptive questions about the preferred reasons they have for using the media text.

3 **Quantitative analysis.** Since UG often uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches, typical studies also analyse questionnaire and survey data statistically. For example, a study found that 48 per cent of *World of Warcraft* players sought gratification in the excitement of combat while 44 per cent found satisfaction in the teamwork.



Alamy Stock Photo/Curious Lens Stock Photos

Figure 11.3 Japanese teenagers near Harajuku Station in Tokyo. Uses and gratifications theory says the famous mobile phone culture of teenage girls in Japan has developed because the phone meets the need for companionship, diversion and personal identity.

Strengths and weaknesses of UG theory

Strengths

The strengths of uses and gratifications theory include the following:

- **Active audience.** UG represents a move away from the media having all the power to audiences also having some say in what they will use the media for.
- **Qualitative approach.** By combining interviews and diaries with statistics, UG represents a middle-ground between the two approaches.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of uses and gratifications theory include the following:"

- **Dehumanising.** UG studies reduce the viewer to a set of needs, and the meanings in the text become only gratification. Humans are made of much more than a need for food and social interaction. Needs and desires do not explain everything in life.
- **Ignores media power.** UG theorists have also been blamed for ignoring the complexities of the media's influence and giving all power to the audience. They have not explained how needs can be manipulated by advertising agencies. People are shaped by their society, which is in turn shaped by the media and its advertising.
- **Negative uses.** UG seems to assume that audiences are always finding positive uses for media. It ignores the dysfunctional and anti-social uses that some people put the media to.
- **Best of the worst.** Audiences do not have a lot of power over what media products are produced, so their power to pick and choose texts to suit their needs is limited.

Table 11.1 Audiences can choose particular media platforms and programs to meet particular needs. The power of choice rests with the audience. (An adaptation of a table created by Katz, Gurevitch and Haas.)

AUDIENCE NEED	DESCRIPTION	MEDIA EXAMPLES
Thinking/ mental needs	Acquiring information or knowledge	• Television news and documentaries • Facebook news feeds • YouTube 'how to' videos
Attitudinal and feeling needs	Emotional release from media use	• Movies • Television dramas and comedies • YouTube 'prank videos'
Personal self-help	Enhancing self-esteem or confidence	• YouTube videos and tutorials
Social	Making connections with family/friends	• Internet • Social media • Video sharing
Tension release	De-stressing, letting go, diversion and escape	• YouTube • Television comedy • Movies

UG theory and new media

In the past, audience interaction with moving-image media might have just amounted to pressing the buttons on the remote. Today, in the time of the internet, digital games and smart televisions, the media is much more complex. Audiences can interact in a greater number of ways.

Many studies show that people tend to use new media for many of the same reasons they use traditional media. For instance, the entertainment gratification can be obtained from the cinema, television, digital games or YouTube. Even competition or challenge as a gratification was available in television quiz shows before it became available in digital games.

However, the way people reach for their mobile phones as soon as their plane has landed suggests there are new and urgent needs. Surveying the internet for reviews before buying online purchases or before seeing a movie suggests that people need to seek the opinions of others. Looking at Google Street View to get an understanding of a landmark site before visiting it also suggests a need to take a look around in a virtual sense. **Augmented reality** technology seems to suggest a need to experience the world and understand it in more enhanced ways.



Getty Images/BraunS

Figure 11.4 As soon as the plane lands, out come the mobile phones and devices. Mobility is one gratification gained from new media. Identity enhancement is another. Applications such as Instagram can allow users to build and enhance their public identity.

Some researchers have isolated more specific uses and gratifications gained from new media. Shyam Sundar and Anthony Limperos say the new media gratifications are based on the affordances (see page 244) of the new media technologies:

- **Platform or modality gratification.** The platform of a technology can let us satisfy different needs. For example, **virtual reality** may make us feel as if we really are there experiencing something for ourselves. Moving-image media generally make us feel as though we have greater realism because we tend to trust our vision over other senses. A platform, such as a new mobile phone, can also make us feel 'cool'.
- **Agency or 'being in control' gratifications.** Users can be in control of the new media experience much more than with traditional media. This can make users feel that they have real individual power or agency to do their own thing. Such feelings can fulfil multiple needs, such as the need to be a leader, to build communities, to be creative or to tailor things to suit the individual.
- **Interactivity gratifications.** Interactivity usually means intense engagement with the content. It fulfils a need to be actively doing things, and to influence how something looks or works.
- **Navigability gratifications.** Feeling as though you can move through a space and browse one thing and then another gives users a sense of **navigability**. This enhances the sense of play in an environment. A sense of play factors into the need to escape or just enjoy pleasure.

11.2 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** how two selected media platforms provide you with particular gratifications. **Provide examples** to **illustrate** your explanation. Share your explanation with someone else in the class and compare their explanation with yours.

2 Conduct a mini UG study on the audience interaction with a traditional or new media platform. Provide both a qualitative (interview-based) and quantitative (numbers- or percentage-based) investigation.
Develop five quantitative questions you can ask survey respondents about their use of media and the gratifications they get from it. These should be 'yes/no' questions, or questions asking about ratings on a scale.
Develop five qualitative questions that require survey respondents to make a longer written or verbal response (like interview questions).
Use a colour-coding system to highlight areas of similarity in the qualitative interview responses and then respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the survey **information** about the purpose and conditions, including sample questions. **Explain** the respondents, including **information** about age ranges, gender, etc.	**Analyse** responses, **examining** each and **considering** any patterns you can see. **Interpret** the gratifications using both quantitative and qualitative responses as **constituent parts** of the survey. Express quantitative results as percentages.	**Appraise** the degree to which respondents use particular media for particular uses and gratifications. Interpret the **significance** of these gratifications in the range of overall reasons people use the media.

FANS AND PARTICIPATION

Sometimes being a **fan** is a bit like being a little crazy. We decide to dress up, scream out for our favourite team, fly thousands of kilometres to see our favourite band, or follow our superheroes across every major media platform available.

Hollywood has often turned the camera back onto fans who love movies, music or sports, and have made movies about the fans. Examples include *Fanboys* (2009), *Galaxy Quest* (1999) and *Trek Nation* (2011).

Everyone knows someone who is a fan of something – music fans, sports fans, cult-movie fans, game fans, television or video program fans. Even though they are intense, the way they operate can tell us about audiences and participation in general. In an attempt to explain audience activity, academic studies of fans emerged in the 1990s.

The word 'fan' originally came from the word 'fanatic', which describes a person filled with excessive or even irrational enthusiasm. It is often associated with political causes or extreme religious beliefs. It can even have connotations of possession. Nowadays the contracted term 'fan' has come to mean an enthusiast or someone who is highly engaged. It is a much more playful term than the word it originated from. The term also suggests loyalty to the game, text, character or imaginative world of attachment.

Fandom is the world of the fan community, but it can also mean the state or condition of being a fan. Sometimes the term is used to suggest a collection, community or a subculture of fans.

Media fans

Media fans are highly devoted audience members who often extend their involvement into a network of other areas. For example, they may follow a narrative beyond the first text into a range of other texts on different media platforms. They may co-create additions or 'spoofs' of the text. They may also spend lots of money on merchandise.

Sociologists Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst argue that the media fan is different from other media users because of their relatively heavy media use. Fans also tend to be intensely focused on a particular text, character or world. Ordinary consumers may also be heavy media consumers, but they are less discriminating or focused.

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'Whilst the fan can be read in the context of fanaticism and zealotry, many of the behaviours associated with media fandom are comparable to loyalty, a significant indicator of engagement.'

Dr Emma Beddows, Swinburne University

Fans can be made up of the following categories:

- **Fans versus cultists.** **Cultists** are followers of cult texts, characters or objects. As such, they can be considered as a variety of fan. They are considered to be more discriminating and more refined than ordinary fans. Cultists are usually more organised than fans and often have specialised support materials such as websites and cult literature. Cultists can often have their own networks, and often meet person-to-person in larger organised gatherings.
- **Anti-fans.** The anti-fans are those who strongly dislike a media text, genre or character. Anti-fans (a term coined by cultural studies associate professor Jonathan Gray) might consider it to be 'inane, stupid, morally bankrupt and/or aesthetic drivel'. If the fan is positively charged, the anti-fan is negatively charged. Some of them even form 'hate-sites'. Anti-fans may not interact with the media product very much, but they have constructed a very strong view of what they dislike about it. Their emotional reactions are important in understanding how audiences respond to and interact with media.
- **Fans as active interpreters.** Fans are the best example of active audience members that there is. They make meaning that often extends the media product they interact with. However, even though they are enabled by the media, they are also constrained by it. All of the restrictions of media technology and media institutions apply to fans as much as to anyone else.

Table 11.2 The range of media users from the most heavily engaged to the most oppositional. This continuum is based on the work of sociologists Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, and cultural studies associate professor Jonathon Gray. Gray argues that those who hate a media product are just as worthy of study as those who love it. Each of them tells us something about the emotional involvement of the audience in media.

	THE CULTIST	THE FAN	THE NON-FAN/ORDINARY USER	THE ANTI-FAN
MEDIA USE	Heavy but specialised	Heavy	Variable but distracted at times	Variable levels
TEXT, CHARACTER OR IMAGINATIVE WORLD	Very discriminating reasons for fandom	Attached but not so discriminating	Flows in and out of relating	Distant from the media product

The history of fandom

Beatlemania

Beatlemania is often seen as one of the first examples of the arrival of the phenomenon of the fan. Thousands of fans, often female, gathered in screaming crowds everywhere The Beatles went. The fanaticism of their reactions and the huge number of fans led John Lennon to famously say in 1966, 'We're more popular than Jesus.'

Television was a huge factor in the rise of Beatlemania. Fans could see the band perform. Visuals allowed fans to focus and develop attachments to individual band members. The development of radio transistors allowed the large radio consoles of the 1950s to become small and portable. This was also a factor in Beatlemania. Teenagers took the portable radios into their bedrooms to listen to Top 40 music away from their parents. At that time, televisions were not available to teenagers in their bedrooms as there was usually only one in the house. However, The Beatles would make television appearances on family music and variety shows, and teenagers would rush from their bedrooms to watch.

'The news footage shows police lines straining against crowds of hundreds of young women ... the girls' faces are twisted with desperation or, in some cases, shining with what seems to be an inner light ...'

Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs



Newspix/News Ltd

Figure 11.5 Fans of The Beatles at Festival Hall Brisbane, June 1964. The fan response around The Beatles was unprecedented. The mainstream public and the media were shocked and expressed concern about the behaviour of the young. The extremity of feeling ensured that Beatlemania would be an important phenomenon in the history of fandom.

Science fiction

The emergence of science-fiction fandom in the mid-1960s is seen as the beginnings of media program fandom. *Star Trek* (1967) was one of the first examples. The show wasn't especially popular in the ratings, but it had a very strong fan base. The first fan magazine (also called fanzine or 'zine') was *Spockanalia*, established in 1967.

In the late 1960s, fans of the television show *Star Trek* showed the extent of their power. When the show was threatened with 'the axe' (cancellation) in 1968, fans began a 'Save *Star Trek*' letter-writing campaign. The studios were flooded with thousands of letters, and the show was renewed for another season.

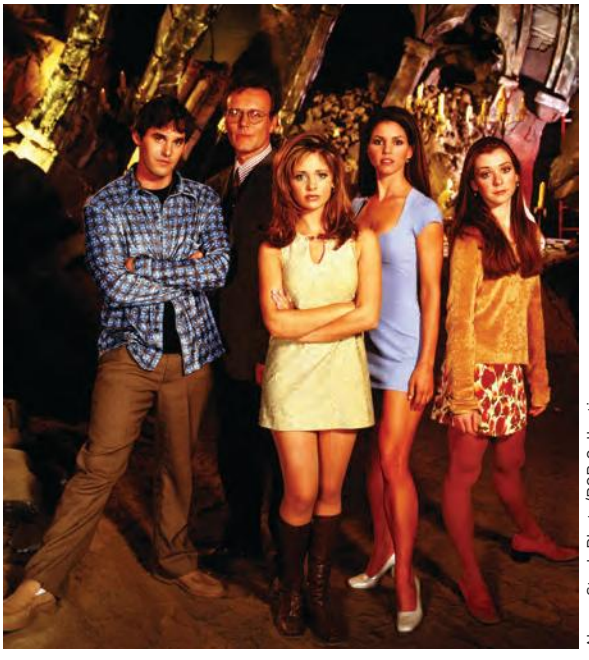
When the first *Star Wars* film came out in 1977, it drew in a huge new fanbase and also took fans from Star Trek. The first of the science-fiction movie conventions was also held at this time. The first of the *Doctor Who* fan clubs were established at this time as well. The first Australian *Doctor Who* fan club was established in 1976. The fans set up the club to pressure the ABC to cancel its plan to axe the show.

Internet era

The arrival of the internet in the 1990s really set up media fandom. Discussion groups sprang up, and fans were able to set up databases and fandom archives. The *Forever Knight* (1992–96) fan club set up the first online mailing list in 1992. Many fans worked at university computers to set up databases because most home computers were not connected online at the time.

The late 1990s was the time when fans got organised online. Membership of fan clubs grew dramatically. Fans no longer had to meet at conventions to talk to each other. People could simply use search engines to find their favourite show and join available mailing lists or investigate the archives. The internet also gave the English-speaking world access to Japanese fandoms around anime. One of the most important fandoms to emerge at this time was around *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003).

In the 2000s, the *Harry Potter* franchise delivered a whole new set of fans. The first movie was *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001). *The Lord of the Rings* franchise also established a huge new fanbase. Personalised blogging technology started to replace the mailing lists of the earlier internet. Digital video and editing software began to allow fans to easily create their own tribute videos. YouTube's launch in 2005 gave a space to homage videos.



Alamy Stock Photo/RGR Collection

Figure 11.6 *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), the television series created by Joss Whedon, led to one of the most important new fandoms that developed in the late 1990s. At that time, access to the internet became more widespread. Fans could meet online instead of having to travel long distances to major conventions. Databases and program archives helped fans engage in new ways.

Fans and engagement

Fans are loyal devotees. This high level of engagement makes them useful for study as an entry point into understandings about how all media users engage.

What are fans?

Generally, fans are considered to be:

- **Knowledge experts.** Fans accumulate vast amounts of knowledge about their favourite media texts. The depth of knowledge is what separates them from ordinary viewers. Sometimes their attention to detail is greater than that of the original producers. Fans often pick up small continuity errors, inconsistencies in character and so on. Fans have strong opinions and may think directors of later movies in a series have strayed from the spirit of a franchise. For example, some fans of the *Star Wars* franchise gave a cool reception to *The Last Jedi* (2017) on the basis of disagreements about the back-stories of characters and straying from the ethos of the franchise's narrative universe. Being able to demonstrate all this knowledge is part of what makes being a fan enjoyable. Fan knowledge is somewhat like academic knowledge.
- **Activists.** Sometimes fans become activists and begin campaigns aimed at saving their favourite programs or changing the nature of them in some way. Perhaps they don't like the way a certain character is developing, or maybe they want a certain type of story to be featured. Fan activism indicates that fans have a high degree of ownership of the text.
- **Co-creators.** Fans have often been the producers of their own media. In earlier times, these took the form of fanzines or newsletters. These days, fans are capable of more sophisticated media productions such as websites, databases and tribute videos. In a sense, a proportion of the early multi-platform work was produced by fans.
- **Socialisers.** Fandom often results in membership of a community of other fans. Online discussion forums and conventions provide ways for fans to meet each other and discuss their interests with like-minded people. Cosplay (costume dress-up) has become an important part of the social aspect of fandom.
- **Commodity consumers.** Substantial investments in merchandise are often made by fans. Indeed, fans are a prime target for the commercial interests of the media. Fans invest both time and money in their favourite stories. Their identities as fans can often be tied up in the selections of merchandise they buy. Fans with a lot of money will often use it to buy unique and rare collectibles.
- **Multi-platform media users.** Because fans are highly engaged and highly invested, they are more likely to 'migrate' to other platforms in search of extra story experiences. Media companies are keen to promote this loyalty as it provides access to far greater profits.



Getty Images/AFP/Roslan Rahman

Figure 11.7 Zombie movie fans at a 'Zombie Walk'. Fandom is often a highly social activity. It can also involve activism, whether to save a popular program, or even to raise funds for worthy causes outside of fandom.

11.3 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** the rise of Beatlemania in more detail, providing information about the role of the media in helping to create the phenomenon.
2 **Explain** the background factors behind the rise of the fan movement around *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003). **Identify** some of the social factors that could have contributed to the interest in the program. **Provide information** about how the Buffy fandom was assisted by developments in the media.
3 **Explain** how fans can also be co-creators. **Identify** some examples to **clarify** and **illustrate** the concept of fan co-creation. **Appraise** the **significance** of these creations for both the fans and the producers of the original media product.
4 **Construct** a timeline showing the rise of media fandom beginning in the 1950s and continuing to the present day. **Systematically arrange** each major development in the history of fandom. Illustrate the timeline with images from significant events.
5 Survey a group of people you know who would fit into the category of fans of a particular media product. Devise some interview questions to test whether they have any involvement around the main areas of fan activities – as knowledge experts, activists, co-creators, socialisers and consumers. Also devise a question testing their use of multi-platform media associated with the original media product.
Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain the survey **information** about the purpose and conditions, including sample questions. **Explain** the respondents, including **information** about age ranges, gender, etc.	**Analyse** fan involvement in each of the areas of fandom, **considering** results in percentages for each **constituent part** of the survey. Provide a discussion, **interpreting** their responses and **examining** the level of involvement in each area of fandom.	**Appraise** results by **drawing conclusions** around the **significance** of each area of fandom to the group of people who make up your survey respondents.

AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPATION IN MULTI-PLATFORM MEDIA

Users of multi-platform media arrived on the scene at a particular moment when technology and new industry approaches have come together. It is much easier than it ever has been to switch between platforms or to involve yourself in fan activities.

Multi-platform consumption is the 'dedicated consumption of a narrative across multiple story worlds', says Emma Beddows of Swinburne University in Melbourne. Users are people who involve themselves actively in the content and communicate with others who are spread out around the world. Users are often highly digitally literate and migrate from one platform to another.

The world of multi-platform media is a great place for users, but it can also be a chance for large commercial enterprises to exploit consumers. Participation is often highly structured by the companies. It is a means of ensuring that audience members add to company profits. Users become commodities that can be exploited when they upload their own content to company sites or when they create identities using company properties. Users also become audiences to be sold to advertisers.

However, multi-platform media do encourage new ways of using media. They encourage users to actively seek out ways of participating with the text. It gives users some degree of control.

Features of the multi-platform experience

The multi-platform media experience has the following features, suggests Beddows:

- **Requires effort.** A narrative in the cinema just happens on the screen, no matter what you are doing in your seats. However, a multi-platform media product requires the users to shift platforms and follow their text around to different places. The user is important in the construction of meaning. Multi-platform media requires users to put in the effort of the physical and mental movement between platforms, and also requires users to actively assemble all the parts of the story in their heads.

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- **Is expansionary or additive.** More and more content can be added to multi-platform media texts. Different but connected stories can unfold on different platforms. Details of characters' lives can be played out on separate platforms while still remaining part of the one whole story.
- **Has gaps.** Missing pieces of a story, or extra details that have to be pieced together, are spaces that must be closed by users. Gaps in the story plots, with the details filled in on different platforms, are what invite interaction and participation from users, according to Beddows. However, it is often the case that the users are not in control of these gaps. It is the copyright holder (usually a big company) that holds the power to influence the story structure.
- **Has multiple entry points.** Users enter multi-platform texts at any one of a number of different points. It might be via television, cinema or first via a digital game. The type of entry point often depends on the user's level of engagement, according to multi-platform specialist, designer and writer Christy Dena of the University of Melbourne. Extra entry points could include fan sites, forums, fan databases or even just Google.

  The original creators and copyright holders (often a large media company) will not have complete control over all these entry points, says Dena. The *Pokémon* franchise is an example where the creators have set up multiple entry points based on the age of the users.

  The Matrix film franchise was one of the first successful multi-platform texts involving a major movie. It offered the original movie, web comics, a computer game, an anime and a massively multi-player online role-playing game (MMORPG). It is unknown where different fans made their first entry. For example, some fans may have played the game *Enter the Matrix* (2003) and never seen the film.

Appraising the audience's use of multi-platform media

Good multi-platform media experiences invite the user into multiple linked stories that exist as part of an overall story universe, according to Henry Jenkins, Provost Professor at the University of Southern California.

Beddows suggests that multi-platform media audiences can be examined in three ways: entry points, mode of engagement and level of engagement.

1 Entry points

The design of entry points into the story world is a major part of the process of building a multi-platform experience.

The selection of a point of entry empowers the audience because they can consume the story in the way they want to. This also means they have the choice of engaging with it on one platform only. They may only go as far as one aspect of the story and go no further than their initial point of contact.

Age-related entry points are a common approach to large franchise multi-platform productions, such as those centred on blockbuster films. For example, a movie could have a PG classification, yet its partner digital game could be rated M. Different age ranges have access to different technologies.

Since it is the user who chooses the entry point, they have the power to construct their own view of the story world based on the platform they are most familiar with.

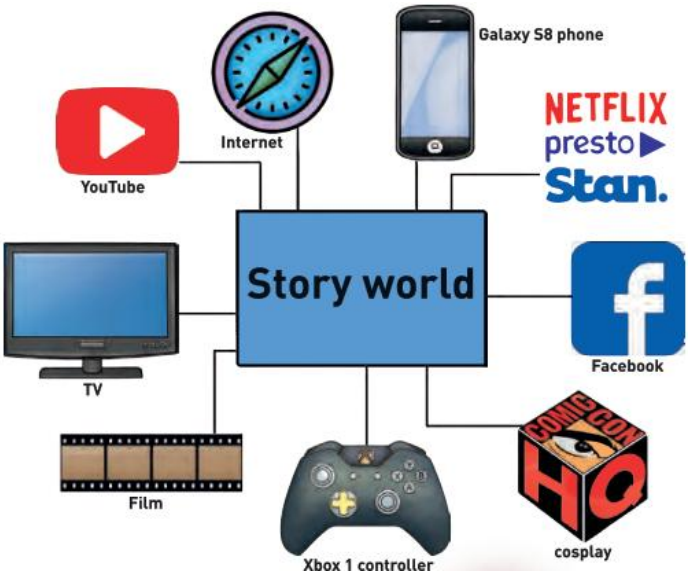


Figure 11.8 Audience members can choose the entry point into a story world based on their preferred platform. Writers and designers have to be aware that most users will not stray far from the initial entry point. They can also enter by any point without reference to the story on other platforms.

2 Mode of engagement or participation

People often have a preference for a particular mode of engagement. They may prefer something that offers them a high degree of control, such as a digital game, or something that offers a low degree of control but allows them to sit back and have the story roll over them, such as a movie.

Movies (at the cinema or delivered on other platforms), television programs and short videos involve the viewer in a whole range of mental activities as they interpret meaning. Emotional responses, such as laughter or joy, come with that. Viewers may also experience actual physical responses, such as increased heart rate or even small jumping reactions. Regardless of their response, the film or video continues to play.

Digital games only proceed if the user engages with the computer and interacts with it in a physical and mental way. Games are dependent on the actions of the audience and their decision-making processes.

Audiences are not necessarily comfortable moving from one kind of engagement to the other. Alternatively, they may want some of the emotional engagement they get from the cinema to be extended to high-control platforms such as games.

3 Level of engagement or participation

The media industries are in a period of unprecedented change. As audiences become fragmented, they become much smaller for individual media products. Many in the industry see that profits can be improved if audiences are more engaged. They are hoping that engaged audiences may be much more valuable than large mass audiences.

Engagement is a process that can take place across a range of different platforms and media texts, including fan texts and discussion forums. Engagement with media can be defined as the depth and nature of a user's investment in a media product. A user's engagement is the sum total of their behaviours, attitudes and desires in relation to a media product.

Engagement can be described as connectedness – a relationship of varying intensity. Connectedness is based on the degree to which a media product is involved in the user's personal and social experiences. It can also be expressed as a relationship to a media product that can be shown in a range of behaviours and attitudes, says Beddows.

According to Beddows, appraising engagement can be done by placing users' responses on a scale for each of the following: loyalty, attentive consumption, media literacy, participation and activities beyond the text.

- **Loyalty.** Loyalty is a form of commitment. For audiences, it involves returning regularly to media products. It also suggests discrimination on the basis of personal taste. Loyalty is very important in multi-platform media because users are required to migrate across several different media platforms.
- **Attentive consumption.** Consumption, says specialist in media engagement Ivan Askwith, can be 'passive monitoring, rapt immersion, and everything in between'. He suggests that attentiveness can be measured by asking users to recall details of the story afterwards.
- **Media literacy.** The ability to operate, code and decode media is referred to as media literacy (see page 300). Media literacy is important because the lack of it can prevent audiences from moving across platforms. For example, if someone cannot play digital games, they will not migrate from the video or film platforms.
- **Participation.** Actively participating is something that people have to want to do. However, the platform must allow interactivity as well. Participation is voluntary, and interactivity is often built into the technology.
- **Activities beyond the main text.** Activities that are based on the media product but are not actually consuming the product are considered to be activities beyond the text. Cosplay is an example; participants may have dressed up for a convention, but they are not necessarily consuming the text at the same time.

Table 11.3 Tiers of involvement in multi-platform media, by Cameron Cliff of Queensland University of Technology.

TIERS OF INVOLVEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Low	These audience members engage briefly. They are too busy or uninterested to invest much time.
Medium	These audience members invest some time and energy to interact with others or find additional platforms.
High	These audience members drive conversation and seek out, share or curate extra content on available platforms.

Source: With permission Dr Cameron Cliff

11.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a well-known existing media product or narrative franchise that has a strong multi-platform presence. Use your knowledge and information from research to respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

SYMBOLISE	CONSTRUCT	APPRAISE
Symbolise the multiple entry points on different platforms that the media product has, using a diagram to **represent** the information.	**Construct** a narrative plan of the product, **systematically** assembling the elements of the story. **Construct** a series of 'break out' points on the plan where there are gaps in the story encouraging movement to another platform.	**Appraise** the relative success of the full suite of multi-platform media, **systematically examining** box office data and **interpreting** the audience statistics.

2 In pairs, discuss your preferred mode of engagement with a multi-platform story. **Explain** your preferred mode and provide an example as to how you have used it. **Compare** your preferred mode to that of your partner.

3 **Construct** from your imagination a proposal for a possible multi-platform story. **Explain** the audience entry points and any gaps in the story that encourage movement across to other platforms. **Symbolise** the multi-platform aspects of the story in a diagram. **Construct** a narrative plan showing how elements of the story are told to audiences across different platforms. **Construct** proposals for three ways that audiences can interact with the story.

4 **Appraise** the level of engagement an audience member has with a multi-platform product, **making judgements** using the areas of engagement outlined by Emma Beddows (see page 270): loyalty, attentive consumption, media literacy, participation and activities beyond the text.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

The real products of the media are audiences, who are then marketed to advertisers. The texts are just the bait to attract the unsuspecting population. However, participation in the moving-image media can be affected by membership of audience groupings or demographic characteristics.

The term 'demographics' is derived from the Greek words *demos* meaning 'people' and *graphe* meaning 'writing'. **Demography** is the study of human populations and their characteristics. In the media, 'demographics' refers to the characteristics of target audiences.

The media accumulate vast amounts of data about who consumes their products. Profiles of audiences include details of their income, education level, lifestyle, marital status and age. The media even know how many households have cats rather than dogs. The audience profile is used to convince advertisers that they will be targeting the right kind of audience. Advertisers pay a lot of money for a high-income audience, even if it is only small, whereas low-income audiences are worthwhile only if they are purchased in bulk quantities.



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Figure 11.9 Audiences can be targeted by demography. Media executives divide the audience into distinct groups based on their characteristics. Media products are then constructed to appeal to the targeted groups.

Demographic groups

Media organisations have built up 'people maps' of the population, based on factors such as social class, age, sex, education, religion, family size and so on. Advertisers use these people maps to target their ads. To find the target audience, the advertiser then matches the ad data and statistics with the media organisation's data. Of course, the data must be kept up to date. Advertisers' people maps are constantly changing as society changes and audiences shift.

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Demographics of generations

Different **generations** have different experiences of life. These experiences affect participation in the media. Media executives have divided the audience into generation categories based on their year of birth, as shown in Table 11.4.

Table 11.4 Western audience categories based on year of birth

GENERATION	BIRTH DATE*	SIGNIFICANT MEDIA	DEMOGRAPHIC AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
'Greatest' Generation	1901–23	Newspapers	• People born at the turn of the 20th century. • Fought in the Second World War and kept the home front going. • Rebuilt society and industry after the war. • Seen as being used to hardship and sacrifice.
Silent Generation	1924–44	Radio	• People born between the two world wars, but too young to fight in the Second World War. • Experienced the Great Depression as children. • Seen as often conventional, fatalistic, hardworking, expecting disappointment.
Baby Boomers	1945–64	Television	• People born after the Second World War as soldiers came home and established families. • First to grow up with television. • Came of age in the 1960s and 1970s. • Some were part of the 1960–70s counter-culture and hippie movement. • Many became more conservative in middle age. • Tend to think of themselves as a special generation, different to those before them.

Generation X	1965–81	MTV	• People born after the Baby Boomers and often seen as living in their shadow.
			• Lived through periods of recession and restructuring in western economies.
			• Often had significant periods of unemployment in their youth.
			• First generation to experience parents' divorce on a large scale.
			• Sometimes divided into sub-groups:
			  • Baby busters 1965–79
			  • MTV generation 1975–80

Generation Y	1982–95	The internet	• People born into Baby Boomer families and came of age around the turn of the 21st century (therefore sometimes called 'Millennials'). • As the children of Baby Boomers, sometimes called 'Echo Boomers'. • First generation to grow up with computers, the internet and digital communication. • As a media audience, they are more segmented.
Generation Z	1996–2010	Smart phones	• People born after Generation Y and even more used to technology. • Grew up with smartphones, video games and the internet. • Often said to be technology obsessed. • Very segmented media interests and are used to diversity. • Very highly educated.
Generation Alpha	2011–	?	• The most technologically literate generation. • As a whole, the most affluent.

*Different demographers use different cut-off dates for the generations. Even some of the more obvious generational starting points are debated. For example, not all demographers agree that the end of the Second World War is the start of the Baby Boomer generation: some say 1943 and others say 1947. For various reasons, the cut-off dates for all subsequent generations are equally debatable.



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Figure 11.10 *Oh My God* sculpture by Lucy Vader at 'Sculpture by the Sea' festival, Cottesloe Beach, Perth. 'OMG' is one of the favourite sayings of Generation Z – the generation who grew up with the smartphone. Generation Z is the most highly educated generation yet. It is also the one with the most segmented media tastes.

Demographics of social class

Money talks, as far as advertisers are concerned, and the most desirable audience is the audience with the most cash. Spending power can also affect the degree of participation in the media. Generally, high-income households participate in media more often than low-income households. Accordingly, advertisers have devised a scale of relative spending power.

- **A-households** are successful upper-level professionals or businesspeople. They include doctors, lawyers and company executives (including television and advertising executives). Only 2 per cent of the population fall into this category.
- **B-households** are below the top echelon but are still well off. They include university lecturers, pharmacists and directors of small companies. These households comprise about 11 per cent of the population.
- **C-households** are of the lower-middle-class and make up around 23 per cent of the population. They include tradespeople, various white-collar workers and the owners of small businesses. Owing to skills shortages and taxation concessions to small business, many C-households now have real incomes that are considerably higher than A- and B-households. Advertisers of luxury goods, such as BMW cars, have begun targeting C-households as well.
- **D-households** are general clerical staff, apprentices, and skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- **E-households** include manual workers such as labourers, traffic wardens, factory workers and truck drivers.
- **FG-households** are people receiving welfare payments, including the unemployed and retired pensioners.



Shutterstock.com/galastudio

Figure 11.11 The seven ages of man, starting with infancy and ending in old age. The ages of man are outlined in Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. Jaques in Act II Scene VII begins the monologue with the famous phrase 'All the world's a stage ...' Age group is one aspect of audience demography and has an impact on media participation.

Cultural demographics

Membership of cultural groupings can affect media participation. Minority groups and Indigenous peoples may be affected in two main ways.

1. **Minority cultural groups may see themselves less in the media.** Media portrayals of members of minority cultural groups can be less than the actual percentage composition of the population.
2. **Minority cultural groups may have less access to media participation**, or they may experience technical or language barriers that reduce their participation.

Research shows that people from minority cultural groups watch more closely and identify with media personalities and characters who are members of their own group. For example, US research shows that African-American viewers respond more favourably and have better memory recall when advertisements feature other African-Americans.

Digital media have made it much easier for cultural minorities to make connections with each other in Australia. This has allowed them to communicate their interests and also to build identities. They may use digital platforms in unique ways. For example, specialised media platforms may provide spaces to exhibit media products in other languages.

Media convergence can affect the way cultural minority groups find themselves in relation the media. For instance, traditional media may

under-represent them. However, they could find that an alternative media platform may be created that allows them more engagement.

Conflicting points of view or ideological positions can be framed between mainstream media platforms and platforms aimed at cultural minorities. The group member has to negotiate different linguistic and ideological zones. In many ways there is an increased media 'mobility'. This can require a higher level of media or technical literacy. There may also be increased inter-generational conflict for group members. Older generations may be more connected to the traditional ways of doing things.

According to Myria Georgiou of the London School of Economics, cultural minority groups use traditional and new media in three main ways:

1 **Media for seeing the self.** Cultural groups use media platforms in ways that enable them to see themselves represented. For example, they may view Indigenous-produced narratives and more strongly identify with the protagonist.
2 **Media to link with their communities.** Maintaining links with the home community or the Indigenous community is an important aspect of cultural minority participation in media.
3 **Media to link multicultural to the mainstream.** Since many members of cultural minorities negotiate a variety of media platforms, they may feel they belong to both the minority culture and the mainstream culture. This is a complex citizenship.

11.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Advertisers group people according to their socioeconomic status. There are six demographic groups commonly referred to in advertising (see 'Demographics of social class' in this section). Watch some television commercials and assign each to one of the six categories.
Explain the factors that influenced your decision and **identify** some of the features that allowed you to make that decision.
Analyse the features you identified and **interpret** them in relation to their appeal to the target audience.
2 List television shows and films that you think would appeal to the generations from Baby Boomer onwards.
Explain why you think the texts appeal to the audience.
Construct the idea for a proposal for a new television show or film to appeal to one of the generations (not your own). Pitch your idea to the class.
3 Select a minority cultural group that you know or are interested in. Use your knowledge and information from research to respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

SYMBOLISE	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Symbolise the range of media platforms available to members of this group, choosing one that fulfils each of the three ways media are used by cultural minority groups.	**Analyse** the range of programming available on the platform that is special to the cultural group. **Examine** program options across a week. **Consider** how it compares to a mainstream platform.	**Appraise** the degree to which participation by the minority cultural group may require greater media literacy. **Draw conclusions** based on enquiry into the range of media platforms available to the group. **Make a judgement** about the **significance** of any obstacles to participation faced by the group.

EMERGING INTERACTIVE MOVING-IMAGE MEDIA

Televisions are becoming smarter and more interactive. Multi-platform programs have audiences engaging with a variety of screens from television, to the computer to the smartphone.

Emerging interactive media products combine all of these developments into a range of new experiences for audiences:

- **Social television.** Taking advantage of the 'liveness' of television, social television is the combination of social media and television. Viewers share their experience of the show with each other. Millions of people tune into

live television shows and use social media such as Twitter or Facebook to participate in discussions, live voting or so-called second-screen activities.

- **Second screen.** The act of engaging with television on two separate screens at once is called **second-screen television**. Audiences watch a television screen and also hold a second screen, such as a smartphone or tablet. They use the second screen to interact with specialised apps or multi-platform content associated with the main program. Second screen can be thought of as a kind of concentrated multi-tasking.

For media organisations, social television and second-screen activities offer the chance to lure viewers to their programs. The new algorithms available on social media also allow the media institutions to collect information about audiences.

There are four predominant reasons big media institutions use social media to build interactivity:

1. **Promotional.** Social media interactivity helps to create public awareness of the show. It also helps to create a sense of an event around the program.
2. **Emotional engagement.** Activity on Twitter or Facebook encourages people to be emotionally invested in the show. It encourages conversations among audience members. It allows audiences to become connected to the people on the program.
3. **Practical purposes.** Social media provides a practical means of allow audiences to vote. It is the means by which audiences can connect to the shows via the internet.
4. **Communicative.** Social media lets communication happen. It allows audiences to express opinions, even if they are not altering the course of the program.

Interactive entertainment shows

Perhaps the most successful of the emerging interactive media products are those from the entertainment and reality TV genres. Quizzes, music shows and talent quests have always been a magnet for audience discussion. It has proved easy to get audiences to interact with these programs. When they do interact, audience members often feel passionate, and part of a shared national experience as the show leads up to its finale.

Smartphones and social media platforms seem to work together with entertainment television as partners. The two screens in conjunction create a good chance for media companies to improve audience engagement.

Reality TV

Big Brother (2001–2014) was one of the most significant milestones in the development of interactive moving-image media. The show was a reality television program set in a house on the Gold Coast. Housemates vied with each other to be the last remaining housemate. They were filmed 24 hours a day, and the footage was edited ready for prime-time viewing each evening. Audiences were able to interact through telephone voting, or in later series via phone apps and social media. The audience also became part of the production and they were regularly seen holding up banners giving their opinions.

Producers of reality television attract audiences by offering fairly structured narratives. The stories are structured by careful editing. Sometimes they offer the chance that audiences can disrupt these stories by surprise voting or live audience protests.

Talent quests

Singing talent quest shows have also been at the forefront of audience interactivity. Shows such as *The Voice* (2012–) use audience interactivity as a way of increasing engagement, and therefore profits. Executives try to create a sense of a national event with the programs so that people will feel the need to be involved.

Talent quest shows offer the audience at least some ability to influence the outcome of the show. Low-influence interactivity, such as quizzes, is often offered on talent quest programs. Tweets and discussions are also low-influence activities. Some shows offer higher levels of interactivity through voting and polls. These can influence the progress of the judging. Apps can allow audiences to vote and see the results of the voting in real time. These results are also posted on screen in the shows.

Often there are postings to YouTube so that fans can watch reruns of performances. Key moments in the show are commonly posted within hours of the live performances.

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Interactive documentaries

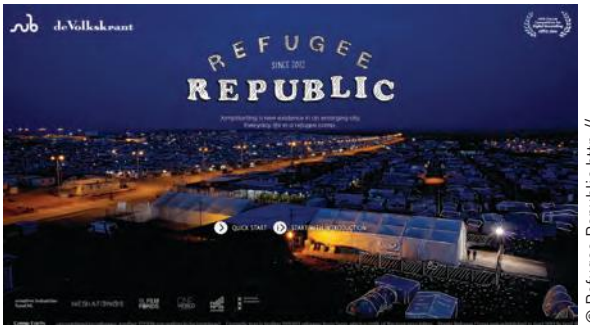
Documentaries are a powerful way of engaging with the world. They provide perspectives on the issues facing the world by presenting facts about a subject using real events, persons and places. They stimulate audiences to take action, and force political change. Pioneer documentary-maker John Grierson defined a documentary as the creative treatment of actuality (or reality).

Linear or traditional documentaries are now joined by **interactive documentaries**, thanks to changes in technology. Interactive documentaries are not simply a new style of linear documentary but are now considered to be an entirely new art form.

An interactive documentary is a one that is usually delivered over the internet and uses interactivity as central to the audience experience. If it was ever shown on traditional television, it would lose many of its basic elements. Interactive documentaries examine the real world by using digital interactive technologies.

According to film academic Sandra Gaudenzi, there are three main approaches to interactive documentaries: user-controlled, immersive and co-created.

1 **User-controlled.** Interactive documentaries where the user can control what elements they see, and how the story progresses, are the most common type. An example is *Journey to the End of Coal* (2008), which tells the stories of Chinese coal miners sacrificing themselves to their nation's economic progress. The user is placed in the role of an investigator. The documentary operates along the same principles as **choose your own adventure stories**.
2 **Immersive.** Some interactive documentaries use augmented reality or virtual reality to place the user into the world of the story. **Immersion** shifts the experience of the user into something much deeper. For example, immersion into the world of a refugee in a camp can be a heightened emotional experience. The audience member moves from being an eyewitness via television to being an actual participant via virtual reality.
3 **Co-created.** Users can contribute to some interactive documentaries, uploading video or images from their mobile phones. Ridley Scott and Kevin MacDonald used YouTubers to contribute video content for the movie *Life in a Day* (2010). Other co-created products ask participants to submit shots to a video that is already live on the website. An example of this is *The Johnny Cash Project* (2007–). Others ask users to contribute to a questionnaire or provide information for a database. For example, the French interactive documentary *Génération Quoi*? ('What?') built into the interactive program a 143-question survey that almost 230 000 users filled in as they participated in the documentary. As a result, the portrait of a generation that the documentary presented was changing all the time as more data was added. An Australian example of a co-created documentary is *Big Stories Small Towns* (2010), which showcases both filmmaker and community-made footage.



© Refugee Republic http://refugerepublic.submarinechannel.com

Figure 11.12 *Refugee Republic* (2015) is an interactive documentary about life in a Syrian refugee camp in northern Iraq. It uses a mix of drawings, photography and video to give users an insight into life in the camp. *Refugee Republic* is an example of an interactive documentary with user-controlled story progression – like the choose your own adventure stories.

Features of interactive documentaries

Interactive documentaries have existed in experimental form since the 1980s. However, the growth of social media and the opportunities for participation that have come out of the internet, have led to a huge growth in the genre.

Interactive documentaries have two main features:

1 **Modular.** A traditional linear documentary is like one single unit. An interactive documentary is composed of separate linked parts that allow users to choose their own path. These can be thought of as separate modules of files. Each file of images and videos is independent, and capable of being reached from other files by hypertext links. The user makes their own pathway through the information.

2 **Variable.** Once a traditional documentary has been edited, it cannot be changed – its form is fixed. An interactive documentary can change and evolve as users change the order of the files or add material of their own. Each experience of it can be different, depending on how the algorithms match the data.

Designing for interactive documentary

Navigation is very important in the design of the interactive documentary. Navigation is created by designing the links between the different files and working out possible pathways a user might take. For an interactive documentary, the hyperlink is the equivalent of the cut in traditional film editing.

Interactive documentary designers may consider the following steps in creating the navigation:

- graph the structure of the ideas that are available for the user to explore
- group similar concepts so that users can link to them easily from related ideas

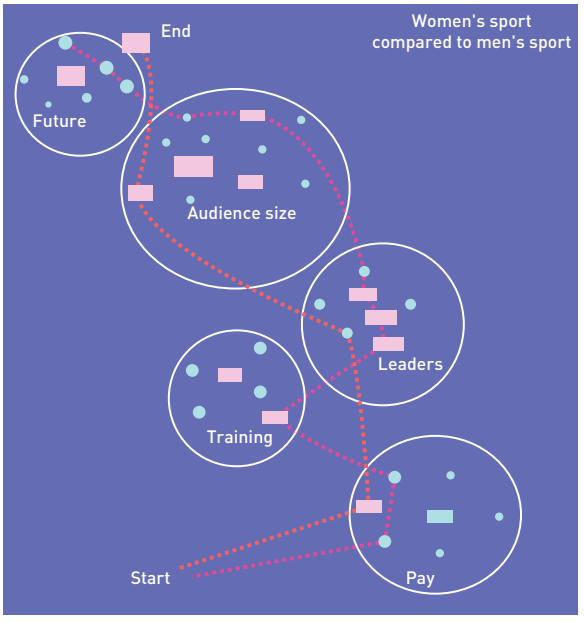


Figure 11.13 A 'map' of an interactive documentary about women's sport and the aim of future parity with men's sport. The documentary video files are grouped into broad content areas. Large files are represented by squares, smaller ones by dots. Files on similar topic areas are grouped together and allocated the same colour. For instance all video interviews and commentary on the differences between what male and female sports stars can earn are grouped in one area. Users can choose to just view one file, several files or they can elect to view none of them, moving on to one of the other topic areas. The dotted lines represent the pathways of two different users.

- enable users to take new pathways or shortcuts of their own making.

Navigation can be presented to the user in quite simple ways. Audiences can be connected to the ideas in the documentary in ways that allow them to choose their reactions, or to contrast feelings with cold facts. For example, one interactive documentary showed a user interface that looked like two parallel bumpy or wavy lines – like cardiograms. These were like two separate climax mountains for the story. One represented the emotions and reactions to events felt by families, and the other represented the cold hard facts of the officials and military and the official version of the story. Moving a cursor from one line to the other allowed the user to contrast the two, accessing both feelings and facts.

Information and its organisation is vital to interactive documentary. The shooting ratio of a documentary can be quite high. It can rise to 50:1 or more (which means the filmmaker may shoot 50 hours of footage from which the editor produces a 1-hour documentary). Filmmakers often say their best material ended up on the cutting-room floor. This information can be accommodated in an interactive documentary; however, it still must be organised and coherent.

Space or informational room is like time in a traditional documentary. A linear documentary only has the inevitable moving forward of time as the user experiences the program prepared by the editor.

Benefits and limitations for audiences

An obvious audience benefit of interactive documentaries is that users can follow their own interests and choose to investigate events as they see fit. In many ways, this puts them in the shoes of the original filmmaker or editor. They can make their own construction of the meaning. As a result, they may feel that their involvement is much more immersive and experiential.

However, this has limits. Audience members can only construct meaning out of the footage the filmmaker has provided. This is the case with traditional documentaries as well, but the capacity to make your own sense of the information is present in interactive documentaries to a much greater degree. It transforms the audience into 'doers' and 'makers' rather than 'receivers'. Potentially, this makes the audience more powerful.

Because interactive documentaries often use modules of information (separate files that make up parts of the whole), it can be up to the user to piece all this together into a unified understanding. This has benefits in that the user can assemble their own understanding and is more likely to remember and incorporate the experience. However, a disadvantage is that users may never assemble the whole. Their understanding may be limited to brief whistle-stops along the navigation pathway.

Traditional documentaries are more likely to offer viewers the chance to interrogate evidence and be guided towards reaching a point of view. With an interactive documentary, it may be more a case of being able to establish dialogues. Linear narratives allow the filmmaker to express a point of view, argues Arnau Gifreu, an interactive documentary specialist. In contrast, interactive documentaries are better at creating a debate, Gifreu says. The audience is more likely to feel that there are multiple perspectives. However, any sense of 'truth' may be considerably watered down.

Interactive films

An **interactive film** is a participatory experience that follows the 'choose your own adventure' style of storytelling where a viewer can make decisions that affect the outcome of the story. These sorts of experiences have existed since the 1980s with the development of LaserDisc technologies (precursor to DVDs and Blu-ray discs). However, these interactive movies were usually considered to be part of the gaming world instead of a cinematic experience.

The 1992 interactive film *I'm Your Man* required participating cinemas to spend thousands of dollars retrofitting their chairs with joysticks and buttons so that audience members could make decisions along the way. The 20-minute experience was met with mixed reviews – teenagers seemed to love it, but not so much the adults in the audience. One major criticism was that audience members would run around the theatre and press the buttons of empty seats, thus skewing the 'vote'. Overall, the 'interfilm' experience was considered gimmicky.

Some of the interactive films of this era were later released on DVDs that could be 'played' at home, but mostly this concept was merged into video game experiences. The video game company Telltale Games has successfully used this formula to create narrative experiences around established media products such as *The Walking Dead* (2010–) and *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014).

Interactive films as a group cinematic experience did not really take off in popularity in the 1990s as their creators had hoped. Fast-forward 25 years and the use of smartphones to 'vote' on decisions could see a new wave of cinematic interactive films being produced.



Alamy Stock Photo/Atlaspix

Figure 11.14 The interactive film *the Late Shift* (2016) marketed itself as `the world's first cinematic interactive movie'. It provides audience members with 180 decision points and has 4 hours of total footage. During a cinema screening, audiences interact with the film by using a smartphone app to collectively decide on a course of action for the protagonist.

Augmented reality (AR)

Augmented reality (AR) is when technology is used to superimpose images or video over a view of the real world. Participants can engage in AR experiences via a device (such as a smartphone) with a camera to view the world and a screen to display the augmented world. This means that an AR experience can still be a social one as participants are not 'blocked off' from others as they would be if wearing a virtual reality headset.

Pokémon Go (2016) is an AR game where players 'capture' Pokémon characters in real-life locations (using a phone's GPS technology) before training them up to battle those of other players. According to Guinness World Records, the game was a global phenomenon and topped the download charts in 70 countries in its first month of release. Compared with other video game experiences, *Pokémon Go* was visible to

the general public and made news headlines as swarms of players converged at particular locations to 'catch them all'.

The Whole Story (2017) is an app that combines augmented reality with history to add virtual statues of notable women alongside existing physical (male) statues. Users can take photos next to these virtual statues and share them on social media to celebrate the achievements of women such as Marie Curie, Nina Simone and Amelia Earhart. The crowd-sourced app and website encourage users around the world to add to the project by creating and uploading their own virtual statues. The creator then 'anchors' the statue to a particular location on the map.



Getty Images/Donald Iain Smith

Figure 11.15 Holograms are no longer just science fiction, but are now possible through augmented reality technologies. In 2017, tech company 8i released an app called 'Holo' where users can record video or take photos of themselves interacting with the hologram. To create the holograms, 8i uses an array of cameras to record 'volumetric video' that can be viewed from any angle and inserted in AR or VR situations.

Virtual reality (VR)

With a virtual reality (VR) experience, by wearing a headset a person's view of the real world is replaced by a simulated environment that can be photorealistic or computer-generated. Compared with traditional media that presents one view, virtual reality allows a user to move around a scene and engage with multiple perspectives. A VR user is in the centre of the experience and not just an observer, which raises questions about the ethics of storytelling with VR.

The language of VR storytelling needs to be different from that of traditional media as there is no **fourth wall** between the viewer/participant and the action. The traditional framing choices in television and film don't have quite the same effect on audiences in a VR storytelling setting. For example, in a slapstick-style comedy film, someone falling down is often humorous. However, if a character falls down right next to you in a VR experience, you may have a different empathetic response and it is not funny anymore. Similarly, viewers are used to seeing a couple kissing on television framed in a close-up shot – however, being that close to a couple kissing in a virtual world (or in real life) could be weird and uncomfortable.

A virtual world where people can spend their work and leisure time is the dream of Philip Rosedale, CEO of High Fidelity. Rosedale's online role-playing game *Second Life* (2006) showed the potential of users interacting in an open digital world. With developments in VR technologies, Rosedale believes the idea behind *Second Life*, of 'living' in an open simulated environment, is finally going to be fully realised.



Image of Inside Manus created by SUTU and provided courtesy of Hoodlum and Chemical Media TV (c) 2018

Figure 11.16 A screenshot from the interactive VR documentary *Inside Manus*, created by Hoodlum, Cutting Edge and SBS. Audiences are taken behind the fences to experience first-hand accounts from three detainees from the Manus Island detention centre. The documentary experience features an ink-and-wash style hand-drawn world. There are also recordings from the detainees, so the story is told in their own words and voices.

'A book works through an inner monologue, you read what a character thinks. In a film, you understand a character through his actions. And in VR, I think you understand the story more through how *you* feel in a situation.'

Saschka Unseld, head of Oculus Story Studio

11.6 ACTIVITIES

1 **Identify** a narrative VR experience.
Analyse whether the viewer/user is positioned as an observer or participant. **Examine** whether the user can interact with the world, and whether the characters in the story seem to 'acknowledge' the user.
Analyse the positive and negatives of current audiences experiencing an interactive film in a cinema compared with a solo viewing at home.
Appraise the user experience of the *Pokémon Go* (2016) phenomenon by considering any limitations to participation, and the benefits or disadvantages for players engaging with the game.

2 Sandra Gaudenzi has identified three main approaches to interactive documentaries. Find online an example of each type.
Explain the factors that influenced your selection of chapters, **identifying** some of the features that allowed you to make that decision.
Analyse the features you identified and **interpret** them in relation to their appeal to the target audience.
Construct a pathway plan for an interactive documentary about an aspect of life at your school. Suggest potential video footage to be shown at different node points along the pathway. **Arrange** some alternative video footage at each point that will allow different choices to be made. **Design** into the pathway a shortcut link at each node point that will take the users to later stages in the documentary.

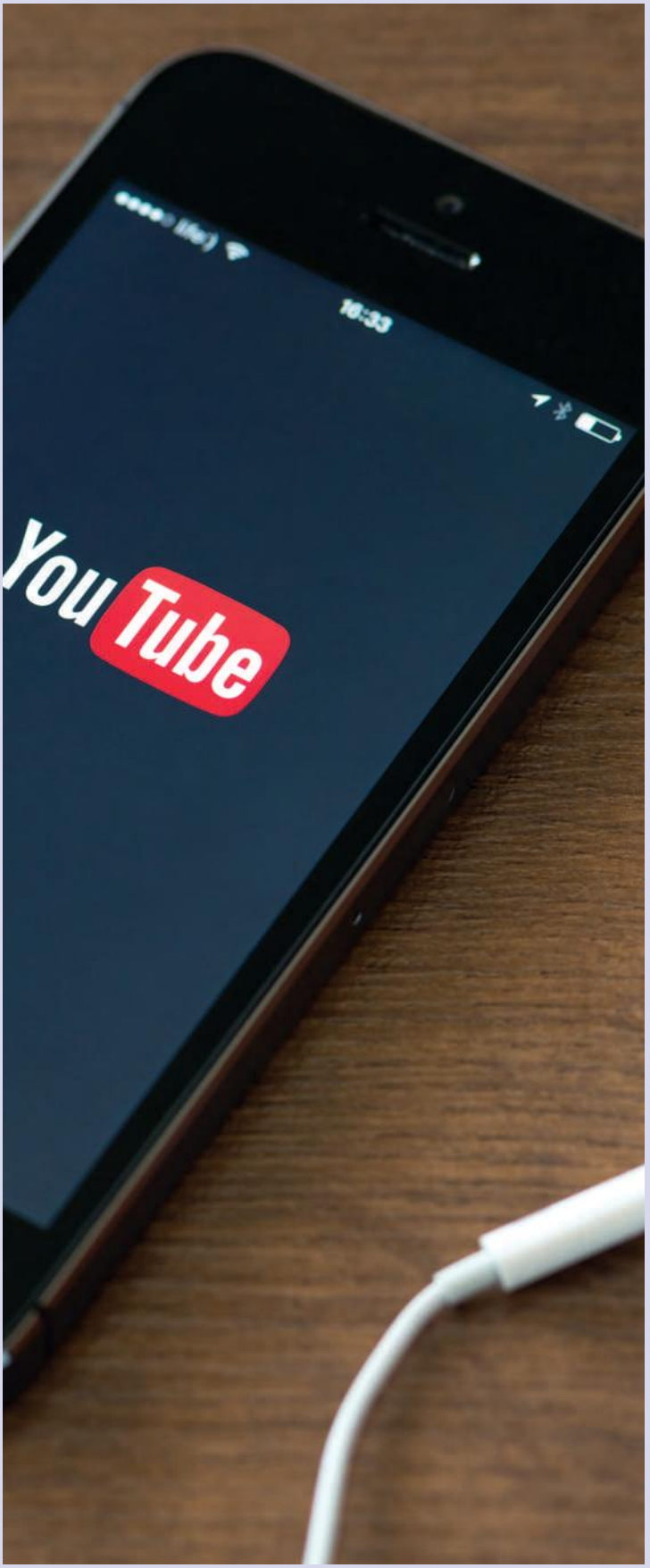
3 Participate in an interactive documentary, **exploring** the range of pathways available and **engaging** in opportunities for immersion or co-creation. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how interactive documentary users can have a range of choices available to them. **Give information** about the way the files are arranged. **Provide examples** of the ways in which the documentary allows multiple pathways and shortcuts.	**Analyse** information structures in the documentary, **examining** each and **considering** the relevance of each to the central theme of the documentary.	**Appraise** the benefits and limitations for audience members of participation in this interactive documentary, **drawing conclusions** about the **significance** of the interactivity in comparison with linear documentaries.

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12

Institutions and participation



Getty Images/iStock Editorial/pressureUA

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INSTITUTIONS AND THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT

British media tycoon Lord Thomson is reported to have said that owning a television station is a licence to print money. For economic and other reasons, the media institutions are close to the centres of power in society. They are closer to the 'big end of town' than they are to their audiences.

Features of media institutions as businesses

Media organisations tend to have common characteristics, because they all operate in the same business environment.

Profit takers

Most media organisations are private businesses. They are corporations with shareholders, and their prime concern is to make a profit for those shareholders. Huge investments of money are made. Many blockbuster films now routinely cost over US$200 million to make. For example, the movie *Black Panther* (2018) cost more than US$200 million to produce and within a few months had returned over $1 billion. Returns are not guaranteed, but they are spectacular when they happen. Revenue from box office and DVD sales for *Avatar* (2009) has long passed US$3 billion.

Supporting the powerful

The owners of media organisations can strongly influence those organisations. There are many examples of editors being forced to resign because they did not support the owner's political viewpoint. A survey of journalists showed that more than 70 per cent believed owners used the media to push their own political views.

The owners of big businesses are members of society's ruling class. While they make up approximately 5 per cent of the population, they control 50 per cent of the national wealth. Everyone else works for them, exchanging labour for wages. As members of the wealthy classes, owners tend to represent reality from the viewpoint of 'the bosses'. There are several famous cases of this. For example, European media baron Silvio Berlusconi used his own television and radio outlets to support his political campaign to become Prime Minister of Italy. Berlusconi heads the second-largest retail–industrial corporation in Italy (after Fiat).

However, this view may be partly inapplicable today. Media organisations cannot afford to alienate most of their readers. To make profits, they sometimes present material that does not directly support the interests of the owners of big business. Occasionally, for example through television programs such as *The Simpsons*, a less elitist view of the world is presented. Analysis of news programs nonetheless has shown much clearer support for the capitalist establishment.

Tending towards monopoly

The media industry is a competitive jungle where larger businesses gobble up smaller ones until only one (a monopoly) or, more commonly, a few (an oligopoly) are left. In either case, the result is an unhealthy concentration of ownership.

- **Monopoly.** In a media monopoly, a single firm dominates the market or even operates as the sole provider. Large western media markets have not yet reached the stage of monopoly.
- **Oligopoly.** In an oligopoly, four or five firms operate like card sharps in a poker game. Each player knows what the others are up to but does not have perfect knowledge. Others are excluded from the game. In Europe, the UK, Australia and the US, the major media markets seem to have settled down to four big players per market. Some of these, such as Rupert Murdoch, are household names in a number of countries.



Jon Kudelka, www.kudelka.com.au

Figure 12.1 Imagine a primeval swamp where a few bloated dinosaurs confront one another. They exist in an uneasy truce. However, if one beast averts its head momentarily, another will deliver a death blow. If one is smaller and grows more slowly, it will be hunted by the others. Eventually only one or perhaps two of the largest, most ferocious dinosaurs survive. These are our media organisations!

Diversification

Diversification is a process of enlarging a company by taking over or merging with other companies. For example, the NBC network in the US is owned by General Electric, which makes conventional and nuclear weapons on defence contract. In Australia, private equity investors in media companies have extensive other investments as well as their media interests. Diversification increases profits and long-term security. If one part of the firm loses money, the other parts can support it.

Sideways expansion is called **horizontal integration**. The entertainment media already sell their products in the leisure industry. For example, to horizontally integrate, a movie company may spread its activities into virtual reality technology or holiday resorts. It is still within the leisure industry, but has spread to other, parallel activities. For example, Sony Entertainment produces films, television programs and digital games, spreading horizontally across the entertainment platforms.

Expansion up or down is called **vertical integration**. It is made possible because the production process is divided into stages. For instance, a newspaper begins as a tree, and then goes through multiple stages of production and distribution as a newspaper until it finally ends up as stuffing for a padded post bag. In one example of vertical integration, the Japanese television manufacturer Sony purchased the US movie company Columbia in the early 1990s. Sony now controls the production and distribution of some of Hollywood's most famous movies and television programs. Sony also makes television sets and video cameras. In this way, it controls media production from top to bottom. In Australia, Rupert Murdoch controls 70 per cent of the nation's newspapers and owns all sources of mainstream newsprint.

When media companies buy shares in companies making other products, there is an increased danger of a conflict of interest. A newspaper company will be unlikely to run a story on problems with airline safety if the company also owns the airline.

Selling audiences as products

Media products are not sold direct to their consumers. Instead, the consumers are sold to other producers. For example, television advertisers buy the audience for a prime-time television program for 30 seconds so they can show their advertisement. The cost of each 30-second timeslot depends on how high the show's ratings are.



Shutterstock.com/Maxx-Studio

Figure 12.2 Laptops, smartphones, tablets and PCs provide data about audience through measurements of site visits. However, free-to-air media such as traditional television stations do not have any reliable way of measuring audiences.

The media factories

According to a study of news-gathering procedures, almost 95 per cent of television news stories appeared because they happened at the right time (11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.) or because the media crew was close enough and there was enough videotape to record the event. What makes news has as much to do with institutional convenience as newsworthiness. The industrial processes of media organisations are major determinants of the texts.

Division of labour into roles

Henry Ford used assembly-line techniques to build cars. By the time the last Ford Model T was made in 1926, Ford had made half of all cars sold in the US. Much capitalist production continues to follow Ford's mass-production techniques. Each worker performs a single task repetitively on a production line. Labour, including labour in media organisations, is divided into component stages. For example:

- **Media producers have specialised roles.** Examples of these roles are journalist, subeditor and editor. A consequence of this multiple authorship is that media texts often follow standard routines.
- **Media texts are produced in teams.** No individual is totally responsible for the meanings communicated in a text. The values of the text are therefore more likely to be those values acceptable to the institution as a whole.

Media institution effects



12.1.1 Enhanced Media Metrics Australia (EMMA)

Media markets are heavily influenced by the commercial media. Even government broadcasters operate in an environment dominated by their often better-resourced competitors.

Sameness and repetition

Audiences are never guaranteed, no matter how much money is spent. Audiences can be uncooperative and fickle. This makes media programming a risky business – it becomes difficult to gauge what will work. Once a successful product has been discovered, the formula is copied over and over again as every other producer tries to cash in. Because of a desire to guarantee profits in fickle markets, media products can all seem the same.

Neglect of smaller and poorer audiences

The profit motive of the media works consistently to exclude audiences lacking economic power or resources. Unless the media organisation can sell the audience to advertisers, there will be no attempt to cater for that audience. The size of the ignored audience can be in the millions.

12.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Research any media takeovers that have happened in the past five years.
Explain the details of which organisation made the takeover. **Provide information** about each media institution and about the takeover offer. **Identify** any effects on the market after the takeover, and identify any changes to media products as a result.

2 Investigate one of the media industries (such as the film industry).
Explain the range of production agencies (for example, studio or independent), and the stages of production (such as scripting, shooting and editing).
Appraise the impact of the practices of the industry, **making judgements** about the effect on the shape of the final product.

3 Identify the principal owners (or owner) of one of the media institutions. Prepare a personal profile of each owner. Research estimates of the percentage of market share each has accumulated. Research details of other investments each has acquired.
Explain the findings of your research, **giving information** about the impact of the owner/institution.
Appraise the significance of concentration of ownership in the media, **drawing conclusions** about the impact on society overall.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEDIA ORGANISATIONS

In recent years there have been important changes in the regulations and operating environments of the media in Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand.

Background

Since at least the 1970s, most western democracies have carefully regulated the television and radio broadcasting environment. Justifications for the regulations included:

- **Spectrum scarcity.** The broadcasting spectrum was seen as very limited and therefore a scarce resource. There could be only a limited number of television channels. Spectrum usage therefore required regulation as a rationing measure.
- **Spectrum as a national resource.** The airwaves were seen as national property to be used in the national interest for the good of the public.
- **Media power.** The influence of the media was seen to be based on its pervasive presence. In particular, television and radio had constant access to every living room in the country.
- **Conflicts of interest.** Commercial profit motives were often seen as being in opposition to the needs of democracy and to the principles of quality broadcasting.

Present trends

By the 2000s, economic, social and technological changes meant earlier justifications for regulation no longer had widespread support from governments. Changes included:

- **Decentralisation.** Nowadays, anyone can be a media producer. Home computers, smartphones and digital editing programs have made it possible for ordinary individuals to do what

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once required a hugely expensive television station or printing operation.
- **Free markets.** The dominance of the idea of free markets as a solution to many problems has brought a desire for less regulation.
- **Multichannel television.** Digital systems have become capable of delivering hundreds of new channels. Instead of everyone looking at the same few channels, there is suddenly the potential for a bewildering choice. This has weakened the idea of spectrum scarcity and the need for regulation to ration resources.
- **Globalisation.** The worldwide interlinking of digital media is called 'globalisation' (see page 58)

Public versus commercial media

In a public system, producers get the money to make programs. It is the reverse situation in a commercial system – they make programs to get the money. Whether to apply a market solution or a government-funded public service solution to today's broadcasting problems has been a subject of recent debate in all western societies.

The nature of the media reflects the nature of society. Therefore, the debate is really over what kind of society people want. Both sides seem to agree they want a television environment that promotes freedom, but both sides of the debate have different definitions of freedom. Public service media argue for 'freedom *from*' where as commercial media argue for 'freedom *to*'.

Public service media

In public service media, 'freedom from' tends to mean freedom from forces such as domination by the almighty dollar, powerful vested interests, advertising and mediocrity. In Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand, public service media have been organised along broadly similar lines.

Communications professor Michael Tracey of the University of Colorado has studied a range of public service broadcasters around the world and developed principles that form the basis of the public broadcaster's definition of freedom:
- **Universal availability.** Public broadcasters tend to make sure their signal is available to as many people as possible. This isn't to maximise the audience – rather, access is viewed as a right of citizenship. For instance, in many parts of remote Australia only the ABC was available until recently.
- **Universal appeal.** Programs are produced to appeal to a wide range of tastes, not just to 'high culture' tastes (for example, opera lovers).
- **Diversity and provision for minorities.** Public service media provide access to the media for disadvantaged or minority groups. In a multicultural society, public service media should be pluralist and diverse.
- **Education of the public.** Educational programming, ranging from school to university material, demonstrates the public service broadcaster's view of audience members as citizens with certain needs and rights.
- **Independence.** Public service media can best serve the public when they are independent of both the government and commercial interests.
- **Service to the public sphere.** The needs of the citizenry within a civilised society should be served by the public broadcaster. These needs may be related to politics, law, consumer issues, national culture or a whole host of other activities that make up the life of modern society.
- **Criticism.** The market opponents of public service media argue that they have been captured by cultural elitists and have imposed a diet of unpopular programs on the public.

Commercial media

In commercial media, 'freedom to' tends to mean freedom to maximise profits. The principles of commercial broadcasters might be summarised as follows:
- **Diversity.** Commercial broadcasters argue that the market creates the best chance of diversity of choice.
- **Consumer sovereignty.** Commercial operators see the audience as consumers rather than as citizens. The consumer is king, or sovereign, and rules by casting a vote for a particular program. This could be with cash (in the case of pay television) or through the ratings system (in the case of free-to-air television or radio). Of course, consumers with big wallets are worth more than the less well-off.
- **Mature audiences.** Supporters of the market argue that the contemporary consumer wishes to be exposed to as many choices as possible. The consumer does not need educating or regulating.
- **Criticism.** The opponents of the market approach say it simply gives freedom to large multinational

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corporations. They dominate production and reduce the range and quality of programs, catering only for big-spending majorities. These critics argue that diversity is therefore reduced, and national culture is impoverished

12.2 ACTIVITIES

1 The beliefs that led to a heavily regulated television broadcasting environment after the Second World War still have value for some analysts.
Appraise their relevance in terms of today's television. **Inquire** into the relevance of national media regulations in an era of globalised media and internet distribution. **Make a judgement** about the **worth** of the role of the nation in the contemporary media environment.

2 Research to find evidence of the idea that television works as a 'social glue'.
Explain your findings, **giving examples** of the role that television has played in holding society together.

3 **Analyse** the current role of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), **making judgements** using Michael Tracey's principles of public service broadcasting as the **criteria**.

4 Consider to what extent Australia's commercial media has lived up to claims of promoting freedom of choice, diversity and consumer sovereignty.
Appraise the **status** of commercial media at the present time, **drawing conclusions** about the claims and assessing the **significance** of their current role in Australia.

AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION ORGANISATIONS

The Australian television system more closely resembles that of the US than those of the UK or the countries of western Europe. Australia, unlike Europe, has not experienced decades of government television monopoly. Both the US and Australia have significant commercial sectors.

Since the introduction of television, Australian governments have insisted on 'structural diversity'. There has been a commercial television market from the beginning. However, there has also always been a strong national public service broadcaster to provide an extra dimension. In addition, the establishment of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) produced an organisation unique in the world.

Most western countries had pay television before Australia. Subscription television, delivered by cable or satellite, depending on the provider, was introduced in Australia in 1995.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)

For most of the past 20 years, the ABC has operated in an environment of tight or reducing government funding, pressure to commercialise and vague threats of some kind of privatisation. Despite this, surveys show about 80 per cent of people think the ABC is one of the most valuable institutions we have in Australia. One survey showed the only brand more popular than the ABC was Vegemite! Most people also believe the ABC should be funded at or above current levels and are opposed to advertising.


12.3.1 ABC

The ABC charter

Parliament has given the ABC a charter of functions under the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*. Under the Act, the ABC has the following functions:

- **Innovative and comprehensive broadcasting.** The ABC must provide innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard. It is also required to provide:
  - programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform, entertain and reflect the cultural diversity of Australia
  - educational programs.
- **Delivery of programs outside Australia.** The corporation is required to transmit Australian news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural programs to overseas countries. Under the Act, the aims of this provision are:
  - to encourage overseas awareness of Australian culture and policies
  - to provide a service for Australians living or travelling overseas.
- **Arts coverage.** Under the charter, the ABC must encourage and promote the musical, dramatic and other performing arts in Australia.

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Funding

The ABC is directly funded by federal government grants. This makes it different from many other public service broadcasters in countries such as Japan, the UK, Canada, France and Germany. Most of these countries collect licence fees as the most common method of funding the national broadcaster. A 2001 study by Macquarie Bank found the ABC was the second-lowest-funded public broadcaster of 18 western countries. A 2018 report found that the ABC costs each Australian taxpayer 4 cents a day – half what it did when the famous '8 cents a day' slogan was started in 1987.

The Australian government allocates funding grants on a three-yearly basis, indexed for inflation. At the end of each three-year period, the ABC management negotiates with the federal government for funding for the next period.

Programs

The ABC has a range of digital television channels. A substantial internet portal has stand-alone content and is also associated with both television and radio content. The Australia Plus network is an international television service that broadcasts to 39 countries, including India and Mongolia. ABC iView is also available as a global streaming service.

Programming on standard ABC television (ABC1) is 'balanced and comprehensive', according to ABC executives. The balance is between programs catering for a broad audience and specialist programs. The ABC argues that it must have popular programs to attract large audiences. For example, the news and current affairs programs are of broad appeal and work as 'gateway' programs. They channel audiences towards programs of a specialised nature later in the evening.

Audience

During peak viewing times, the ABC typically has a market share of around 17 per cent of the prime-time television audience. Unlike commercial free-to-air broadcasters, the ABC is not affected by audience fragmentation. Without advertising pressure, it doesn't matter if the audience for ABC programs is on television, on the official website or elsewhere. The only issue is that the program is seen.

The national broadcaster prefers not to use the commercial ratings system to measure its audience. Rather, it has a measure of audience response called 'reach'. Audience reach measures how many people in a week switch to the ABC to watch a particular program. Figures from 2018 show 70 per cent of Australians watch the ABC at some stage each week.

ABC digital online had an audience reach of around 24 per cent of Australians in 2018. Since the year 2000, the ABC website has consistently ranked in Australia's top 10 most visited websites each year. However, the ABC also pushes its news stories out to digital platforms such as AppleNews, Facebook, Snapchat and WhatsApp.

Research has shown that the widespread belief that ABC's audience is just a highly educated elite of 'culture vultures' has little basis in fact. Blue-collar workers and those with minimum education watch the ABC as often as white-collar workers or university graduates. However, older viewers make up a larger proportion of the audience than younger viewers. There is also a slight skew toward female viewers.

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)



12.3.2 SBS

The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) was set up in 1980 to provide multicultural and multilingual television. There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. Although other countries often broadcast foreign language shows on television (for example, Sweden has shown many Australian movies), no other country has a station devoted exclusively to multiculturalism.

Australia is a multicultural society. This means it is a society composed of many different cultures, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. As a policy of government, multiculturalism has the following three dimensions:

1. **Cultural identity:** the right of all Australians to express and share their individual heritage.
2. **Social justice:** the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity.
3. **Economic efficiency:** the need to maintain, develop and utilise the skills and talents of all Australians.

SBS says it attempts to cater for the needs of as many of Australia's cultures as possible. SBS television states its mission as contributing to a more cohesive, equitable and harmonious Australian society.



© SBS

Figure 12.3 SBS is unique in the world. No other country has a station devoted exclusively to multiculturalism.

The SBS charter

Like the ABC, SBS has a charter and operates as an independent, semi-government authority. The charter of functions was set up under the *Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991*. Following are the main functions according to the charter:

- **Multicultural broadcasting.** SBS is required to meet the needs of Australia's multicultural society, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in languages other than English.
- **Cultural skills.** Retaining and further developing the language and cultural skills already present in Australia is a key role under the charter.
- **Diversity.** SBS must increase the community awareness of the contributions the diversity of cultures has made to Australian society. It should also promote understanding and acceptance of diversity.
- **Specialised broadcasting role.** SBS is also expected to extend the range and diversity of Australian broadcasting.

Funding

Like the ABC, SBS relies on federal government grants for its continued existence. However, SBS has a mixed-funding agreement with Parliament, which allows it to sell advertising time and accept sponsorship. Approximately 15 per cent of the SBS budget comes from advertising and sponsorship. Five minutes in every hour of air time can be used for advertising. Commercials can be broadcast only before and after shows, or during any 'natural breaks' in the program. Natural breaks are taken to include a change in narrative time, a change in continuity or a change of topic.

Approximately 25 per cent of the budget of SBS is spent buying programs from overseas.



Shutterstock.com/Radu Razvan

Figure 12.4 The Tour de France in the Alps near La Rochette during stage 16 of 100. SBS provides coverage of international and local sport. Audiences for the Tour de France increased by 17 per cent after Australian cyclist Cadel Evans won in 2011. SBS research shows that Australian fans have stayed with the event since then.

Programs

Programs are selected on the basis of the number of native speakers living in Australia. For example, 8 per cent of programs are in Italian, 7 per cent in German, 2 per cent in Arabic and 2 per cent in Chinese. About 47 per cent of all programs are broadcast in English.

Approximately 70 per cent of SBS programming comes from overseas and 30 per cent is produced domestically. News, current affairs and sport make up the bulk of locally produced programs.

Under the SBS Act, the broadcaster is seen as a provider of 'quality' programming. The government defines quality programs as resulting in high audience involvement and having an impact beyond the moment of their screening.

Audience

'Viewers don't use us as wallpaper TV,' says SBS director of publicity Jenny Looman. 'They tune in and out because they like our news, a particular program or a movie.'

SBS uses the same measure of audience size as the ABC: audience reach. Research has shown that SBS reaches about 12 million people per month (that is, these people watch the station at least once a month). Measured in the same way as the commercial stations, market share is about 5 per cent.

Commercial television

Advertising on the commercial stations is not just an annoyance that interrupts the shows. On the contrary, the shows are there merely to fill in the gaps between the advertisements.



Cartoonstock.com/John Boatman

Figure 12.5 Advertisements are not interruptions, say television networks, they are the main part of the show. Commercial television operators would rather people left the room during the shows and came back when the advertisements started.

Regulations and codes for commercial television

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates commercial television operators through its licence controls. These controls cover the following:

- **Limited term.** Licences are granted to commercial operators for five-year terms.
- **Ownership.** There are limits on ownership and control. Also, a licensee must be a 'suitable person' as defined in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.
- **Programs.** There are compulsory standards in relation to children's programs and overall Australian content.

Beyond these regulations, commercial television operates under a voluntary code of practice. Aspects of this self-regulation code, drawn up by Free TV Australia in 2004 in consultation with commercial broadcasters, include the following:

- **Classification and programming.** The code sets out standards of responsible broadcasting. These refer to a range of program types including news, current affairs, drama and children's programs.
- **Advertising.** The code also sets out hourly limits on advertising. These limits are set at an average of 13 minutes between 6.00 p.m. and midnight, and an average of 15 minutes at other times. A station may choose to schedule an extra 1 to 2 minutes of advertisements in any hour, as long as the averages are satisfactory overall. An exception is made for children's viewing times, when advertising is set at 5 minutes in any 30 minutes. No advertising is permitted during preschool programs.

Funding

To fund commercial broadcasting, audiences are sold to advertisers. The ratings system determines how much money television stations can charge for the audience. High-rating, popular programs attract large audiences. Advertisers want to reach large audiences and will pay handsomely for their products to appear during these shows. When fewer people are watching, the advertising rate is lower.

Just as the taxpayers support the public service broadcasters, it could be argued that the general community also supports the commercial stations. The cost of advertising is simply passed on to the consumer in the final cost of any products sold.

Programs

Advertising is the first concern of the commercial stations. Advertisers have a right to expect that their products are positioned in the best possible light. The television shows themselves need to provide a positive environment for the advertisements. As a result, many programs on serious topics never get to air. Advertisers simply have not wanted their products to be associated with them and so have refused sponsorship. In one example of this, a US program on the aftermath of nuclear war was hastily pulled off the schedules; this scenario was not seen as an appealing environment for consumers.

Audience

Since the early 2000s, each of the major television networks has managed to capture only 18 to 25 per cent of the market. This is significantly down from the 30 per cent share that was typical before the introduction of pay television, YouTube and the arrival of digital TV.

Recently, networks have sought to differentiate themselves by targeting certain broad audience groups. However, despite these early trends towards specialisation, all networks continue to appeal to a general audience.

12.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Refer to the ABC charter. Find a sample program to illustrate each area of endeavour. **Explain** why you have **identified** the program as fulfilling the charter.
2 **Construct** a strategic plan for the ABC, **showing** several tactical changes they could make to programming and to online content in order to attract a younger audience. Be specific about the types of programs, when they might be scheduled and the particular audiences they might attract.
3 **Analyse** the news stories on SBS and another news channel. Count the number of local and foreign stories on SBS news. Do the same for the news on another channel. **Explain** your results, **identifying** the key points of difference.
4 If you were an advertising agent and were asked to promote SBS, consider to which groups in society you would direct your campaign. **Explain** how you would sell the benefits of watching SBS television to each group.
5 Commercial stations sell audiences to advertisers.
Analyse some programs, **considering** the kind of audience the station would attract, and then suggest advertisers who would be willing to 'buy' that audience.
Explain how the program would suit the advertiser.

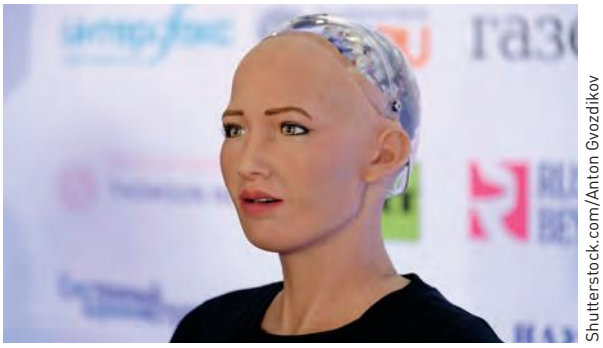
BIG DATA AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

Seemingly 'magical' technology is heavily reliant on data sets. Information is the fuel of online economies and the media-based interface we have with them. Big data is the petrol that runs the engines of robotics, mapping, search platforms and content delivery.

12.4.1 Sophia the robot

Big data

'Big data' is modifying its own definition as it evolves. The concept began in the 1940s with the large amount of information being created, particularly scientific data. By the 1960s, there was a recognition that the information growth rate was speeding up. The number of scientific papers published was doubling every 15 years, and each one of those papers was leading to new papers at about the same rate. This meant the increase in information



Shutterstock.com/Anton Gvozdikov

Figure 12.6 'Sophia' was showcased in open-ended conversations with strangers at the Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show in 2018. The robot's apparent wisdom doesn't come from learnt experience or onboard programming, but from access to the wealth of data online.

was not a linear, straight-line rising graph, but instead an exponential curve growing ever steeper.

The original three 'V' factors that many organisations use to determine what is meant by big data are:

- **Volume.** The amount of data is large. Exact sizes vary between companies and government departments, but the storage requirements are beyond normal domestic resources and are expanding over time.
- **Variety.** Many quite diverse sources are contributing data. Transaction amounts for a particular purchase, key words mentioned in a posting to a network of friends, and genre of content viewed at a specific location can all contribute to a big data set. The apparently randomly arranged information is compared to data with a known structure in an effort make sense of it.
- **Velocity.** Information flow does not stop to be analysed. As the data is never really in a state of completion, real-time processes try to cope with increasing users on increasing networks with a broadening range of functions.

The large amounts of information may be randomly collected and therefore not organised. New data being added at a rapid pace is often bringing with it information that is not of use at the time of collection. Information is so vast and disconnected that it requires specialist processing using **machine learning** to recognise patterns in the data, typically about human behaviour.

More 'Vs' have been added to the definition of big data as the sector has expanded. A number of overlapping labels have been introduced to

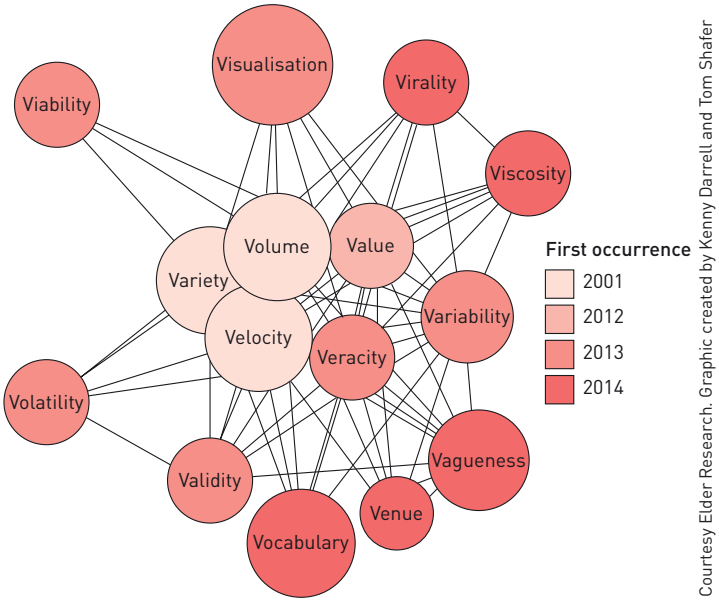
address the changing uses and complexity of the information:

- **Veracity.** The information may not be true. Users may be deliberately misleading the information gatherers, or just simply borrowing a phone for the day that confuses their own habits with a friend. Data sets are assumed to have a certain amount of 'noise' that pollutes trustworthiness.
- **Validity.** Even accurate statistics can be irrelevant. The purchases of one customer may be a gift for another, therefore misleading retailers about the customer preferences. Data must be interrogated to see if it actually answers the question that has been asked of it.
- **Volatility.** Trends can rapidly change. Some data may relate to buying consumable items or be very temporary, like self-deleting apps or the traffic congestion due to one particular accident. While long-term habits may be of interest, the specific event that generated data may evaporate quickly.
- **Visual.** Cluster maps and tree diagrams are more useful than traditional graphic representations for human analysis. Representing millions of data points in a meaningful way is difficult and increases the reliance on artificial intelligence for interpretation.
- **Value.** The worth of knowledge to a particular group for a particular purpose may not be fixed in time. A retail entity can judge the value of big data collection if it leads to more sales or profits, but the future value of that data may not be known until the next generation of products become available. The potential future value of data for governments and corporations is a strong incentive for them to retain whatever information they already hold.

Big data organisations

The term 'big data' is still used to refer to the resources themselves that are being 'mined' for information. It can also be applied to a group of companies with business models reliant on accessing big data sets. Previous decades have seen companies or **cartels** regarded suspiciously when they have dominated certain sectors such as 'big tobacco', 'big oil' and 'big pharma' (pharmaceutical companies). Even the term 'big business' carries an implied negative connotation of prioritising profits over consumers and other less-powerful businesses.

Many big data companies are household names such as Amazon, Google, Facebook, Oracle, IBM, and Microsoft. Some of the lesser-known players have ownership or cooperative affiliations with these companies: Azure, Alphabet, Tableau, VMware, Splunk, Cloudera, BigPanda, SAP, TIBCO, Jaspersoft and many more. They are able to monetise user-generated content and behaviours. In this way, even non-commercial media has become commercialised within the new digital economy.



Courtesy Elder Research. Graphic created by Kenny Darrell and Tom Shafer

Figure 12.7 Dr Tom Shafer, data scientist, humorously proposes up to 42 Vs relating to big data. He also maps some of the more specific examples that have legitimately emerged around the original three.

Surveillance capitalism

Like previous media-based industries, surveillance capital turns the audience into the commodity for sale.

Surveillance capital goes beyond the media experience and into other spheres of activity in the real world. Companies are sold tools for predicting consumer behaviour and are then able to modify consumer behaviour based on this knowledge – also using closely allied technology to measure that changed behaviour. Loyalty cards or credit purchases give marketers quick feedback on spending.

An irate father in the US was furious at a department store when his teenage daughter was sent babywear brochures in the mail – but the store had worked out from her clothing and vitamin supplement purchases that she was pregnant. The change in shopping habits triggered an automatic response from computerised mailouts.

Business and digital developments have combined to present new opportunities to make

money. Academic writer Shoshana Zuboff asks a question that is fairly simple – master or slave?

Zuboff is known for her three laws around the roll-out of information technologies, in which she describes 'informating.' This is the converting of objects and human activities into an information format that can be recorded by organisations. Zuboff's laws are:

1 Everything that can be automated will be automated.
2 Everything that can be informated will be informated.
3 Every digital application that can be used for surveillance and control will be used for surveillance and control, irrespective of its originating intention.

Generating data

Any economic, social, political or community activity online leaves a **digital footprint** that the user has little control over. People can actively choose to contribute posts, knowing there will be a record of the contribution that may persist even after the content is deleted. **Passive footprints** refer to searches, emails, online services, phone calls and texts that generate an automatic metadata trail left behind as a consequence of those interactions.

For Zuboff, the opaque nature of the data collection is a problem. We are not expecting our private moments to be on a kind of public record, and we don't even know what type of product our behaviour is being packaged into. The assumed rights of the data industries are rarely questioned in any serious way, even though centuries-old democratic conventions are being rewritten.



Alamy Stock Photo/Technology/Stephen Barnes

Figure 12.8 The Google Home speaker and Amazon's Alexa respond to key phrases to invisibly set in train a complex series of searches, product orders and sponsored links to food chains based on what is already known about the owner of the voiceprint. The devices are sophisticated but cheap; highly subsidised by harvesting the value of the exported data about users as they talk in front of the speakers and make requests.

Engagement strategy

Social media platforms all aim to engage and sustain audience participation. Heightened engagement happens when users are extremely positive or extremely negative about what they see. The Facebook behind-the-scenes programs use machine learning to identify the kind of content the user prefers and delivers more of it. Items that enrage an individual will often be shared with others who feel the same, increasing engagement with the platform.

Some applications have the ability to monitor scrolling within each page and even leave cookies



Copyright © 2018 Magic Leap, Inc.

Figure 12.9 Mixed reality glasses have the ability to capture everything a user sees, overlaid with algorithm-guided superimposed information and moving images. Magic Leap's mixed reality headset has strong moving-image media connections and distribution links. Some of the people connected to the project include the CEO of Google, the CEO of Weta (The Lord of the Rings SFX), the Alibaba executive chairman, the film director Steven Spielberg, a medical robotics entrepreneur and co-founder of Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic.

on the user's device to report back about digital activity across the whole internet. Facebook has used this external search information to shape newsfeeds that mirror recorded preferences across the web. The more an individual uses it, the more accurate the information becomes and the more targeted the newsfeed is. If new material causes 'engagement' to drop, the machine learning kicks in and alters the content delivery strategy. This manipulation may be moving to the real world, with major players working on integrating big data with the engagement potential of augmented reality and **mixed reality**.

The individual in the data

An **algorithm** is a formula for solving problems in various steps, and the way they function in social media is working against democracy, according to futurist author Mark Pesce and many others. They worry about algorithmic discrimination and companies that work directly for political parties. Data sets from the likes of Google and Facebook are purchased to cross-reference with publicly available information on voters. Facebook advertising is purchased to trigger a response in *that* voter, even down to the timing of items in a newsfeed arriving at the user's most persuadable moment. Scandal erupted in 2018 over this data use and wiped US$119 billion from Facebook's market capital in one day, forcing one of the pioneering data companies, Cambridge Analytica, to close down.

It is possible to identify individuals even from anonymised data. Intersecting information from different sources can produce enough 'resolution' to recognise a person's details. Triangulation, similar to that in mobile phone tower technology, can be used to match specific facts from the databases: it is like mapping in dozens of unique circles to pinpoint an individual. Even without a name, a detailed story of a person can come into sharp focus by purchasing and cross-matching datasets.

Behavioural change

Online purchases offer a very direct measurement tool for advertisers: place the ad, and then measure the number of sales. Big data is also very interested in the motivating mood behind those purchases, and how emotions intersect with consumer action. The continuous monitoring of multiple facets of activity is similar to living in a perpetual experiment. While it is considered unethical to conduct human experiments without gaining 'informed consent' from the subjects, digital platforms claim their sign-up conditions constitute agreement to a range of scenarios.

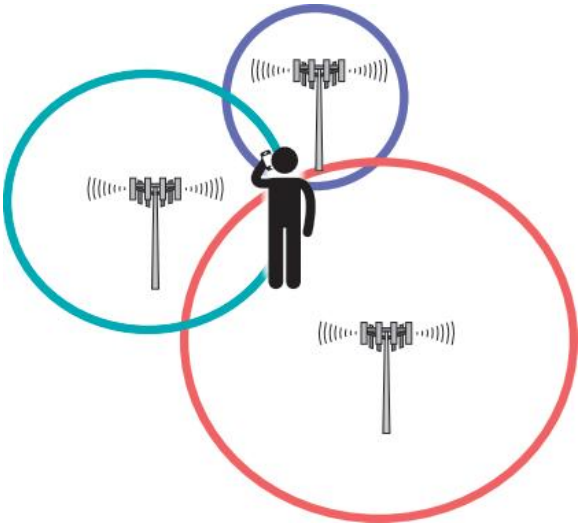


Figure 12.10 Mobile phone signals can be triangulated to pinpoint a location. The exact distance from a tower can be measured by the time it takes a signal to travel at a known speed. A distance from two base stations give two possible locations, but the third locks in one exact spot. Each tower only 'knows' a vague detail about where the caller is. Once the towers are networked, the location is precise and verifiable. In a similar way, individuals can be identified from anonymised data by intersecting information.

Facebook and university researchers ran a 2012 experiment on 689 000 users without their knowledge. Pictures, videos, comments and links posted by other people were manipulated to exclude positive emotional content from certain users, and to exclude such negative content from other users. Unknowingly, they adopted the same pattern in their contributions that reflected their feeds. The finding was regarded as a shock and was dubbed 'emotional contagion'.

It may give a clue as to why networks of friends on social media indicate statistically that depression, obesity and divorce are contagious between peers. The experiment also sparked fears of some future political manipulation of mood that would be difficult to detect and beyond the reach of current laws about political advertisements.

Official data collection

The predictive ability to punish people for what they think about, rather than the crimes they actually commit, is the sci-fi scenario in the film *Minority*

Report (2002). In many ways, big data algorithms are already delivering this as reality. In an effort to pre-empt terrorist attacks, many governments monitor media for 'chatter' that might identify potential perpetrators before they enact any plans.

In April 2017, the Australian Government's data retention laws came into effect. **Internet providers (IPs)** must store all user metadata for at least two years, including:

- geographic location of the user
- user names, phone numbers and IP address of the recipient of communications
- date, time, duration and network connection details
- linked information to the account, such as name, address, phone number and billing details
- the source of any phone call, text, voice or email message
- the type of communication, such as social media post, chat, forum, voice message, email or text.

The context for data retention includes the 2014 laws that made it a criminal offense to 'travel to a designated area' (countries determined by the government) and to 'advocate terrorism'.

Privacy protections

From 2014, Australian citizens were given the right to ask marketers where they obtained contact details from and to provide an opt-out procedure from their contact list. Personal information collected for other purposes should not be used in marketing. Companies sending information overseas must have the individual's permission or make sure the data is going somewhere with similar privacy laws to Australia. Penalties for breaching the law are up to $1.7 million for a company or agency and $340 000 for individuals.

Legally, organisations collecting personal data need to have a privacy policy and can only use information for the exact purpose for which it was given. This personal information protected by law includes name, signature, medical and bank records, date of birth and telephone number. They should inform individuals of how their own information can be seen and checked for accuracy. Only with consent can they record sensitive information such as political opinion and membership, religious belief, criminal record, race or trade association membership.

Big data and society

Closed thinking

Cognitive bias is the tendency to cling to a mistaken conclusion because it agrees with an existing belief. Social media is already prone to this due to the nature of 'friending' people with similar interests or susceptibilities. Adding self-fulfilling newsfeed preferences to the social media experience may bring a dangerous confirmation bias to what is already an echo chamber where we are hearing our own opinion back.

Censorship

Democratic countries have banned symbols, phrases and certain content that is generally considered offensive within the culture. The Chinese government has been widely criticised for managing websites through the 'Great **Firewall** of China'. The filtering does allow Google, but searching banned terms such as 'Tiananmen Square' (where protestors were massacred by government forces in 1989) can generate a fake error message. Users may think their internet connection is down, unaware they have triggered digital censorship. Local variations of Facebook, Twitter, Google and Amazon (Tencent, Weibo, Baidu, Alibaba) are heavily moderated by the Chinese government, which oversees the digital interactions of 20 per cent of the Earth's population.

> 'Everyone is getting their own custom reality ... like a drug we don't know we're taking because it is made to feel real, but it is "tickling" us to keep us around. It's making extreme people more extreme because middle-ground news is dropping out, making it harder to get consensus.'
>
> **Mark Pesce**, futurist author

Social credit systems – big data meets big brother

SBS News reported in 2018 that eight Chinese companies and 30 localities were pilot-testing the 'social credit system' that monitors internet use, bill paying, recycling and commentary on the Chinese government. The system assigns a score for each person's compliant behaviour and is designed to be compulsory for all citizens. As a reward, reduced waiting times and housing deposits are on offer to cooperative citizens. However, punishments for 'untrustworthy' residents may include denial of school enrolment, job bans and displays of jaywalkers on billboards via facial recognition.

12.4 ACTIVITIES

1 **Apply literacy skills** to **communicate** a concise summary of a news story related to big data, **describing** the **context** and **citing sourced information**. **Distinguish** between arguments for and against the particular application of big data use and **recognise** the potential implications for social, political and community involvement.

2 **Appraise** the representation of the institutions portrayed in the films *Underground: The Julian Assange Story* (2012) and *Snowden* (2016). For each film, consider the institution's **viewpoint**. Search for reviews and summaries of the movie. **Inquire** into the big data-based true story, **drawing conclusions** about subsequent political events and their **significance**, and the **worth** of the retelling in the **moving-image media**.

CITIZEN JOURNALISM

These days, the first person on the scene of a dramatic newsworthy event is probably going to be an ordinary citizen with a smartphone. These people are often 'accidental journalists'.

New media technologies have allowed average users an active role in the collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating of news and information.

Social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Reddit allow the footage of news events to be uploaded and shared by ordinary citizens.

Citizen journalism is the participation of ordinary citizens in the process of reporting news. The term encompasses a range of individual and social involvement in media creation, reporting and filtering. Content via citizen journalism can appear in established news sites or in independent blogs and citizen news sites. It has the following features:

- **User reporters.** Typical users or amateur reporters report directly on the news or analyse its content and meaning. They do this through blogs and video blogs, through user-generated news sites or through submitting their content to mainstream news organisations.
- **Mobile technology.** The convergence of mobile technologies and cameras means an average citizen carrying a smartphone is now more likely to be first on the scene of a news story than a professional crew. Often, the user is involved in the event. Even when not directly reporting the news, amateurs are able to submit footage for use in news reporting.
- **Social filtering.** This filtering of news allows users to highlight a news story they consider important and upload the story (or a link to the story) to social network news sites. Others can vote for or against display of the story.

Influence of citizen journalism

There are several types of citizen journalism, and it has been developing in new directions since its beginnings in the early 2000s.

Random acts of dramatic journalism

Photos and videos of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 London bombings and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans have demonstrated the influence ordinary people can have on news reporting, especially now many of us carry a camera wherever we go. These events marked a change in the way media content is gathered and viewed. Because of its 'on the spot' quality, citizen journalism can often be more immediate, passionate and illuminating than professional reporting.

The first amateur footage with a sensational media impact was Dallas resident Abraham Zapruder's 8-mm film record of President Kennedy's assassination in a 1963 motorcade through the city. The momentous significance

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> 'Journalists once had the exclusive province of taking people to places they'd never been. But now a mother in Baghdad with a videophone can let you see a roadside bombing, or a patron in a nightclub can show you a racist rant by a famous comedian. These blogs and videos bring events to the rest of us in ways that are often more immediate and authentic than traditional media. These new techniques, I believe, will only enhance what we do as journalists and challenge us to do it in even more innovative ways.'
>
> **Richard Stengel**, managing editor of *Time* magazine

of this footage proved that anyone could capture history. Today, such a public event would be recorded by hundreds or even thousands of spectators with cameras, all connected to the internet. Mainstream news coverage would have to compete with the mass of user-captured material.

Many news organisations already invite their audience to contribute eyewitness reports and imagery, but media outlets continue to wrestle with issues of quality control, hoaxes and manipulated imagery. Financial compensation for content owners is another difficult issue, as media organisations seek to avoid fuelling a 'feeding frenzy' of uncontrolled and intrusive amateur news collection.



AAP Photos/Alexander Chadwick

Figure 12.11 An image taken on a mobile phone by Alexander Chadwick as he escaped from an underground tunnel at Kings Cross Station after the 2005 London bombings. The following day, this photo was used on the front page of *The New York Times*. News organisations could not gain access to the underground railway. The only footage came from those who had the foresight to film on their smartphones.

Hyper-local journalism

Many local newspapers have closed down as the newspaper industry struggles to be profitable. Citizen journalism can act to fill in the gaps. Ordinary citizens can investigate local issues and act as watchdogs on the activities of local government or businesses.

Crowd-sourced journalism

Some news organisations invite people to participate in journalism by submitting knowledge, sharing opinions and sending in photos they have taken. For example, *The Guardian* newspaper invited 'the crowd' to examine hundreds of thousands of documents about an expense scandal involving British politicians in 2009. In the US, the general public was used for information-gathering during Hurricane Irene in 2011. Often journalists organise and verify the information before publication. However, sometimes the volume of information is too great and publication happens regardless.

Blogs

Increasingly, bloggers are using video for political and social activism. Events such as the wars in Iraq and Syria allow those caught in the conflict to give voice to their own opinions and experience. As consumers of this content, we see a firsthand view of the conflict, and have access to uncensored reporting and imagery. Locals also have access to dangerous environments that western journalists are unable or unwilling to enter.

Issues in citizen journalism

Most of the criticisms associated with citizen journalism concern themselves with three main areas of weakness. They are objectivity, quality and the effect on traditional journalism.

1 Objectivity

Balanced reporting or impartiality (not taking sides) is an important principle in traditional journalism. It is included in the journalist's codes of ethics in most western democracies. This kind of 'objectivity' aims to limit the journalist to just reporting the facts – without letting their own emotions or political views interfere.

Objectivity was seen as a way of gaining the trust of the audience. The more a news outlet was trusted, the larger the audience became, and therefore the more money advertisers could be charged.

Journalistic objectivity is a set of practices that are taught within the profession and during university training. These include: interviewing a range of people, the presentation of opposing points of view, supporting evidence or verification and a careful structuring of the news story. Citizen journalists are not obliged to follow any of these procedures. In fact, part of the appeal of citizen journalism is the expression of emotion and of strong points of view.

2 Quality of the journalism

Mainstream journalists are worried about issues of quality control, bias and accuracy. They claim the assumption that everyone can be a journalist devalues the skill and experience of professional journalists and editors. Journalist James Farmer asks, 'When was the last time you encountered a "citizen doctor", valued a report by a "citizen researcher", took off in a plane flown by a "citizen pilot" or saw justice meted out by "citizen policemen"?' While there are exceptions, the quality of citizen journalism to date is questionable. Nonetheless, citizen-contributed content that can be used, analysed and recompiled by professional journalists and editors represents the power of citizen journalism.

Some critics are worried about the ease with which manipulated images can be distributed through citizen media channels. Journalists are bound by professional ethics, while average users may not fully understand the consequences of their actions.

On the other hand, Yahoo and Reuters identified that there is already a lot of quality amateur journalism being created by their users. In an effort to create a more efficient process for soliciting and publishing user-contributed content, Yahoo and Reuters pioneered the organised user contribution of news footage through their *You Witness* program.

3 The effect on traditional journalism

Many traditional news organisations have not been very welcoming of citizen journalists. News organisations have tended to view citizen-journalism content as merely convenient source material for stories. Some see it as a sideshow to the main game. The content has often been criticised as being untrustworthy and unethical – too emotional and subjective.

Even during a crisis, the citizen-journalism content is usually focused on sharing emotions and eyewitness accounts. It is not often used for giving important facts or information.

Traditional news sources are also forcing their journalists to produce content faster and with fewer resources. Mainstream journalists now have to write, film and edit their own stories. This is partly in response to competition from other sources of news, such as citizen journalists.

12.5 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a timeline of the period since the year 2000 to the present, recording events where citizen journalism played a key role in providing the imagery or the information.
Analyse the timeline you've created and comment on any trends. **Examine** the following areas of investigation in your analysis:
- proportion of citizen journalism that is image-based versus information-based
- role that luck plays in citizen journalism
- trend increases in citizen journalism over time, or at certain times, such as during crises.

2 Select a news story into which citizen journalism has had a significant input. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain some of the issues concerning reliability that the component raises.	**Analyse** the impact of the citizen-journalism component by breaking down the story into its **constituent parts**, determining the percentage of citizen journalism.	**Appraise** the status of the citizen-journalism components, **making judgements** about the ways in which the inclusion of citizen journalism adds to or detracts from the credibility of the news story.

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BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

> 'In a hunting culture, kids played with bows and arrows. In an information society, they play with information.'
>
> **Henry Jenkins**, Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism and Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California.

While digital media have lowered many of the barriers to media access and participation, they have also opened up new barriers. The information society generally has created new forms of inequality that exist alongside the long-standing forms. There are big gaps between the participation levels of different groups.

Importance of media literacy

The new globally networked society requires people to have certain skills and access to technology. One of the most important skills is media literacy.

Media literacy is usually thought to have two parts. It is the ability to be able to 'read' media by interpreting its meanings and making informed judgements. It is also the ability to be able to 'write' media by becoming producers and participants in the media.

A lack of media literacy represents a barrier to participation. It can affect millions of people, both in wealthy western countries and in less-developed countries around the world. According to Henry Jenkins, if someone can just consume media but not produce it, they cannot really be regarded as being media literate. They are reduced to being spectators who are locked out of the empowering potential of contemporary media.

Types of barriers to participation

As well as being an issue of media literacy, barriers to participation can be thrown up by the types of inequalities that exist elsewhere in society. These include socioeconomic, age and identity group inequalities. They also include power inequalities between individuals and big business.

Economic, age and identity group barriers

People who function well in the world of digital media tend to enjoy advantages in a range of other areas. These include advantages in the labour market, income earnings potential and better access to a whole range of other services. Certain other groups experience barriers in each of these areas.

- **Socioeconomic barriers.** The term 'socioeconomic' refers to the combination of social factors, such as education and cultural groupings, together with economic factors, such as income and wealth. Socioeconomic disadvantage is closely mapped onto digital disadvantage and a lack of participation in the potential of new media. Those in disadvantaged socioeconomic groups are less likely to use the internet than those in more privileged groups. This reduced online connection leads to a range of other barriers. For example, employment status and income are both connected to the intensity of computer usage. Social networks are also affected.
- **Age.** There is considerable variation in the media and digital literacy skills of people of different generations. Generally, it is assumed that younger people have better media literacy skills. However, this is not always the case. Despite the media image of teenagers as being glued to their smartphones, there are wide variations in the media participation skills of young people.
- **Gender.** While the gap in participation according to gender was once quite large, contemporary research is showing that it has narrowed considerably in western countries. However, there are still differences in the types of digital engagement. Females are still under-represented in the IT production and design areas. Some women still tend to underestimate their skills as well, and this may form a barrier to participation. These differences are larger in countries with a greater degree of difference in the power of each gender.
- **Cultural groups.** Multicultural societies are made up of different cultural and social groups that often have different socioeconomic positions in society. Media participation rates are often quite different between cultural groups. For example, ethnic

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minority groups in the US have lower internet access rates, yet studies show that American Latinos and African-Americans participate more in content creation than other groups of Americans.

- **Disability.** Media participation for those with disabilities is a case of both exclusion and possibility. At times, the hardware and software are not designed with disabled people in mind. Assistive technology can help disabled people. However, this is often an add-on and sometimes it is clumsy. Disabled people argue that the hardware and programs should take them into account right from the beginning. People with disabilities tend to lag behind those without disabilities in their use of computers and the internet. In the US in 2013, only 53 per cent of people with disabilities owned a computer compared with 80 per cent of people without disabilities.
- **Regions and countries.** Intense use of technology is associated with highly productive regions and cities, such as Silicon Valley in the US. In Australia, capital cities tend to have much more intense use of technology and involvement in communications participation than do regional areas. Geographic location can still be a barrier to participation, despite the internet helping to break down those same barriers of geography. Some analysts speak of a worldwide digital communication divide between wealthy and poor countries. Many of the wealthy countries are in Europe, North Asia and North America. Many of the poorer countries are in the southern hemisphere. Analysts speak of a 'North–South digital divide'.

  Bandwidth allocation to particular regions and countries is another aspect of the digital divide. Only three countries host half of the world's available bandwidth. China is now the leader in world bandwidth allocation. The US lost its place as the global leader in hosting bandwidth in 2011.

Institutional and technological barriers

Some barriers to media participation are not related to media companies and specific technologies. Media companies can restrict participation in order to provide a benefit for themselves. This benefit could be greater profits, or it could be to enhance their ownership of certain media products. Technologies themselves can be a barrier to participation in the ways they are designed.

- **Big data barriers.** Cross-platform content and the rise of the user as a participant in media has allowed for data to be collected about users and their tastes and habits. This data is owned by media companies. While the benefits of all this data flows to media companies, very little of it is available to users. Users are prevented from greater participation by the fact that much information is privately owned.
- **Fragmented content.** Media companies often own multiple platforms of delivery. This allows them to generate huge audiences and therefore huge profits. However, this can often be a barrier to users. Content can be fragmented and difficult to track down. For example, if you want to watch a television program and also see what people are saying about it on Twitter, you have to log on to a website or access Twitter separately. You may need to be on two separate device screens. Often there are cumbersome registration and log-in procedures. Navigating across platforms is not as easy as turning a dial.
- **Proprietary platforms.** Platforms themselves provide barriers because they are their own complete systems. These platforms do not have any provision for communication with other platforms. For example, Facebook users cannot connect directly to Twitter users. All information and activity is embedded in the privately owned platform, with difficult cross-communication. This suits the platform owners because they can capture audiences and make them stay within their own platform. However, it does not really suit users who may benefit from seamless movement between platforms.

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12.6 ACTIVITIES

1 Survey your class to see how many members are media-literate. Simply ask them if they can both 'read' and 'write' moving-image media – that is, can they interpret the media they see, and can they produce media themselves?
Analyse the results of the survey to express the final responses as percentages of class members who are media-literate and who are not.
Explain possible reasons why some people have become media producers, and others have not.

2 Consider how the economic, age and identity group barriers to media participation might be overcome.
Explain some of the measures that individuals, communities or governments could take. **Provide additional information** about the details of what steps could be taken and give **examples** of how they might work.

3 Select a moving-image media product that has a multi-platform component and provides opportunities for audience participation.
Construct a graphic organiser that shows the multi-platform components, and also shows links to the various platforms that are used to provide audience participation (such as Facebook).
Appraise the overall ease of operation for audiences, and **draw conclusions** about the **significance** of institutional or technological disincentives or barriers to participation.

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13

Making and responding – Participation



AdobeStock/Gandini

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Part A: Production – for multi-platform

MULTI-PLATFORM STORYTELLING

What do *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *The Dark Knight* (2008), *The Bourne Legacy* (2012) and Disneyland all have in common? They are all multi-platform projects. Multi-platform has been used to market each of the films and expand the experience for the audience. Disneyland is itself a multi-platform experience. It was one of the first, having been established in 1955. Disneyland involves the characters of Disney movies and provides a live experience inside the story world created by the studio.

Table 13.1 Multi-platform storytelling around *Tron Legacy* (2010) – separate but connected story worlds are created on different media.

MEDIA USED	ACTIVITY
Video games	*Tron: Evolution* was released before the film. The game world is a back-story of the film narrative.
Websites	Players were encouraged to search for the character Kevin Flynn, believed to be still alive, using websites that contained codes and clues.
Twitter	A Twitter account was opened during Comic-Con (a conference for fans of comics).
Live events	In London, a light-cycle motorcycle was set up, and fans could have their own photographs taken in front of 'Flynn's Arcade'.
Mobiles and tablets	Three mobile applications were set up to explore more of the *Tron* story world.
Social media	A Facebook page was established, and a Facebook game was created.

Multi-platform storytelling is the technique of conveying to audiences a single story, or several stories, from the same story world in a planned way across a range of different media platforms. According to media academic Henry Jenkins, multi-platform storytelling is a process whereby 'integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels'. Jenkins argues that the purpose for this is to 'create a unified contribution to the unfolding of the story'.



Alamy Stock Photo/Newscom

Figure 13.1 The band Daft Punk arrives at the world premiere of *Tron Legacy* in Los Angeles in 2010. Multi-platform media for the film involved several points of entry into the story world for the fans. One entry point, which built on an existing fan base, was via the band. Daft Punk provided the entire musical soundtrack for the film. Six songs out of 24 in the film were released early.

Multi-platform media storytelling spreads the plots, characters and settings of story worlds across several media platforms in order to create a more immersive entertainment experience for the audience. A multi-platform story has more depth. This is quite different from a straightforward conversion from one media to another. For example, a movie that is also shown on television is not usually considered to be a multi-platform story. However, a movie that is converted into a video game and gives characters their own Twitter accounts *is* multi-platform.

Multi-platform stories come about through two main ways, or some combination of them:

1 **A story is so popular and becomes so important in popular culture that it automatically generates lots of different versions of itself.** These might be sequels, prequels, fan homages or various adaptations. The *Doctor Who* series, *Harry Potter* series, *Star Wars* franchise and *The Lord of the Rings* are examples of this kind of development.
2 **A story is planned as a multi-platform product right from the beginning.** The **story world** is a very commercial franchise, and the aim is to get the audience to consume the product on as many different platforms as possible.

The *Star Wars* multi-platform narrative is an example of an immersive entertainment experience for the audience. Originally, the creators of *Star Wars* simply re-told the story from the film when they presented it on other platforms, such as via video games. Today, multi-platform products are approved

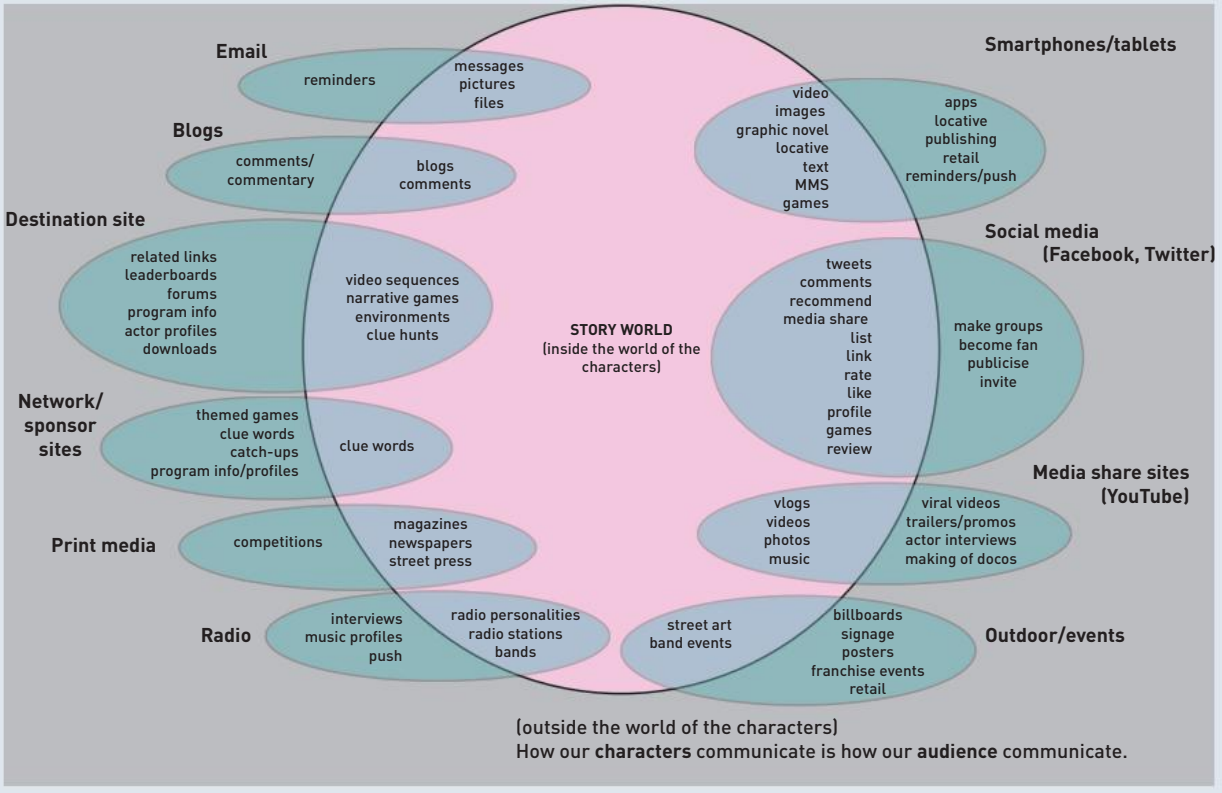
by George Lucas, and they must add something to the story world. The additional platforms must reveal something new or expand on the *Star Wars* universe, opening up a larger story world.

Four necessary characteristics of good multi-platform media have been identified:

1 **Multiple media.** The special features of each media form should be used to tell the stories.
2 **Different platforms without overlap.** Multi-platform media stories should be connected, but not exactly the same on each media form. Sequels and prequels are a good way of keeping the stories distinct.
3 **Common themes.** The different media should have different stories that are based around alternative perspectives of the same theme.
4 **Audience involvement.** Part of the responsibility for the story should lie with the audience so that they can have a greater feeling of participation.

The concept of multi-platform media entertainment experiences was first proposed by film scholar Marsha Kinder in 1991. She had watched her sons viewing *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987–96) on television, buying the merchandise and then playing games as 'the turtles'. She proposed the idea of multi-platform media as a 'super-system of entertainment' that would:

- cut across modes of production
- appeal to different generations and cultures
- become 'collectible'
- become a media event in itself, accelerating the publicity around itself.



Courtesy Hoodlum Entertainment

Figure 13.2 A graphic representation of multi-platform media prepared by world-leading Australian multi-platform company Hoodlum. The Brisbane-based company created the multi-platform strategy for the television program *Lost* (2004–2010). Multi-platform media differs from traditional storytelling. Hoodlum's Nathan Mayfield states that the aim is to 'provide a constant narrative thread through all multi-platform touchpoints. All experiences of the story are complementary and refer back to each other.'

Features of multi-platform media

> 'The best multiplatform experiences are when the broadcaster, producer and brand are thinking multiplatform from the outset – the ground floor. Most projects have two of the three on board. It's about enabling each party to have ownership.'
>
> **Nathan Mayfield**, Hoodlum (multi-platform production company)

Those who work in the field of multi-platform media storytelling suggest that it has many of the following features.



Courtesy Hoodlum Entertainment

Figure 13.3 *SLiDE* (2011–12) was a multi-platform program developed by Hoodlum for Fox subscription television in Australia and TeenNick cable channel in the United States. *SLiDE* focused on the lives of five Brisbane teenagers as they made their way towards adulthood. Their stories were told across television, **webisodes** and social media, and through mobile phone apps. An online graphic novel was also produced. Audiences were encouraged to get involved in games, quizzes and real-world events, such as street art production by local artists. The show also encouraged involvement in the real-world music scene and gave local bands airtime.

Compelling stories

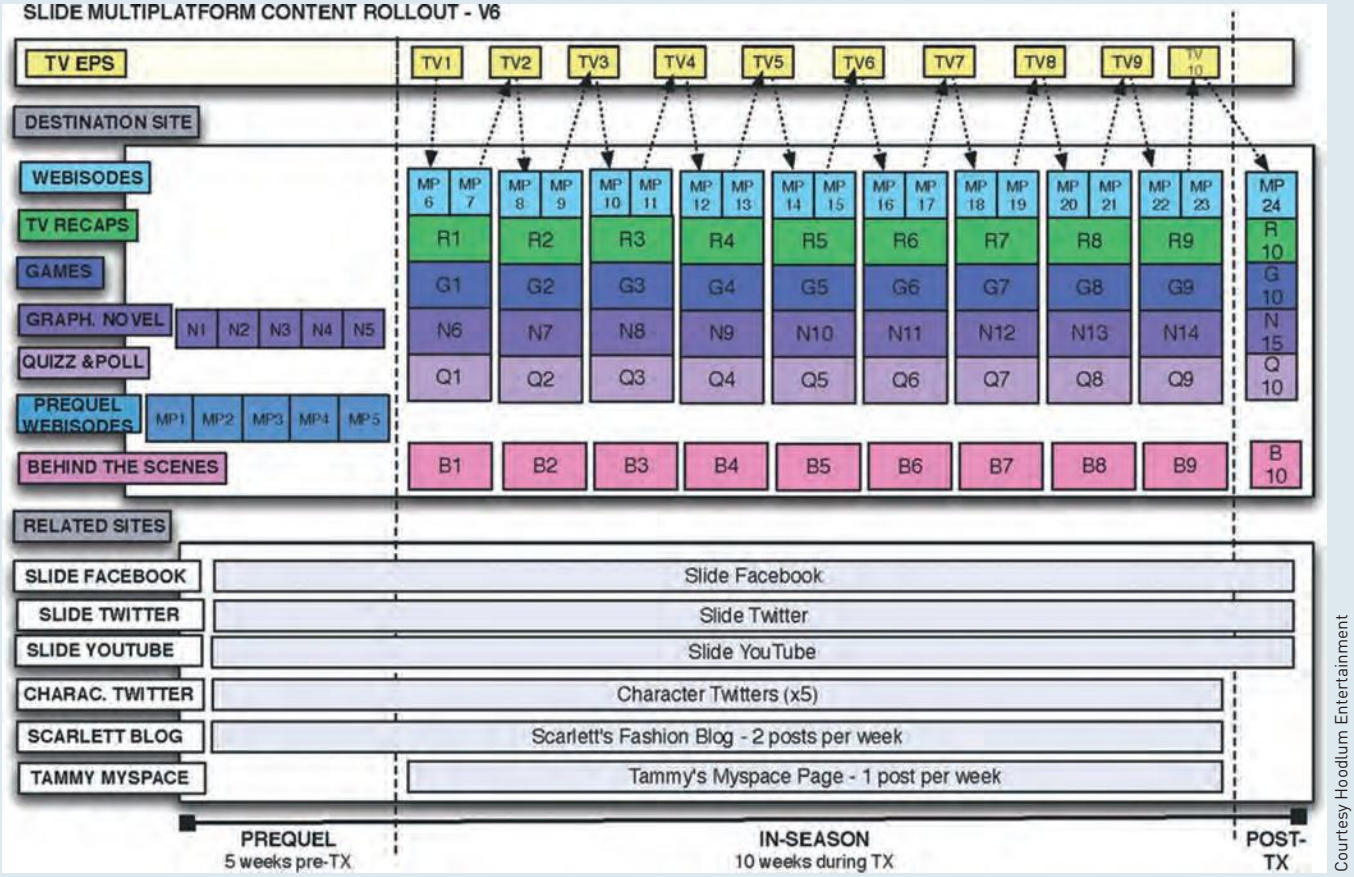
Multi-platform media stories follow the same general pattern of all narratives – a chain of events unfolding over time. The difference is that the stories are fragmented. Events may occur on one media platform that do not occur in the others. Each story or story part needs to be satisfying in its own right.

If stories are distributed across many different media forms, then the audience has many different points of entry. Ideally, the different fragments should encourage audiences towards the other narratives on different platforms.

Story world

The story world is like a hub from which many different story possibilities can extend. It provides the base that stories extend from.

A story world is a shared universe with a setting, characters, events and actions that form part of a larger narrative. The story world is often fictional, but can sometimes be a non-fiction world.



Courtesy Hoodlum Entertainment

Figure 13.4 *SLiDE* multi-platform content plan. Fans could choose their own story 'journey' depending on what combination of media platforms they used.

Creating multi-platform media productions requires the establishment of a fictional world or universe that is large enough to encompass all of the media platforms. As with soap operas and other long-running television series, multi-platform media writers often begin by developing a 'bible'. The bible is a collection of all the characters, their back-stories and their personal motivations.

Extensions to the story across different media platforms can be used to provide parts of the story that are not in the main narrative. This can be back-story – sometimes referred to as a prequel. Extensions to the main story can be based around particular characters telling more detail of their life stories.

Multi-platform characters

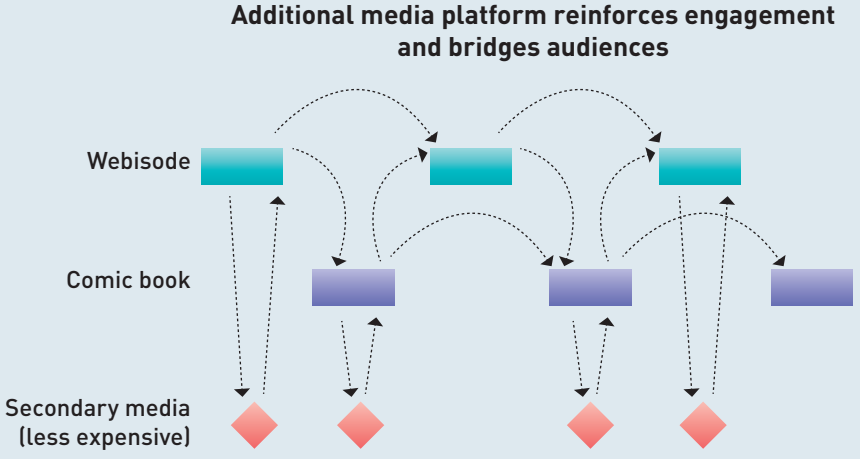
These are characters whose adventures unfold across multiple media platforms. More details about the characters are shown in each successive media platform. Multi-platform media productions provide a lot of extra scope to develop characters. Different media can be used to reveal more about a character and their motivations. Using other platforms means that the character can be allowed to develop without taking time away from the main story. Or they can be involved in their own separate stories.

> 'World build is all about efficiently conveying information about the time, place and mood of your story. In multi-platform media storytelling, though, the most effective tool is actually to create a small piece of your world and give it to your audience to play with. This piece of the world is often online – this is the realm of the oft-used corporate website.'
>
> **Andrea Phillips**, freelance multi-platform media writer

Distinct media

Distinct media exists when the media platforms each give a different experience to the user. Different media have different characteristics and will therefore suit different parts of the story. These different characteristics are called **affordances** (see chapter 10, page 244).

- **Strengths and weaknesses.** Each medium has its own affordances and its own pros and cons. The multi-platform media plan should consider these and use them to advantage. For instance, Twitter is good for short messages, but Facebook would be better for an extended posting from a character.
- **Support weaknesses.** If there is a weakness in one medium, the multi-platform media plan should support this with the strength of another. For example, film is good for showing a character as they develop though a long story sequence. This could be supported by television, because it is better at allowing a character to remain themselves as they are at one point in time through many episodes.
- **Time the releases.** Using distinct media, it is possible to time events on different platforms so that there is a sequence of activity. This generates audience excitement and sometimes publicity.



Source: Pratten, Robert (2011). *Getting Started in Transmedia Storytelling* Kindle Edition ISBN-13: 978-1456564681 page 47 Figure 36

Figure 13.5 Multi-platform media consultant Robert Pratten's diagram of narrative flow across distinct and different media platforms. Pieces of story are distributed across each platform, yet each makes sense on its own.

Real life

Not everything in the multi-platform media narrative has to be placed in the media. Sometimes a lot of extra interest can be generated by using real-life experiences. Two kinds of real-life experience are popular with multi-platform media producers:

- **Artefacts.** Physical artefacts or objects are often used to generate extra interest and to give a real world 'edge' to the fictional world. Artefacts could be business cards, perhaps mailed out to fans; or they could be products used by characters. Another type of artefact often used is specially minted coins or medallions. Sometimes clues to game problems can be hidden in the artefacts.
- **Real-life events.** Competitions, gala events or concerts incorporated into the narrative can be a way to encourage fans to be more involved.

Audience considerations

It's important for multi-platform media producers to consider their audience. The following demographic factors should always be considered:

- age and gender
- occupation and income
- cultural factors, such as whether they are young and trendy
- media patterns of consumption – magazines, films, blogs and so on
- general consumption – clothes, cars, brands and so on.

Knowing the audience is important because it can suggest where to place pieces of the story, and what kinds of characters will appeal.

13.1 ACTIVITIES

1 **Symbolise** a multi-platform media storytelling graphic like the one in Figure 13.5 for a multi-platform media narrative that you have been involved with or have heard about.
Explain in a summary the aspects of the narrative that were distributed across each media form. **Clarify** the technological advantages (or affordances) of each platform that suited a particular aspect of the story. **Give examples** of how this might work.

2 Select a classic story and create a multi-platform media narrative treatment. Example: for the classic text *Romeo and Juliet*, the central part of the story (the romance) could be the part that is expanded and distributed across media platforms. Example: *Pride and Prejudice* has been cleverly modernised as the multi-platform media narrative based around the YouTube vlog *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012–). Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

SYMBOLISE	CONSTRUCT	APPRAISE
Symbolise the migration points or story gaps that allow audiences to 'break out' to different platforms, using a diagram or flow chart to **represent** the information.	**Construct** a pre-production plan for how this could work, **systematically assigning** elements of the story to specific platforms and designing proposals that suit the **codes and conventions** of the genre.	**Appraise** the worth of classic literature as a subject for multi-platform application, **systematically examining** the proposed plan and **making judgements** about any renewed audience appeal.

3 Select three mediums/media forms that have complementary strengths and weaknesses or affordances. **Explain** what these affordances are for each platform. Give additional information about each platform's strengths and weaknesses.
Analyse how affordances, strengths and weaknesses can be used to advantage in a particular story or story type. **Examine** each aspect of the story, breaking it down into **constituent components** that suit particular aspects of the platform.

4 Select a movie or television program that you think would work well as a multi-platform media production. **Construct** a list of real-world artefacts and events that could add to the experience for the audience. **Explain** how the real-world events and artefacts would add to the experience of the story world.

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PRE-PRODUCTION FOR MULTI-PLATFORM PROJECTS

For your multi-platform project, you will need to design a multi-platform story and create a pilot element production. The overall concept will need to demonstrate how audiences will participate with the story across two or more moving-image media platforms. The story can be told through a variety of media types such as documentary, animation, film (short or feature length), fictional or reality television, web-based video, gaming or interactive experiences. Be certain to check your task sheet for exact specifications and expectations.

Planning the project

When planning the project, ensure that the use of different platforms is purposeful and will enhance the storytelling and participatory experience. Be careful that your multi-platform concept doesn't become simply a 'tour' of social media platforms. You will need to explain the connection between the chosen platforms and how the audience will participate with the story via these platforms.

Moving-image media platform options could include (but are not limited to):

- cinema
- broadcast television
- television websites with 'catch-up' and video-on-demand (VOD) services
- pay TV
- websites
- social media and networking
- video-sharing websites
- mobile apps
- live streaming via websites or apps
- games – console, PC and mobile
- augmented reality (AR)
- virtual reality (VR)
- video advertising platforms in real-world spaces (such as video billboards).

It is important to explain *how* the audience will engage with the story world and participate via the platforms (see chapter 11, page 270). Consider whether the platforms will further the narrative of the story world, such as fictional websites, or provide opportunities for fan culture practices and behind-the-scenes experiences.

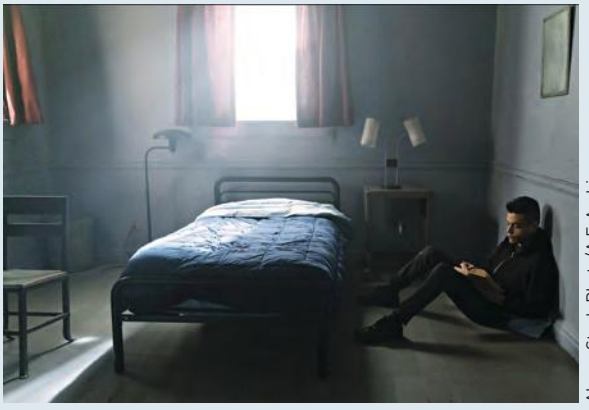
Depending on the type of multi-platform project, releasing certain elements on each platform at different times may maximise the audience experience. In this case, it can be helpful to plan out the release of these elements using a timeline.

Multi-platform treatments

A treatment for a multi-platform project will describe the usual elements of story development, characters, visual style, representations, target audience and how mood will be created (see chapter 5, page 91). Further justification includes descriptions of how technical and symbolic codes and conventions are used to create meaning and 'position' audiences. For this particular task, the treatment will also explain how the story is told across the chosen platforms, and how audiences can participate and engage with the story.

Technical codes and conventions include cinematography, editing, special effects and sound. They are called 'technical' as they refer to the technologies and equipment used to construct media products. In this treatment, you will need to explain and justify key technical choices made in order to tell the story and create meaning for audiences, including the interactive features of the platforms.

Symbolic codes and conventions are the elements within the frame that can communicate meaning to audiences. The elements of *mise en scène* are considered symbolic codes. *Mise en scène* can be used to help tell the story, evoke emotions, communicate themes and create symbolism for character representations. Often the effect is subtle,



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 13.6 *Mr Robot* (2015–), a cyber-thriller television show, follows Elliot Alderson who works as a computer engineer in New York City by day and a vigilante hacker by night. This show's notable use of lower-quadrant framing throughout the series is a technical code that reinforces the inner turmoil of the main character as he struggles with an anxiety disorder and depression.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection Inc.

Figure 13.7 Bob Parr, aka Mr Incredible, denies an insurance claim of a customer in *The Incredibles* (2004). The bland colours in the office space combined with harsh and sterile lighting show the workers' boredom in this cold and oppressive environment. Bob, looking uncomfortable in business attire, is squeezed into his cramped office cubicle and the crowded framing emphasises his discomfort. The use of technical and symbolic codes in this scene all serve to reinforce how miserable Bob is with suburban life and a white-collar job, and how much he longs for the glory days of being a hero.

and audiences may not be consciously aware of how this is being achieved.

When describing the *mise en scène*, explain the signified meanings of important elements. These can include setting, props/décor, visual motifs, lighting, colour, costume, makeup, acting and arrangement of elements within the frame.

Multi-platform storyboards

Storyboards in Film, Television & New Media have detailed drawings and additional written descriptions to demonstrate the use of technical and symbolic codes and conventions. Stick figures are not considered detailed enough to show an understanding of film languages.

Technical codes are shown in the storyboard through the cinematography choices (such as shot types, angles, camera movement and framing), and also descriptions of other technical elements such as sound, editing techniques or special effects. It is vital that the labelling of the shot matches the drawing.

Variety in shot types is usual in storyboards to effectively create meaning. If a storyboard contains all long shots, for example, this typically suggests a lack of understanding about the key concepts and how to tell a story visually (unless it is a purposeful, considered decision for stylistic reasons that have been explained in the treatment). Similarly, the duration of shots will often have variation in times, unless they are being timed to music, for example.

Use of symbolic codes are demonstrated in a storyboard through including detail in the drawings and written labels/descriptions. Ensure *mise en scène* explanations in the treatment are consistent with the illustrations and overall sequencing of the storyboard. Effective storyboard drawings do not require talented artistry, but rather the inclusion of visual information such as colour, identifiable characters and settings, and consideration of staging and depth within the frame.

A well-constructed storyboard should be able to visually communicate what is happening in a sequence. A good test is to show your storyboard to someone unfamiliar with your concept, and then ask then to explain what is happening in the sequence to check if it makes sense.

Another way to check a storyboard for visual clarity, and also test the anticipated duration of shots, is to create an **animatic** of the storyboard. This involves scanning the storyboard images, and then importing them into an editing program timeline to essentially create a timed movie 'slideshow' of storyboard images. This process can be further enhanced by including music or dialogue to check ideas before finalising the design and/or creating the actual product. Animatics are particularly useful and popular in the planning process for animations.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 13.8 Alexander Witt annotates a storyboard sequence for *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* (2004). In the film industry, detailed sketches may be suitable for storyboards. However, in Film, Television & New Media, additional information in both the drawings and labelling is required to show understanding of key concepts.

13.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Choose a short sequence from a media product (such as 10 shots) to practise storyboard drawing.
Construct a storyboard that represents the shots from that sequence. Aim for accurate translation of shot types and angles, as well as *mise en scène* elements such as setting, character appearance and staging.

2 **Analyse** the different drawing styles of professional storyboard artists and examine the similarities and differences.

3 Find a short storyboard sequence online, and then rearrange the shots so the sequence is out of order. Have a classmate do the same with a different storyboard. Swap this out-of-order storyboard with one your classmate has found.
Construct a storyboard sequence by arranging the images so that it tells a story. **Compare** these storyboard sequences with their initial order and **determine** how closely (or not) they match the originals.

4 **Structure** an animatic by scanning the images of a draft storyboard and using an editing program. Add music and dialogue where appropriate and adjust the duration of each shot to match the intended production. **Determine** whether your **technical and symbolic code** choices are effective, or whether changes are required to improve the clarity of the storytelling.

5 Select a screenplay/script from a short film or feature film you haven't seen before. Read through the first page or two of the script.
Explain the **technical and symbolic codes and conventions** that could visually tell the story. **Identify** the key characters, settings and opening events of the film.
Construct a storyboard of the opening sequence of the film. Ensure the *mise en scène* elements are clearly identifiable and the **technical codes** are accurate.
Find and view the opening sequence from the actual film.
Analyse how the opening sequence was filmed/animated.
Appraise your storyboard sequence in comparison with the completed product. **Examine** the **similarities and differences** in the **technical and symbolic codes** used, and explain whether the choices in either sequence detracted from or enhanced the creation of meaning for audiences.

Part B: Making pilot productions

> 'A television pilot is like a first date. It's a sales pitch where a great first impression hopefully sets up weeks – if not years – of loyal companionship. A pilot is shiny, exciting and dressed to the nines.'
>
> **Carita Rizzo**, writer, *Variety*

PILOT PRODUCTIONS

In traditional media contexts, the term **pilot** usually refers to the first episode produced for a proposed television show. A pilot can also be a 'test' episode used by creators to secure funding and resources – if successful, a second pilot would be produced, which is what an audience would typically see as the first episode. Sometimes a pilot episode is created with high production values in the first place, and this would be the first episode released to audiences.

In the 21st century, with new and emerging media technologies, the term 'pilot' or 'pilot elements' can refer to 'proof of concept' productions for multiple types of moving-image media platforms as well as television episodes. Pilot elements can be thought of as a 'prototype' for a production in order to test whether an entertaining concept on paper is a viable product.

In Film, Television & New Media, a pilot is a sequence or production that shows the intent of a completed film, television show, web series, digital game or other media product.

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Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 13.9 The Stark family await the arrival of King Robert and the royal party in the first episode of *Game of Thrones* (2011–). This television phenomenon almost didn't happen due to the massive problems with the original pilot, particularly in failing to establish major plot points. The creators refilmed 90 per cent of the pilot episode, and screenwriter Craig Mazin declared it 'the biggest rescue in Hollywood history'.

Types of pilot productions

Pilot productions can be designed for different platforms and audiences, but generally they have a few elements in common. Pilots are designed to 'sell' a show, and therefore need to engage and appeal to an audience so they will want to experience more. A production will need to establish setting, characters, story, visual style, rhythm and overall tone. A pilot may also demonstrate the interactivity or gameplay elements in a digital game or virtual reality experience.

Complete pilot episodes

A complete episode is the traditional form of a pilot that represents an episode in a television series. According to screenwriter John August, pilot episodes can be grouped into three categories: premise pilots, soft premise pilots and non-premise pilots.

- **Premise pilots.** This type of pilot includes a dramatic, significant event to mark 'The Beginning' of the story, and the underlying premise of the series.
- **Soft premise pilots.** These still set up what a normal episode will play out like, but there is a less-significant inciting incident that marks the start of a story. This can sometimes be called the 'one new guy' pilot, says August. Often used in sitcoms or procedural shows, a new character is introduced into an existing group, but they aren't the sole focus of the show.
- **Non-premise pilots.** These pilots represent a typical episode in a series and showcase the 'formula' for the show and dynamics between characters.



Gristmill/Australian Children's Television Foundation

Figure 13.10 *Little Lunch* (2015–) is an Australian mockumentary-style television show that follows the everyday lunchtime dramas of six primary school students and their teacher, Mrs Gonsha. Created by the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), the first episode of *Little Lunch* is an example of a 'non-premise pilot'. The story of the first episode revolves around Rory being sent to the principal's office for biting Melanie's hand, but this episode could easily have been switched with any other episode in the first season.

Demos or presentation pilots

Funding a pilot episode can be very expensive for studios, so instead of a full-length episode they may request a demo or 'presentation pilot'. These pilots are shorter in duration than a regular episode and give an example of what a complete episode would look like. A game show or reality series might include a condensed version of the gameplay or challenges, but this would establish the tone of the show and how the host would interact with contestants. A narrative series or feature film might have the opening sequence developed as a pilot element.

Special effects sequences

Similar to a demo or presentation pilot, if a production is using new special effects techniques to tell the story, a creator may develop a special effects sequence (or sequences) to demonstrate that the idea is technically possible.

Trailers and teasers

A pilot production may include a selection of short clips in the form of a trailer or teaser instead of a specific longer sequence. A trailer will generally have footage from throughout the narrative and provides information about plot, characters, casting and settings.

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Courtesy Dane Krams and Newspix/Michael Ross



Courtesy Dane Krams

Figure 13.11 Brisbane-based game designer Dane Krams (pictured) released the first volume of his point-and-click adventure game *Anna's Quest: Winfriede's Tower* in 2012. This pilot volume of the game sparked the interest of publisher Daedalic Entertainment, who then collaborated with Krams to produce the completed HD version of *Anna's Quest* (2015).

A teaser is designed to create intrigue in the product, often before a trailer is released. A teaser may focus on a specific moment of a product to suggest a tone and direction, but usually doesn't give away major plot information.

Digital game elements

For digital games, single levels or chapters can be created as interactive pilot elements to represent the completed product. Pilot elements for digital games could also include videos of cut scenes or a sample of 'walkthrough' recordings to show what playing the game would be like.

Augmented reality and virtual reality products

Like digital games, the pilot elements for AR and VR products may be interactive prototypes, or sample 'walkthroughs' or recordings of user participation. In a school setting, traditional technologies could be used to simulate the emerging technologies for an AR or VR pilot production. For example, a combination of strategic point-of-view (POV) filming and post-production special effects could simulate a walkthrough for a VR experience.

13.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a recent television or web series and view the initial pilot episode.
Analyse the narrative structure of the episode and classify it as a premise pilot, soft premise pilot or non-premise pilot. **Evaluate** the **strengths** and **limitations** of this type of pilot production.

2 **Identify** examples of a teaser and trailer for the same film, digital game or television/web series.
Explain the difference between a teaser and a trailer for a moving-image media product.
Analyse the **codes and conventions** used in the teaser and trailer. Examine the similarities and differences between the clips.
Present your findings to the class using **examples** from the clips to support your analysis.

3 Choose a production of your own that you created for Unit 1 or 2.
Structure a teaser or trailer pilot production for promotional purposes using this footage.

4 Collaborate with a small group of students to film a short science-fiction sequence at school.
Experiment with adding special effects to the sequence by using various green screen special effects clips (such as flying saucers or lightsabers) and an appropriate editing program.

5 Research three to five examples of pilot television episodes that were considered unsuccessful by audiences and/or critics. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain which **qualities and characteristics** of each episode contributed to the unfavourable reaction by audiences. **Identify** specific **examples** from the pilot episodes to **illustrate** these characteristics.	**Analyse** the **qualities and characteristics** that were considered **limitations** for each episode and determine any common trends.	**Appraise** the pilot episode for each production and **draw conclusions** about their value by rating each pilot episode using a scale of your choice (e.g. 1 to 10, or out of 5 stars). **Justify** your **conclusions** by referring to specific features of each episode. For each pilot episode, determine one change that could improve the overall impression of the pilot.

EDITING TECHNIQUES FOR PILOT PRODUCTIONS

Without editing, there would be no story – just a collection of takes. Editing is what creates the narrative. A typical Hollywood movie contains between 800 and 1200 shots. For a narrative movie, the shooting ratio of filmed rushes (raw footage) to final selection is usually about 8:1. Editing is often thought of as a process of cutting down, but it can also be seen as a means of building up a story.

In its simplest form, editing may be defined as the process of coordinating a unit of vision (shot) and a unit of sound with the next one. This process of coordination of units of vision and sound creates the narrative – the cause-and-effect chain of events in time and space. Editing is a process of combining images so that they play off each other and create meaning.

Editing creates the cause-and-effect chain in the following ways:

- **Arranging the order of events.** Editing is the way the director deliberately arranges the sequence of events. This makes the individual differences between the story, the plot and the narrative.
- **Creating relationships between characters.** Combining images of characters as they respond to each other builds character relationships. For example, the scene in *Psycho* (1960) in which Marion is questioned by the police officer establishes a sense of threat from the officer and a sense of frightened guilt from Marion. This relationship is created by editing together shot and reverse-shot sequences.
- **Creating pace and rhythm.** As the excitement builds, the pace and rhythm quicken. However, a film cannot just relentlessly quicken from beginning to end – it must have moods. It needs periods of higher and lower intensity.



Courtesy NBCUniversal

Figure 13.12 In *Psycho*, Marion is questioned by the police officer after sleeping overnight in her car by the highway. The editing together of shot and reverse-shot builds the relationship between the characters and increases audience identification with Marion. It also builds tension.

- **Building emotional involvement.** Building tension is one way that audience involvement is increased. However, emotional involvement with characters can be created with cuts that establish point of view.
- **Building themes and concepts.** Editing allows a director to establish the theme of the film and also to guide the audience response to it.

How editing controls text progress

According to US film studies academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, editing offers the filmmaker four areas of control over the relationships between shots: picture relationships, rhythmic relationships, space relationships and time relationships.

Picture or graphic relationships between shots

An editor can make a connection between two scenes if there are any similarities in the actual content of the pictures. These similarities, say Bordwell and Thompson, could be in the scenery, the lighting, the costumes or what the characters are doing.

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A famous match of picture action occurred at the beginning of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). A prehistoric man-ape hurls a bone into the air, and we watch it spin over and over. The next shot is of a 21st-century space station spinning in space. The spinning bone and the spinning space station connect prehistory with the future.

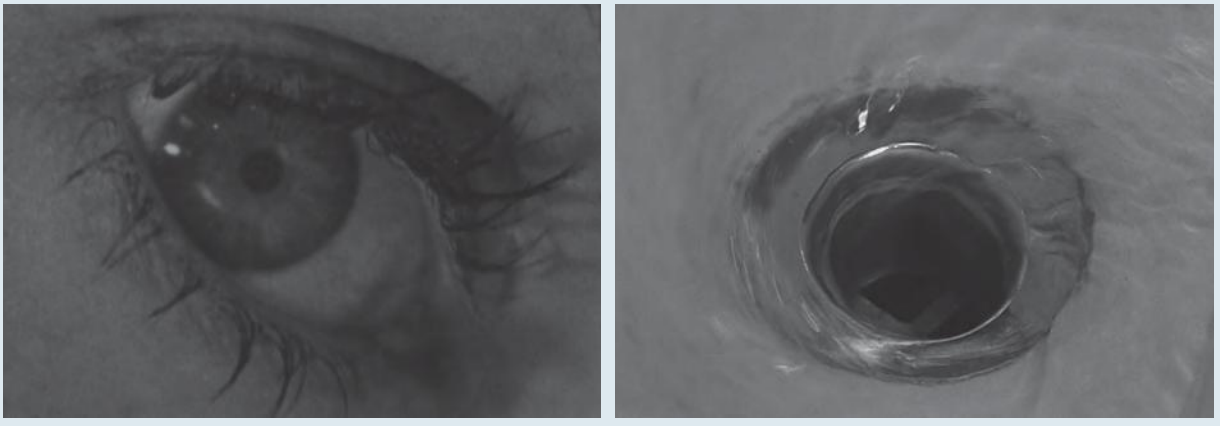
Graphic matches are also used extensively in *Baraka* (1992) to link the imagery as transitions are made between the scenes. In one clear example, an overhead shot of a circular group of men performing the traditional 'monkey dance' is followed by an overhead shot of the circular vents of volcanoes.

Table 13.2 gives other examples of texts in which two scenes are connected by the pictorial content of each shot.

Rhythmic relationships

Each shot takes up a certain amount of time on screen. A shot may range in length from one second to several minutes. Just as variation in the length of notes creates rhythm in music, shot length can be used to build rhythm in visual texts. A sequence of rapid shot changes gives an impression of fast, exciting action. A sequence of longer shots may create a reflective, romantic mood. Using cuts speeds up the transition, while dissolves slow it down. Filmmakers punctuate fast passages with slow ones so that the variation in rhythm is accentuated. Accelerating the tempo creates a greater feeling of excitement than a constantly fast rate of cutting.

In the traditional Hollywood style, the rhythm of the shots also depends on the shot size. Long shots



Courtesy NBCUniversal

Courtesy NBCUniversal

Figure 13.13 Probably cinema's best-known graphic match is between Marion's eye and the plughole at the end of the shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). A graphic match can work like a metaphor in poetry – it can say one thing is another thing.

Table 13.2 Examples of edits made on the basis of the pictorial or graphic content of the image. The relationship of shot A to shot B is purely visual.

TITLE OF TEXT	SHOT A	SHOT B
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)	Close-up shot of Lawrence striking a match	Shot of a flaming desert sun
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)	Titles showing the Paramount Studios mountain	Dissolve into opening shot of actual mountain where the story begins
Baraka (1992)	Medium close-up of monk's head as he enters deep meditation	Long shot of natural stone archway on seashore as waves break through the gap – position of archway corresponds to the monk's head
Once Were Warriors (1994)	Close-up of Beth's face defiant and proud despite suffering	Close-up of face of carved Maori wooden statue
The Usual Suspects (1995)	Medium long shot of the mouth of a cave, which is the scene of a violent confrontation	Rim of a coffee cup belonging to the man recounting the tale of events in the cave
Titanic (1997)	Shot of the rusted bow of *Titanic* underwater	Shot of the bow of the ship just before sailing
Hugo (2011)	Shot of a large clock mechanism with a central cog	Shot of Paris streets at night radiating out from the Arc de Triomphe at the centre

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are left on the screen for longer than close-ups. This is because it is assumed the audience needs longer to read the greater amount of detail in a long shot.

Space relationships

With clever editing, a filmmaker can make it seem that places on opposite sides of the Earth are next door to each other. For example, someone can walk out the front door of a constructed set in a Hollywood studio and into a street in Egypt.

Placing shots side by side can suggest the action is occurring within the same space. The traditional progression from extreme long shot through medium shot to close-up is a device often used to create space relationships. An establishing shot sets the scene. All other shots in the sequence are much closer, allowing the filmmaker to return to the studio. The audience continues to believe the action is taking place within the setting of the establishing shot.

Time relationships

A program can encapsulate whole lifetimes or just a few minutes of someone's life. Time can be manipulated in both the filming and the editing. There are several ways this can be done, including:

- **Compressing time (ellipsis).** Long passages of time can be shortened to just a few shots.
- **Expanding time.** Prolonging the action can prolong the suspense, increase the importance of an event or draw out the emotional response in the audience.
- **Flashbacks.** Memories or past events can be shown by juxtaposing shots of the present with shots of the past, perhaps separated by a transitional device such as a fade.
- **Flash-forwards.** In visual texts, these are rarer than flashbacks because they create a more obvious break in the logical order of a story.
- **Cross-cutting/simultaneous time/parallel editing.** Cutting from one event to another can give the impression they are occurring simultaneously. A rule of simultaneous time is that events in the two or more parallel locations must come together in some way.

Many films rely on cross-cutting as an important feature of the film's narrative. Examples include Stephen Spielberg's first film *Duel* (1971), which cuts between a car and a menacing truck; *Jeepers Creepers* (2001), which cuts between a car and a demonic vintage vehicle; and *Run Lola Run* (1998), which cuts between a young woman extorting money and a young man about to hold up a supermarket.

Although creating suspense is one of the most common uses of cross-cutting, it does have other uses. Cross-cutting can be used to draw parallels or to create contrasts. For instance, showing images of wealth cross-cut with scenes of poverty can make the injustice much more apparent. Cross-cutting to create a contrast was used in a memorable scene from *The Godfather* (1972). At a baptism, Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) accepts God and renounces Satan. Cross-cut with this scene is one of Corleone's henchmen violently executing his enemies one by one.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 13.14 Bullet time from *The Matrix* (1999). Bullet time is an extreme case of expansion of time – a technique used to heighten suspense.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 13.15 The German film *Run Lola Run* uses cross-cutting/simultaneous time to explore how different everything might be if just one thing, or one moment, were changed. In the movie, Lola is running to prevent her boyfriend, Manni, from robbing a supermarket at exactly midday.

Motif in editing

A **motif** in editing is a recurring idea, image or sound. It is repeated in the narrative and becomes significant or symbolic in some way. The word is of French origin, and should not be confused with 'motive'. The audience may not realise the significance of a motif until the end of the film. The symbolic importance may be hidden until the end. Motifs can be used to:

- signify a character
- reinforce an idea
- develop a theme
- build a sense of unity across the film.

Table 13.3 Examples of editing motifs in film

FILM	MOTIFS
Citizen Kane (1941)	The word 'rosebud'
The Sixth Sense (1999)	The colour red
Minority Report (2002)	Eyes

13.4 ACTIVITIES

1 View the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) – perhaps the most famous edited sequence in cinema history. Carefully use freeze frame to record each shot. Note down its shot size, shot duration and the content of the shot. **Explain** the relationship of each shot to the next. **Identify** changes in the pace of the editing as the scene develops. **Explain** the rhythmic pattern of the sequence. **Clarify** the meanings of the opening and closing shots.

2 View some action films and find a powerfully edited action sequence. Create stills of representative images in the sequence. **Explain** how they work in relationship with one another, **demonstrating** your **understanding** of **codes and conventions**. Present your investigation to the class.

Part C: Writing case studies

CASE STUDIES

This **case study** investigation task is an opportunity to explore how audiences participate with a specific media 'case', and to investigate how institutions and technological developments have engaged and sustained audience participation.

A case study is a research method investigating a particular product, question or real-life situation. The term 'case study' refers to both the investigation process and the product of that inquiry. The content and structure of a case study can change depending on the subject area or discipline, but generally it will involve research and analysis of issues involved in the case.

In Film, Television & New Media, this investigation will focus on a moving-image media case, and how technological and institutional factors influence the ways audiences participate and engage with media.

Features of case studies

When writing a case study, it is important to establish a specific 'case' for investigation, have a clear structure, and show evidence of analysis and research.

Case choice

A case study should have a case with defined focus and boundaries, and clear research questions. The case should be contemporary and, at the very least, a phenomenon specific to time and space. In practical terms, the topic of your case choice must be specific enough so that the response can be written within the word limit while still allowing appropriate scope for analysis and appraisal.

If the case choice is too broad and lacks boundaries, it could possibly result in a superficial response if completed within the word limit. That is, the response may only include identification of interactive features and contexts of use, and therefore not enough analysis of interactive features and appraisal of factors affecting audience participation.

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Reading the task instructions carefully and seeking clarification if needed is an essential step in all assessment. Check the instrument-specific marking guide to ensure your idea will satisfy requirements. It is also wise to confirm your idea with your teacher. When deciding on a 'case' for investigation, conduct preliminary research to ensure there is enough information available for you to make supported judgements.

Structure and content of case studies

Like most academic writing, a case study has an introduction and conclusion, with body paragraphs in between. Consult the task sheet and instrument-specific marking guide, and be careful not to go off on tangents. When structuring the body of your case study, you may wish to use a basic structure of:

- Introduction
- Body
  - Contexts of production
  - Interactive features
  - Social/audience impact
- Conclusion.

It is also important to check when you are expected to explain, analyse and appraise within your response.

Case study introduction

Like most academic writing, the introduction will need to establish a clear topic or thesis for your case study. Ensure the case choice is well-defined, and that the opening is written so that readers want to learn more. Briefly set the context for the case by considering: who, what, when and where.

Once you have finished writing, it is important that you double check there is coherence between the introduction and the rest of the investigation, especially if you discovered new points about the topic during the writing process.

Production contexts

Explaining the production context for your case study may include (but is not limited to) explanation of the following aspects.

Location and time period of production

When and where a production is made can influence many factors such as available technologies, ratings, settings and costumes, representations and cultural contexts. Locations for filming or post-production services can also depend on budgetary factors, or the specific needs of production. *Aquaman* (2018) received millions of dollars in tax benefits from the Australian Federal Government, and it was primarily filmed at Village Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast and other parts of south-east Queensland. This location choice also meant access to the largest purpose-built tank in Australia, which was perfectly suited to film the water-based scenes in the production.

Creators of the product

A small emerging company sometimes has the benefit of more creative control over a project compared with a digital game designer or film director working for a larger corporation. A company may also have specific values or mission statements to uphold, or creators may be influenced by their own values. The digital game industry has often been criticised for being male-dominated. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2016 approximately 15 per cent of digital game developers were women. As the gaming industry becomes more diverse in its makeup, it is anticipated that the representations in digital games will also become more diverse.

Financing and budgeting

The source of funding for a project could be commercial, private, **crowdfunded**, government/public funds, or a combination of these. Consider possible requirements/limitations based on the source of funding. **Screen Australia** is a Federal Government agency that supports Australian screen development, production and promotion.

Government regulations or other institutional restrictions

Sometimes a company will have to operate under specific restrictions. For example, when animation company Animal Logic were developing *The LEGO Movie* (2014), *The LEGO Batman Movie* (2017) and *The LEGO Ninjago Movie* (2017), the company had to work within restrictions set by LEGO as to what they were allowed to do with the minifigurines.

Intended target audience

Studio/company websites, behind-the-scenes footage and press releases can be sources of information about intended audiences. How the production is marketed and advertised can also reveal its target audience.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

13.5.1 Aquaman blockbuster to be filmed on Gold Coast in 2017, 13.5.2 Film, Television and Digital Games, Australia, 2015–16, 13.5.3 Screen Australia, 13.5.4 Animal Logic visual effects

Figure 13.16 Construction worker Emmet Brickowski is the unlikely hero in *The LEGO Movie* (2014). Animal Logic had to follow the LEGO rule book when creating the films. The digitally animated films only use the limited LEGO colour palette, and all the brick constructions were designed so they are 'buildable' in real life.

Market research and product testing

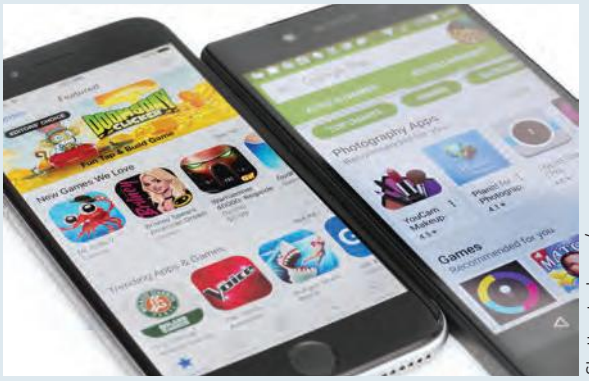
To effectively create a product for an audience, a company may conduct market research into consumer behaviour and engagement across different media platforms. This might include releasing beta versions of digital games or interactive applications, or conducting test screenings of productions. In the film *Shrek* (2001), Princess Fiona was originally designed and animated to look more human-like. This resulted in the Uncanny Valley phenomenon (see page 77). During an early test-screening of the film, it is reported that children began to cry at the sight of Princess Fiona. This was not encouraging for DreamWorks, so they altered the 'look' of Princess Fiona to appear less realistic and more cartoonish.

Product distribution and audience access

The way products are distributed and the available platform/s for a product can affect audience access and participation. The cost of certain technologies can also provide a barrier to participation.

Available technologies

The technology at the time of production can have a significant impact on production methods, the visual style and the interactive features of production. Sometimes a product will break new ground in technological developments, such as the computer-generated animation in *Toy Story* (1995) and the motion-capture technologies in *Avatar* (2009). Virtual reality will be the next 'big thing' in media storytelling, says Nathan Mayfield, co-founder of Hoodlum, a multi-platform production company.



Shutterstock.com/ymgerman

Figure 13.17 The Google Play Store on an Android smartphone and Apple's App Store on an iPhone. The issue of product distribution is particularly noticeable with the development of smartphone technologies where some apps are available on iPhones/iPads but not on Android devices and vice-versa.

Interactive features

With the rise of digital social networking and new media technologies, it is increasingly common for media producers to create multi-platform content to expand their story worlds or provide new levels of participation and interactivity for audiences. During the research process, determine what opportunities exist for audience interaction for the chosen case. Analyse how these interactive features can enhance participation and sustain audience engagement. Possible interactive features for audience interactivity include the following.

13.5.5 The Uncanny Valley effect

Social media as storytelling

While the popularity of various social media websites/apps can come and go (such as MySpace from the early 2000s), a product having a social media presence is an easy way for it to connect with audiences and provide interactive opportunities. Media producers can expand the story world of a multi-platform product and offer different narrative threads, enabling audiences to 'follow' or message a fictional character's blog, twitter or Facebook page, for example.

Social media and fandom

Social media provides a way for communities to be built around media content, and audiences are able to share favourite clips, comment on posts to show support, and generally engage in fan culture practices (see page 319). During live broadcasts, some reality shows will display Tweets or social media posts from audience members to further engage viewers.

It is important to determine if the various sites/pages are 'official' and created by the producers of the content, or whether they are produced by audiences. Conversations about media products will happen anyway, says Nathan Mayfield, and a multi-platform approach allows creators to have some control or 'ownership' of the conversation.

Behind-the-scenes, extras and short clips

No longer only the domain of the DVD, behind-the-scenes clips for television shows, webisodes, films and digital games are available online via a product or company's website, posts on social media or links and videos shared between consumers.

When exploring these media elements, consider how these interactive features enrich the audience experience, and the levels of interactivity available. This approach is also used for reality television where audiences can re-watch episodes or specific parts of episodes (such as the judging moments or favourite performances), learn more about contestants or view how-to videos for lifestyle shows.

Digital games

This type of media has often been the platform to push existing boundaries of audience interactivity. New technologies such as VR allow for immersive gameplay, which is a new level of physical interactivity. In terms of social interactivity, evolving internet speeds have led to online gaming and MMORPGs where gamers can interact with each other within the games. Social media and video streaming services mean gamers can easily connect with other players and share videos showcasing their skills or asking for advice.



Alamy Stock Photo/Hero Images Inc

Figure 13.18 Teenagers play a virtual reality video game together at home. Although the technology changes, this has been a familiar scene in households for decades.

Interactive movies and episodic narrative games

How a person participates in an interactive movie can be affected by whether the interactive film is viewed as a group cinematic experience or individually. It could get annoying very quickly in a cinema setting if your choice is always in the minority, and you don't get to see the film play out as you would like. Having full control of the story would be a benefit of 'playing' the interactive film as a solo experience, such as episodic narrative games.

Episodic narrative games can also provide interactive opportunities that expand on existing media products and franchises. Fans of the television show *Game of Thrones* (2011–) get to further interact with the story world through an episodic graphic adventure game that features the same actors to voice the characters. *Game of Thrones: A Telltale Games Series* (2014) allows players to switch between five different characters of House Forrester, and the choices made in the game influence the future episodes.

Audience voting

Usually a popular option for reality television or competitions, audience voting allows for comparison with judges' decisions and, for some

shows, can determine which contestants advance to the next round. More recently, audiences are asked to download a specific app to vote, or to download an artist's latest song to count as a vote in singing competitions, for example. SBS used audience voting to sustain engagement during the finals of the 2017 Eurovision contest. The experience was enhanced for audiences as they could 'unofficially' vote for or against contestants, with results shown on screen during the TV broadcasts.

Social/audience impact

In the case study investigation, once you have explained the contexts of production and analysed the interactive features of your chosen case, you will need to appraise the impact of audiences participating in and engaged with the moving-image product/experience.

This appraisal can include:

- inquiring into factors that contributed to or hindered audience participation
- the degree to which audiences participated in a case
- drawing conclusions about the overall experience for audiences
- the effect participation had on both the product and the audience
- making judgements about outcomes of participation
- assessing the value, significance or success of the selected case.

It is important to support such points with evidence of research such as statistics or other reports (for example, news stories) about audience participation.

Barriers to participation could include technological, financial, institutional or social barriers. An example of an institutional barrier to audience participation is the official *Game of Thrones* website, which allows audiences to explore the story world and creation of this popular television show. This website provides barriers to some fans as it contains videos that are not permitted to be viewed by Australian audiences. Glitches in gameplay or apps/websites/streaming services crashing are common concerns that affect audience enjoyment. On the surface, creators may design an experience that looks really interactive on the surface but, in reality, the opportunities for audiences could be limited. The design of



carsales.com.au/Feann Torr

Figure 13.19 VicRoads, the Victorian Road Authority, displayed warnings of 'Don't Drive and Pokemon' on its electronic signs over major highways. Although *Pokémon Go* (2016) was celebrated for getting gamers out of the house and exercising in the fresh air, there were also issues around player safety.

interactive elements can be the difference between a successful product and a failure.

For a multi-platform case in particular, the creators may have designed a range of possibilities for audience participation, or avenues to expand the story world, but audiences may not actually use/view all the potential options. Audiences may focus their attention on a particular part of the experience, or their engagement may be more passive than the creators had planned.

Audiences can interact with media in ways that were unanticipated by the creators, which



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Figure 13.20 A 2015 advertisement for *Rise of the Tomb Raider* featuring a fully clothed Lara Croft. Since the first *Tomb Raider* game in 1996, there has been much criticism of the way Lara Croft has been represented in the video game and promotional materials. Recent instalments of the game have featured a more realistically proportioned and clothed Lara Croft.

might even result in companies making changes to the products. With the 2016 craze of *Pokémon Go*, there were reports of players trespassing on private property or being involved in road accidents. Apparently, some players were so distracted that they ended up in lakes or walking over cliff edges. To combat the issue of road safety, Niantic updated the game so that it was 'unplayable' at higher speeds. This decision wasn't popular with fans who liked to play the game when on public transport.

In response to audience feedback or cultural changes, media institutions can modify or revamp representations in products. Representations of characters can be altered as media franchises expand to reflect changing attitudes or revive series. For example, in *Doctor Who* (1963–) the Thirteenth Doctor is played by actress Jodie Whittaker, which is a change from the usual male casting. When first announced, the story made news headlines around the world – finally, after 50 years, there would be a female Doctor Who.

Overwatch (2016) is a team-based multiplayer shooter game that features a diverse group of characters. This indicates an institutional change compared with the typical main character in video games being '30-something white males'. According to the game developer Jeff Kaplan, *Overwatch* was purposely designed in this way so that audiences feel included and well represented. One of the characters, D.Va, has even become a symbol for a group of Korean feminist gamers who are fighting for gender equality. Participating with media can lead to audiences creating communities and building relationships to engage with each other as well as the story world.

13.5.6 *Overwatch* Overwatch director on the game's diversity: 'normal things are normal'

Social activism, or increased awareness of social issues, can be another outcome of audience participation with media. Through AR projects such as *The Whole Story*, or *The Artvertiser*, audiences are able to edit their environments without the obvious disadvantages of normal graffiti, says Robert Seddon, philosophy Honorary Fellow at Durham University. Virtual reality has been called 'the empathy machine', by tech entrepreneur Chris Milk, for its ability to put a person in someone else's shoes. *Clouds Over Sidra* (2015) is a VR experience developed by the United Nations that follows the story of a young girl living in a refugee camp in Jordan. Early findings by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action



Cartoonstock.com/Larry Lambert

Figure 13.21 A man rages as he plays a driving game on his phone. The effects of media on audiences have been a concern for as long as media products have existed. Often these concerns are with the effects of violence or adult themes on audiences.

Campaign suggest that VR is twice as effective at raising funds than traditional methods.

Another factor that can enable audience participation is access to media with the increased popularity of personal devices and internet connectivity. Concerns have been raised about young or vulnerable audiences accessing mature content with our increased access to video-on-demand (VOD) services such as Netflix or SBS On Demand, and game download services such as Steam and various app stores. It is not unusual for film or television show releases on Netflix to make news headlines as experts debate their potential effects on young viewers.

Given the immersive nature of VR and the potential impact on audiences both emotionally and physically, concerns have been raised about when it is ethical and unethical for VR producers to place somebody in certain situations. Watching a news story on a screen with footage of war zones, for example, is not nearly as confronting to audiences as being placed directly in that war zone situation through wearing a VR headset. Marc Fennell, host of *Download This Show* on ABC Radio National, says that virtual reality developers are starting to come up with their own sets of rules in the absence of clear

regulations. The main agreement is that anything that is physically intrusive, such as messing with someone's sense of gravity (potentially making them nauseated) or simulating something happening to a person's body, is unethical and should not be an option.

> 'Research shows that when you watch VR your brain understands and processes that as memory, as a lived experience. There is much more research to be done to establish the short, medium and long-term impacts of watching this material.'
>
> **Courtney Gibson**, Screen NSW CEO (2016)

Case study conclusion

The conclusion of your case study may include a single summative judgement about the overall success, popularity or importance of the 'case'. Depending on the nature of the case, you might suggest areas for improvement if issues were identified earlier in the piece. A summary of the main arguments is standard practice, but this is more effective if the ideas are there to emphasise a final point rather than just reminding the reader of what came before.

Primary and secondary sources

Sources are the products, reference materials or evidence that you use to find out more information about a particular topic. It is expected that your case study follows referencing conventions such as the use of in-text citations and a bibliography.

Both primary and secondary sources are necessary in writing a well-supported case study investigation.

Primary sources

Primary sources are considered the original product/experience being investigated. They can include:

- original productions (such as film, television and online videos)
- digital games
- augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) experiences
- in multi-platform storytelling, the different media elements involved
- pre-production planning (such as storyboards and director's notes)
- evidence of audiences participating in the experience (such as social media content).

Secondary sources

Secondary sources are written/created about, or in response to, the primary sources. They can include:

- textbooks and books
- research articles and academic journals
- websites and blogs
- news stories (such as articles, radio and video)
- film/television/game reviews
- documentaries
- podcasts or video essays
- social media.

Finding information

Ensure you carefully consider the source of your information, its reliability and how you will use the evidence to support your judgements. Traditional sources of information such as academic journals and books are useful starting points, but occasionally it can be difficult finding information when the chosen case is a recent or current phenomenon at the time of writing.

There are a number of ways you can approach searching online for audience participation data or production information. Secondary sources can often include statistics, or comments on the outcome of audiences participating with the 'case'. Institutions such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Screen Australia and Screen Queensland release publications about topics such as audience statistics or contexts of production. News articles and film reviews can also reveal information about audiences interacting with media, or critics' reactions.

Depending on your case choice, you can check primary sources for participation data. For instance, the number of views on YouTube, or number of downloads on app stores for a product. Steam, a digital distribution platform and website for video games, even shows back-to-back bar charts displaying the number of positive and negative reviews from over a particular time period.

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13.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Choose a selection of the top YouTubers that are labelled 'Creator on the Rise' by YouTube, or another measure of popularity such as the Top 20 most subscribed last year.
Analyse the types of content they produce. Categorise the YouTubers in groups such as product review videos, vlogs, gaming videos, educational videos or prank videos. Count the number of YouTubers in each group.
Construct a pie chart that shows the popularity of the different video types by comparing the number of YouTubers in each group.

2 **Construct** a timeline showing significant events in a recent media phenomenon such as *Pokémon Go* (2016). Include **additional information** about events and key dates such as product development, release dates and updates, gamer participation events, awards, and 'milestones' and significant changes in terms of number of users.

3 Select a popular mobile/tablet digital game.
Explain how audiences are participating with the product experience in addition to the game. Consider social media, websites, real-life events and so on.
Symbolise the various avenues/options for participation in a diagram.
Appraise whether the game experience is enriched by audience participation across platforms as well as the main game. **Make a judgement** about the worth of the participation experience to both audiences and the game makers.

4 Select an example of VR storytelling. Respond in writing to the areas of investigation in the following table. Present your findings to the class.

EXPLAIN	ANALYSE	APPRAISE
Explain how **technical and symbolic codes and conventions** are used to tell the story through this platform. **Identify** and **explain** any opportunities for user interaction.	**Analyse** how the user experience of the story **compares** to traditional media options such as film and television. **Evaluate** the **strengths and limitations** of this method of storytelling.	**Appraise** the overall value of the storytelling experience for an audience. **Draw conclusions** about whether the story was enhanced for audiences through virtual reality technologies.

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Case study example

Doctor Who: A case study of multi-platform storytelling

by Dr Cameron Cliff

Doctor Who is one of the longest-running story worlds in modern history. Lasting over 50 years and based around a television series broadcast in over 50 countries, it is the largest export and third highest merchandise seller of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Chapman, 2014, p. 56). This success is linked to a complex strategy of creating many interlinked stories across multiple platforms. This strategy, in turn, is influenced by the BBC's responsibilities as a public institution.

The impact of production context and available technology

Doctor Who may have the popularity and size of a Hollywood story world like *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. However, it is also influenced by the BBC's position as a public institution. The BBC is guided by a set of guidelines known as the BBC Charter. When creating narratives, the BBC must benefit the public with stories that are entertaining, educating and culturally relevant (Department of Culture, 2006). 'Public benefit' refers to showing 'the most creative, high quality and distinctive output' and reflecting 'the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world' (BBC, 2018). From 2005, the charter also charged the BBC with 'experimenting with new technology' (Department of Culture, 2006).

The chronology of *Doctor Who* (see weblink) shows three distinct periods in *Doctor Who's* development that reflect the evolution of the BBC as an institution. These are: Classic Who (1962–1989), Hiatus Who (1989–2005) and Contemporary Who (2005–present). Each is influenced by available technology and the BBC's charter at that time.



13.6.1 Doctor Who chronology

From 1962 to 1989 (Classic Who), *Doctor Who* was made for a medium that was relatively new – television. It was created to fill a programming gap on Saturday afternoons between sports programming and talk shows (Chapman, 2014 p.46). The BBC also developed books, comics and movies that followed popular characters, such as the Daleks (BBC, 1966). However, these often contradicted the central narrative of the television series or were retellings of the television series. They did not represent true immersive extensions of the *Doctor Who* world (Perryman, 2008).

During the second period of *Doctor Who*'s history (1989–2005), the central television series was taken off air as its popularity waned with British audiences. However, new *Doctor Who* content was still released every month (Yarbrough, 2015). The BBC was able to produce books, comics, a movie and an animated show as it experimented with the narrative future of the show and ongoing merchandising (Jones, 2013).

The success of different extensions and the emerging internet marketplace led to a return of the television series in 2005. This reboot was underscored by a significant change in the BBC's institutional strategy.

Doctor Who returned to television screens with a strategy to extend the world across multiple platforms (Yarbrough, 2015). Since its reboot, *Doctor Who* has included websites, blogs, animated videos, books, comics and interactive television programming. Each platform introduces the new world of *Doctor Who* and expands the central narrative by adding characters, back-stories or methods of interaction.

> 'How and where we can watch comedy, drama and entertainment has undergone a revolution. The programmes themselves have not. What's needed now is a creative revolution every bit as ambitious as the technical one we've seen.'
>
> **Jana Bennett**, Director of BBC Television (2004) in Perryman, 2008.

Multiple tiers of engagement

The reboot of *Doctor Who* introduced new layers of interaction for contemporary audiences. When each layer of audience interaction in *Doctor Who* is examined and considered, it reveals a complex structure of interactive features aimed at sustaining audience engagement across different levels of involvement.

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For those just casually interested in *Doctor Who*, there is a layer of passive interactive points. These include: the main television series, as well as two spin-offs for different age groups (*Torchwood* (2006–2011) and *The Sarah Jane Chronicles* (2007–2011)). It also includes an extra layer of immersion through books, comics and audio dramas to sustain audience interest. Within this passive layer, the BBC has also fulfilled their charter obligations by experimenting with new methods of engaging fans. Since 2005, they've been using connected television technology to provide documentary content and behind-the-scenes commentary on episodes. For example, before the launch of the episode 'Rose' in 2005, hundreds of thousands of people used this technology to view a web documentary called *The Doctor Who Years* (Core, 2015).

For those interested in a more active participation with the world of *Doctor Who*, the BBC also experimented with additional interactive content to sustain audience interest. Websites authored by fictional characters within *Doctor Who* have continued since the series' relaunch, providing immersive clues based on the show. Similarly, the BBC has even created 'real-world' narratives for the audience to interact with. *The Doctor Who Experience* was a unique story to which audiences could buy tickets when they visited what was a museum for *Doctor Who* props and sets. It gave hardcore fans an experience that was part-theme park ride and part-theatre show so they could fully immerse themselves in the story. It was so popular that since its closure in late 2017, there have even been reports of families cancelling trips to Wales (Knapman, 2017).

This experimentation hasn't always been successful. *Doctor Who* has continually failed to launch a successful spin-off game franchise. While some games such as *The Doctor Who Adventures* (2010) have been well received, every attempt at a high-budget game has failed. Most notably, *Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock* (2012) was critiqued as such a poor game that planned sequels for the game were scrapped almost immediately after its release (Reynolds & Nichols, 2013).

Social impact and fandom

Multiple factors have led to the BBC, as a public institution, creating a sustained social and cultural impact with *Doctor Who*. These include the BBC's institutional obligations, the BBC's embrace of fans and the place of *Doctor Who* fans within the BBC.

Due to its institutional obligations, the BBC has increased the worth of *Doctor Who* beyond a traditional entertainment franchise, developing educational content such as coding apps and live shows in schools. Thousands of British schoolchildren learn to code with *Doctor Who* characters in *Doctor Who* learn-to-read apps. To date, the 2014 app *The Doctor and the Dalek* (2014) has been downloaded by over 100 000 android users alone (Google, n.d.) and now comes with classroom exercises and a full curriculum for teachers.

An embrace of fans and fan culture also salvaged the television show during the Hiatus period. The United States had only just come into contact with *Doctor Who* during the 1990s but many crucial episodes of the show had been lost. Hardcore fans, who had been recording and remixing episodes on VCR, scavenged television and radio episodes in order to provide missing content to the BBC (Jones, 2013). This led to a booming international audience that has continued to grow until the present day. Gallifrey One is one of the largest fan conventions in the world, with over 3200 paying members attending the Los Angeles convention in 2017 alone (FanCons, 2017).

Prior to the relaunch of *Doctor Who* in 2005, the BBC focused on demonstrating the worth of *Doctor Who* to existing fans. They provided documentaries, websites and historical content online and on television. This leveraged the nostalgia of older fans and brought forth a wave of new recruits through word of mouth (Chapman, 2014). As a result, more than 10 million viewers tuned in within Britain alone to watch the first episode of the new series (Sullivan, 2009).

Such is the status of *Doctor Who* fan culture in Britain that its influence has become a cycle of development. Early fans of *Doctor Who* are now the ones creating the modern multi-platform version of the show. During the Hiatus period the BBC supplemented low book budgets by publishing the best of fan books. One fan author, a young Russell T. Davies, would go on to become a successful creative embedded within the BBC. This was the same Davies who, along with a group of *Doctor Who* fans promoted to high places within the BBC, would be responsible for returning *Doctor Who* to its heights of success in the contemporary era (Davies & Cook, 2010).

Conclusion

Doctor Who is a significant and successful multi-platform franchise that developed due to an embrace of fan culture and the BBC's position as a public institution. Cross-platform interaction sustained *Doctor Who*

during the Hiatus years and created a platform for success as the modern version launched in 2005. Through their multi-platform strategy, the BBC brings different levels of engagement to their audience today. Modern *Doctor Who* goes beyond a successful television series, helping the BBC to fulfil their obligations as a public institution. Not only has this created a popular franchise, but adherence to the BBC's charter has also resulted in significant social impact including educational, social, cultural and entertainment outcomes.

1500 words

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UNIT 4 IDENTITY

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Unit 4 is about identity. It is about exploring your individual style and how you can develop and enhance your ability to express yourself. It is about all the other moving-image media artists who have developed their own stylistic identities. It is also about how moving-image media can be used as constructive tools to help build and express identities.

You will learn about many of the moving-image media styles and movements, and how they have developed out of particular historical, social and cultural contexts. You will be encouraged to experiment with the codes and conventions to create your own style.

In Unit 4, you will be encouraged to explore and experiment with technological practices. By examining how moving-image media artists have used technologies to enhance their works, you will be able to draw inspiration for your own. You will appraise the work of other artists and directors, reflecting on their approach to using technologies.

You will be able to analyse the representations created by other artists from a range of different contexts. Examining their work will allow you to think about how you might experiment with and challenge existing representations in artistic ways.

By the end of Unit 4, you will have made a stylistic production that in some way experiments with and challenges traditional approaches.

AREAS OF STUDY

Technologies: How do media artists experiment with technological practices?

Representations: How do media artists portray people, places, events, ideas and emotions?

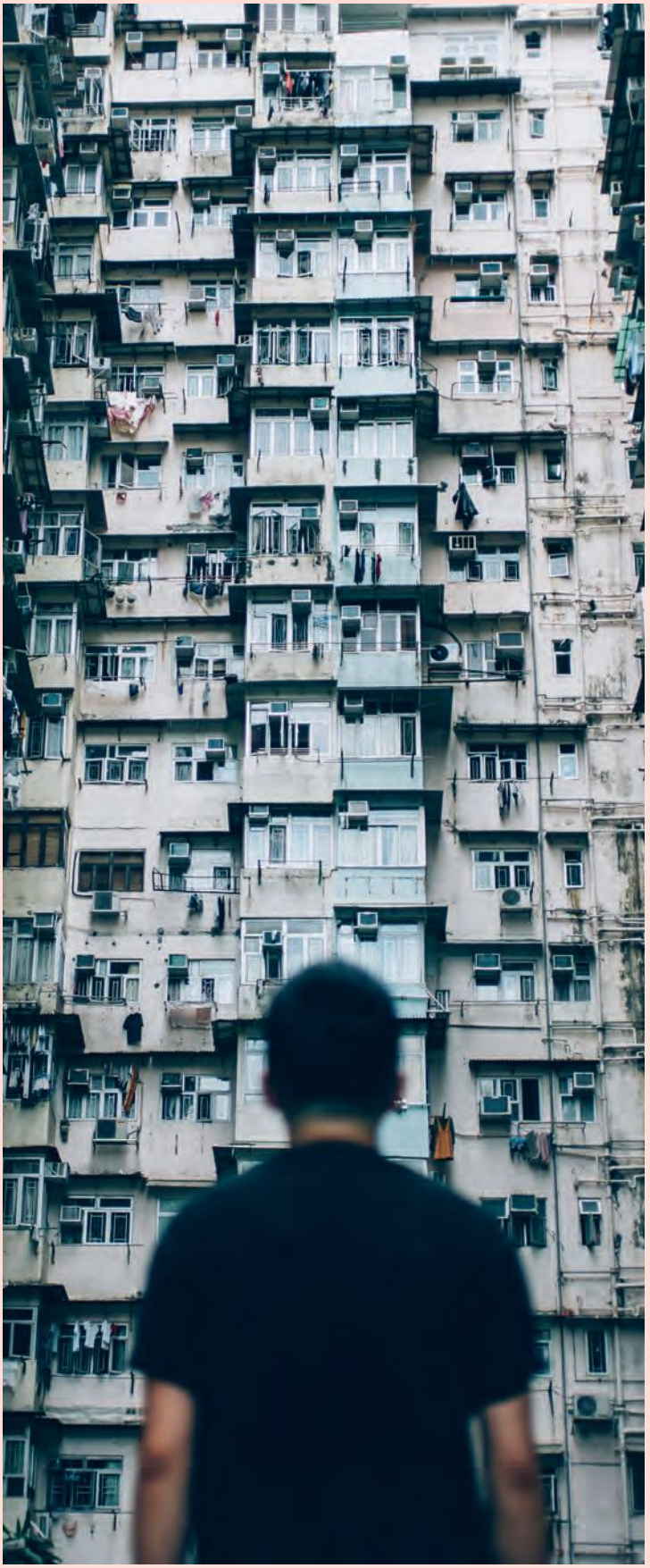
Languages: How do media artists use signs, symbols, codes and conventions in experimental ways to create meaning?

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14

Representations and identity



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INTRODUCTION TO IDENTITY

Experimentation has been central to the development of moving-image media – to its technologies, its languages and its **representations**. Experimentation leads to **innovation**, and this pushes moving-image media forward.

Innovation and experimentation are what allowed forms such as animation to develop from early keyframe drawings such as *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) to the use of stop motion and computer-generated imagery to create animations such as *Zero* (2010).

Currently, audiences are highly literate in moving image, trained through years of viewing in how to read narrative images. Technological developments are progressing faster than ever before. Languages in formalised **mainstream** institutions (such as Hollywood) are slower to adapt, and representations can often be tangled in stereotype. As technologies of production and use change, the possibilities for innovation and experimentation increase.

Identity and artistic expression

Innovation in moving-image media does not occur for its own sake, but rather as a means to better tell stories – to better express ideas about what it is to be human, what it is to belong to a particular culture or society or group, or what it is to be oneself. Central to experimenting with representations is the concept of 'identity' – the artist's identity, a group's identity and a culture's identity. Innovative moving-image media engages us through how it resonates with our own identities.

Film can unite an audience as a collective, speak emotively to individuals or position viewers to think or feel a particular way. Artists create stylistic identities through the moving-image media they create, and these media construct representations of ideas, people, places and emotions.

What is identity?

Identity has been the subject of significant psychological research and theory, which has given us multiple definitions. The term 'identity' encompasses three key forms:

- **Individual.** A sense of place in the world (past, present and future), and what differentiates self from others.
- **Social.** A sense of belonging to a group.
- **Cultural.** A sense of belonging to a distinct cultural or ethnic group.

Identity and narrative

Identity has long been linked with narrative. Storytelling is central to identity – to nations, to cultures and to self.

The work by political theorist and philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906–75) provides some thought-provoking approaches to considerations of identity – particularly the role narrative and society play in the shaping of it. Arendt's own identity was influenced by her 'statelessness' between 1937 and 1951. Born Jewish in Germany, she fled to the US during the Second World War.

For Arendt, an individual does not only have a personal sense of self, but also a **narrative identity** that centres on the stories key to a sense of meaning and purpose in that individual's life. Narrative identity must be articulated and shown in public in order for an individual to tell their own stories and, most significantly, to act upon their past experiences and influences.

This idea of identity and narrative can be built on by engaging with the theories of academics Anna Sfard and Anna Prusak – that identity centres on the sharing of narratives about self with and between others. Individuals, they propose, define multiple identities through these narratives. Every individual has an identity expressed in narratives they tell about themselves (*I*), in narratives told by others to them, about them (*you*), and in narratives shared between others about them (*they*).

Understanding these key theories reinforces for the filmmaker the importance of storytelling, and of these stories taking innovative yet resonant approaches to the exploration of identity.

14.1 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** what identity is, **demonstrating** your understanding of the definitions provided above by psychologists and philosophers.
2 **Construct** an experimental film narrative that explores a single person's identity from the perspective of first-person, second-person and third-person identity, as per Sfard and Prusak's theory. Perhaps this might be your

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identity or a family member's identity. **Create systematically** by asking each individual to tell a story they feel best illustrates who they are. You might write down a description of each, and then use these descriptions as your stimulus to **design** the **pre-production** of an experimental film work.

Nothing exists in a vacuum – particularly moving-image media. What we see on our screens is undeniably a reflection, or mirror, of our past and present. Our screens often draw on the past and present to pose a vision of our future.

Moving-image media artists use expressive film to make statements on personal, social, cultural or human identity. As nothing can be created in a void, there are multiple factors that can influence a moving-image media product.

The main areas in which moving-image media artists find influences are internal, contextual and stylistic.

Internal influences

'Self-plagiarism is style.'

Alfred Hitchcock, director

All moving-image media artists are influenced by internal factors, because their work is centred on identity. Whether the identity expressed in final products is personal, cultural or national, the artist will always be influenced by self.

Internal influences include:

- personal experiences, memories, observations
- family and friends
- dreams and nightmares
- fears, phobias, anxieties
- beliefs – ideological, spiritual, political, social, likes and dislikes
- questions.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 14.1 As a director, writer and performer, Charlie Chaplin drew on his own impoverished childhood. In this scene in *The Kid* (1921), Chaplin's character 'the Tramp' cooks for an abandoned child (Jackie Coogan) in his poverty-stricken home. Chaplin's work is an example of a director being influenced by internal factors, such as personal experiences, memories and observations.

Example of internal influences

Director Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), a masterpiece of German Expressionism, is an excellent example of the influence of context. These influences had an impact on both the visual style of the film and on the themes explored.

Personal experiences and memories were a strong influence on *Metropolis*. Lang had visited New York in 1924 and been struck by the skyscrapers. He stated that *Metropolis* was born from his first sight of these buildings, and from his days spent walking the New York streets and observing the city and its people.

Drawing on these personal experiences, and further influenced by his socialist leanings toward community control of production and wealth, Lang created a cityscape in *Metropolis* that is bustling, monumental, delightful, rapidly expanding like New York and decadent. Yet, like New York at the time, the cityscape in *Metropolis* is also heaving with social problems (such as corruption and poverty) and built, quite literally, on inequality. The film is a demonstration of the mechanics of capitalism and its private ownership of means production.

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Contextual influences

Context entails what is happening socially, economically, technologically, culturally or politically prior to a moving-image media product's creation. This may include customs, taboos, laws, political events, economic conditions, available technologies or new developments, social movements, values and beliefs, cultural groups and changes.

Context can involve what happens during the product's creation (such as production constraints and conditions) and unexpected events. It can also extend to how the product was reacted to, both immediately and in the long term. In terms of the key concepts, context relates to institutions (funding and legal), audiences (expectations and values), technologies (availability and innovations), languages (codes and conventions) and representations (prevailing ideas, beliefs, emotions and so on).

Example of contextual influences

Metropolis is set in a future where the technologically advanced, luxurious existence of the upper classes is supported by the labours of a large, oppressed working class living hidden in the underground bowels of the city. This plot can be interpreted as both a comment on the political situation of post-First World War Germany, and a warning for the future.

Politically, Germany was making its first attempt at a democracy through the Weimar Republic. Culturally, artistic freedom flourished, but at the same time the 1920s saw a hyperinflation crisis, continual street riots, tension between various political parties (communism versus the rise of fascism), and growing anxiety and dissatisfaction with the German government. Socially, Germany was continuing the rapid process of modernisation and industrialisation that had commenced with its unification in 1871.

In this context, German audiences sought films that engaged with technology but removed them from the present, through historical narratives or otherworldly science fiction. **Realism** was not a successful genre in this social context. Fritz Lang therefore took the relevant contemporary issues of poverty, power struggle and anxiety for the future and placed these in a metaphorical future. In this setting, heavily stylised *mise en scène* and technological innovations distanced the audience but allowed exploration of contemporary political and social questions.



Alamy Stock Photo/Interfoto



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Figure 14.2 A street scene in Weimar Republic Germany and a shot from the opening scene of Fritz Lang's Weimar-era science-fiction film *Metropolis*. There are distinct similarities in these cityscapes: the bustling crowds, mechanised transport, and architecture. The political, economic, social and cultural context of Weimar Republic Germany was a strong influence on the style and narrative of *Metropolis*. Another influence was European imaginings of a futuristic New York City.

In *Metropolis*, Lang created a symbolic protagonist, Freder, whose character arc seemed to speak for the experiences of the German audience – a witness of horrors (for Germany, of the First World War) and then an observer of political instability.



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 14.3 Freder in *Metropolis* is the privileged son of a wealthy industrialist. He is the protagonist. Freder can be seen as a representative of German experience. Like the German public, Freder witnesses horrors followed by political instability. The character of Freder is a direct reflection of the director's social context.

Stylistic influences

Innovative moving-image media **artists** are saturated in the work of others. Passionate about their art, moving-image media artists engage in continual, critical viewing of other artists' work. Understanding how others make moving-image media products allows the artist to learn technique, and thus break rules.

Examples of stylistic influences

14.2.1 An introduction to German Expressionist film

14.2.2 Alfred Hitchcock

14.2.3 Tim Burton

German Expressionism's shadowy **aesthetics** and psychological themes (see page 389) directly influenced *film noir* through the exodus of German filmmakers such as Fritz Lang to the US during the 1930s.

The contemporary influence of German Expressionism can be seen in all psychological genres such as horror, thriller, suspense, crime and the work of Alfred Hitchcock. It can also be seen in the fantastical, dark supernatural worlds of directors such as Tim Burton.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 14.4 A murderer approaches in Fritz Lang's *M* (1931). As an Expressionist filmmaker, Lang's clear use of style helped lay the groundwork for the development of *film noir*'s distinct visual style in the US by the end of the 1930s. The influence of German Expressionism on *film noir* is a clear illustration of stylistic influences.



Alamy Stock Photo/cineclassico

Figure 14.5 Humphrey Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). This shot demonstrates 'typical' use of shadow in *film noir* – which was directly influenced by the shadows in German Expressionist film (compare to the shot from *M* in Figure 14.4.) Many German directors fled to the US during the 1930s, providing a direct influence from German Expression on US *noir* films. Artists can often be influenced by a variety of styles, not just by one movement.

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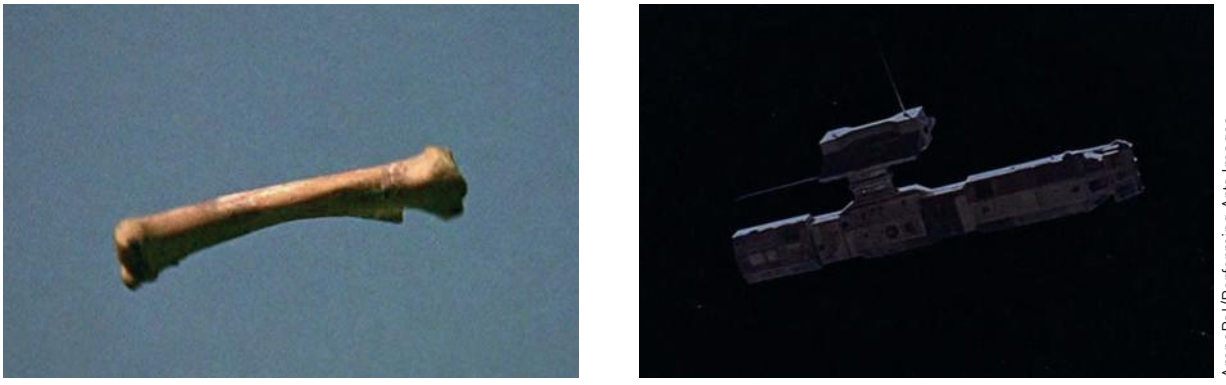
Filmmaker Quentin Tarantino's work showcases its artistic influences. For instance, the graphic design of location titles in *Django Unchained* (2012) evokes the title sequence from another US Southern-set epic, *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

> 'I steal from every single movie ever made.'
>
> **Quentin Tarantino**

Bollywood cinema's use of music and myth has had a substantial stylistic impact on Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann's 'Red Curtain' films, especially evident in the final sequences of *Moulin Rouge* (2001).

Stylistic influences are not limited to visual elements of moving image. They are also present in narrative, audio and editing. Stanley Kubrick's use of montage in the 'Dawn of Man' sequence in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) draws directly from Sergei Eisenstein's Soviet montage technique, using a cut to link the beginning of human violence to the development of human endeavour. Potentially reinforcing the choice of this stylistic influence was Kubrick's contextual influence of the Cold War – a struggle between the ideologies of communism and capitalism.

No moving image is ever made in isolation, without influence.



ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 14.6 The final frames of the 'Dawn of Man' opening sequence in Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) contain possibly the most famous cut in moving-image history. A thigh bone is graphically matched to a space ship in the second shot. The understated stylistic influence of Soviet montage editing style is clear in Kubrick's juxtaposition of shots. Like Sergei Eisenstein, Kubrick uses montage to birth a new idea from the linking of unrelated images.

14.2 ACTIVITIES

1 View the opening scene of Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927).
Analyse how the director makes a comment about the conditions of the workers and the wealthy, **examining** film languages such as *mise en scène* and editing.
Evaluate the **strengths and weaknesses** of these languages in making such a comment.

2 **Explain** how a current social or political context might influence a science-fiction film narrative. **Identify** key film languages, representations or technologies that might be used to comment on the current context.
Symbolise, using a storyboard to detail images and sound, how you might **represent** the opening sequence of this film.

3 Investigate through research the internal, contextual and stylistic influences on a director such as Akira Kurosawa.
Analyse several films, such as Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954), *Throne of Blood* (1957) and *Drunken Angel* (1948), **examining** the languages, technologies and representations in terms of these influences.
Make judgements about what the director's most significant influences were.

4 **Explain** which moving-image media artist's work you like best, **identifying** what it is about their products that resonates with you.
Analyse the artist's techniques, technical and symbolic codes and contexts. **Make judgements** about which are the artist's key representations, languages or technologies used across their work.
Evaluate which of these representations, languages or technologies you will be influenced by and why.

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EXPRESSIVE FILM MOVEMENTS

Throughout the history of moving-image media, the products that have progressed the form have been the most innovative and expressive in terms of representations and languages. Most have resonated with an individual, social or cultural identity, which has served to give the product momentum and timelessness.

Central to innovation and expression is the concept of experimentation. No scientist has proved a theory without experimentation. Similarly, no moving-image maker has innovated without experimenting with languages, technologies or representations.

To experiment, it is vital to understand **traditional** or mainstream languages, representations and technologies in moving-image media. Such understanding allows artists to 'break the rules' – to make deliberate selections and thus construct work that meaningfully aligns with a representation.

Moving-image media has traditionally been made using two key elements: 'the shot' (languages) and 'the cut' (technologies). With shots and cuts, we can tell narrative stories through constructing representations of places, people, ideas and emotions.

Expressive film movements

Mainstream film does not always succeed in telling stories that represent the varied and diverse identities of the world's audiences. This is where expressive **film movements** take the spotlight. Expressive films allow the film's author to craft a message independent of the production requirements of institutional formulas (such as Hollywood).

Expressive film (also referred to as art film or experimental film) is generally:

- independent
- targeted at a **niche audience**
- often experimental
- made for aesthetic or symbolic reasons rather than commercial profit.

Expressive films often emphasise the expressiveness of the director as author. They may focus on the internal influences of characters, such as thoughts, dreams or motivations. A typical expressive film experience may not unfold using conventional form or style.

Expressive film movements break rules. They experiment with the technologies and languages traditionally used in order to challenge representations or to create new representations. Expressive film allows the moving-image media artist a canvas on which to innovate.

Early innovators

Innovative Russian filmmakers Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) and Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970), working during the early years of the Soviet Union, experimented with the cut to create montage (see page 40). They explored how an editor's cut creates meaning through manipulating the audience to associate potentially unrelated and unconnected images. The impact of Eisenstein and Kuleshov was substantial. Montage, in order to manipulate audience emotion, has become a central element of moving-image media.



Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 14.7 French impressionist filmmaker Abel Gance's epic *Napoléon* (1927) demonstrated an innovative way to use film languages and technologies to show a dynamic battle sequence. Gance used three cameras to shoot the same scene from slightly different angles. His experimentation with film languages and technologies makes *Napoléon* a highly innovative film.

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Dada

Dada, like German Expressionism, was an expressive art movement birthed from the emotional trauma and devastation of the First World War (1914–18). Dada reflected the disgust and rebellion of disillusioned French and Germans emerging from a lost youth.

Dada, a word that does not mean anything, was a process-based anti-art movement centred in Germany and France from 1916 until the mid-1920s.

Dada sought controversy. It bit its thumb at authority and the conventions that governed the creation of 'Art' and spread its rebellion through theatre, poetry, visual art, film and even music. It was total artistic anarchy, aiming to assault conventional definitions of art, and rational thought as well.

The Dadaists saw the horrors of the First World War as confirmation that the existing social structures of nationalist politics, repressive social values, and unquestioning conformity of culture and thought were degraded and corrupt. At the first Dada exhibition in Berlin, a pig dressed in a German officer's uniform was suspended from the ceiling. Many took offence, for Dada was a movement of criticism.



Fountain, 1917/64 (ceramic), Duchamp, Marcel (1887-1968) / The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel / Vera & Arturo Schwarz Collection of Dada and Surrealist Art / Bridgeman Images. © Association Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP. Copyright Agency, 2018

Figure 14.8 *Fountain* by Dadaist Marcel Duchamp – an 'artistic assault' on convention. Dada was a movement that existed not just in film, but in visual art, music, theatre and poetry. The Dadaists used artistic forms to assault conventions and rational thought. Many Dada artworks use a blend of poetry, theatre, music, visual art and film.

Dada's brief lifetime established the groundwork for **Surrealism**. Many Dadaists became Surrealists (or overlapped the movements), but Dada's highly political nature meant that its works became labelled as 'degenerate' in Germany as the Nazis grew in power.

Table 14.1 The key texts of Dadaism

KEY TEXTS OF DADA	LANGUAGES AND TECHNOLOGIES OF DADA	KEY REPRESENTATIONS OF DADA
Ghosts Before Breakfast (1928) and *Inflation* (1927) – by German filmmaker Hans Richter *Entr'acte* (1927) – a short film by Frenchman René Clair, specifically commissioned as a Dadaist film for the intermission of a ballet performance *Anemic Cinema* (1926) – by artist Marcel Duchamp, who also created the Dadaist artwork *Fountain in* Figure 14.8 *Retour à la raison* (1923) – 'The Return to Reason' by American photographer Man Ray	• experimentation is key • anarchy, **rhythm** and play • one image begets another • **unorthodox** materials • chance-based procedures and experimentation • spontaneity and irreverence • collage and photo montage • rhythm and repetition	• controversial • meaning resides in meaninglessness • representations are critical – entirely upon the viewer to determine • meaning in the cathartic spirit and process of creation – in the act of making



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection Inc

Figure 14.9 From Marcel Duchamp's Dada film *Anemic Cinema* (1926). Duchamp was a significant figure in the Dada movement. His work was nonsensical and irreverent. *Anemic Cinema* highlights the repetition motif common to much Dada film.



Alamy Stock Photo/Paul Fearn



Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 3

Figure 14.10 Dadaist poet Hugo Ball in 1916, presenting his Dada poem 'Karawane' at Club Voltaire. The poem and costuming indicate the irreverent, nonsensical nature of the movement. Ball's theatrical poetry is an example of the fusion of artistic forms that characterised Dada.

The methodologies of Dada and its spirit of criticism and anarchy are very useful to the moving-image innovator seeking to challenge.

Surrealism

Surrealism emerged as a movement in the 1920s, influenced by the fashion for Freudian psychoanalysis – exploring dreams, subconscious and unconscious thoughts. As a movement, Surrealism was highly non-conformist and is strongly linked to explorations of identity.

Surrealism has continued as an influential expressive film movement, visible in the works of director David Lynch, such as *Twin Peaks* (1990–91, 2017) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001). Director Terry Gilliam's work also exhibits Surrealism, such as *Brazil* (1985) and *Twelve Monkeys* (1995). Surrealism is also noticeable in sketch comedy such as *Monty Python's Flying Circus* (1969–74) and *The Mighty Boosh* (2003–07). Any dream sequence invariably contains Surrealism.

Surrealism takes the hidden, personal, non-rational worlds of dreams and the subconscious and expresses these in art. Through juxtaposition, Surrealists create fantastic, irrational or incongruous imagery. The word 'surrealism' reflects this – *sur* meaning 'over' or 'above', and *realism* meaning the viewing or representation of things as they really are. Surrealism = beyond realism.

Much was written by the group of artists who called themselves Surrealists during the foundation years of the 1920s. Leader and French writer André Breton (1896–1966) is considered by some to be the founder of Surrealism. The statement of intent in his *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924 is particularly significant – that a Surrealist aims to express the functioning of thought, without being constrained by aesthetic or moral conventions.

The Surrealists, in their rebellion against the rational thought of the bourgeoisie, were playful and audacious in their art-making, purposefully letting go of deliberate action. They believed that in letting go of traditions and socially acceptable behaviours, an artist's true nature would be revealed. Many were Dadaists, as Surrealism essentially grew from the Dada movement. Consequently, there is some crossover between artists and conventions.



The Moviestore Collection Ltd

Figure 14.11 A scene from *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí. A man's hand has a hole in the palm from which crawl living ants, and a woman tries to stop the man from coming into her room. *Un Chien Andalou* is considered a masterpiece of Surrealism and continues to influence filmmakers.

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Table 14.2 The key texts of Surrealism

KEY TEXTS OF SURREALISM	LANGUAGES OF SURREALISM	KEY REPRESENTATIONS OF SURREALISM	TECHNOLOGIES OF SURREALISM
Un Chien Andalou (1929) – an audacious masterpiece and a deliberate insult to the quest of intellectuals to find meaning in everything, by Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) shows a counter-representation of women in the 1940s.	• showing the grotesque (e.g. perversity, decay, unexpected violence and scatology), often close up • linking of disparate locations • construction of imagery featuring juxtaposition (two opposing elements) to create a 'beautiful' image – e.g. brutality vs serenity, or something strange among the familiar • *mise en scène* may reference familiar cultural or religious objects • light-hearted scenes with a seriousness of purpose	• the exploration of dream and unconsciousness as a valid reality • expression of basic, primitive desires • art as ambitious and strange through use of the mysterious, marvellous, mythological and irrational • 'worship' of the artificiality in B-grade films • interest in innocence and the naive	• use of chance and spontaneity • deliberate use of cutting to link unrelated events/ locations • special effects to convey the grotesque • visual effects e.g. **superimposition**



ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 14.12 A very long arm reaches from above to put a flower on the road, creating a surreal moment from Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943). A key feature of Surrealism is strangeness amid normality.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 14.13 The infamous opening sequence of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). This moment encapsulates a key stylistic feature of Surrealism – brutality in a moment of serenity. Consequently, Surrealists often make use of special effects in order to achieve the grotesque.

Impressionism

Impressionism as a film movement is tightly linked to the visual art movement. Interestingly, Impressionist filmmaker Jean Renoir followed the style of his famous father's Impressionist art. Perhaps because of this heritage, Impressionist cinema became a synthesis of other arts.

As a film movement, Impressionism was born out of the crisis that shook the French film industry after the First World War – a lack of domestic product. This stimulated a keen interest in local experimentation in order to develop a unique French style.

Impressionism had a short life as a film movement, with its most significant period being during the 1930s. However, its techniques diffused into other movements. We see Impressionism's influence today in the **subjectivity** explored in independent works such as those by Gus Van Sant – for example, *Good Will Hunting* (1997).

Impressionism used film to convey emotional 'impressions' and sensations, fleeting moments, and the 'essence' of objects and people.

Table 14.3 The key texts of Impressionism

KEY TEXTS OF IMPRESSIONISM	LANGUAGES OF IMPRESSIONISM	KEY REPRESENTATIONS OF IMPRESSIONISM	TECHNOLOGIES OF IMPRESSIONISM
Napoléon (1927) – by Abel Gance, the dream scene *La Roue* (1923) – 'The Wheel' by Abel Gance, the train-crash scene *Cœur fidèle* (1923) by Jean Epstein – the merry-go-round scene	• narrative structure • *photogénie* – 'the quality that distinguishes a film shot from the original object photographed' • visual rhythm created by fast cutting • location shooting • camera work most important • split screen • moving cameras • colour tinting to illustrate setting or mood	• personal actions • psychology • emotions • flashbacks	• optical devices often used to create *photogénie* – e.g. superimposition • *Napoléon* used overlay of **double exposures**, dissolves and composition of multiple images in the same frame



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 14.14 Still from *La Roue* (1923) by Abel Gance. The director's use of overlay and superimposition convey the emotions of the characters.



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 14.15 Still from *Cœur fidèle* (1923) by Jean Epstein. Using double exposure and movement allows the audience to see a character's unspoken thoughts. Expression of emotions on film are a central focus of Impressionism.



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 14.16 To film *Napoléon* (1927) and convey a sense of the restless motion of the main character, Abel Gance kept his camera moving in innovative ways – for example, by mounting it on horseback to film a battle sequence.

14.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Research and view work from a moving-image media artist from each of the expressive movements discussed in this section.
Analyse how they have experimented with languages and technologies, **evaluating** the **strengths and limitations** of the languages and technologies used in terms of challenging conventional representations.
Examine the component parts of the artists' work for the influences of historical or social context.
Structure a short documentary on each artist, **sequencing** audio and visual elements, including 10 seconds of film that you have created in each style.

2 **Explain** which of the experimental practices on the above artists you would like to explore further in your own work, and **identify** how you might use these practices.

3 **Analyse** the use of technologies in one of the expressive film movements in this section, **examining** the available technology and **considering** its impact on the movement. **Consider**, through research, contemporary films that may have used these technologies.
Appraise the **significance** of the influence of the movement's technologies on the contemporary filmmakers you researched.

DOCUMENTARY FILM MOVEMENTS

Documentary is a way of telling stories that generally relies on **objective truth** – or fact and reality. It is a form of filmmaking that consciously acknowledges the ways in which the camera can capture the real world accurately and without making any changes. That is the power of photography – it can produce an image of a tree that is exactly the same as the real tree in every detail. This idea has shaped the way in which documentary developed as a movement.

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Because the camera is capable of making exact recordings of the real world (what appears on the screen is exactly the same as what appears in reality), documentary uses the camera as its chief tool in representing truth for the viewer.

A documentary is a film text that will generally communicate facts drawn from the real world. Documentary theorist Bill Nichols states that a documentary's communications and meanings must be the same as the events and objects that occur in front of the camera lens – the representation must suggest what it appears to record. In addition, a documentary must communicate truth through the language of **sobriety** (of a serious nature) and communicate it in a serious way.

There are two key documentary film movements across the history of documentary. What separates these movements is how truth is represented in **screen space**. The dividing line between them occurred generally around the 1980s, when shifts in thinking affected film's approaches to truth and how the real world is perceived. Prior to the 1980s, truth was thought of in terms of objectivity. After the 1980s, truth was thought of in terms of subjectivity.

Objective truth (pre-1980s)

Truth and how it was preserved was very important in the early years of documentary filmmaking. Documentary movements that occurred prior to the 1980s were generally concerned with the difference between the putative event (the real-world event) and the **pro-filmic** event (the recording of the real-world event). The documentarian's aim was to capture the facts of the real world and present them unchanged to the viewer on the screen. It was permissible for the filmmaker to shoot a variety of shot scales and perspectives to maintain viewer interest, but generally very little use of filmic style was allowed. To do this, documentarians sought to carefully capture the real world in the process of recording. Doing this meant that the filmmaker tried very hard not to interfere with what was being recorded.

However, is it ever truly possible to represent truth objectively? Filmmaking involves a process of selecting and shaping information for the final product. For example, interviews may need to be edited to leave out long pauses in conversation, or locations may need to be filmed during certain times of day for lighting advantage. The filmmaker makes choices that can affect the nature of the truth being communicated. In the end, what is represented may not be as objective as originally planned. This could lead to questions being raised about the nature of fact within the film, and then whether the text is truly a documentary.

Documentarians are charged with the difficult job of establishing their own identity in this body of work. A documentary filmmaker can only achieve credibility when able to skilfully negotiate truth between their own work and the actual world.

Subjectivity – the essence of truth (post-1980s)

Over the 1980s, documentarians started to rethink their initial positions on documentary and truth. This happened partly because of an acknowledgement of the sheer difficulty in achieving true objectivity. It was also influenced by the drive to be more persuasive.

Filmmakers began to explore new ways of representing facts. Documentary movements began to be informed by a process of combination – a mixture of filmic techniques derived from both documentary and fictional filmmaking. This mixture was called **hybridity**, which means the mixing of characteristics from other forms of filmmaking to create a hybrid text. Documentary was starting to break new ground in representation by using Hollywood narrative techniques in storytelling, new forms of editing such as montage, the emergence of **spectacle** in cinematography, and so on.

Truth was repositioned to be more of an approximation – the essence of truth – rather than an exact replication. If the truth of the matter is still communicated to the viewer, then the way in which that communication occurs becomes irrelevant. Part of this shift in thinking was also a result of new interests in the power of persuasion in documentary communication. Simple objective truth was no longer a useful tool in convincing a viewer about a particular argument.

Filmmakers had to employ more engaging techniques to really 'hook in' a viewer. Viewer positioning therefore became a key element in the design of a documentary text. If there were filmic techniques that could increase viewer engagement with the documentary argument, then using those techniques became more of an obligation. As a result,

more and more documentaries began to surface making use of comedy, flashy MTV-style editing and sound, and anything else that drew attention.

Key movements of documentary

Documentary movements did not occur as specific historical moments like French New Wave or Dogma 95. Instead, they were more like trends or modes that surfaced over time and developed in specific directions over longer periods. There is no real point in which one of these modes finished so that another began. Instead, there was a lot of overlap between the movements so some of them evolved alongside others. Of course, there are some that developed as a result of the shift in thinking about truth as previously outlined. Movements like the participatory mode, for example, did not surface until shifts in thinking about truth leaned toward subjectivity.

According to Bill Nichols, there are six main modes used by documentary filmmakers:

- poetic
- expository
- observational
- participatory
- reflexive
- performative.

Each documentary mode has its own specific set of conventions that gives the mode its unique shape. Prior to the 1980s, many of these modes were used independently of each other. Over the 1980s, filmmakers grew dissatisfied with the limitations of only one mode, and so they started to blend the modes to create interesting and new representations of truth.

Poetic mode

One of the first movements in documentary history was the poetic mode. The purpose of this documentary was to try to communicate what the real world felt like. Instead of recording sound and movement to be an exact record of the real world, a filmmaker would attempt to communicate their feelings as they interacted with the real world. For example, if it was raining, the filmmaker would attempt to use imagery and combinations of different edits to communicate the feeling or experience of rain. If rain was chaotic and loud, then the film would try to replicate the experience of that chaos and loudness. It was a highly experimental movement.

One of the key techniques employed was the removal of continuity editing across shots. As a result, time and space were displaced, leading to sometimes odd and very artistic representations. This means that as a shot transitioned to the next shot, the action did not carry across the edit point. The second shot that appeared in the edit sequence usually had completely different action unfolding.

Although there was a distinct inconsistency that characterises flow across the shots, the communication itself still made sense. Intentional patterns were formed within the footage, and the actual world was explored through these patterns. Because patterns and sounds were the primary means of communication, people in the film were often relegated to be a part of the composition. People were not the subjects of interest – the patterns of the real world were. Thus, people merged with the *mise en scène*.

The premise of the poetic mode is that there are alternative ways to approach the real world and truth. The connection between this mode and documentary's focus on truth stems from the actual world remaining the source material for the various representations. *Rain* (1929) is an example of a documentary text attempting to convey the impression of what a rain shower is like, and what effects it has on the documentarian.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 14.17 This shot from the poetic documentary *Rain* (1929) illustrates the way in which patterns in *mise en scène* were used to convey information about the real world. The text is trying to re-create the feeling and impression of rain, not show what rain actually is.

Expository mode

The next documentary movement to arise was the expository mode. Even today, expository is the most common mode of documentary. It was very much connected to the idea of pre-1980s objective truth and sought to create an exact representation of the real world.

Communication is often shaped in terms of an argument and is informed by the authority of the one making the argument. The chief form of communication is the voice. The imagery is designed to support what is being said. In order to do this, the documentarian adopts 'the voice-of-God' commentary. The filmmaker's voice provides a factual commentary for the unfolding action of the documentary. The person speaking (who is not seen) speaks directly to the viewer via the soundtrack. The viewer watches the imagery and accepts the information as undisputed fact. Alternatively, the filmmaker may appear on the screen to convey the factual information. In this case, the filmmaker adopts a **voice-of-authority** commentary and looks at the camera lens while speaking. The viewer at home is directly involved in the flow of information as a result of the filmmaker's direct gaze.

The performance of the voice also contributes to the ways in which the information is received. Value is placed upon voices that are professionally trained and richly toned. The quality of the voice is directly connected to the perceived quality of the information communicated. Over the years, male voices were exclusively used because of the association between deep tones and factual information. This convention still persists today. For example, *March of the Penguins* (2005) features Morgan Freeman as the **voice-of-God** commentary; while viewers watch imagery of penguins marching on a journey to their breeding ground, they listen to Freeman commentate the action. However, this convention is beginning to change with the use of women in 'voice-of-God' commentary roles. For example, Oprah Winfrey narrated the 2009 BBC documentary series *Life*.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 14.18 While traditionally male voices have been used as 'voices of authority', this is changing with more women, such as Oprah Winfrey, providing the 'voice-of-God' style commentary in expository documentaries.

Observational mode

Observational documentary mode, also known as a 'fly on the wall' approach to filmmaking, is where the documentarian addresses the real world by observing it from a distance. This movement is also heavily influenced by the idea of pre-1980s objective truth. The filmmaker is at pains not to interact in any way with the recording of the real world. This is their way of providing assurance that there is no tampering with the facts of the documentary.

Like a security camera, the documentary camera is set up to observe action unfolding while the filmmaker is usually located in another space during the recording. In their original forms, early examples of the observational mode had no evidence of the filmmaker's involvement. There was no direct address of information to support the imagery – there was only the image as the chief form of communication.

Sound was present in these texts, but it was mostly dialogue coming from the participants in the screen. There was also a notable absence of music, titles, dramatisation or interviews. *Salesman* (1969) by the Maysles brothers remains the most famous example. This film revealed the struggles of door-to-door Bible salesmen and their attempts to meet the financial quotas set by upper management. The camera followed the men around town as they went from house to house discussing the Bible and attempting to make a sale. Unlike other modes, the value of communication was embedded in the unpredictable actions of participants. In some cases, this became more powerful than the crafted word choice of expository documentary.

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Salesman offered viewers an interesting insight into the stressful lives of salesmen. In one scene, a man breaks down emotionally in his hotel room, realising that he has made little money for his family for the month. The discovery that this mode offered powerful and real moments led to its increased popularity during the 1960s and 1970s.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 14.19 Making a sale in the observational documentary *Salesman* (1969). The chief form of communication in this mode was the image, which was not guided by any kind of voice commentary.

Participatory mode

Participatory documentary mode surfaced after thinking about truth changed. Suddenly, it was permissible for the filmmaker to be a part of the real world being recorded. This mode is derived from anthropology, where the study of human culture is achieved by being a part of that culture. Thus, the filmmaker becomes a participant in the unfolding events and action in screen space, seeking to find an authentic representation of the real world through personal involvement. What was recorded was affected by the filmmaker's presence. Unlike earlier documentary modes, the purpose of participatory mode is about conveying the essence of truth rather than an exact record. It does not matter that the filmmaker was there.

This mode is generally associated with social and political issues, where the documentarian seeks to represent their own direct encounter with the subject matter through combinations of interviews and actuality footage.

Michael Moore is a prominent example of the participatory mode of documentary. Moore's film *Sicko* (2007) features an exploration of the US Government's policies regarding health insurance for its civilians. A combination of interviews and actuality footage is used to convey a damning argument that the US Government is wrong in what it is doing. Moore's constant presence in screen space provides the text with a more intimate and personal quality, conveying the idea that the filmmaker cares deeply about the issue. This characterises the text in a unique way for the viewer, who cannot help but feel the pull of the documentarian's concerns. This also implies that the filmmaker's personality is a dominant element in the success of the mode's communication.



Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives GmbH

Figure 14.20 Michael Moore makes an appeal on behalf of medical patients in *Sicko* (2007). Moore's involvement in the plight of these people shapes the filmmaker in specific ways. The viewer is positioned to interpret the argument of the documentary on Moore's terms, limiting the viewer's response.

Reflexive mode

The reflexive mode of documentary draws the viewer's attention away from the real world represented on the screen, and instead points the camera at the documentary process. This mode has been influenced by a post-1980s approach to thinking about truth. Truth is recognised as always being constructed, and that there is no such thing as objective truth. Instead of seeing the real world through the lens of the documentary, the viewer is positioned to see the documentary lens as an

intentional construction. What this actually looks like varies across examples, all depending on the filmmaker involved.

Reflexivity could be observed in how an interview takes place – maybe the interview space is revealed to the viewer by the use of a long shot, so the viewer suddenly sees a studio film set. This robs the text of its actuality or real-world presence, and instead reshapes it as a film production. It could also be observed in how the film might reveal the process of makeup in preparation for an interview, which Trinh Minh-ha did for her documentary *Surname Viet Given Name Nam* (1989). The reflexive mode of documentary is at once self-conscious and self-questioning, interrogating everything about documentary filmmaking, including truth and representation of the real world.

Performative mode

The performative mode is similar to the reflexive mode in its capacity to raise questions and interrogate knowledge. The chief way in which communication functions in this movement is to position the viewer emotionally in relation to story. Any idea of objective truth is abandoned in preference for a world represented through subjectivity. Thus, the subject of the documentary is transformed into a set of performed experiences that are visually represented through various expressive filmic techniques. It is in this way that knowledge is interrogated, by suggesting that there are other ways of communicating information or of understanding the actual world.

Touching the Void (2003) remains the chief example of the performative documentary mode. It tells the story of two rock climbers who become stranded on top of a mountain. The trauma of their journey back to safety is conveyed by actors. This was done by primarily using POV shots, blurs and fades, and unusual soundscapes to represent an altered state of mind. The goal for *Touching the Void* was to try to convey for the viewer what it was really like to be struggling with exhaustion and dehydration while trying to reach the bottom of the mountain.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 14.21 The trauma of survival made into perceivable representation by actors in *Touching the Void* (2003). Various expressive film techniques such as blurs and fades, jump cuts, POV shots and unusual soundscapes all combine to re-create the subjective impression of the real world.

14.4 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a pre-production plan for a factual film about your school. You will want to give a true and fair account of what the school is like. Answer the following questions as a means of building up your proposal:
   - Which areas of the school will end up as subject matter in the film?
   - At what time of day would you like to shoot these areas?
   - What groups of people are you going to film?
   - What are these people going to be doing while being filmed?
   - Who is going to be interviewed by you for the film?
   - Which areas of the school are you going to avoid shooting?
   - Which people and activities are you going to avoid shooting?

   Explain your choices for each of these questions. **Clarify** how your choices are a representation of the real school.
2 **Experiment** with your choices, **trying out** different choices to see if they work. You can do this by including not only your preferred subjects, but also your non-preferred subjects and non-preferred aspects of the school in your planned film.
   Explain what differences this inclusion makes, **clarifying** how 'real' it makes your school look.
3 View a scene from a documentary of your choice.
   Explain why this scene is a documentary and not a fictional film, **clarifying** the differences

between the two and **illustrating** the point with examples from the scenes.

4 **Construct** a list of popular documentary directors.
Explain each director's preferred style of documentary. **Identify** at least three features of each director.
Appraise the impact of this style on the viewer's understanding of truth, **interpreting** the relationship between the filmed realities and the actual realities.

CULT FILMS

Cult films have a tendency to remain current and timeless because of their enormous popularity. Films such as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, shot as far back as 1975, continue to have a strong presence in culture today. Theatres across the US still show the film to the public, in some cases on a monthly basis, but especially around Halloween. As a result, the film has been 'in release' for over four decades. But what makes this film so popular? Why are fans so obsessed with it? These questions are at the heart of critical discussion of cult film.

A cult film is a one that develops an enormous fan base that is generally obsessed with the film. In addition, cult films usually feature counterculture themes and ideas that shape the story. In many cases, cult films suffer from poor production values, although there are some examples that have high production values as well.

It is difficult to outline the general features of cult films because of the way their stories span many genres and many forms, and make use of many different stylistic systems. They all seem to be very different from one film to the next. The one thing most critics agree on is that cult films are fuelled by counterculture and fandom – obsessed fans who find the body of work inherently fascinating at every level.

The original goal of many early cult films was to explore alternate ways of thinking. Thus, cult film directors forged their screen identities through counterculture by overcoming the conventions of Hollywood – its impersonal production machine with the recycling of stories with the same ideologies and values. Cult film directors have actively set themselves apart from whatever Hollywood was doing. If Hollywood promoted stories where heroes overcame villains, then cult film directors would think differently and tell stories where evil won in the end. It was a simple game of opposing values. As a result, many cult film directors developed reputations as 'rebels' in the film industry.

Types of cult films

There are two distinct ways in which finance and production value have functioned in the cult film body of work. This evolved into an observable scale within cult cinema: a range between trashy films and quality films. In turn, this has affected the ways in which the cult film director has been able to construct an identity in screen space. Some directors have had a great deal of control over how their screen identity unfolded, while others were forced into an identity because of circumstance.

Blade Runner (1982) commandeered a budget of approximately US$28 million, allowing director Ridley Scott to design an aesthetic that drew on different styles of art. Scott has since gone on to more famous work, establishing a reputation for a particular aesthetic drawn from large amounts of finance.

On the other hand, *Forbidden World* (1982) worked on about US$800 000, forcing creator Roger Corman to design an aesthetic constrained by finance and drawn from cheap materials. There are many historical factors that affect these differences, such as cultural reception, studio constraints, story and even directors themselves. Aside from these, a particular scale evolved within cult film that was connected to finance and directorial identity.

Trashy cult films

Trashy cult films are popular films of a poorer aesthetic quality and appearance than Hollywood. They often have abundant issues with performance, continuity and execution. Many of these production issues function as constraints that inevitably affect the director's identity in screen space.

Because of the limited budgets, directorial identity in trashy cult film is not constructed so much as it is 'guided'. Identity is often beyond a

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director's control. *The Room* (2003) was shot on a relatively small budget. Much of the production value was limited as a result, leading to inorganic or imitation set designs, limited props, casting, etc. The casting department hired mostly untrained and unproven actors. This was made obvious in the execution of many of the scenes in *The Room*. Dramatic sequences were poorly acted – so ill-timed and caricatured that the scenes ended up being more comedic than suspenseful. What appeared on the screen was likely a fair distance from what director Tommy Wiseau had originally intended. Nevertheless, a certain identity was forged as a result of the reception of the text, and identity that had a particular meaning for the viewers, but ultimately for the director as well.



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Figure 14.22 The caricatured choreography and performance of the dramatic scenes in *The Room* (2003) were so bad that it became a comedy hit. A trashy cult film is sometimes received as a comedy, even though the production might have been shot quite seriously. This leads to an identity for the director that is outside of the director's control.

Sometimes a director's identity might discover some currency even within the constraints of low-budget production. The low-budget horror film *Sharknado* (2013) featured poorly designed and poorly executed CGI sharks. Much of the film was computer-generated and led to a particular directorial identity for Anthony C. Ferrante that was connected to bad aesthetics. However, the film was celebrated for its poor execution. Ferrante became a popular 'bad director' for fans of the film, and this positive response led to the approval of four *Sharknado* sequels. As a result, Ferrante was able to further develop the association between his directorial identity and bad aesthetics across the *Sharknado* franchise.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection/SciFi Channel

Figure 14.23 The 'cardboard cut-out' appearance of the sharks in the horror film *Sharknado* (2013) was mostly a result of the limited budget of the film. The resulting poor aesthetic contributed not only to the film's cult status, but also the directorial identity of Anthony C. Ferrante.

Quality cult films

Quality cult films are popular fan-driven films whose execution closely resembles that of Hollywood, particularly in terms of aesthetics, while drawing on large budgets. As such, directorial identity is qualified by the idea of freedom, and is able to be taken in many different directions.

Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982) is an example of a cult film whose aesthetics rival Hollywood productions. *Blade Runner* is also an example of a cult film where the director was able to control their own screen identity. The director's designs and ideas were largely unrestrained by a budget set in the millions. Much of what Scott wanted became realised in screen space, allowing the director to construct his own identity. This identity is now celebrated as a good example of art in film.

A particular focus is often placed on Scott's visually arresting aesthetics, but there is also acknowledgement of other areas of production such as the performance of quality actors, elaborate sets and lighting, colour and so on. Scott's ability to mould these aspects of production into the resulting film is both a product of his skill and the freedom that comes from large amounts of finance.

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Figure 14.24 Ridley Scott on the set of *Blade Runner* with actor Harrison Ford. The enormous budget of the film gave Scott a lot of freedom in design, such as high-quality acting and lavish set design. All these privileges combined to create not only a quality directorial identity, but also a quality cult film to rival Hollywood's best.

Representing counterculture

Originally, the general emphasis of cult film was embedded in the idea of counterculture, where the stories of cult film were set against the values and ideologies of mainstream or Hollywood film culture. It was in this practice that directors created their identity in screen space.

Early directors such as Roger Corman (who continues to make cult films today) brought highly empowered leading women into his stories at a time when women were being represented by Hollywood as soft and passive. Corman's 1956 film *Gunslinger* featured a tough woman capable of violence and revenge. At the same time, Hollywood was producing films such as John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), where women were still defined by domestic duties such as cooking and looking after children. Much of this counterculture thinking still persists in cult film today.

Sharknado (2013) is a part of a larger cycle of contemporary low-budget horror films that intentionally make use of poorly designed CGI. Films such as *Sharktopus* (2010) and *Piranhaconda* (2012) each feature terribly unconvincing monsters that stand in opposition to the high-quality CGI monsters created by Hollywood. For many fans, that is actually part of the fun.

Counterculture can be realised by using many different filmic techniques. Some films represent counterculture through film production technologies. *Sharknado*, and the many other films that come with it, are prime examples of how a filmmaker creates a counterculture comment through the use of production-related computer software. If Hollywood's CGI aesthetic is motivated by subtlety and realism, then cult film's CGI aesthetic must therefore be obvious and function more in terms of narrative intervention. Other cult films might present a counterculture comment through their use of film languages.

Director George Miller of the *Mad Max* film franchise, and other directors of this time, experimented with convention to intentionally set their work apart from the highly stylised imagery of Hollywood. Some of this experimentation was a result of the constraints of a low budget – the original *Mad Max* (1979) was actually a trashy cult film. In many ways, Miller's counterculture stemmed from a 'maverick' approach to film production in general. Throwing caution to the wind, Miller found ways to create ground-breaking and fascinating imagery by changing the rules of cinematography. He constantly improvised because of the lack of film equipment on hand. He would use cars as dollys for motion shots and mount cameras in dangerous positions to push screen perspectives to new heightened effect.

Counterculture is generally represented in two key modes: cosmetically and thematically.



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Figure 14.25 The new and interesting (sometimes dangerous) approaches to cinematography were just the beginning for George Miller's counterculture in *Mad Max* (1979). His maverick style in directing created a significant identity for him – one that led to the development of a *Mad Max* franchise.

Cosmetic counterculture

To think of counterculture cosmetically involves not only thinking about what is represented, but also how a subject is represented. In the film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), the representation of characters is cosmetically connected to counterculture via the costuming. Women were

designed as hyper-sexualised through revealing or low-cut outfits, made from combinations of leather and standard underwear. Men in the film were subjected to the same treatment – their costumes were varying combinations of revealing outfits, leather and underwear, and in many cases were cross-dressing in traditionally female attire. There were no films in Hollywood at the time that associated cross-dressing with this kind of overt sexuality.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/20th Century Fox

Figure 14.26 The revealing costumes of the male and female characters in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975) were a key way in which counterculture was cosmetically represented. Female characters were often exploited in screen space – but in this case, men were subjected to the same treatment. Nothing of the kind was being produced in Hollywood at the time.

Thematic counterculture

Counterculture can also be observed thematically in cult films. This is usually found by interrogating the nature of the character to determine what they actually mean or represent. For example, female characters in cult films are often represented as strong characters, unhinged from dependence on stronger men. Thus, cult film leading women are highly empowered capable women who could survive the conflicts offered by the narrative. In doing so, they brought about a different set of ideologies. These figures represented a push toward a more realistic representation of women. Their appearance on the screen operated in direct contrast to the perpetual way in which Hollywood produced stereotypes of females who were defined by the male gaze. *Death Proof* (2007) introduces a group of women who are independent and strong. These women resolve the conflict of the story with ease. The representation of women carries with it a suggestion that they are not the passive objects often found in Hollywood films.

Fascination in cult film – fandom

Cult film has some kind of inherent quality within it that not only draws in its fans, but also manages to sustain a presence in the film landscape, even today. Fandom exists in two key modes of communication: as a community and as a screen culture. In both cases, fandom receives validation and motivation through interaction.

Much of the Comic-Con culture is saturated in fans reliving their favourite characters through costume play. There are bikers from *Easy Rider* (1969), Cylons from *Battlestar Galactica* (1978) and Marty McFly from *Back to the Future* (1985), just to name a few. But cult film fandom has also thrived as a result of the internet. Where before fans were limited to interacting with each other at conventions, now they are able to communicate instantaneously through chat sites, blogs or websites designed to facilitate conversation about their favourite films. This instantaneity fuels fandom growth and sustains its presence.

Many critics have also suggested that cult film's popularity stems from the incredibly rich representation of characters that populate the screen. In this case, fandom is a screen culture dependent on identification and desire. The viewer imagines what it would be like to live as the character and, at the same time, forges connections with the story world at a thematic level. After all, who wouldn't want to travel through time 'in style' in a 1983 DeLorean?

For the older classics such as *Flash Gordon* (1980) or *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (1958), fascination might be connected to the nostalgic qualities that the film can offer the modern audience. Seeing outdated production techniques and special effects may offer an interesting departure from contemporary standards. Or it could be as simple as a stroll down memory lane, revisiting the romanticised memories of watching these films as a young child.



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Figure 14.27 Fans gather at a convention dressed as their favourite characters. On the left is 'Number 5', the robot who came 'alive' in the cult classic *Short Circuit* (1986). While most conventions now celebrate all kinds of popular culture from comic books to Marvel cinema, iconic characters from cult film classics still surface from time to time.

14.5 ACTIVITIES

1 **Construct** a plan for a 60-second scene. Try and make the scene reflect the idea of counterculture. For example, maybe one of your characters is acting rebellious, or perhaps you are using a challenge to a stereotype. **Design** the scene in the form of a table, listing the scene shot by shot. **Explain** what happens in each shot, **giving additional information** about the action.

2 **Experiment** with your shooting. Imagine you have a zero budget, and don't have access to the correct camera equipment. Think outside the box by coming up with ways to replicate the following cinematography techniques, then shoot the scene:
- a contra-zoom/triple-zoom reflex (see page 30)
- a dolly shot
- a Steadicam shot.

3 **Analyse** a scene from a popular cult film. **Evaluate** the use of *mise en scène* and the expression of counterculture. **Explain** how it is an example of cult film.

AUTEURS

If someone asked you to see the new Quentin Tarantino or Joss Whedon film, you would know what to expect. This is because they are what cinema analysts call *auteurs*.

The word *auteur* is French for 'author'. In film studies, it usually refers to a director who is widely respected and seen to have a particular artistic style. An *auteur's* films will have a high level of artistic vision and an interesting technical style that breaks new ground. Not every director is considered an *auteur* – only those whose productions are considered to be works of film art. The *auteurs* in the film industry at the present time are those directors whose names most people recognise: James Cameron, Jane Campion, Sofia Coppola, Ang Lee, Christopher Nolan, Martin Scorsese and so on. Those from the past who are considered *auteurs* include Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford and Orson Welles.

The term *auteur* was popularised in the 1950s in the French film criticism journal *Cahiers du cinéma* (cinema papers).

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Figure 14.28 Directors who have become so well known that they are 'household names' can be thought of as *auteurs*. These are individuals with their own special style of movie production. Director Joss Whedon (left) is famous for being the executive producer of the cult television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1996–2003). Whedon is well known for his depictions of powerful women. He also tends to use ensemble casts where there are several protagonists. His themes are often philosophical. Wes Anderson (centre), director of films such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) and *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), has a distinctive style with trademark features such as zip pans and strong use of colour. He also uses carefully constructed and elaborate *mise en scène*, strong locations and very tightly targeted pop music. Quentin Tarantino (right) is considered a modern *auteur*. In his directorial style, Tarantino is known for ultra-violence, pop-culture intertextuality and witty dialogue. Criticisms of *auteur* theory include that it focuses too much on the cult of the director's personality, and that it obscures the contributions of others.

After five years of Nazi occupation in the Second World War, French cinemas begin showing US films again. These now seemed refreshingly new, and they excited French critics so much that a whole literature of film criticism developed around the *Cahiers du cinéma* journal. With French critics exposed to the works of Alfred Hitchcock, John Ford and Billy Wilder for the first time, they developed the theory of the director as *auteur*. Although this concept seems obvious now, at the time most people considered films on the basis of plot, character and setting. The filmic elements that a director might put in were not considered in the way they are today.

The *Cahiers* group of critics tied the idea of *auteur* very closely to their concept of *mise en scène*. The French critics recognised that films are a team effort and that directors may have little control over the production process or even the script. But directors do have control over the staging of the shots and the *mise en scène*. Therefore, the term *auteur* refers to the director's style as recognisable within the *mise en scène*.

The *auteur* approach to film criticism was very popular in the 1960s. However, after that period, critics developed other theoretical ways of thinking about film. Following are the main criticisms of ***auteur* theory**:

- **It ignores team effort.** Films are created in an industrial process that involves the efforts of hundreds of people. While some directors (such as the Coen brothers) take on many roles, it is unfair to credit them with everything. The idea of the *auteur* hides the input of other creatives. Consider what might have been lost in Alfred Hitchcock's shower scene in *Psycho* (1960) without Bernard Herrmann's musical score.
- **It claims that codes have meaning in the film only.** *Auteur* theory assumes that the director has control over what the film means. The theory gives the power to the 'encoder'. Modern approaches credit the audience (the decoders) with power to create their own meanings as well.
- **It creates a personality cult.** A great work of art should be seen for what it is, not praised because it has been directed by a particular individual. Personality is not the same as artistic value.
- **It has a male bias.** Most of those who are regarded by critics as *auteurs* are men. Feminists say this is because the theory favours male approaches based on powerful control. More collaborative creative styles are not generally used by *auteurs*.

Producer as *auteur*

The 'producer as *auteur*' is a phrase used to describe the way in which creative control of a film production is 'wrestled' from a director by a producer.

David O. Selznick is an example of producer as *auteur*. During production of the now famous *Gone with the Wind* (1939), Selznick oversaw every level of production from direction (he replaced the film director during production) to editing and marketing. He even introduced his own personal approach to style – the famous crane shot over downtown Atlanta was his making.

A contemporary example is Jerry Bruckheimer, who has created a label out of his name – 'Jerry Bruckheimer Films'. When his signature label is seen at the start of a film, viewers already have a strong understanding of what to expect: action–adventure buddy films such as *Top Gun* (1986), *Bad Boys* (1995), *Gone in 60 Seconds* (2000), *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003) and *The Lone Ranger* (2013). There are many stylistic and thematic similarities between these films, suggesting that Bruckheimer has forged an identity in the film landscape.

Auteur structuralism

Auteur theory developed into a new form of analysis during the 1960s called ***auteur* structuralism**.

Auteur structuralism is a type of analysis that combines the study of directorial identity with another form of study called structuralism. The study of genre and the structure of narrative (including three-act structure) are all outcomes of structuralism.

Structuralism (created by Claude Lévi-Strauss) in the context of film studies is a way of examining stories as a system essentially composed of two levels. The two structures of the film text combine to create meaning.

- **Surface structures (the first level).** This is the characters and *mise en scène* of the diegesis, or story world. This level communicates the story, and it is what viewers 'read' as the story unfolds.
- **Deep structures (the second level).** This is the themes and recurring motifs that form the ideas for the story. These deep structures often form patterns that shape the way story unfolds. This level is described as 'hidden' and not always noticed by viewers. To be able to read it may require some interpretive thinking on behalf of the viewer.

Structuralism is used to identify and isolate the patterns within the deep structures of one film, and these patterns are then compared against other films by the same director. Through this method, film critic Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (*auteur* structuralism's biggest supporter) discovered that a film's patterns inside the deep structure are not at all unique to that film. That pattern can be used to categorise a director's body of work. Thus, certain films can be grouped according to an observed pattern. The group is called a **director's oeuvre** (director's work).

Auteur structuralism and Steven Spielberg

In studying the observable patterns in the deep structures of Steven Spielberg films, distinct groups of films can be isolated and labelled. One group can be shaped by patterns related to the binary opposition of 'humanity and monster'. This oeuvre might be labelled as Spielberg's 'Dominion of Humanity' films, since in each case the value of 'monster' is eventually overcome at the end of the story by the value of 'humanity'. This group might include the films *Jaws* (1975), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) and *Duel* (1971). This kind of analysis is able to group films together based on elements not necessarily noticeable to the naked eye. *Jaws* and *Duel,* for example, or *Jaws* and *Close Encounters* are different at the surface structure level of sharks, trucks and aliens. However, within their deep structures, the themes and recurring motifs form the same patterns that shape the story – a monster arrives and presents a challenge. Humanity then establishes some kind of dominion in relation to the monster.

Spielberg himself sees similarities between *Jaws* and *Duel*. The ending of *Jaws* (the death of the shark as it falls into the ocean depths) is actually a mirror-finish to that of *Duel* (the monster truck falls to its death down into a ravine). Spielberg intentionally shot the death of the shark as an homage to his earlier film, because he saw the two films as sharing thematic elements. Spielberg even used the same sound effects of the 'dying' truck while the shark sank in the ocean (listen for it next time you watch *Jaws*).

Using *auteur* structuralism to look at more of Spielberg's work, another group of films may feature patterns of a different nature. These patterns could be related to the binary opposition of 'humanity and machine'. This particular oeuvre might be labelled Spielberg's 'Submission of Humanity' films, since the value of 'humanity' is eventually deposed in favour of inevitable technologies. This group of films might feature *Minority Report* (2002), *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001) and *Ready Player One* (2018).



Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives IFTN Cinema Collection

Figure 14.29 The final moments of the 'monster truck' as it crashes into a deep ravine in Steven Spielberg's *Duel* (1971). This scene was re-created in *Jaws* (1975), where in a similar incident the shark falls into the depths of the ocean defeated. The same sound effects used for the truck also found their way into the death scene of the shark.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 14.30 A study of the recent sci-fi film *Arrival* (2016) under *auteur* structuralism offers interesting insight into how the film interrogates institutions. The recurring motifs in the film seem to hover around a binary opposition of transparency versus reservations or distrust.

How to use *auteur* structuralism

The patterns and meaning of the themes and recurring motifs in the deep structures can be discovered by positioning motifs into binary oppositions. Creating a table with the initial headings of 'protagonist' and 'antagonist' is helpful in making sense of the data. Patterns are observed by studying the varying relationships among all the identified and categorised motifs. What is most significant about the patterns is what it all means. After examining the relationships, it is best to articulate the meaning in a clear concise sentence. This sentence becomes the pattern that shapes the text. That pattern can then be used to isolate a director's oeuvre.

Table 14.4 is an example of categorising the recurring motifs in the film *Arrival* (2016). What becomes noticeable is the ways in which certain recurring motifs come to symbolise qualities of the film's protagonist, Louise Banks. Other recurring motifs seem to equally symbolise qualities of the film's antagonist, Ian Donnelly. However, as the film progresses, the personality of Donnelly changes and he eventually abandons his original position (the value that he represents) and his values merge with those of Louise Banks. This could be the pattern that shapes the ways in which the story functions – a pattern suggesting that institutions should be more transparent. Multiple values are being communicated here, but a suggested binary opposition of 'transparency and reservation' might be useful for an analysis.

Table 14.4 Categorising the recurring motifs in the film *Arrival* (2016)

PROTAGONIST	ANTAGONIST
Louise Banks	Ian Donnelly
The individual	The organisation
Will	Force
Trust	Deception
Patience of science	Impatience of army
Open communication	Restricted communication
Pens and pencils	Guns
Civilian clothes	Uniforms
Binary opposition = transparency	Binary opposition = reservation

Once the motifs are understood and a pattern is discovered, the director's identity can then be studied and articulated. A director's identity in *auteur* structuralism is connected to how the surface structures (particularly the *mise en scène*) reflect the patterns in the deep structures.

If the *mise en scène* is used in a careful way to express the ideas found in the deep structures, then the director is deemed to be an *auteur*. The consistencies between the surface and deep structures operate as a measure for artistry. However, if the *mise en scène* is not used in a functional way, then the director is deemed a ***metteur en scene***, meaning that *mise en scène* is present, just not carefully constructed in relation to what is going on in the deep structures.

In *My Darling Clementine* (1946), the oppositions of 'nature and civilisation' structure the story and can be used to isolate a director's oeuvre. Those same oppositions are readily observable in the *mise en scène*. In one scene, the Sheriff (representing civilisation) stands amid a garden full of weeds (representing nature). In this film, there is an observable consistency between the deep structures and the surface structures of the text. This suggests that the director, John Ford, can be considered an *auteur*.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive

Figure 14.31 In *My Darling Clementine* (1946) the director John Ford often used *mise en scene* to communicate the themes of nature and civilisation. Wyatt Earp, representing civilisation, is constantly framed amid untamed and wild nature. Ford's ability to articulate this binary opposition symbolically indicates his insight and cleverness as an *auteur* director.

The importance of *auteur* structuralism faded shortly after its beginning with the advent of post-structuralism and the publication of *The Death of the Author* by literary theorist Roland Barthes.

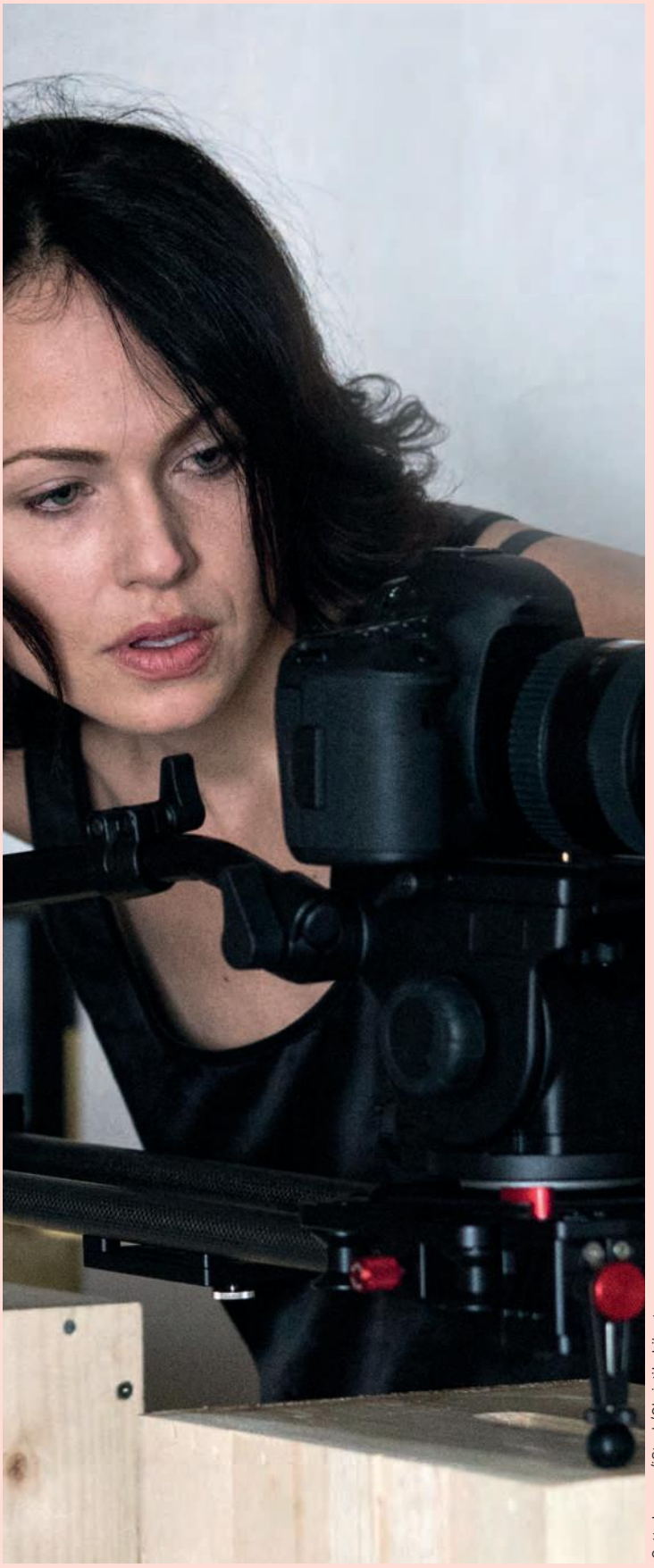
14.6 ACTIVITIES

1 **Analyse** a film to determine its chief binary oppositions. Once you have determined them, create a table and place the binary oppositions at the top of each column. Go back to the film and **examine** the obvious motifs as well as the hidden ones. Try to think of as many as you can. **Consider** where each motif belongs in your table and place them accordingly under each binary opposition.
Explain how each binary opposition you determined shapes the story. **Identify** how the ending of the film works to see how the conflict is resolved and the story is shaped. To do this, you could answer questions such as: Who wins? Who loses? Why? For example, from the above table for *Arrival*, you could argue that 'control' is not always the necessary approach when meeting alien beings for the first time.
Appraise any correlations between the *mise en scène*, the binary oppositions of the text and the director of your chosen film. For example, does the *mise en scène* reflect the binary oppositions in any way? **Interpret** this correlation and try to draw **conclusions** about the worth, significance and status of the director.

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15

Languages and identity



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EXPRESSIVE PRODUCTIONS AND MEDIA ARTISTS

There are boundless ways to create moving-image media that is expressive, stylistic and innovative. Key to creating an innovative product is experimentation – asking 'what if I …?' – guided by a **stylistic intent**.

A media artist may choose to experiment by:

- **Using a single long take to show a long period of time.** Russian filmmaker Alexander Sokurov uses this technique to express 1000 years of history in *Russian Ark* (2002).
- **Modifying technology to allow exploration of an idea.** Australian director Lynette Wallworth's virtual reality documentary *Collisions* (2016) about atomic testing on Martu land in Australia used a camera composed of 16 GoPros to capture 360-degree footage.
- **Composing each shot like a painting to convey nostalgia.** This characterises the work of America director Wes Anderson, such as in *Moonlight Kingdom* (2012), *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), *Fantastic Mr Fox* (2009) and *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001).
- **Challenging editing conventions such as the purpose and use of cutting.** The cinema of the French New Wave (directors such as François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard) uses a cut not simply to progress narrative but instead to linger on beauty.
- **Using close-ups to powerfully express an individual's inner psychological state.** An excellent example of this is in Danish filmmaker Carl Theodor Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).
- **Exploring a personal event through mixing forms.** The use of animation, poetry and music to explore cultural identity can be seen in Ann Marie Fleming's *Window Horses: The Poetic Persian Epiphany of Rosie Ming* (2016).
- **Express an opinion on a political event through stop-motion animation.** Mexican animator PES uses this technique with seemingly unrelated children's toys in the short film *KaBoom!* (2009).



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant Archive/Societe Generale Des Films

Figure 15.1 The stunning, emotive use of close-ups in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) convey the inner emotions of Joan (Renée Jeanne Falconetti). As this is contrasted against a barely present set and minimal *mise en scène*, the audience is forced to focus solely on the face in close-up. Dreyer's shots still look modern today, but in the 1920s he was considered to be experimental.

Key features of expressive productions

Media artists will challenge prevailing codes and conventions, experimenting with languages, representations and technologies, thereby creating expressive and stylistic moving-image products. These products are generally referred to as 'art', 'avant-garde' or 'experimental' film. Avant-garde is French for 'ahead of the crowd'. Moving-image products under this banner are always a vehicle for filmmaker expression, creative innovation and learning about the potential of moving-image media.

Expressive, avant-garde productions are generally characterised by:

- **Experimentation.** This often occurs in terms of narrative or visual representation, or as a departure from current norms or conventions.
- **Focus on the lyrical, poetic, aesthetic or abstract,** such as beauty for its own sake.
- **Frequent iconoclasm.** Avant-garde productions often mock conventional values – for instance, through a focus on extremes of eccentricities.

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- **Restricted context of production and use.** Small budgets, lack of studio use and release for local audiences are common institutional features of expressive productions.
- **Varied creative processes.** Some artists carefully plan their choices, while others prefer spontaneity, with the filming process itself as an act of expression.
- **Expression.** Social or personal expression is a key motivator in the creation of expressive productions.
- **Artistic fusion.** Avant-garde productions often combine elements from other artistic mediums, mixing and manipulating forms to further expressiveness.

Avant-garde films may also feature a lack of characters or human presence, instead focusing on nature or on inanimate objects. Media artists working in the avant-garde often have a social concern driving their work, and an underpinning belief in the cultural and political benefits of making film. Many are supported in their experimentation by collaborators, all aligned by a clear stylistic identity.

15.1.1 *Fresh Guacamole* (2012) by PES

Pes's short film, *Fresh Guacamole* (2012) is the shortest film to be nominated for an Academy Award (Best Short Animated Film). In this film, Pes replaces the familiar objects involved in the creation of guacamole with gambling items such as dice and poker chips. Pes essentially creates avant-garde film, experimenting by removing narrative and animate objects, and using stop motion animation of familiar objects in symbolic, unfamiliar ways. Follow the weblink to the Pes YouTube channel to view the film.

Expressive moving-image media artists

As all moving-image media creators are informed by a variety of influences, examining the work of several expressive media artists will serve to highlight the multitude of ways in which a moving-image media artist can pursue a stylistic intent by experimenting with languages, representations and technologies.

When exploring expressive moving-image media artwork, *auteur* theory is a useful tool for analysing and appraising the work of expressive media artists. In assuming that the director is the author, the central controlling force on a production and the chief creator of stylistic identity, *auteur* theory proposes that the director's body of work will be characterised by three features:

1. **Technical mastery**, indicating an ability to manipulate filmmaking techniques expressively.
2. **Personal style**, stylistically linking all works together with the same recognisable 'signature'.
3. **Consistent representations**, underpinning and linking all works.

The following sections outline a variety of moving-image media artists, from past and present, and from across the world, and highlights the importance of collaborators in the development and realisation of stylistic identity.

Jane Campion (1954–), New Zealand



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Figure 15.2 Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1993). Ada and Flora arrive in the remote wilderness of New Zealand after a long journey from Scotland. The expressive impact of this shot comes from the incongruity between objects and location – a piano, better found in a house, and Ada's elaborate outfit, isolated in a long shot on an uninhabited grey beach. Campion's work often explores isolation and centres on strong female characters.

Table 15.1 Key work of Jane Campion

KEY PRODUCTS: JANE CAMPION	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
An Angel at my Table (1990) *The Piano* (1993) *The Portrait of a Lady* (1996) *Bright Star* (2009) *Top of the Lake* (2013, 2017) – television series	• strong, grown-up female characters – trying to be themselves, but also trying to be what others want them to be • themes explore gender politics, e.g. seduction, repression, female sexual power • isolation • everyday experiences • use of words to express and conceal self • enormous, mystical landscapes • naturalistic audio • dreamy surrealism – actors seem directed to react just a beat after the audience assumes they should • lack of judgement for all characters	Holly Hunter (actress)	Gender stereotypes – role of women

Ivan Sen (1972–), Queensland and New South Wales, Australia



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 15.3 Vaughn and Lena, teenagers on the run, share a joyful moment in Ivan Sen's drama *Beneath Clouds* (2002). Lena, the daughter of an Indigenous Australian mother and an Irish father, spends the film searching for her father. Vaughn has escaped prison because he needs to visit his dying mother. Sen's films explore characters caught between worlds, such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

Table 15.2 Key work of Ivan Sen

KEY PRODUCTS: IVAN SEN	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Beneath Clouds (2002) *Mystery Road* (2013) *Goldstone* (2016)	• themes of dislocation, family, culture and race, place and identity • character caught between two worlds – Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia • taut, pared-back dialogue to allow silences to play out • lingering camerawork	Sen as writer, cinematographer, composer, editor and director	Use of experienced, established actors – Sen often uses first-time performers as his protagonists

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Jean-Luc Godard (1930–), France



age-fotostock/The Hollywood Archive

Figure 15.4 A tender moment between Patricia and Michel in Jean-Luc Godard's film *Breathless* (1960). This sequence, like much of the film, was shot on Parisian streets – a break away from the studio-based nature of mainstream film. Godard, like fellow filmmakers in the French New Wave, used location filming and natural lighting, and didn't always show the audience the actors' faces. Godard liked to show fleeting moments of experience – such as in this moment.

Table 15.3 Key work of Jean-Luc Godard

KEY PRODUCTS: JEAN-LUC GODARD	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Breathless (1960) – also known as *A bout de souffle* *Vivre sa vie* (1962) – also known as *My Life to Live* *Pierrot le fou* (1965) French New Wave cinema	• natural light, creating soft shadows • use of faster film speeds and lighter cameras • handheld camerawork • improvisation • location filming – e.g. on real streets and inside cars • jump cuts and sudden changes in shot distance – cuts as beautiful in themselves, serving to emphasise that the audience is watching cinema • **homage** • sensory experience • self as subject – imagination, fragility, alienation • the shot as a unit of time – of thought, not just action • freeze frames to extend the pleasure of looking • fleeting aspects of experience • a look at the back of actors' heads at times – audiences don't always have to see faces • ambiguous conclusions • unclear character motivations • characters searching for meaning – indefinable, transcendent	Raoul Coutard (cinematography)	• Narrative cinema conventions – Godard is quoted as saying, 'A film should have a beginning, a middle and an end, but not necessarily in that order.' • Cinema not about capturing real life, but as part of life. • Use of studio conventions, such as makeup and three-point lighting • Use of shot and cut – the temporal and spatial continuity of traditional narrative film storytelling

Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), UK and US



Alamy Stock Photo/cineclassico

Figure 15.5 A disorienting moment in Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958). Scotty, the protagonist, suffers from vertigo. Hitchcock portrayed this sensation through use of the famous **contra zoom** (also known as dolly zoom or triple-zoom reflex; see page 30), where the subject remains stationary but the size of the background changes. Hitchcock was influenced by the disorienting perspectives used in German Expressionism, but experimented further with camera movement.

Table 15.4 Key work of Alfred Hitchcock

KEY PRODUCTS: ALFRED HITCHCOCK	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
The Lodger (1927) *The 39 Steps* (1935) *Rebecca* (1940) *Notorious* (1946) *Strangers on a Train* (1951) *Rear Window* (1954) *Vertigo* (1958) *North by Northwest* (1959) *Psycho* (1960)	• understanding of audience, allowing the director to continually adapt to changing values and contexts • shadowy, expressionist-influenced lighting • building suspense through use of silence – influenced by beginnings in silent cinema and long takes • cutting away just when the audience wants to look • loading each shot and each cut with information, conveying characters' thoughts without words • often the middle-class 'everyman' protagonist has been wrongly accused and may engage in a double-chase • female protagonists are glamorous blondes • motifs – stairs, trains, brandy, personal cameo	• Bernard Herrmann (composer) • Cary Grant (actor) • James Stewart (actor) • Grace Kelly (actor) • Alma Reville (screenwriter)	• Hollywood lighting – three-point, studio interiors • Showing the audience what they want to see

Terry Gilliam (1940–), US



Alamy Stock Photo/Photononstop/Screen Prod

Figure 15.6 One of many bizarre scenes from Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985) – cosmetic surgery in a **dystopian** world. *Brazil* takes place in a totalitarian bureaucracy, obsessed with whimsical machines in disrepair. Gilliam uses surrealist, nonsense comedy to portray a society gone berserk.

Table 15.5 Key work of Terry Gilliam

KEY PRODUCTS: TERRY GILLIAM	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS HALLENGED
Jabberwocky (1977) *Brazil* (1985) *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988) *Twelve Monkeys* (1995) *The Brothers Grimm* (2005)	• Surrealism • influence of animation – fantastical *mise en scène* • comic nonsense to create visions of society gone berserk • past or future settings • use of the grim and grotesque – e.g. blood and excrement • revisiting fairytales or familiar stories through a distorted lens • irreverent, low-brow wit • characters are naive dreamers, underdog protagonists • themes explore distrust of systems	Michael Palin (actor)	Social mores

Baz Luhrmann (1962–), Australia



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 15.7 A wild song-and-dance sequence introduces us to the Moulin Rouge in Baz Luhrmann's musical film *Moulin Rouge!* (2000). The tragi-comic story of a star-crossed love between a poet and a courtesan, *Moulin Rouge!* uses well-known pop songs, extravagant, colourful sets and quick-cut musical sequences to construct an over-the-top, un-real world. Luhrmann's 'Red Curtain' style utilises a key device, such as song and dance, to ensure the audience knows they are watching a film.

Table 15.6 Key work of Baz Luhrmann

KEY PRODUCTS: BAZ LUHRMANN	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Strictly Ballroom (1992) *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) *Moulin Rouge!* (2001)	• 'Red Curtain' style • simple, predictable stories • heightened setting • use of a stylistic device to ensure audience involvement and engagement – e.g. iambic pentameter or singing • **hybrid** of multiple styles – music video, musical, stage opera, Hong Kong action films, 1970s disco, Mardi Gras, Bollywood • themes of love and rebellion • hybrid musical 'moments' – pause for extended, dynamic, lavish dance routines • intercut tracking shots • uses editing technology to create a distinct rhythm – fast cuts central to style • set and costume design highly colourful	• Jill Bilcock (editor) • Catherine Martin (production, costume, art design)	• Gender stereotypes • Realism

Akira Kurosawa (1910–1998), Japan



ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 15.8 A scene from the beginning of Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The deliberate framing of the two men and the rising mist creates a mythical, foreboding world. Often Kurosawa's work fuses eastern and western influences – in *Throne of Blood*, Shakespeare is transposed to feudal Japan and infused with traditional Japanese Noh theatre.

Table 15.7 Key work of Akira Kurosawa

KEY PRODUCTS: AKIRA KUROSAWA	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Drunken Angel (1948) *Rashomon* (1950) *Seven Samurai* (1954) *Throne of Blood* (1957) *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) *Yojimbo* (1961)	• fusion of Western editing styles and deep focus with eastern martial arts narrative • influence of John Ford's Westerns, Shakespeare, samurai tradition and classical texts • characters are isolated individuals, such as lonely men and samurai • themes explore ennobling self-preservation and self-sacrifice • framing and horizontal composition • staging of action – unrealistic and exaggerated blocking • deliberate use of movement to be unexpected, meaningful and cinematic • backgrounds of all shots contain movement – weather • shots often contain large groups of people • use of long lenses and deep focus • fluid camera movement in long takes • cut on movement • experimentation	• Takao Saitō (cinematographer) • Asakazu Nakai (cinematographer) • Takashi Shimura (actor) • Toshirō Mifune (actor) • Ichirō Minawa (sound effects engineer) • Teruyo Nogami (assistant) • Kamatari Fujiwara (actor) • Yoshirō Muraki (production designer) • Fumio Yanoguchi (sound technician) • Kurosawa wrote and edited his own work	• When to cut • How to use movement

15.1.2 Akira Kurosawa – Composing movement

Tracey Moffatt (1960–), Queensland, Australia



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 15.9 A dying non-Indigenous woman is cared for by her adopted Indigenous daughter in Tracey Moffatt's *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1990). The film is an emotive portrayal of the relationship between mother and daughter, and is powerfully supported by vibrant, colour-saturated *mise en scène* and a soundscape. Moffatt's work includes photo narratives that probe social and cultural representations of Indigenous Australians and women.

Table 15.8 Key work of Tracey Moffatt

KEY PRODUCTS: TRACEY MOFFATT	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Nice Coloured Girls (1987) *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1990) *BeDevil* (1993)	• **photo narratives** • video collage • formal and stylistic experimentation with still and moving image • explores gender, sexuality, history, representation and race – e.g. social and cultural representations of Indigenous Australians and women • non-realistic narrative scenarios – vignettes • sets: shot on interiors – 'fakeness' of locations • non-acting • evocative use of sound and music • juxtaposition • humans superseded by entities woven within landscape • layering of cultural icons and references, especially Indigenous Australian, photographic and historical	Moffatt tends to work without collaborators	• The social construction of Aboriginality • Linear narrative structures of western Hollywood storytelling

Wong Kar-wai (1958–), Hong Kong



Alamy Stock Photo/Entertainment Pictures

Figure 15.10 Wong Kar-wai's film *In the Mood for Love* (2000) is a dreamy, aesthetically beautiful mood piece set in 1962 Hong Kong. Su Li-zhen and Chow Mo-wan are attracted to each other, but don't want to have an affair and thus stoop to the moral level of their own unfaithful spouses. Wong Kar-wai's characters drift through life, experiencing longing and unfulfilled desire. The director's work is languid and romantic, capturing fleeting moments of beauty, and focusing on creating mood more than narrative.

Table 15.9 Key work of Wong Kar-wai

KEY PRODUCTS: WONG KAR-WAI	KEY STYLISTIC AND AESTHETIC FEATURES	COLLABORATORS	CONVENTIONS CHALLENGED
Days of Being Wild (1990) *Fallen Angels* (1995) *Happy Together* (1997) *In the Mood for Love* (2000) *2046* (2004)	• dreamy, floating camerawork – fleeting moments of beauty • characters are drifters, existential loners • style is languid, romantic, elliptical • rambling, anarchic process • themes of loss, longing and unfulfilled desire; transient, surface beauty of youth, experiencing social and sexual ennui • mood more important than narrative • use of 'dead time', as per **Italian neo-realism**	• Christopher Doyle (cinematography) • William Chang (designer, editor)	• Use of scripts

15.1 ACTIVITIES

1 View two of the works listed in this section – for instance, *KaBoom!* (2009) by PES and *Russian Ark* (2002) by Sokurov.
Explain the stylistic intentions of the artwork. **Identify** the key features of the artwork in terms of representations, technologies and languages.
Analyse how each artist has experimented with technologies. **Examine**, in detail, the component parts of two sequences and use this evidence to help you **make judgements** about the artist's experimentation.
Appraise how the artists used technologies to fulfil their stylistic intentions. **Systematically examine** how technologies have been used through the artworks and **interpret** how these have supported the stylistic intentions. **Draw conclusions** about how significant each artwork is as an example of use of technologies to fulfil stylistic intentions.

2 Select a moving-image media artist from this section and view two or more of their key products.
Explain the artist's style, **identifying** their key languages, technologies and representations.
Explain what the internal, contextual and stylistic influences on the artist have been, **demonstrating** understanding gained from research. **Identify** the significant representations in the artist's work. **Clarify** any links to the artist's influences.
Analyse how the artist has experimented with technologies and languages. **Evaluate** how such experimentations have constructed these representations. **Make judgements** as to whether such experimenting is key to the artist's stylistic identity.
Appraise whether the artist is an *auteur*. **Systematically examine** your analysis and **draw conclusions** using specific examples from the artist's work.
Synthesise a moving-image sequence in the style of your chosen artist. **Plan** and **sequence** audio and visual elements according to the artist's stylistic identity, **solving conceptual and technical problems** as you go.

CREATING EXPRESSIVE MOVING-IMAGE MEDIA ARTWORKS

Just as there are no hard-and-fast conventions of expressive moving-image media artworks, neither are there established processes around the design and production of these artworks.

Designing

Finding an initial idea is often the greatest challenge. An artist may have a message they wish to relay through moving-image media, a story to tell or an idea to explore. To find ideas, artists seek out, explore and reflect on influences. From a political event may come a message, and the form through which to express this message may come from a stylistic influence.

Developing an idea into an innovative moving-image media product requires creative thinking, and a willingness to explore different ways of thinking and doing. Sometimes these haven't been explored before or perhaps they are uncomfortable.



Shutterstock.com/Alhero

Figure 15.11 Experimenting to develop innovative ideas requires thinking outside of the box – reflecting on the known, the unknown and the untried, and giving it a go.

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Once an initial concept or subject is identified, an artist may examine the idea from multiple perspectives and break it down into as many component parts as possible – any narrative, characters, locations, symbols, shots, audio and so on that the subject or concept brings to mind.

Next, an artist may further develop concepts by seeking influences, experimenting, trialling, testing, re-trialling from another perspective, reflecting, collaborating, and seeking feedback from peers and mentors.

Austrian–American screenwriter and director Billy Wilder is known for films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), *Some Like It Hot* (1959) and *The Apartment* (1960). Framed and hanging in his office he had the words 'How would Lubitsch do it?', referring to fellow director Ernst Lubitsch, a major influence and mentor. Having a mentor, clear influences and a mantra helped Wilder generate ideas, solve problems and ensured that stylistic identity was clearly maintained through all processes of experimentation and creation.

A key principle in the generating and refining of concepts, common to all innovative and stylistic moving-image media artists, is asking the question 'what if?'

What if *I* …

- tried to approach this like a stylistic influence or mentor would?
- simplify the story further, or remove something from the shot?
- repeat a symbolic audio, visual or story element?
- merge unconnected shots, stories, styles, sounds and visuals through editing?
- extend, expand or literally magnify an idea, image, object or technique?
- transfer the idea, object or images to a different time, context or location, or approach from a different point of view?
- put the audience in the subject's shoes?
- give inanimate objects human qualities, such as through animation?
- layer images over images, or sounds over sounds?
- increase or decrease the size of a shot or element of *mise en scène*, or the volume or pitch of a sound?
- swap something else into the place of a key object or image?
- use editing to dissect or interweave ideas or emotions?
- twist subjects, characters or stories through use of *mise en scène*, shots, audio, effects or editing?
- hide ideas or objects within something else?
- portray the inverse of a symbolic element of *mise en scène*?
- link unrelated techniques, styles, forms, audio, concepts or objects to each other?
- ridicule an idea through humour, visual jokes or references?
- use camera movements, angles, lighting and audio to make an object gain further symbolism?
- create metaphors?

Useful creative thinking tools for generating ideas are synectics – the 'what if' thought triggers initially outlined by Nicholas Roukes. Having approached their concept from a variety of angles by asking 'what if I …', the artist will then reflect on any experiments and select the best option, structuring this into a cohesive design concept.

15.2.1 Synectics

Producing

Producing expressive moving-image media artworks is, at times, a spontaneous and fluid process. A product may be precisely planned down to each shot or it may organically evolve through multiple iterations of experimentation and reflection.

An artist influenced by the Dada movement, where process is the most important factor, will focus on experimentation – on play, chance and reflection. From these experimentations, the artist will create a final artwork with technologies, languages and representations that best align to their stylistic intent. However, an artist influenced strongly by German Expressionism is more likely to carefully plan each shot of their process, given the essential role to the style of *mise en scène* and the required props, costumes, settings, lighting and acting.

Synthesis of a design concept into a tangible product through the production process requires continual pause for reflection and review. Reflection and review of a concept is done by self, by peers and by mentors to evaluate and refine the artwork. New possibilities may emerge that lead to further refinement.

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15.2 ACTIVITIES

1 **Explain** a key idea or concept for an expressive production. **Identify** any key audio, visual or symbolic moments.
Analyse your concept. **Consider** it from multiple perspectives, so that you can **examine** as many of its component parts as possible (narrative, characters, locations, symbols, shots, audio, and so on) that the subject or concept brings to mind. **Make judgements** as to what you think are key elements.

2 **Construct** a concept for a short art film, **designing** using a format such as storyboard or treatment.
Experiment with film languages and representations in order to create your design.
Appraise why your favourite moving-image media products appeal to you by **systematically examining** their style, creative process or the identity they are expressing. **Review** your design concept according to these influences.
Structure your film product, **systematically sequencing** your footage and audio according to your design.
Experiment with technologies throughout your production process in order to fulfil your creative vision.
Synthesise your production, **solving technical and creative problems** to **combine elements** into a final product.

DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTIONS AND MEDIA ARTISTS

Michael Moore (1954–)

Moore's documentaries and approach to filmmaking have been the subject of controversy on numerous occasions. Much of the criticism stems from the ways in which he represents truth. Prior to the 1980s, documentary filmmaking constructed truth in terms of absolute fact: the image that appears on the screen must have a strict correlation to the object recorded in reality. Moore's construction of the **real world** represented a departure from that basic convention. Much of his work received criticism for failing to convey truth in documentary form.

The biggest contention was over one of his earlier works, *Roger & Me* (1989). This documentary focused on the impact of closing the General Motors auto factories in and around Flint, Michigan. While the film received critical praise for its comedic approach to the social and economic problems of the factory workers, particular attention was levelled at how events were represented.

According to film critic Pauline Kael, the film was not a documentary because it modified the narrative in order to construct a more meaningful climax. Moore responded by admitting that events were reconstructed to elevate emotional investment, but he remained adamant that this did not change the nature of the work. For Moore, the work was still a documentary because it conveyed the **essence of truth**. This is precisely the point about Moore's approach to documentary. Truth does not necessarily need to be an exact representation – if the essence of the matter is communicated, then it doesn't matter how it appears in screen space because the message remains the same, Moore says.

Representing the 'essence of truth'

Moore's approach to truth is simply a subjective reworking of the representation of the real world. His documentaries transform truths in various ways, and in so doing reject the notion that there is only one objective way to read the historical world. To a large extent, the difference from earlier approaches to documentary is located in his perspective and attitude.

> 'I think of what I do as a work of journalism. It's more than the op-ed page, though. These are my opinions. My point of view.'
>
> **Michael Moore**, documentary filmmaker

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Although Moore's reshuffling of narrative events to heighten experience might violate documentary convention, his argument is presented in a much more accessible way. For Moore, that is the point of documentary – audience positioning. In *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), Moore employed the use of animation to convey a point about the real world. This was highly experimental at the time. It represents one of the many ways in which he created new conventions in representing truth.

The essential issue was that animation is typically reserved for children's television, and not the appropriate tool for an adult text such as documentary. However, Moore's decision to employ it was connected to the ideas surrounding the 'essence of truth' – truth could still be represented even if the camera was not used to capture the communication.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 15.12 In *Bowling for Columbine*, Michael Moore discusses the fascination with guns with *South Park* creator and animator Matt Stone. After this scene, a highly innovative animated sequence was used to convey the history of guns in the US. This animated scene was created by Matt Stone specifically for the documentary.

Since the 1980s, documentary filmmaking has begun to embrace new directions in representing truth. Today, documentaries often mix fact with fiction film techniques in order to convey a point more effectively – a technique that Moore employed in *Bowling for Columbine*. Moore's approaches to filming and representing truth changed not only the way in which documentary is constructed, but also in how it is received.

Narrative structure

Moore's narratives follow a typical structure of orientation, complication, climax and resolution. For him, narrative is a matter of strategy rather than blind adherence to objective history. Because his interest lies in the power of his persuasion and argument, Moore will record truths but then reshape them to help push the complication in a more dramatic fashion. This has a run-on effect – the climax is elevated even further, and the catharsis or relief the viewer feels at the moment of resolution is more succinctly felt. Sometimes this process may require showing information in a different order to how it occurred in history. It also may require withholding information or omitting certain truths to elevate the engagement.

Documentary in general seeks to engage its viewer either through emotive or persuasive means. Moore's choices related to how his narratives unfold are merely an expression of that desire to engage emotionally and persuasively with viewers. In *Bowling for Columbine*, Moore chose to open with a comical scene where he obtains a shotgun by simply opening a bank account. This scene, along with its satirical content, shapes the argument being presented about the current state of gun laws in the US, and how this is related to the school shooting at Columbine. Although Moore's shotgun purchase occurred a few years after the Columbine shooting, and in many ways was entirely unrelated, the scene can be considered in the documentary as being historical. Moore used the scene to shape how he had interpreted the history of America's gun laws in the documentary. The scene is featured at the start of the documentary, as a part of the orientation, in order to position the viewer to think about gun control and the Columbine massacre in the same sentence.

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Figure 15.13 Michael Moore purchases a shotgun in a bank to illustrate the state of gun control in the US. This scene, occurring a few years after the Columbine school shooting, is the opening for his documentary *Bowling for Columbine*. Moore used this scene to establish the key conflict in his narrative, and to help present a convincing argument for the viewer.

Aesthetics and style

Much of Moore's approach to aesthetics is related to his personal views about persuasion and its connection to the documentary genre. His stylistic choices are generally employed to elevate the likelihood of emotional investment. Thus, his aesthetic and style are informed by persuasion. Music is one of the ways in which Moore creates a certain tension that underpins his narrative. This is primarily because Moore wants to elevate his argument to be much more persuasive. During comical scenes, light-hearted music is used to support the humour. During emotionally charged scenes, Moore will strategically use sad music to amplify the effect of the 'acting' on the screen. In so doing, Moore's work begins to border on representation rather than fact. This is Moore's style and his personal identity as a documentary artist – it is about the essence of truth, not an exact replication.

Moore frequently uses cinéma vérité as his chosen means of communication. This shapes his work according to a more accessible realist aesthetic, but also converts his style to be more aligned with reality. The use of simple, handheld cameras creates a more intimate and engaging aesthetic that the viewer equates with real experience. The freedom of the cinéma vérité style allows Moore to improvise with more efficiency. Instead of being bogged down by large tripods and convoluted camera set-ups, Moore is able to move through space to capture what is needed. Again, this is about persuasion – that movement through space translates into a dynamic viewing experience on the screen. There is an allure in the way the camera has the power to bring the viewer into the action.

Moore's aesthetic and style are also informed by the use of direct address. Since he is a participatory filmmaker, Moore will sometimes use his presence in screen space to speak to the viewer. At other times, his voice appears as a part of a commentary, usually during emotionally charged montage sequences. In this way, Moore's voice functions as one of authority. The deep and richly toned nature of the voice lends itself to the ways in which viewers receive it as authoritative. This is not necessarily a result of Moore himself, but rather how male voice in documentary in general came to be equated with fact over time.

Persuasiveness

The viewer's role in the documentary process is simple – to be engaged. Engagement is not just a matter of emotional investment, even though Moore's texts are structured around the idea of entertainment. Persuasiveness is an engaging element that shapes the flow of information. A viewer must engage with the nature of that persuasiveness if the argument of the documentary is to be successful. That is not to say that a documentary does not have an accessible emotional plane. There are many examples of Moore's work where the real world is framed to evoke emotions.

Sicko (2007) features a lot of moving stories of medical patients who have suffered under an unfair medical system bent on profit. While not necessarily argumentative, its content is emotionally charged enough to convince the viewer of the plight being represented. Primarily, Moore makes use of logic and rhetoric in his information flow. Starting with a premise, he then proceeds through a well-reasoned argument in order to reach a logical conclusion.

Werner Herzog (1942–)

Werner Herzog's documentaries have received notable critical acclaim. As a result, they have become a very popular body of work consisting of over 70 films. Often compared to art-house cinema and Impressionism, Herzog's films have been the subject of fascination for many film critics. Herzog's understanding of film is a product of his time spent in the German New Wave movement, and much of his identity stems from this. However, at the same time, he was anxious to distinguish his own work as unique.

> 'The roll of unexposed celluloid you have in your hand might be the last in existence ... so do something impressive with it.'
>
> **Werner Herzog**, documentary filmmaker

His approach to filmmaking is highly experimental and serves as an interesting case study in the intersection between art, personality and the goals of documentary. One of the chief characteristics of his work is the physical dimension of filmmaking that he often exhibits – a director in action, running around and being very much an active part of the diegesis. He once described filmmaking as athletic work.

Cinematography and narrative form

One of the best ways to exemplify Herzog's experimentation with documentary is through an examination of cinematography and narrative form in his film *Lessons of Darkness* (1992). Forgoing typical approaches to documentary via narrative structure and cinéma vérité, Herzog constructed a unique perspective of the real world that was entirely dependent on editing and style. This film was shot at the tail end of the Gulf War, and was recorded in a raw, direct manner. The focus of the footage is the burning oil fields of Iraq. The theme of the film hovers around anti-war sentiment – however, it grows to be much more than just that. *Lessons of Darkness* has been described as a work of art. The film employs long takes of the oil fields, shot from an aerial camera, which are then supported by beautiful music.

The purpose of this approach to sequence is to mirror the scope of the damage. As the oil fields seem to drift on and on into the distance, seemingly without end, so does the cinematography. As such, the film becomes a damning survey of wanton destruction, combining beautiful spectacle with violence. Herzog did not redefine documentary in this simple approach, but he did find a fascinating way to allow the truths of the real world to speak for themselves.

The use of the single long take meant that narrative structure was not needed. There was no need to orient information to lead to some kind of climax. The image is all the persuasion that the viewer needs. In some ways, the film is similar to how the poetic mode draws on the real world for its commentary. This film draws on the real world through an aestheticised composition, and a particular and simple shot scale. The film has a mesmerising effect on the viewer. Just before the imagery becomes entirely too boring, the sequence is interrupted by a simple interview in which a mother recounts the effects of war on her child. Then, just as abruptly as its opening shot, the film ends.

Documentary truth

Herzog's work is not always strictly a matter of objective **documentary truth**. A number of his films interrogate the differences between fact and fiction. Herzog will use any filmic device he sees fit to communicate his content. This unconventional approach to the design of documentary stems from a simple belief that the boundary between documentary and fictional film does not exist. For him, all stories convey truths – all films take facts and mould them in specific ways. There is no such thing as documentary, and no such thing as fiction film. There is only film.

Herzog believes that real life and fiction feed off each other. This gives him more freedom. Sometimes he might apply style, sometimes he might not. Sometimes he might use a script, and other times he might not. He does this in order to pursue an illumination of moments of truth. If his interaction with the real world happens to bend facts, then there is no cause for alarm, he says. He claims that he seeks 'ecstatic truth' – rare moments of illuminated truth accessible only through style. It is in this sense that he sees himself as more of an artist than a documentarian.

This kind of improvisation does at times lead to issues. However, for Herzog, this is just a fact of life. Mistakes will be made in the process of filmmaking. In many ways, mistakes serve to provide character to both the filmmaker and the text. For this reason, Herzog suggests to never do 'reshoots'.

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15.3 ACTIVITIES

1 **Analyse** at least two scenes from a documentary by Michael Moore. **Interpret** the text to determine what parts appear to be examples of actual truth, and then to determine what parts of the text appear to be examples of an 'essence of truth'. **Construct** a table that illustrates your answers. **Design** the table using the column headings 'Pre-1980s truth' and 'Post-1980s truth' and place your analysis answers in either column.

2 **Analyse** at least two scenes from a documentary by Michael Moore. **Examine** the similarities and differences between Moore's text and the various documentary movements. Is there a movement that fits neatly? Is there more than one movement that connects to Moore's text?

3 View one of Michael Moore's documentaries and one of Werner Herzog's documentaries. **Analyse** each documentary, **breaking them down** into **constituent parts** and **examining** each in their portrayal of truth. Compare the two texts using the features of documentary movements and styles as points of comparison or **criteria**. How are they similar? How are they different?

WORLD CINEMA

World cinema usually refers to films from countries outside of the English-speaking world. However, the term can also indicate films from countries outside of one's own country – as long as that excludes Hollywood! Before world cinema, Americans tended to use the term 'foreign films'.

Typologies of world cinema

A classification system for films from around the world has been prepared by Dr Stephen Crofts, an authority on national cinemas. He lists eight types of cinema:

1 **United States cinema** – may include US independent and also English-speaking cinema that imitates US cinema production style.
2 **Asian commercial cinema** – includes Hong Kong, Japan and Bollywood.
3 **Entertainment cinema** – in Europe and the developing world.
4 **Totalitarian cinema** – includes cinema in states such as Iran, where there is considerable political or religious control.
5 **Art cinema**
6 **International co-productions**
7 **Third cinema** – political and revolutionary in nature (see following section).
8 **Sub-state cinema** – small centres of filmmaking within a larger country; for example, French-speaking Quebec in Canada or possibly (since 1997) Hong Kong within China.

Another system was devised by Argentinian filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino. They list three cinema types in the world:

1 **First cinema** – large-scale commercial production along Hollywood lines. It includes Bollywood and Hong Kong cinemas. 'Third-world' India hosts a 'first cinema' commercial industry.
2 **Second cinema** – art-house, *auteur*-style and independent means of production represent the second mainstream type of cinema.
3 **Third cinema** – made up of political films of liberation from national and corporate oppression. Third cinema is not necessarily 'third-world' cinema. It can be made in the first world (developed countries). For instance, Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me* (2004) might be called 'third cinema'.

Indian cinema

> 'Cinemas are the temples of modern India.'
>
> **Das Gupta**, Indian film critic (1921–2011)

Indian movie production is twice the size of Hollywood's. The statistics are staggering. Close to 1000 new films each year are distributed to more than 13 000 movie theatres, with an average audience of 11 million each day. More than 800 languages are spoken in India, and there can be as many as 20 different language versions of the same film. The cinema is perhaps the sole model of national unity, says Indian cinema analyst Vijay Mishra.

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Bollywood

Bollywood was originally a nickname for the Indian film industry, but it has now gained wide acceptance as a term for the Hindi-speaking film industry based in the city of Mumbai. The name is a combination of Hollywood and Bombay (the old name for Mumbai).

The Bollywood style of filmmaking is also used in other film centres throughout India. The Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam commercial cinemas produce films in their own languages but use Bollywood conventions.



Alamy Stock Photo/Pep Roig

Figure 15.14 Indian cinema produces more movies each year than Hollywood. In the cities as well as the villages, the cinema has an important cultural place in Indian daily life.

Cultural context

After their shows in Paris, the Lumière brothers brought the first moving pictures to India in 1896. The first Indian feature film was made in 1913, and it dealt with themes from Indian mythology – gods and demons in combat. Cinema became immensely popular very quickly, partly because most Indians could not read and had relied on an oral tradition of storytelling.

By the 1930s, India had developed a studio system very similar to that used in Hollywood. Just as the American cinema developed the classical Hollywood narrative, India developed its own pattern of storytelling. Many films had a mythological basis and used song and dance extensively. A Bollywood film of the 1930s could have 50 or 60 song sequences. As box office prices were relatively high, audiences wanted their money's worth, so the length of a feature film was established at about three to four hours.

Around the time of Indian independence from Britain, movie stars became prominent in Indian life, and magazines and newspapers began writing about their exploits. The huge success of the film *Mother India* (1957) showed the ability of the film industry to reflect the national mood and become a uniting force in Indian culture.

'Playback singers' gained wide acceptance at this time as the links between the film music industries developed. On-camera actors mimed to the off-camera voice of the playback singer. The practice became so widespread it was soon normalised. Even today, Indian audiences readily accept singing voices that are dramatically different from the actors' real voices.

Today, 70 per cent of India's population lives in villages. In the mid-20th century that figure was even higher, but by the 1970s the great movement to the cities had begun. Cinema-going audiences grew. Action and revenge movies became popular. Bollywood films began to take a mixed approach to filmmaking, combining all genres in a single movie. Sometimes this is referred to as Bollywood masala (spice). 'This can translate into the hero fighting a sinister politician in one scene and serenading his heroine, with forty dancers moving in unison behind him, in the next,' says Indian film expert Nasreen Munni Kabir.

> 'Most Bollywood films do not shoot what we know in the West as sync sound. Large numbers of Indian films are totally dubbed after the movie has been edited.
>
> As much as 30 per cent of a film's financing can come directly from the "music launch" of an upcoming release. This usually takes place a few weeks before the general release of the picture.'
>
> **Larry Engelmann**, Bollywood film colourist

In the west, the music recording industry developed separately from the movie industry. In India, these industries are intertwined. By the 1970s, films had become one of the prime sources of recorded music in India. Pop music was the song-and-dance music from Bollywood films. Cheap cassette players made it possible for the bulk of the population to listen to much-loved film soundtracks.

Television and video came to the Indian villages in the 1980s and 1990s, changing film viewing habits dramatically. Many villages pooled their funds to install satellite dishes. As a result, Bollywood suffered a temporary decline.

One way that Bollywood countered the influence of television in the 2000s was to increase the spectacle and glamour in movies. Another response was the rise of independent producers, many of whom rejected the escapism of traditional Bollywood in favour of **social realism**.

Features of Bollywood cinema

Like Hollywood, Bollywood makes many different kinds of films. India has a significant independent sector producing what might be called art films. However, some features of Indian filmmaking have remained consistent over the past century. Certain themes or discourses crop up regularly, even though filmmakers address them in different ways and from different points of view.

- **Length and time.** Bollywood films are usually between three and four hours long. Hindi films also structure time somewhat differently from Hollywood films. Flashbacks are used extensively. Stories are not always told using the sequential time structure of the average Hollywood blockbuster.
- **Indian nationalism.** Many films raise questions of Indian identity. Some films are concerned with the Indian nation and its history. Others touch on national identity only as it affects individuals.
- **Mythology.** Like many western epics or fantasy films, Bollywood films often refer to mythological characters such as gods and demons. They may also draw on traditional religious stories or folktales. For instance, *Love Story 2050* (2008) combines science fiction with an eastern mystical approach to reincarnation.
- **Traditional plots.** According to Indian film critic Asha Kasbekar, certain plot lines crop up frequently in Bollywood films.
  - **Family relationship plots** are very common and often focus on an individual character and his or her response to dilemmas relating to family duty. Family plots also often involve a search for a lost brother or a quest to be reunited with the character's mother. Arranged marriages are another common plot element. One film that demonstrates this concern with family is *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham …* (2001).
  - **Romance stories** are a main theme of Bollywood. In a typical story, an impoverished young man falls in love with a wealthy woman. Her father disapproves, and the young man must prove his worth – perhaps by saving her father's fortune, or even his life. Love triangles also feature regularly in Bollywood plots.
- **Song and dance.** Every film typically has five to ten songs, often dubbed by professional playback singers. Film soundtracks represent 75 per cent of the total music market. Most films feature at least two dance items. The dances are a loose mixture of traditional and western music styles.
- **Emotion.** Emotional appeal is considered very important in Indian film, says Asha Kasbekar. 'It must reach out and touch their hearts.' This tradition goes back to ancient Indian theatre, which is governed by eight emotions (love, humour, energy, anger, fear, grief, disgust and astonishment) and eight matching sentiments (erotic, comic, heroic, furious, apprehensive, compassionate, horrific and marvellous).
- **Spectacle.** Traditional Indian entertainment uses elaborate costumes, makeup and masks. Bollywood has incorporated these traditions into spectacular visual displays. Lavish sets and exotic locations make expensive backdrops for actors in glittering costumes. Love songs and dances are often performed as elaborate dream sequences. Often a new panoramic setting and complete costume change accompanies each verse of the song. Switzerland is a favourite location because it resembles the alpine beauty of war-torn Kashmir. *Salaam Namaste* (2005) was filmed in Melbourne. *Love Story 2050* was

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filmed in Adelaide. Other films set in Australia include *Janasheen* (2003), *Chak de! India* (2007) and *Prem Aggan* (1998).

- **Stars.** It is possible that the stars in Bollywood are more important to a film's success than they are in Hollywood. Male stars earn much more than female stars, but both earn vast sums of money compared with ordinary Indians. Unlike Hollywood stars, Indian stars work on numerous films at once. It is not uncommon for them to be acting in 10 to 12 films at the same time. Huge hand-painted billboards of stars are all over Indian cities. These actors often appear in national television commercials as well, and many go on to pursue political careers.
- **Genre 'masala'.** Bollywood films almost always include a mix of family drama, action sequences, romance and music. Many genres can appear in one film. The primary focus is the emotion of the film, and the dominant emotion determines the style of film.
- **Censorship.** Just as Hollywood was constrained by the Hays Code (see chapter 3, page 64), Bollywood has its own censorship code. The focus is on perceptions of decency and morality. Nudity is forbidden. A discreet kiss is rarely permitted in a love scene. Seductiveness is therefore transferred to the song-and-dance sequences.



Reuters/Danish Siddiqui

Figure 15.15 A travelling cinema set up in the village of Palli. With nearly half of India's population living in villages, Bollywood filmmakers must take into account that their films may be shown on ancient projectors with the sound system turned up high to drown out the noise of cooling fans.

Indian movies

The following titles are among those that have been released in Australia on DVD. Many of them are by 'indie' (independent) directors rather than Bollywood directors.

Table 15.10 Indian films released in Australia on DVD

INDIAN FILM TITLE	DETAILS
Earth (1996)	While not strictly a Bollywood film, Deepa Mehta's feature *Earth* addresses Indian nationalism.
Salaam Bombay! (1988)	This moving film is in the Indian independent social realist tradition rather than commercial Bollywood style, but it makes a useful contrast. Many of the actors are amateurs and street children. It was funded internationally.
Monsoon Wedding (2001)	Although funded internationally, Mira Nair's film contains many of the traditional elements of Indian cinema.
Queen (2014)	This film by Vikas Bahl is often seen as feminist. A young woman is jilted by her fiancé and then decides to go on her honeymoon by herself. She travels alone in Europe and eventually thanks her ex-fiancé for freeing her from her old identity.
Raman Raghav 2.0 (2016)	Directed by Anurag Kashyap, this film is based on the story of a real-life 1960s serial killer who lived in Mumbai. The film is a violent thriller about a policeman and a murderer whose lives seem to mirror each other.

Influential Indian directors and identity

Anurag Kashyap (1972–)

Sometimes called the Tarantino of India, Anurag Kashyap is often hailed as an *auteur* in Indian film. He is often seen as having a signature style and tends to have a set of common themes in his work. Kashyap is often credited with having influenced Danny Boyle in the making of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). His films are well-known in world cinema circles and include *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012), *Ugly* (2013) and *Raman Raghav 2.0* (2016). Kashyap's work tends to exhibit the following features:

- brutal realism
- dark but very engaging stories
- noir-ish dystopian *mise en scène*

- angry arrogant characters struggling with personal issues
- experimental **soundscapes**
- innovative editing.

A key influence in Kashyap's filmmaking are his own life experiences. The experience of the migrant as someone perpetually in motion across global urban environments is a common theme in Kashyap's films, argues Kaushik Bhaumik of Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi. Most of his main characters are migrants in one way or another, says Bhaumik. However, they are migrants in a brutally greedy globalised world.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 15.16 *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012) is the gory story of the violent power struggles between three crime families. Some critics have likened it to the Australian film *Animal Kingdom* (2010).

Deepa Mehta (1950–)

The Indian–Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta became widely known with the release of her elements trilogy. Each of the three films focuses on the experience of Indian women in different ways. *Fire* (1996) focuses on controversial female desire, *Earth* (1998) looks at the experiences of women during India's battles for independence, and *Water* (2005) looks at the oppression of Hindu widows. Mehta moved from India to Canada in 1973. She sees herself as a hybrid person who moves between continents. The work of Mehta tends to focus on the following:

- the oppression and brutalisation of women in traditional societies
- women with a strong sense of inner power
- unconventional people undertaking journeys of new identity to break free from highly restricted traditional identities
- exotic features of traditional India
- migrant experiences.

Mehta has also produced a number of North American films that form another body of work. The Indian films are often about restricted identities and material poverty. The North American films are about life in overly individual societies where family and community ties have broken down. The lonely characters in these films yearn for the warmth of traditional extended families and close communities.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 15.17 *Water* (2005) is set in 1938 and deals with the issue of Hindu widows. If their husband died, Hindu women were often faced with death themselves, or with banishment. The films of Deepa Mehta often deal with the restrictions on women in traditional societies, and the journeys the women make to be free.

Chinese cinema

Chinese-language cinema has at least three distinct branches, based in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Since 1997, Hong Kong has been incorporated into China as a special administrative region.

Mainland China also has a diverse cultural mix, embracing the majority Han people and at least 55 minority cultures.

Chinese cinema is taken to refer to the movie production of mainland China. Most of these films are produced by graduates from the state-approved Beijing Film Academy. Production output varies between 100 and 200 films a year.

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Mainland Chinese films are subject to state censorship. The government-controlled press can also be highly critical of movies that pass censorship regulations but still meet with state disapproval.

Context

After the 1949 communist revolution, the government used movies as a propaganda tool. The Soviet style of filmmaking (see chapter 2, page 40) was the biggest influence during the Chairman Mao era. All foreign films were banned. Chinese films focused on revolutionary heroes and the struggles of working people to overcome oppressive landlords and capitalists.

Under Chairman Mao, romance stories were discouraged. Rather, young men and women shared political idealism and revolutionary goals. The state called this style of filmmaking 'socialist realism' or 'revolutionary romanticism'. Directors were ordered to integrate revolutionary movements into their films and to portray characters as class types. For instance, a hero would always be a factory or farm worker, whereas a villain would always be from the capitalist class – perhaps a landlord or a foreign factory owner.

Directors were also ordered to make their films as Chinese as possible. Often they would include symbols from traditional poetry or painting. For example, a shot might be framed by branches of blossoms in the style of traditional 'bird and flower' painting. Or a film might start with a long tracking shot or pan to represent the unrolling of a scroll.

After the opening of China to world trade in 1978, a new generation of filmmakers emerged. They were called fifth-generation directors because they were the fifth generation of directors to come out of the Beijing Film Academy since 1949. Unlike earlier graduates, they were allowed to begin directing straight away, and their films began appearing in the 1980s. Fifth-generation directors abandoned the socialist realist model in favour of a return to historical Chinese literary and artistic traditions. The best-known of these films are *Yellow Earth* (1985), *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) and *Farewell My Concubine* (1993). Foreign distribution and funding has ensured these films are well known in the west.

Increasing industrialisation has brought many problems to China's cities. Despite state censorship, a 'sixth generation' of film-makers is beginning to depict these problems. Their films are often privately financed and shot in low-budget digital formats using handheld cameras. Sometimes they are filmed in secret. The underground nature of sixth-generation films has meant that western funding has tended to stay with fifth-generation directors. One sixth-generation film that is readily available in the west is *Beijing Bicycle* (2001).

Epics are not favoured by sixth-generation directors. Neither are mythical heroes and spectacle – so loved by western audiences. The films are likely to be structured around the daily lives of ordinary people. The narratives are sometimes called 'stream of life' stories because of their natural flowing style and non-political subject matter.

Films of broad international appeal are now being made in China. They star Chinese actors and are produced with a combination of Taiwanese and Hong Kong expertise. Some of these have toppled Hollywood films at the US box office. These internationally produced Chinese films are often in the *wuxia* genre – examples include *Hero* (2002) and *House of Flying Daggers* (2004).

Features of Chinese cinema

Before the 1980s and the fifth generation of Chinese filmmakers, films kept to the socialist realism style. In particular, fifth-generation films are a return to classical Chinese traditions. Chinese painting has been a key source of inspiration. Some critics have referred to this as the 're-Orientalising' of Chinese film. According to Hao Dazheng, professor of film theory at the China Film Art Research Centre in Beijing, these films share many of the following features:

- **Traditional painting style.** Historically, Chinese painting uses a different sense of perspective from that used in western art since the Renaissance. Western art uses a perspective based on the point of view of one person, with the distance disappearing away from a single vantage point. Chinese landscape painting uses a multi-focal perspective that is based on multiple viewpoints. Chinese painting aims to represent spiritual rather than physical truths. In film, this multi-focal approach influences camera style, *mise en scène* and plot lines.
- **Large-scale framing.** In ancient Chinese thinking, humans are mere specks in nature's grand scheme. Chinese painting miniaturises humans in vast natural landscapes. Newer

Chinese films reflect this with an emphasis on scenic shots on a larger scale than is typical in western films. In fifth-generation films and beyond, more of the screen is occupied by space. High or low shots often fill the screen with earth or sky. If humans are represented as only a small part of nature, then there is no need for the traditional Hollywood sequence of shot sizes that move from long shot to close-up.



Bridgeman Images/Private Collection/Paul Freeman

Figure 15.18 In traditional Chinese painting, human figures are often dwarfed in a landscape that occupies most of the frame. Fifth-generation Chinese filmmakers have used the same kind of framing.

- **Medium shots emphasised.** Traditional Chinese social taboos did not allow for the sort of close-up, face-to-face interaction that is permissible in the west. Lots of close-up shots can be a source of uneasiness. Fifth- and sixth-generation filmmakers have preferred medium shots that show a character's activities but do not invite overly personal inspection.
- **Limited shot-size variation.** According to Hao Dazheng, Chinese directors avoid sudden changes of shots. In the west, a jump from a long shot to a close-up may give force and rhythm to a scene. In contrast, Chinese directors often use one primary shot for a whole scene. Transitions to different shot sizes are very gradual. Zooms are viewed as an unnatural progression and are rarely used by fifth- and sixth-generation directors.
- **Lateral tracking through landscape.** The return to traditions has meant that lateral tracking shots are often used. In these shots, the camera moves sideways on tracks past a landscape, revealing an expanding natural environment, rather like multi-focal painting. Lateral tracking makes it possible to shift focus from one character and set of events to another, a little like unrolling an ancient scroll. However, lateral tracking can result in the *mise en scène* looking rather flat – it has length, but little depth.
- **Flat lighting.** The Beijing Film Academy's approach has been to use flat lighting rather than the traditional Hollywood studio style. They have not favoured sharply contrasted shafts of light in the low-key style. Flat lighting allows for a more neutral viewpoint from which audience members can take their own meaning from a scene.
- **Use of colour.** Drawing on the style of the ancient woodblock printers, Chinese filmmakers use primary colours to represent moods and to create episodes within a film. According to traditional Chinese cosmology, a colour can induce certain feelings. The meaning of the colour is not fixed – it can be changed by the content of the scene. For instance, in *Yellow Earth*, red at the beginning of the movie is a positive colour symbolising freedom. It is a masculine or 'yang' colour that is considered to be positive for males in the film, but in the scenes involving females it is considered to be negative.
- **Multi-focal narration.** Chinese storytelling tradition is based on the same ancient world view as Chinese painting, says Hao Dazheng. The narrative technique is multi-focal, with events and characters represented in parallel. In contrast, the Hollywood style more commonly places events in sequence, usually with one other subplot that joins the main plot at the resolution. Chinese narrative also tends to avoid descriptions of people's inner worlds. Instead, says Hao Dazheng, the movies try to affect the viewer through the plots and the vast scale of events.

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State control in Chinese cinema

The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China controls all filmmaking in China. The Department has the following powers:

- Film studio executives must meet with the Department to discuss quotas and targets as well as types of films to be made.
- All scripts must be submitted and approval gained before filming can begin.
- Films can be censored after they have been produced. The Department can demand that a film be reshot. To avoid this, communist party officials within each of the film studios must make sure that the film is in line with government policy.
- The Department is able to control film release dates and their distribution. For instance, if a film is controversial, the release date can be delayed indefinitely until the subject matter seems no longer relevant. An outright ban is also within the Department's powers.

Censorship of nudity, graphic violence and explicit sexual content is a form of social control exercised by the Department. Political controls are also applied to films. Political control has become the main activity of the Department. Films must not question the government or show negative social or environmental conditions. Since the 2000s, there was some slight relaxation of the controls, allowing films such as *Beijing Bicycle* to be released. However, since 2012 there has been a new tightening of regulations.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 15.19 *Beijing Bicycle* is a film from the so-called sixth generation of Chinese filmmakers. It deals with issues facing people in China today – industrialisation, unequal wealth distribution and pollution. Earlier Chinese movies masked this kind of criticism by setting their narratives safely in the past.

Effect on Hollywood films

Chinese censorship has had an influence on Hollywood movies. The Chinese government restricts the number of foreign films it allows into China. In 2017, only 34 big-budget films were imported. Because of this, Hollywood studios are engaging in co-productions with Chinese companies as these are not restricted by the quotas.

The money to be made in China is enormous. *Warcraft: The Beginning* (2016), the film adaptation of the digital game *World of Warcraft* (2004–), made $25 million at the US box office on its opening week. The same film made $156 million on its opening week in China. Financially, it is very important to Hollywood studios to get films into China without censorship. This means Hollywood is cutting out scenes that may offend the Chinese government and including scenes that may appeal to the Chinese market.

Mainland Chinese film

Some mainland Chinese films from the fifth- and sixth-generation directors are available on DVD in specialty video stores in Australian capital cities.

Table 15.11 Chinese films released in Australia on DVD

CHINESE FILM TITLE	DETAILS
Yellow Earth (1985)	The fifth-generation director Chen Kaige is well known in the west. *Yellow Earth* is regarded as the first film of the fifth generation. It is the film that demonstrated the new Chinese film language with its return to traditional national styles.
Farewell My Concubine (1993)	This movie, also by Chen Kaige, gives an overview of China's turbulent 20th-century history through the eyes of two stars of the Chinese Opera. It was banned twice in China before its international release.
Beijing Bicycle (2001)	This film by Wang Xiaoshuai, from the sixth-generation of filmmakers, is concerned with the issues facing ordinary Chinese people as industrialisation rapidly changes their lives. The film pays homage to Vittorio De Sica's Italian neo-realist film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948).
City of Life and Death (2009)	This film tells the story of the 1937 Japanese massacre of Chinese citizens at Nanking. The estimated death toll of this massacre is between 100 000 and 300 000.
Stray Dogs (2013)	This film by Tsai Ming-liang depicts the impoverishment of a family forced into homelessness. The film examines life in China as it industrialises but leaves some people behind.

Influential Chinese directors and identity

Jia Zhangke (1970–)

A leading sixth-generation filmmaker, Jia Zhangke has combined fiction film and documentary elements in artistic ways. In his films, he has highlighted the problems caused by China's transformation into an industrial and commercial powerhouse. He has also highlighted the problems caused by globalisation. Jia's work tends to focus on the following aspects:

- alienation and social dislocation caused by industrialisation
- migrant worker experiences
- those who fall between the cracks as a formerly communist China becomes an emerging capitalist China
- weaving together of documentary and fiction elements
- occasional bizarre surrealist elements
- use of slow long takes
- use of extreme violence in his later films to highlight injustices.



Alamy Stock Photo/Photo 12

Figure 15.20 *A Touch of Sin* (2013) is a very violent film and represents a break from Jia Zhangke's earlier works. Recent violent incidents in China have been widely circulated on Weibo, the Chinese version of Twitter. The film is organised around four of those events and focuses on four very different characters. Jia uses these to draw attention to the social inequality and injustices in post-communist China.

Ning Hao (1977–)

Probably one of the most commercially successful directors in China today, Ning Hao graduated from the Beijing Film Academy in 2003. Although one of China's most popular directors, Ning has developed a very personal style. Well-known films include *Breakup Buddies* (2014), *No Man's Land* (2013) and *Guns and Roses* (2012). Some critics compare his movies to *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998) or *Pulp Fiction* (1994). His work focuses on the following aspects:

- black humour, as used in *Breakup Buddies*
- absurdism
- road movies (China is beginning to make these as the car becomes popular)
- greed
- violence.

Latin-American cinema

Third cinema (see page 371), a term used to describe revolutionary political films, originated in Latin America. However, greater commercialisation has meant that South American films are becoming more entertaining and less political. Mass mobilisation of the people to overthrow fascist governments is less often the goal of modern films. This is partly because of the slow spread of democracy in South America since the beginning of the 21st century, says Latin American film specialist B. Ruby Rich.

Latin-American film refers to the films of the 20 countries within continental South America and Central America, and the nearby Hispanic islands of the Caribbean. The region is called Latin America because the primary languages spoken are Spanish and Portuguese. These are European languages descended from Latin – the language of the ancient Roman Empire.

Many Latin-American countries do not have longstanding, internationally recognised film industries. The key film industries of South America are located in the larger countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina, and also in Cuba.

Context in Latin-American cinema

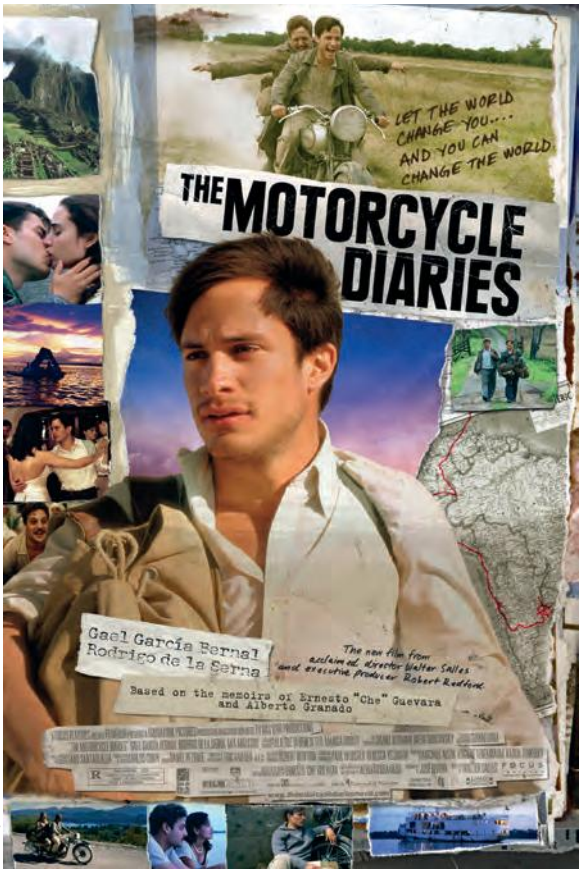
Many of the nations of South America have had similar histories and shared social problems. The continent is torn by class conflict and huge gaps between rich and poor. Dictatorships and corrupt governments have been common. Drug lords and organised crime have created further problems in some countries.

Cuba

In 1959, the US-supported dictatorship in Cuba was overthrown by a communist revolution led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Castro

> 'There is an international division in cinema. Hollywood administers entertainment, Europe art, and Latin America social conscience.'
>
> **Ambrosio Fornet**, Cuban film critic and scriptwriter

became president and, facing hostility from the US, formed an anti-US alliance with the Soviet Union. Moscow provided funds to Cuba – partly in return for a base close to the US. With state funding, the Cuban film industry thrived. Cubans had always been avid cinema-goers, and attendances at film theatres provided a strong support base for the industry. Cuban films became a significant force in Latin America. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 plunged Cuba into an economic crisis aggravated by the continuing US trade ban. Funding for films dried up. Now, only between four and 12 films are produced in Cuba each year. Among the best-known Cuban films are *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), *Strawberry and Chocolate* (1993) and *Guantanamera* (1995).



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection

Figure 15.21 Third cinema, meaning revolutionary political films, is a term first used in Latin America. *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004) traces the early adventures of the Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara.

Mexico

In 2000, Mexico became a democracy after 71 years of one-party rule, although public concerns remain about the conduct of elections. The Mexican film industry is the most productive and the wealthiest in Latin America. It provides competition with nearby Hollywood for the Spanish-speaking audiences of Latin America and the southern US. At its peak in the 1960s, the Mexican industry was producing hundreds of films each year. Whereas many Latin-American filmmakers rely on state funding, most Mexican films are commercially funded. Three Mexican films have been highly successful in the English-speaking world: *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992), *Amores Perros* (2000) and *Y Tu Mamá También* (R-rated, 2001).

Chile

Chile had a democratic tradition but fell under the military regime of General Augusto Pinochet in 1973. Thousands were killed in the brutal intimidation exercises that followed. When his dictatorship ended in early 1990, Chile began its slow transition back to democracy. However, Pinochet had effectively destroyed the film industry. During the Pinochet years, many filmmakers continued to work in exile. After Pinochet, film became an important therapy for the nation, as tragic stories that had been suppressed for 17 years were told for the first time. Two of the most successful films from this time are *The Frontier* (1991) and *Amnesia* (1994).

Argentina

Once a wealthy country like Australia, Argentina was ruled by various forms of civilian and military dictatorship from the 1930s until just after the Falklands War in 1983. Currency troubles, hyperinflation and a huge international debt have led to great poverty and social unrest in Argentina. The country's film industry is small, but it has had success at international art-house festivals. Juan José Campanella is internationally widely known, and Gastón Duprat and Mariano Cohn are two

collaborating film directors and producers who have also created many art-house films. *The Man Next Door* (2009) is perhaps their most famous on the international festival circuit.

Brazil

Brazil, now a democracy, was once controlled by various military dictatorships from the 1930s. The most recent military government held power from 1964 until 1985. Brazil is the largest South American country and also has the largest Catholic population in the world. Great poverty exists side by side with great wealth. Apart from sub-Saharan Africa, Brazil has the most unequal distribution of wealth in the world. About 10 per cent of the population owns half the wealth of the country.

For most of Brazil's history, film production has been sponsored by the state and subject to strict censorship. After a disastrous collapse in the 1990s, the film industry has been revived with increased private investment. About 35 to 40 films are made each year, but production levels vary. A recent Brazilian film that was widely distributed in English-speaking countries is *Central Station* (1998).

Themes in Latin-American cinema

Many of the following features appear in Latin-American films:

- **Magical realism.** A popular style in Latin-American literature and film, magical realism combines everyday reality with supernatural events. Spirituality, folklore and legend merge with the physical world to create a 'magical' reality. Characters seem to accept both real and magical events as of equal significance. For instance, in *Like Water for Chocolate* (1991), Tita's cookery has magical powers of seduction.
- **Social realism.** Many Latin-American filmmakers have used the social realist style (see 'film movements', page 388) to focus on the political and social realities of life for the vast numbers of poor in South America. Casting non-professional actors in these films, such as the street children in *Central Station* (1998), adds to the social realism.
- **Historical themes.** With more than 500 years of interaction between Spanish and Portuguese Europeans and native South Americans (Amerindians), historical themes are a common feature of Latin-American films. Films focus on stories of the ancient cultures of the Aztecs and Incas, Amerindian folklore, and stories of revolutions and political events. There are perhaps two main reasons for this focus on history. One is that the distance from the current political events makes historical subjects safer territory for state-sponsored filmmakers. The other is that damaged societies need to come to terms with their troubled histories in order to move on.
- **Religion.** Latin America has the world's largest Catholic population and a growing evangelical Christian presence. Some film critics say religion is a popular theme because these communities have been abandoned for so long they no longer expect anything from Earthly powers.
- **Gender and families.** Critics note variations among Latin-American countries, but a concern with families and gender relations is a common theme. Charles Ramírez Berg argues that recent Mexican cinema represents masculinity in crisis. Traditional machismo has been shattered, and films seek to redefine masculinity. Often women are portrayed as victims in this crisis. Sometimes the figure of an absent or failed father may symbolically represent the failure of the government or the state. In Brazilian film, children are used symbolically, says Ismail Xavier. 'They feature as an innocence not yet polluted, but about to be if society continues to be what it is.' This idea can be seen in *Central Station*.
- **Economic and political themes.** These themes are never far from the surface in Latin-American films, even if they appear in a disguised form. Directors often see filmmaking as a chance to send a political message. Many films have dealt with:
  - social class and the huge gap between rich and poor
  - economic policies that please world bankers but leave the poor worse off
  - national interest versus US business imperialism
  - corrupt or incompetent government agencies
  - the cruel and ruthless growth of cities and urban slums
  - consumerism and greed that is valued over human life
  - brutal intimidation, whether by governments or by drug lords
  - organised crime.

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Latin-American movies



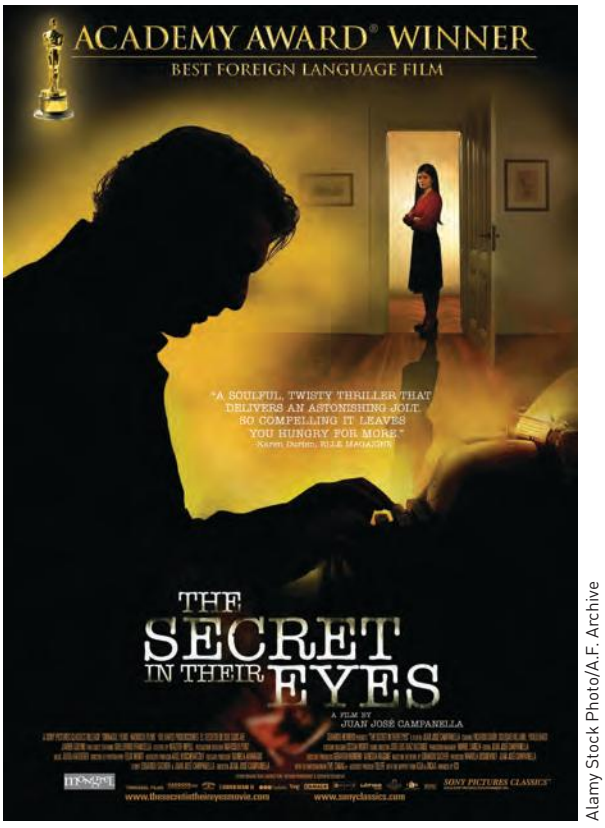
Alamy Stock Photo/United Archives GmbH

Figure 15.22 *Central Station* features a real street child as the lead actor. The former shoeshine boy turned actor used the success of the film to help other abandoned children he had left behind.

Table 15.12 Latin-American films

LATIN-AMERICAN FILM TITLE	DETAILS
Like Water for Chocolate (1992)	This is a romance movie in the magical realist style. The film is set during the Mexican Revolution (1910–17). Although it has been one of the most successful Mexican films ever, critics say the movie masks the problems of life during the 1990s by focusing on a safe and conservative past. The film was sponsored by the Salinas regime during the time of one-party rule.
Central Station (1998)	Unlike earlier films, *Central Station* deals with the abandoned children of Brazil in a positive way within the social realist style. The lead character, a nine-year-old boy, is offered hope in the form of a mother figure who saves him from the fate of most street children. Through the boy's journey, the movie also offers hope of reconstruction for Brazil. *Central Station* features a real street child in the main role. In real life, the former shoeshine boy turned actor used the success of the film to help other abandoned children he had left behind.
The Motorcycle Diaries (2004)	Based on an Argentinean book, this film is a co-production starring a number of well-known Latin-American actors. Officially the film is Brazilian. It is a road movie that recounts the early adventures of freedom fighter Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, one of the leaders of the Cuban revolution. His experiences as a young man on a motorcycle trip through South America sow the seeds of his revolutionary ideals.

Influential Latin-American directors and identity



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Figure 15.23 Argentinean filmmaker Juan Jose Campanella's film *The Secret in their Eyes* (2009) has been likened to a contemporary *film noir*. The film is set in two time periods – in 1974 during a time of great political unrest, and in 1999 as human-rights abusers from the 1970s and 1980s were granted pardons.

Juan Jose Campanella (1959–)

Argentinian filmmaker Juan Jose Campanella is a well-known director in Argentina and throughout Latin America. He began studying as an engineer, but reportedly switched to a career in film after watching *All That Jazz* (1979) shortly before completing his degree. His films are not regarded as experimental, but nor are they standard commercial products. They tend to exhibit the following features:

- high production values with traditional Hollywood continuity editing (see chapter 2, page 41)
- the use of genre – for example, his film *The Secret in Their Eyes* (2009) has been described as 'Argentinean noir'
- concerns with injustice, and repressive and violent governments
- themes of memory and looking back.

Ciro Guerra (1981–)

Colombian filmmaker Ciro Guerra made his breakthrough with *Embrace of the Serpent* (2015), set in the Amazon. Guerra focused on the jungle because it used to represent half of the country of Colombia and contained many different cultures. Much of it has gone now. Guerra's films have dealt with the following themes:

- mythology and mysticism
- pre-history and encounters with westerners
- Indigenous peoples and remote locations.

Iranian cinema

Iranian cinema has grown to become recognised globally, carrying as much critical weight as French and Italian cinema. Its work is described as highly engaging and challenging in its representation of everyday life in Iran.

Iranian cinema refers to film works that are filmed and produced in Iran. Stories often feature life under the rule of a conservative religious government.

Cultural context

Iranian cinema developed shortly after the Islamic revolution era of the late-1970s. The newly established government supported the idea of a film industry and enabled filmmaking to develop under the new government of Ayatollah Khomeini. Although the Iranian cinema was free to film stories, there was a significant amount of constraint set in place by the government. These constraints were all informed by the fundamentalist religious context of the nation.

Representation of public and private life was heavily scrutinised and shaped in accordance with religious instruction. Iranian films are prohibited from representing any physical contact between men and women, including romantic intimacy. Any female characters appearing in stories have to wear a veil along with traditional dress. Most importantly, there are to be no representations of criticism set against the prevailing government. These constraints make it difficult for stories to be earnest or true accounts of Iranian life, but many filmmakers break the rules and tell these kinds of stories anyway.

Features of Iranian cinema

Many of the features of Iranian cinema evolved in response to the government's constraints, in order to enable film to approach contemporary Iranian social reality.

- **Poetic realism.** The influence of Italian neo-realism and French New Wave on Iranian filmmaking cannot be ignored. Realism is a measure of Iranian cinema. Stories often draw on realist aspects either through social content (where unfolding action reflects real life) or through aesthetics (where the image is afforded some kind of style to resemble real life). Realism is also given a poetic slant in Iranian film by directors who merge creative intent with various representations. This is not a departure from neo-realism – instead it is a simple prioritising of directorial intent so that the filmmaker's perspective on the story becomes one with the aesthetic of the film. The colours of objects around a character might change to indicate a psychological state – for example, a cart of fruit might turn grey. The shot is no longer objective in the sense of realism but is a vision of sorts, originating from the character.
- **Static imagery.** The use of the long-held freeze frame is a common device in Iranian cinema. This is a simple device that usually appears as the closing image of a film. It is executed though a fade to black. The shot usually features the lead character in the middle of an action or in accentuated movement. As a device, this kind of shot comes from French New Wave, seen famously in François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959). The purpose of the shot was to represent a fracturing of everyday life – a kind of 'de-dramatisation' by freezing it for contemplation.
- **Disconnected spaces.** Most Iranian films feature a quest through mundane and realistic locations. The journey is often described as a meandering itinerary, which changes locations to be more like disconnected or unrelated spaces. Cinematography is used to hide the geography of the diegesis, so it becomes difficult for the viewer to tell where action is specifically unfolding. Yet as the film progresses, the locations shift and change aesthetically. The ways in which characters become lost in this zone are connected to an overt political commentary.

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Iranian movies

Table 15.13 Iranian films

IRANIAN FILM TITLE	DETAILS
The Runner (1984)	Amir Naderi's film *The Runner* features a story about a young boy who, while struggling to make ends meet, expresses joy in his passion for running. Simple in nature and execution, the film became celebrated. Comparisons were drawn with Italian neo-realism through its use of untrained actors and gritty realist aesthetics.
Where Is the Friend's Home? (1987)	This film is a tale of schoolboy Ahmed's quest to return a homework book to his friend Mohamed. Abbas Kiarostami's story of mistaken property is simplistic yet visually arresting in its execution and delivery. Knowing that the teacher will expel Mohamed for doing his homework in the wrong book, Ahmed sets out on a quest across his hometown to return the homework book to its rightful owner. The film features many scenes of Ahmed running up and down the screen in a random manner, representing the haphazard life of some Iranians.
A Separation (2011)	This Academy Award-winning film by Asghar Farhadi is about a middle-class marriage breakdown and the fallout that lands on the innocence of their daughter. The film is often praised for its simple premise yet complex delivery, not only in narrative but in the subtext as well. The characters are quite richly portrayed through moral, social and psychological dimensions. In so doing, the film casts a spotlight on an often overlooked side of Iranian everyday life.
The Salesman (2016)	A young couple are rehearsing for a production of American playwright Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The house they are in begins to crumble around them – a metaphor for Iranian society. The film depicts the conflicts that women in modern Iran face. It examines the social and religious roles that are gradually changing, even though it is from within an oppressive society.

Influential Iranian directors and identity

Asghar Farhadi (1972–)

Asghar Farhadi is possibly Iran's most successful filmmaker with films such as *The Salesman* (2016) and *A Separation* (2011). Farhadi has received numerous film awards including two Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. The thematic content of his work primarily focuses on social and class structures, expressed in the context of Iran as well as religion. He achieves this by using editing techniques such as cross-cutting and tonal montage to interrogate the relations among class and gender in social contexts. The mixture of imagery creates a kind of disorientation that acts as a commentary on certain aspects of Iranian everyday life.

Abbas Kiarostami (1940–2016)

Abbas Kiarostami received many awards for his work, including the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for *Taste of Cherry* (1997). His style of storytelling differs from one film to the next. However, he does have a tendency to use child protagonists, rural village settings and an odd preference for shooting conversation in cramped spaces, such as the inside of a car. His stylistic approach is very smooth and graceful, making use of tripods for cinematography quite frequently, as well as drawing on documentary-style shooting for realism. His work is characterised in terms of a measured contemplation of Iranian life that stems from the use of carefully designed stylistic imagery.

Tahmineh Milani (1960–)

Some filmmakers have been jailed for their work. Female filmmaker Tahmineh Milani was arrested and charged her film *The Hidden Half* (2001) that questioned the current government. She was also responsible for other breaches of filmmaking constraints by telling stories about couples who resort to crime to survive their social conditions, and a couple out of wedlock being represented as living together in a romantic relationship. Much of her directorial identity is shaped around the political conditions of Iran. Her films raise questions about the rules imposed by religion in everyday life, along with suggesting that the current restrictions are unfair. Her style is informed by realism, forgoing lavish cinematography for a grittier handheld approach to the visual image. In this way, she is able to draw connections between the imagined world of her stories and actual lived experience.

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15.4 ACTIVITIES

1 Using one of the typologies of world cinema (see page 371), provide examples of representative films for each of the categories.
Explain how the film suits its place in the typology, **clarifying** its location in the classification based on your **understanding** of its **meaning**.
Appraise the worth of the two typologies of world cinema. Do you believe they are adequate? Are there cinemas from some countries that don't fit? Are there other types of films? **Make a judgement** about the status of the typologies in the contemporary globalised world.

2 One *New York Times* movie critic believes the typical Bollywood movie can easily set world records in 'genre pile-ups' (number of genres in one film). This may well be true for many other movies of this genre. Select an Indian cinema movie you have access to.
Construct a list of the western genres it seems to bundle together.

3 Select a Bollywood movie you have access to.
Analyse its use of traditional ideas of emotion, **examining** which of the classical emotions and/or sentiments is dominant. **Consider** which others are present and **evaluate** their relative strengths in the story.

4 Compare a Bollywood movie and its use of song and dance with a typical Hollywood musical.
Analyse the way Bollywood inserts musical sequences into the narrative. **Compare** this with the way Hollywood moves narrative forward through music and lyrics.

5 Australian director Baz Luhrmann visited the Mumbai film industry before making *Moulin Rouge* (2001).
Appraise the **significance** of the influences from Indian cinema that can you see in this film. **Draw conclusions** about the degree to which Bollywood has influenced Hollywood through the musical.

6. View a film made by a Chinese fifth-generation director and compare it with one made by a sixth-generation filmmaker.
Analyse the differences you see in subject matter and in characterisation. **Consider** any similarities you see in filming style. **Make judgements** about the styles of the two generations.

7 Select a landscape shot from a well-known fifth-generation film, such as *Yellow Earth* (1985), and also select a landscape painting from traditional Chinese art.
Analyse the two works, breaking each down into **constituent parts** and **considering** the **similarities and differences**. **Make judgements** about the relationship between the two art forms.

8 Select a contemporary Chinese film.
Appraise the film, **referencing** its use of the new Chinese film language (as outlined by critic Hao Dazheng, see page 376) and **interpreting** how the film applies the language.
Explain your findings in a presentation to the class, showing excerpts of the film, **identifying** where it follows these conventions and where it breaks them.

9 Select a Latin-American film you have access to.
Explain the concerns the film raises, **providing additional information** about them beyond what is in the film, and **report** to the class on each situation.
Appraise its status as a film that addresses social and political concerns. **Interpret** the point of view in the film and whether the film presents a sense of hope about the situation. **Make a judgement** on the extent to which improvements have been made since the time in which the film was set.

10 View a Latin-American film that uses the magical realist style.
Explain the use of symbolism in the film and **identify** the ways in which the fantastical elements are woven into the narrative.
Analyse the amount of time the film spends exploring human emotion, **expressing** this as a proportion of total time. **Consider** to what extent the film uses folklore as a basis.
Explain the folklore basis of the magical element, using the internet to **provide additional information** and researched examples.

11 Use the internet to research the funding received by a Latin-American film of your choice.
Explain the nature of the funding, **identifying** whether the film has been funded by state or commercial funding (or both).
Analyse the themes in the film, **breaking them down** into **constituent parts** that reveal the points of view the film is taking.

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Appraise the **significance** of the funding source, **making judgments** on the extent to which the funding source may have influenced the themes of the film. For films that have international funding, take into account what world audiences may expect in a South American film. **Draw conclusions** about how this may have influenced the filmmakers.

12 Imagine Australia is the 'back lot' for the production of a film by a crew from India, mainland China, Latin America or Iran. You are the director.

Construct a 'pitch' for the film that follows many of the conventions of the national cinema and deals with familiar discourses or themes. **Outline** the planned narrative and some of the complications.

Explain how the traditions of the national cinema will be explored in fresh ways. **Identify** the conventions of film language and the stylistic production elements you will use to communicate with the home audience. **Identify** the locations you will use and **clarify** how these will be acceptable to an audience 'back home'.

Construct a workplace health and safety risk management plan, and explain how any action sequences will be fully supervised.

Synthesise the production, filming it and editing it into a resolved moving-image media product. **Solve** any **technical** or **creative problems** you encounter as you go.

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Technologies and identity



Getty Images/Ricky Kresslein

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NARRATIVE FILM MOVEMENTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

According to film academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, whether or not a film belongs to a film movement depends on two criteria:

1 Does the film share features and characteristics of other films from a particular time period or nation? For example, consider any Hong Kong martial arts film made between 1979 and 1989. If it is similar to other Hong Kong films of the 1980s, then it may be part of the 'Hong Kong New Wave'.
2 Do the filmmakers share a belief about what makes a good film with a circle of other filmmakers who work in a similar system? For example, after 1945, a group of French film writers discussed good and bad films, and then went out and filmed their own. Their films became part of the 'French New Wave'. Their ideas and writing still influence filmmakers today.

Soviet montage cinema

Soviet montage cinema was a film movement in Russia during the 1920s that developed around an editing technique called **montage**. Editing styles developed in the early Soviet cinema are still used in most modern films.

Soviet montage cinema is based on the experiments of Lev Kuleshov. In one experiment in his film workshop, Kuleshov edited together camera shots of an actor's face with shots of a bowl of soup. Audiences assumed that the man was looking at the soup and was hungry. In a later experiment he cut together separate shots of a Russian man in Moscow pointing, the White House in Washington, DC, and the steps of a church in Moscow. Audiences concluded that the man was in Washington pointing at the White House and about to walk up its steps. This false connection created in the minds of the audience is called the Kuleshov effect. The idea underpins all modern editing.

Sergei Eisenstein used Kuleshov's findings to come up with his own ideas about **collision of images** or montage. Eisenstein believed that if one shot was 'collided' or juxtaposed with conflicting shot, the audience could infer a third meaning. For instance, when a shot of a man holding his shoulder is collided with a shot of a gun being fired, audiences will commonly derive a third meaning (which is not shown in either shot): that the man has been hit by a bullet.

Eisenstein's collision of images idea was a product of his culture – revolutionary communist Russia. The idea was based on the Marxist theory of the dialectic, one of the foundations of communist thinking. The dialectic theory states that when opposite forces of history clash, they create a third way that is new and different from either.

Films of the Soviet montage cinema

The best-known examples of Soviet montage include the following films.

Table 16.1 Soviet montage films

SOVIET MONTAGE FILM	DETAILS
Battleship Potemkin (1924)	Sergei Eisenstein's film is based on the true story of a mutiny on board the *Potemkin* in Saint Petersburg in 1905. The Tsar's soldiers later opened fire on the ship and its supporters on shore. The use of collision of images in the 'Odessa Steps' sequence (see chapter 2, page 40) makes the scene the most famous example of editing technique in cinema history, with the exception of the shower scene in *Psycho* (1960).
The End of St. Petersburg (1926)	Images of soldiers dying in the muddy trenches of the First World War are intercut with shots of the share market in Saint Petersburg in Vsevolod Pudovkin's film. The point is made that the war was for the profit of capitalists.

Features of Soviet montage cinema

Key elements of early Soviet filmmaking include the following.

- **Editing for emotions.** Soviet cinema used innovative editing techniques to manipulate the emotions of the audience. Collision of images (A + B = C) editing was used by Eisenstein. Linkage editing (A + B = AB) was used by Vsevolod Pudovkin.
- **Types, not stars.** Communist philosophy favoured the action of groups over that of individuals. Soviet films of the time did not have individual film stars. *Battleship Potemkin*, for instance, does not even have a main character. Instead, the film focuses on types of people – those who are typical

of and can be used to represent a group. A **protagonist** appears in some films but only as a representative of a group.

- **Social forces, not individual stories.** In keeping with early communist thinking, Soviet films do not have narratives that focus strongly on individual lives. Instead, stories are about groups of people who take collective action. Events in the story are not motivated by the individual actions of the hero.

Technologies and dialectic montage

Technologies in this movement of film are closely connected to the experimentation with and use of editing techniques. By placing two unrelated images together, filmmakers were able to build sequences that featured dual meanings, and in many cases symbolic suggestions. This was often called dialectic montage.

German Expressionism

German Expressionism was a style of film production that emerged in Germany just after the First World War I (1914–18) and persisted into the mid-1920s.

Like the Expressionist movement in visual art, Expressionist films sought to convey human emotion and feeling rather than to depict conventional reality. One of the most famous Expressionist works of art is Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893). Just as that painting uses a distorted image to express human feeling, German Expressionist film used distorted narratives, sets and *mise en scène* to show emotional truths.

Several factors contributed to the decline of the movement and its disappearance by the early 1930s. The collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler's Nazi Party led to censorship and stronger controls over filmmakers. The persecution of Jewish people, artists and intellectuals forced many to leave Germany. Large numbers of filmmakers migrated to Hollywood in the 1930s, and they took their style of filmmaking with them. Expressionism reappeared as an influence on American ***film noir*** (see page 217) and horror (see page 218).

Expressionist films

The best-known examples of German Expressionism include the following films.

Table 16.2 German Expressionist films

GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST FILM	DETAILS
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919)	Robert Wiene's film is the first and one of the most famous German Expressionist films. A psychotic hypnotist uses a murderous zombie to kidnap a beautiful woman.
Nosferatu (1921)	F.W. Murnau's film was one of the first vampire films to feature Count Dracula. Later, Murnau moved to Hollywood.
Metropolis (1926)	Fritz Lang's film is set in the year 2000. An inventor creates an evil girl to incite a revolt in a futuristic city. Lang fled Germany and moved to Hollywood in 1935, leaving behind his pro-Nazi wife.

Features of German Expressionism

German Expressionist films are highly stylised and unrealistic looking. They have many of the following features in common:

- **Settings and *mise en scène*.** Bizarre and odd-looking settings with distorted buildings create a disturbing impression that seems the stuff of nightmares rather than reality. *Mise en scène* is an important off-balance element in these films. Objects are misshapen or exaggerated in appearance.
- **Characters and actors.** People in these movies are often eccentric or even mentally ill. Actors are heavily made up and their whitened faces and dark lips give them a ghoulish appearance. Characters move with odd jerky actions or overly fluid, floppy gestures. The actors' bodies are part of the graphic design. They seem to be part of the landscape or artistic backdrop – and every bit as weird!
- **Camera work.** The camera uses unusual angles to create the feeling that the world is off balance. There is very little depth in the focal length. Everything appears to be two-dimensional, which is the opposite of Hollywood's deep focus.
- **Lighting.** **Chiaroscuro** or high-contrast lighting is preferred. A shaft of light illuminates the action while deep shadows surround it. This type of lighting is also called **low key**.

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- **Narratives.** The subject matter of German Expressionist films often concerns unnatural acts or disturbed psychologies. Gothic horror is also a common theme.

Technologies and set design

The way in which set design functioned is one way of thinking about technologies. Sets were uniquely designed in accordance with the general mindset of German Expressionism – strange shapes for even stranger stories. For many scholars, the set was a physical expression of a psychological subtext in the story. Much of the work was highly innovative for the time, which gave the body of work more value.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 16.1 A scene from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). German Expressionist films used odd angles and perspectives and unusual proportions to express an emotional state rather than portray a realistic view of the world.

Realism

More than other media, film is seen as the medium of realism. This is because audiences believe the camera reproduces what is 'there'. In more innocent times, audiences used to say, 'the camera does not lie!' Nowadays we know better, but the desire for realism in the cinema has never gone away.

The aim of realism is to capture on camera life as it really is. This may sound simple, but it causes much argument. What does a film have to do to be 'real'? More film movements have been born out of the question of what is real than out of any other debate in cinema history. The growth of digital effects and computer-generated imagery will probably only intensify the arguments.

A realist film aims to project onto the screen actual experience as it is lived by the characters in their own environment. The film convinces its audience that it is presenting a direct and truthful view of life in the real world. A realist fiction film is a drama that seems to be true to life. A realist documentary captures life experience as it happens in front of the camera, as in cinéma vérité.

Types of realism

Two main types of filmic realism have been identified:

- **Seamless realism.** The purpose of seamless realism is to hide from the audience any sense that things are 'just made up'. The construction, sets, camera work and editing all conspire to make you think that what you see is real. There should be no visible joins or 'seams' stitching the different elements together. Most Hollywood movies take this approach.
- **Aesthetic or artistic realism.** Aesthetic realist directors try to make the film 'super-real' – for example, by replacing actors with authentic non-professionals. Sometimes a director will purposely let the audience know that the film is

'Film is truth at 24 frames per second.'

'Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world.'

'Cinema is not the reflection of reality, but the reality of the reflection.'

Jean-Luc Godard, French New Wave director and critic

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a construction; a jump cut might be deliberately inserted, for instance. The idea behind this is usually to allow the audience greater flexibility to make their own decisions about how much 'reality' the movie has captured.

Features of realism

There is limited agreement among film writers as to what constitutes realism. However, many agree on the following four aspects:

1 **Surface reality.** The film needs to look real to convince the audience to **suspend disbelief**. Period dramas, for example, need to look authentic, with nothing out of place that could disrupt the realism. Some directors go to extraordinary lengths to achieve authenticity. To film *All the President's Men* (1976), the entire newsroom of *The Washington Post* newspaper was re-created in a film studio – right down to the scattering of original waste paper from the *Post*'s office!

2 **Realistic acting and characters.** The actors' inner emotions need to be believable. In the Australian war film *Kokoda* (2006), realism is achieved when the actors allow us to feel what it must have been like to have been there fighting in the jungles of New Guinea. But for some of the First World War generation watching this film, realism was disrupted when the language used by the soldiers sounded too modern.

3 **Plausibility.** A film will be accepted as realistic if it coincides with generally accepted ideas about what is and is not believable. For example, the plot of the film should not have too many unbelievable coincidences. What the audience will accept as believable determines the standard. For instance, if 70 per cent of people say they do not believe in ghosts, then a film about ghosts cannot be a realist film – irrespective of whether or not ghosts exist.

4 **Technical and symbolic codes.** Films use technical and symbolic codes to communicate meaning. Over time, audiences have come to accept certain codes as realistic. For instance, we accept music playing in the background. However, in a realist film, we might not accept fades to white because they tend to represent dreams or other unreal experiences. Similarly, we might not accept certain lens filters or colour saturations.

Aesthetic realism

Aesthetic realism may have some of the following features (in addition to those previously discussed):

- **Locations, not studios.** Many directors make a point of shooting only on location and never using studios.
- **Natural lighting.** Hollywood studio lighting, traditional three-point lighting, is abandoned in favour of natural lighting with its shadows and imperfections.
- **Non-professional actors.** Certain aesthetic realists choose their actors from people in the street. Their reasoning is that it brings greater authenticity. Says director Bruno Dumont, 'I choose actors who resemble the characters I've written. I take their physique, I take their psychology. I don't need to discuss with them if they understand the character.'
- **Real-life camera.** Some realist directors place cameras at random and then edit footage based on what they have been lucky enough to capture. What happens on film is left to chance. The Italian movie *Rome, Open City* (1946) tells of the Italian resistance's struggles with the Gestapo in occupied Rome. The film uses footage of life in Rome, filmed in secret, just as the Nazis are leaving and the city is liberated. The shots are of streets filled with a mixture of exhausted and demoralised citizens and panicking German soldiers.
- **Unmediated shots and deep focus.** It is common for realist films to use a lot of long shots and long takes of these shots. This demonstrates the authenticity of the scene, because the illusions created by editing are reduced to a minimum. **Deep focus** (see page 26) is used because it resembles the natural focusing power of the human eye.

Italian neo-realism

Italian neo-realism first appeared in the mid-1940s, and the movement remained popular until the mid-1950s. The movement came to an end partly because the government film sponsorship body refused to fund films that might give Italy a bad name.

Neo-realism was a reaction against the Fascist domination of the film industry under the dictator Benito Mussolini. An ally of Hitler, Mussolini used propaganda techniques in much the same way as

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Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels did. When the US liberated Italy in 1944, filmmakers found a new freedom to tell the truth about life.

Features of neo-realism

Neo-realist filmmakers felt they had a mission – to produce films that told audiences about the harsh realities of life in modern society. Their films had the following characteristics:

- **'Slice of life'.** The Italian filmmakers believed their films should focus on everyday life and give audiences a taste of what it was like to live in the cities of Italy as the war ended.
- **Natural dialogue.** To reflect life as it was, people should talk naturally without the advantage of clever scriptwriting that could hide the real message. Often people 'just talked' in these films, even improvising at times.
- **Non-professional actors.** To really capture ordinary life, the Italian directors dispensed with highly paid actors and instead recruited people off the streets.
- **Location shooting.** Even though the films are fiction, the directors used documentary-style location shooting with random camera placement and sometimes even handheld cameras. Lighting is natural and without the benefit of studio lights.

Neo-realist films

The most widely available and best-known Italian neo-realist film is Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948). It is the story of a poor man whose job is putting up posters around the city. When his bicycle is stolen, he and his young son begin a search for it. The film is about the father–son relationship, but it is also about the causes of poverty and despair in postwar Italy.

Technologies and natural lighting in realism

Technologies in production suffered a process of reduction so that only certain basics were utilised. Amateur actors were employed for films, but they did not step out onto a staged area: sets were the available local spaces. Lighting was dismantled, as were other 'unneeded' technologies such as second or third cameras. The omission of technologies in this cinematic space was an attempt at drawing closer connections to reality.



Alamy Stock Photo/A.F. Archive

Figure 16.2 *Bicycle Thieves*, also known as *The Bicycle Thief*, was one of the most influential European films of the immediate postwar era. It demonstrates most of the attributes of Italian neo-realism.

French New Wave

The **French New Wave** (also called French *Nouvelle Vague*) was a youth-oriented film movement that came about when an influx of young directors took over from France's old-style movie makers in the late 1950s. About 170 new directors came onto the scene at this time. At least half of them had no previous film experience, so they broke all the old rules. With so many new filmmakers, funding was spread thinly, so their movies were nearly all made on very low budgets.

A number of the most famous directors were young film critics who worked for the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* (cinema papers). Having begun writing about films, they decided to make their own. As a result, many French New Wave films are experimental and very intellectual. Best known among these critics-turned-directors are Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut.

The French New Wave had two stages: the first wave from 1958 to 1962, and the second wave from 1966 to 1968. The second wave was very political. It coincided with the student demonstrations and riots across France that almost came to a revolution in 1968.

Features of French New Wave

The French New Wave became a major international influence in filmmaking. French New Wave movies tend to have the following characteristics:

- **Inexpensive and democratic.** The expensive sound stages and studio post-production of the

old cinema were seen as belonging to *cinéma de papa* (old fogey cinema). The new directors shot films quickly on cheap, portable equipment.

- **Disjointed stories.** The narratives of French New Wave movies often lack a clear ending and sometimes even a beginning. The directors rejected the old storytelling techniques. The characters in these movies are complex and serious young people wandering around 1960s France.
- **Broken codes.** Many of the long-established codes and conventions of the cinema were challenged by the French New Wave. The editing style was very fast. Traditional seamless editing was abandoned. Jump cuts were purposely inserted. Even **establishing shots** were often left out.

French New Wave films

Jean-Luc Godard's movie *Breathless* (1959) is regarded as one of the best examples of French New Wave. It is the story of a young delinquent in Paris who falls in love with a visiting American student. Towards the end of the movie she betrays him to the police. Filmed during the same year, and also featuring a young petty criminal, was François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959).

Technologies and mobile cameras

Technologies in the French New Wave movement were more associated with accessibility and aesthetics. The invention of portable, handheld cameras changed the ways in which storytelling functioned. Cinematographers could now find access to spaces that were previously too difficult for a larger rig, expanding the scope of narrative and changing the kinds of stories being told.

British New Wave

The British New Wave was a movement in the British social realism tradition. It dealt with the issues of the early 1960s: rising youth culture, changing sexual values and changes in music and fashion. It also focused on the difficulties of ordinary life for working-class people in postwar Britain. The British New Wave developed in 1958 and continued until Hollywood's export push into Britain decimated the local film industry in the mid-1960s.

The British New Wave movement grew out of the 'kitchen sink' drama movement of the mid-1950s. A group of writers called the 'angry young men' wrote gritty plays about working-class people and the dramas of their domestic lives. They angrily expressed the disappointment of a generation of people who had come of age during or just after the war. The promised new society was failing to deliver. That wouldn't come until the 'Swinging Sixties' and the era of the Beatles.

The British New Wave was controversial by the standards of the 1950s and early 1960s. For the first time in British film, characters had sex lives and money worries, and faced major social problems. Themes included abortion, workplace bullying, unhappy marriages, runaway teenagers, the urban poor and depression.

A typical protagonist was a young working-class male. As traditional industries closed down and the old working-class culture was lost, the hero had to cope as best he could and find a new identity and way of living.

Some British New Wave films

Some important films in the British New Wave movement are the following.

Table 16.3 British New Wave films

BRITISH NEW WAVE FILM	DETAILS
Room at the Top (1959)	Based on John Braine's novel, this film tells the story of an ambitious young man who seeks to escape his working-class background in a bleak northern factory town.
Look Back in Anger (1959)	This film was based on the play (and early experiences) of another of the 'angry young men', John Osborne. It is about working-class life and class friction in a dreary one-bedroom Midlands flat.
The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner (1962)	While running a race against a team from an exclusive private school, a borstal (British reform school) boy thinks about his depressing, poverty-stricken life, comparing it with their privileged lives.

Much later, in the 1980s and 1990s, the concerns of the British New Wave found new relevance. With the restructuring of traditional British industry and coalmine closures, many working-class people lost their jobs and their hopes

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Figure 16.3 Unemployed former steel workers decide to form a male striptease act in *The Full Monty* (1997). The British New Wave was a film movement of the 1950s and early 1960s whose style and concerns were echoed in the new wave of British films of the 1990s.

for the future. Two movies were made in the style of British New Wave during this time: *Brassed Off* (1996) and *The Full Monty*.

Technologies, and black-and-white footage

Most British New Wave films were shot in black and white to place emphasis on the serious and artistic nature of the work. Termed 'pseudo-documentary' these films used black and white to create a gritty tone that felt like historical record. It qualified unfolding action in a more engaging manner.

Classical Hollywood narrative

Classical Hollywood narrative films have plots that progress through time in a linear way, are based on character-driven action and use the continuity editing style (see chapter 2, page 41).

The style is classical because it is based on the classical principles of literature and art. A work is described as classical if it has perfect balance and symmetry. It must also be clear, simple and free of excesses of emotionalism or irrelevant detail. From beginning to end, all elements must be integrated, and the resulting sense of harmony should reassure and satisfy the audience.

Features of classical Hollywood narrative

The Hollywood style takes advantage of the contract people make with the filmmaker when they pay their ticket price – they willingly want to suspend disbelief. Deep down, people know it is tomato sauce, but they really want to believe it is blood. In a conspiracy with the audience to make movies believable, classical Hollywood narrative has developed the following features:

- **Three-act narrative.** Hollywood plots are set out according to the three-act structure of orientation, complication and resolution (see page 131). A situation is presented, a disruption is introduced and then the resolution ties everything up in a strong closure. Real life is not so simple, and actual events rarely have such neat starts or finishes. Even so, the word **realism** can be applied to Hollywood style because it is based on classic literary narrative realism.
- **Objective storytelling.** The audience in a Hollywood film knows more than the characters do. We are able to see what is happening in other places at the same time, and we can see what other characters are doing. In this respect we are God-like – we can see everything. This makes the style of storytelling objective, according to film academics David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson. It also allows us to accept **simultaneous time** or parallel editing (see chapter 2, page 41).
- **Character driven.** The US style of cinema is almost exclusively concerned with individual characters (and stars). This contrasts sharply with the Soviet montage style of filmmaking. The objective of the Hollywood movie is to relate what happens to the characters and whether or not they get what they wanted. The films have strong individual characters who struggle to fulfil their hopes and goals. These characters are arranged in a hierarchy, from hero or protagonist to antagonist and then down to minor characters and supporting cast.

> 'Classical Hollywood cinema possesses a style which is largely invisible and difficult for the average spectator to see. The narrative is delivered so effortlessly and efficiently to the audience that it appears to have no source. It comes magically off the screen.'
>
> **John Belton**, film scholar and Professor of English at Rutgers University

While earthquakes, alien invasions or cyborgs may act as catalysts to events, the stories generally focus on the personal choices of individuals, say Bordwell and Thompson. To confirm this point, Susan Hayward gives the example of Vietnam War movies. Many movies take an anti-war stance, but in Hollywood movies we learn about the impact of the war only by seeing how it affects our main 'G.I. Joe' character. Only a few other surrounding characters suffer. We don't get to see how the war affected society, or what caused the war, or what its long-term effects were. Even if a cause for a war is proposed, it tends to be marked down as the responsibility of one individual. For example, in Hollywood movies, Hitler is shown to be solely responsible for the Second World War.

- ***Mise en scène.*** One of the most important aspects of Hollywood style is the *mise en scène*, the sole function of which is to manufacture realism.
- **Time and space.** Hollywood movies have a strong sense of movement – either through time or through geography. The story movement through time most often follows a straightforward line of episodic events. Flashbacks or flash-forwards may be used, but the overall linear direction is strongly maintained. Whether through time or space, movement is totally subordinate to the action, say Bordwell and Thompson. Only the bits that are important to the story are shown.
- **Classical continuity editing.** A typical feature film has between 800 and 1200 shots. Editing is designed to render all these shot changes invisible or imperceptible. Editing in the invisible style serves to hide any jumps or discontinuities that would alert the viewer to 'non-reality'.

Most people are very familiar with classical Hollywood films. Examples include timely classics such as *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), and musicals such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). Contemporary examples include blockbuster films such as the *Star Wars* franchise.

Technologies and continuity editing

One way to think about technologies is through editing and multi-camera shooting. In general, narrative was constructed through continuity editing that relied quite heavily on match-on-action. This is a simple editing process where an action in one shot is matched to the action of the following shot, so that the transition of action across the edit point appears consistent and seamless. Multi-camera shooting enabled continuity to function across shots more efficiently, making the editing process much quicker.

New Hollywood

New Hollywood presented stories that were wildly popular precisely because they were never seen before. Its chief films included *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Graduate* (1967), *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969). New Hollywood marked the end of the studio system, and the rise of new approaches to representation and spectacle.

In some ways a response to the social upheaval of the time, New Hollywood refers to a film movement that began in the early 1960s and lasted for over a decade. It is qualified by changes to industry context, particularly the removal of the studio system's power, along with the rise of the director's creative vision as a key function of visual storytelling. As a result, New Hollywood is viewed by many critics as a shift in the style of filmmaking.

Creative vision was not a prescribed mandate of New Hollywood film production. Nor does it imply that earlier film directors were not capable of some kind of creative vision in their own productions. Under the new system, creative vision experienced more flexibility and was therefore realised in dynamic new ways simply because studio system's controls had been stripped away. Executive producers and their respective studios no longer controlled filmmaking in the same way – it was almost as if directors were given free rein over production. Thus, creative vision became a by-product of industrial contexts of the time, and amazing new visual imagery began to surface.

Creative vision affected the screen in multiple ways. Firstly, representations were grounded in a strict kind of realism. Narrative structure suffered significant change, particularly in the manner

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of endings. For many years, Hollywood had produced a number of films whose narratives were informed by romanticised endings. The protagonist always achieved their goals – happy endings were common, as was marriage and fruitful relationships.

In response to this, New Hollywood stories were shaped more by reality than idealism. Lead characters experienced disillusionment, failure and even died in some cases. The moral integrity of lead characters was also subject to change. The cowboy characters in Westerns, such as those played by John Wayne, gave way to characters who expressed uncertainty, doubt and even violence. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* is a good example of displacing romanticised endings in narrative. Where conventional Hollywood film would have seen the heroes survive against incredible odds, the characters in this film died at the end – because reality demanded it.



Alamy Stock Photo/Photo 12

Figure 16.4 The iconic final moments of the film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* where the two protagonists race out of a saloon to face the Bolivian army. Instead of surviving against insurmountable odds like in older, romanticised Hollywood films, the two lead characters die instantly. Viewers are left contemplating this cold, hard reality.

Another way in which creative vision affected New Hollywood film production was at the level of film style. New Hollywood style has been described as a departure from the classical system of Hollywood narrative filmmaking. What this means is that Hollywood conventions, like continuity editing, are intentionally displaced in preference for new and interesting visual designs. Final cut privilege was often handed over to directors who then experimented with the flow of story. Spectacle came to more prominence and served to interrupt narrative coherence so that viewers could luxuriate in spectacular big-screen experiences. Breaches in continuity editing (largely inspired by French New Wave) became more common in the process of storytelling via techniques such as rapid-cutting or experimenting with montage.

Technologies and spectacle

One of the many ways in which technologies were used in New Hollywood films is special effects. The importance of special effects became paramount because of the growing emphasis placed on spectacle as a means to tell story. Large explosions, buildings collapsing, stunt tricks and performances – all of these developing technologies became more valuable. New Hollywood filmmakers came to realise this importance and shaped their production practice around the use of effects.

Dogma 95

Dogma 95 (*Dogme* in Danish) is a radical film movement originating in Denmark in 1995. In Paris, at the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of motion pictures, the Danish director Lars von Trier announced the rules for Dogma 95 films. These rules were referred to as the filmmaker's 'Vow of Chastity'.

The Dogma 95 film movement is a kind of anti-Hollywood movement that sets out to do the reverse of what is expected in classical Hollywood narrative films. All the techniques of the Hollywood style are regarded as 'cosmetics' that hide the truth and turn films into mindless entertainment.

> 'In 1960 enough was enough! The movie was dead and called for resurrection. The goal was correct but the means were not! The new wave proved to be a ripple that washed ashore and turned to muck. The movie had been cosmeticised to death, they said; yet since then the use of cosmetics has exploded.
>
> The "supreme" task of the decadent filmmakers is to fool the audience. Is that what we are so proud of? Is that what the "100 years" have brought us? Illusions via which emotions can be communicated? By the individual artist's free choice of trickery?'
>
> **Dogma 95**, Filmmakers' Collective, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995

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Audiences of Dogma 95 films cannot ignore the fact that films are constructed. Whereas Hollywood uses the invisible style to hide the 'machinery' of filmmaking, Dogma 95 films put the machinery on show. 'Dogma 95 is very visible in that it disappoints audience expectations and prevents automatised reception,' says the Danish academic Ove Christensen.

Technologies and Dogma 95

Dogma 95 had a strict approach to the use of technologies. Cameras were permitted, but virtually everything else included in film production technologies were abandoned in favour of a particular approach to film. Instead of relying on three-point lighting, for example, available light sources such as the room light was used. If the lighting was not enough, then production had a choice – proceed anyway, or find another location.

Dogma 95 films

Very few films in the movement have managed to conform to all the dictates of the Dogma 95 manifesto. Between 40 and 80 films that follow at least some of the rules are believed to have been made worldwide. However, most of these are not available in Australia. Films that are available and give some idea of the movement include the following.

Table 16.4 Dogma 95 films

DOGMA 95 FILM	DETAILS
Mifune (1999)	This Danish film is the third Dogma 95 film to be made. During the accreditation process, the director made several confessions about rules he had broken. Among other wrongdoings, he confessed to having chased some chickens onto the set and having moved some furniture in the house to better suit the filming!
Dancer in the Dark (2000)	Starring Björk and directed by Lars von Trier, *Dancer in the Dark* is about a poor factory worker whose desire to save her son from blindness leads to tragedy. This is not an official Dogma 95 movie, but as a founding member of the Dogme 95 Collective, von Trier has followed some of its principles.
Dogville (2003)	Starring Nicole Kidman and directed by Lars von Trier, this movie is not an official Dogma 95 film but shares some of their characteristics. The film breaks a key rule – that shooting must take place where the action takes place. However, it does reflect other aspects of Dogma 95.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 16.5 *Dancer in the Dark*, starring Björk and Catherine Deneuve, is directed by one of the founders of the Dogma 95 movement, Lars von Trier. The film has divided critics, who either love it or hate it. For instance, on *The Movie Show* at the time, Margaret Pomeranz awarded it five stars while David Stratton gave it zero!

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16.1 ACTIVITIES

1 Some of the experiments conducted by the Soviet montage directors are fun to try yourself.
Construct a reproduction of the Kuleshov effect by filming action in one location and then linking it to another. Use well-known locations so your audience will feel the Kuleshov effect but will know it isn't true. For instance, film inside the principal's office and open the door to leave. Cut to an exterior shot outside a door at the tuckshop and walk away. Your audience will be led to believe the principal's office is in the tuckshop – even though they know better.
Construct in storyboard form or shoot some collision of images sequences. In a short action sequence of about three or four shots, use collision of images to **suggest** to the audience that something occurred when no shot actually shows it happening. **Systematically arrange** the shots so that the codes make the meaning clear. For instance, show a close-up of a gun, and then a long shot of a body; or show a close-up of a fist, and then someone on the ground.

2 View the 'Men and the Maggots' sequence in the Soviet film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).
Explain Eisenstein's use of group motivation instead of Hollywood-style individual motivation to move the narrative forward, **identifying** a series of shots in the maggot sequence in which he has done this to illustrate the idea.
Analyse the sequence together with the 'Odessa Steps' sequence, **breaking each down** into their constituent parts and **making comparisons**. **Make judgements** as to whether or not Eisenstein does use individual characters in this sequence. **Compare** the 'Odessa Steps' sequence with the way you think Hollywood would treat the subject matter.

3 **Construct** a set design proposal, using sketching as a pre-production technique, for a film in the German Expressionist style. Design your set so that it reflects a state of mind rather than a strictly realistic rendition.

4 **Analyse** the appearance of the city in *Metropolis* (1927) and the city imagery for the science fiction film *The Fifth Element* (1997), together with the sci-fi neo-noir film *Blade Runner* (1982). **Break** each design **down** into its **constituent parts** and **examine** the meaning of each component.
Explain the influence of German Expressionism on contemporary cinema. Select a fiction film you are familiar with.
Analyse the film to determine its degree of realism using the four standards used to determine film realism as **criteria**. The standards are: surface reality, realistic acting and characters, plausibility, and technical and symbolic codes of realism.

5 The Italian neo-realist director Vittorio De Sica used non-professional actors in his film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948). View a sequence from the film.
Appraise the worth of this technique, **making judgements** about whether non-professionals improve or detract from the film.

6 View a sequence from the French New Wave film *Breathless* (1960).
Construct a list of the standard Hollywood codes that Godard deliberately breaks (for example, jump cuts).
Appraise the effectiveness of Godard's anti-Hollywood approaches in the film, **drawing conclusions** about their impact on subsequent films.

7 Research some of the social issues facing British youth in the early 1960s just before the advent of the Beatles.
Construct a list of these concerns and then view a film from the British New Wave of social realism.
Analyse the film to report on the extent to which the concerns are evident in it.

8 **Analyse** a contemporary Hollywood film using the basic standards of classical Hollywood narrative as the set criteria. **Make judgements** about the extent to which classical style is still being used, considering aspects of plot, objective storytelling, character causality, linear time and continuity editing.

9 Some critics have accused the Dogma 95 collective of hypocrisy. It is said they seem to believe in some types of technology but not others. They seem to believe in some 'cosmetics', but not all. They have been accused of just being anti-technology (but only modern technology).
Appraise the principles as they apply to some Dogma 95 films you have viewed. In small groups, discuss whether or not you believe the Dogma 95 principles are hypocritical.

10 **Synthesise** a short fiction sequence in the style of one of the film movements discussed in this section. Follow the basic principles of the movement and use the techniques favoured by its followers. **Solve conceptual and technical problems** to create a moving-image media product.

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DIRECTORS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Filmmaking is not done in a vacuum. It is not something that is created separately to current trends and thinking about production practices. Directors today frequently make choices in response to the various contexts of production when approaching their stories. Technologies are a major part of this context. Much of the film practice is guided by the ways in which technologies are made accessible to filmmakers. Many directorial identities are shaped in response to technologies. Aesthetics are also shaped by the ways in which technologies are employed. It is almost as if technologies are the backbone of the entire film process – after all, without the simple technology of the camera, film would not exist.

Directors and new aesthetics

Whenever filmmakers experiment with new technologies, new aesthetics are inevitably constructed that present exciting new directions in cinema. However, sometimes new technologies become a point of contention. The emergence of digital technology in filmmaking has become one of the biggest issues at the moment for filmmakers. This is primarily expressed as the shift away from celluloid film in preference for capturing with digital technologies. This new production practice – digital technologies – can be described as both a technological practice and a stylistic trend.

It is technological because it relies on new and emerging hardware and software specifically designed to create a digital image using pixels. It is also stylistic because it conjures up new kinds of aesthetics that change the nature of the image, the screen itself and its reception. Many directors find the shift challenging. This is not because it is difficult for them to manage, but because digital technologies are an issue that is affecting the director's identity and the nature of the visual image.

At a surface level, there appears to be no right or wrong in the choice to use or not use digital imagery. However, among elite directors who have influence in Hollywood, the gap between the two technologies could not be larger. Directors such as Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino and Christopher Nolan, among others, promote the idea that there is a gap in quality between the two approaches, suggesting that the digital image is far inferior to the aesthetic of the celluloid image. However, other directors such as David Lynch are currently promoting digitally acquired imagery precisely because of its aesthetic differences to film. For Lynch, the gap in quality is a good thing. It appears that the wider film industry, and Hollywood in particular, are largely ignoring the debate, remaining fixed on establishing a completely digital film industry.

Currently, the push for cinema conversion toward digital projection is in its final stages of completion. Almost all cinemas in the US and above 60 per cent globally have made the change away from celluloid film projection. The shift in projection and the subsequent changes in the dynamics of viewership have left celluloid directors with little choice about the craft. While shooting in celluloid is still an option, thanks largely to companies like Kodak, the option to project in celluloid is becoming harder and harder to achieve. This has far-reaching implications.

Celluloid directors feel that the idea of cinema is constrained and being corralled in only one direction at the expense of art. These technological changes are considered a threat to the idea of identity because the artistic quality (and property) of the image is based on aesthetics. Their visualisation of story cannot be separated from image acquisition, particularly when utilising the relationship between light and shadow, colour or shooting in black and white. The software used to create the digital image makes subtle changes to these qualities and properties, which is dramatic for certain filmmakers.

How Steven Spielberg uses technologies

Steven Spielberg's use of technologies has helped shape a particular identity across his career. Much of this identity is connected to aesthetics and ideas about art in film. For Spielberg, aesthetics is a key part of not only film production, but film appreciation as well. He is prudent about shooting practices, and just as invested in projection. The digital versus celluloid divide has greatly affected his personal view of aesthetics, and threatens the nature of his identity in screen space.

Spielberg fights against the rise of digital technologies. His concern stems from the shift in aesthetics that comes out of them. It is not a question of quality, as much as it is about

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haptic visuality – or the material presence and texture of the celluloid film. What is interesting are the various implications that stem from Spielberg's persistence with celluloid in his filmmaking. In a time when the film industry is defined by digital filmmaking, Spielberg refuses to conform. Digital cinema projection has been a solid presence in the film industry for over 10 years. Audiences have grown accustomed to the current state of the image – they are very familiar with the digital aesthetic.

Spielberg's aesthetics represent a change in the way the digital image has come to shape cinema. Spielberg is presenting a new aesthetic in screen space through the use of outdated technologies. Very rarely does a film appear as a product of the celluloid process. Spielberg's films are offering the viewer a unique change to that status quo. So not only are viewers watching an esteemed filmmaker, but they are also seeing new ways of representing the world.

Much of Spielberg's discussion around the benefits of celluloid arrives back at aesthetics. But what does this mean exactly? Many have offered different explanations of specific digital aesthetic and how it differs from celluloid. Explanations range from how grain functions as a part of the form of the image, to the image being likened to television video as seen in television dramas. Advances in the digital image have developed now to the point where there appears to be no quality difference between the two (or at least to the average person). However, industry figures like Spielberg still claim to be able to see a marked difference.

The implications that stem from these beliefs seem to have a significant affect upon visual culture. Celluloid directors have made celluloid image acquisition popular again – there is a growing market for celluloid photography and filmmaking. This popularity has resulted in an **analogue renaissance**.

Old technology companies such as Kodak have managed to recover from a near disastrous exit from the industry. Kodak is capitalising on the growing interest in celluloid products by releasing a new Super 8-mm camera that makes use of celluloid film. They have marketed this new product suggesting that old technologies are gaining momentum in spite of the digital era. This will likely introduce significant changes in not only amateur filmmaking, but also in visual spaces such as You Tube, whose aesthetics have always been inclined toward the digital image. Other companies such as Lomography are also re-introducing celluloid photography and filmmaking via their range of new analogue cameras and scanners.



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Figure 16.6 The new Kodak Super 8-mm camera makes use of celluloid film to capture imagery, but also uses digital technologies via an LCD screen similar to DSLR cameras. It is the first of its kind in the recent 'analogue renaissance' that is currently sweeping through visual culture. It is also a strong indication that there is a legitimate interest in the quality that comes from the use of celluloid film.

Spielberg has at many times claimed that shooting on celluloid is a far superior practice than shooting with digital technologies. When film is considered an art form, part of that artistic merit is connected to the disciplines that come out of celluloid filmmaking. Mastering those disciplines is what gives the activity of filmmaking a special quality that appears removed when using digital cameras. For example, with digital filmmaking, mistakes can be tolerated. You need only switch on the camera and shift and shoot (through trial and error) until what is needed is created. Any mistakes can be easily deleted when required. However, with celluloid film there is a certain precision to the shot that constrains the practice of filmmaking. Errors cannot be tolerated in the same way as with digital technologies. There are a number of reasons for this, but it is mostly because film is expensive, and errors in judgement usually equate to an increased expenditure for production.

Spielberg connects the idea of mastering the use of a celluloid camera with highly artistic work. There is a precision to the image, it is highly

articulated, and it is planned before it is executed. He suggests that digital filmmakers are not acquiring the skills necessary for being recognised as an *auteur*.

Somehow, through digital technologies, filmmakers are being robbed of a specific art form. There is a specific drive to work with and master the association between art and analogue photography. Celluloid now appears to carry a certain notoriety, since the words 'aesthetic' and 'art' have come to be associated with it.



Alamy Stock Photo/Malcolm Brice

Figure 16.7 Spielberg's insistence on using analogue film cameras often results in interesting combinations and mixtures of technologies. Here on the set of *Ready Player One* (2018), Spielberg lines up a shot using a camera loaded with celluloid film but mounted on the latest cranes that technology has to offer.

How Quentin Tarantino uses technologies

Tarantino is outspoken about his ideas regarding digital technologies. Like Spielberg, his identity is inevitably connected to choices regarding the aesthetic of the celluloid image. Any threat to the continued use of celluloid film represents a threat to his directorial identity. However, apart from the visual look of the image, Tarantino also makes connections between reception and celluloid film.

The experience of celluloid is as much a part of the filmmaking practice. This is not so much a discussion about art as it is about a kind of visual culture. Tarantino actually despises both digitally acquired imagery and the projected digital film. He feels that the audience is robbed of a particular experience that can only be attained through celluloid. Again, this comes down to aesthetics, but it is also about how the illusion of movement is lost in the digital image.

Film is shot and projected at a certain rate of frames per second. In Australia, it is usually 24 frames per second. The camera does not actually record movement, but instead takes a series of photos that offers the illusion of movement when projected. When a viewer is seated and watching a celluloid film projection, what the viewer witnesses is the 'magic of movies' – that illusion of movement that stems from the physical rapid movement of photos whizzing through the projector. The flicker and sudden movement of the photo, in combination with the physical presence of it, is what Tarantino qualifies as the magic of cinema motion.

With the digitally acquired image, that illusion of movement is lost. It is not there at the point of acquiring the image, and it is not there during projection. It is more like an illusion. For Tarantino, the 'magic' that was created with the first film camera over 100 years ago is being removed from viewership by digital technologies. For him, this is more than just a significant loss – it is a profound repositioning of the relationship between viewer and screen.

Tarantino typically employs the use of older cameras such as Panavision for the wide-screen image it offered. This 2.76:1 aspect ratio was made famous by earlier classics such as *Ben-Hur* (1959). In some of Tarantino's productions, he has even resorted to sourcing antique lenses that haven't been in circulation since the film *Khartoum* (1966). Tarantino's choice to shoot this way reflects not only his interest in the experience of celluloid film, but also an aesthetic that seems to be dissipating more and more from the film landscape. But Tarantino is not about resurrecting technologies or embracing some kind of zombie formalism merely for the sake of it. His position is similar to that of Kodak, 'not nostalgia, but appreciation', and is based on his desire to project the film in 70-mm print, 'for people who care' as he puts it.

The retro technology of cameras and lenses not only preserved an aspect ratio that reaches the width of *Ben-Hur*, but also gave the film's perspectives a look and feel similar to the Golden Age of Cinema. It is, in sum, a unique combination of qualities and properties that (even now) cannot be replicated when shooting with digital cameras. Actors in Tarantino's films often find the experience enchanting for those reasons – an opportunity to work with something other than digital. The cast of *The Hateful Eight* (2015), for example, supported the choice, stating that 'we weren't in a hard drive, we're in a movie'. In many ways, the imagery produced by Tarantino functions

as a new aesthetic, similar in nature to what Spielberg is producing in cinemas. This uniqueness elevates the value of the production. The saturation of digital cinema in the industry means that deviations like this present exciting new challenges and directions for viewers, especially generations born post-2000s who might not be familiarised with older cinema aesthetics.

Tarantino says that the digital image resembles the video imagery of television, and that, in terms of aesthetics, shooting in digital merges television with the big screen. In other words, the silver screen is cheapened by the presence of the digital camera at the point of production and at the level of projection. Tarantino is not speaking from a position of ignorance – he experimented with digital imagery while shooting a scene in Robert Rodriguez's *Sin City* (2004). Many of his opinions are derived from this experience, he says.



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Figure 16.8 Tarantino's use of celluloid film and antique lenses in his productions changed the way in which his aesthetic functioned in screen space. For many contemporary viewers, this was a new aesthetic since the technologies used to create it have not been in circulation for nearly 50 years.

How David Lynch uses technologies

On the opposing side to both Tarantino and Spielberg, filmmaker David Lynch argues in favour of the digital image precisely because of the difference it offers in image quality. Lynch acknowledges how the digital image is aesthetically different, and also acknowledges that this is part and parcel of what comes from the underpinning software used to create the image. Unlike his counterparts, Lynch prefers the digital image precisely because of the issues it presents in aesthetics.

For Lynch, the fact that it imparts blemishes into the story is the most attractive quality about the digital image. These imperfections mark the story as slightly more interesting. While Spielberg and Tarantino feel that the digital image chips away at industrial aspects such as reputation, Lynch sees a fascinating opportunity to build a unique directorial body of work. Lynch likens digital video to 1930s film, where some information is lost as a result of the image quality or aesthetic but this gives him more 'room to dream', as he calls it, to convey particular symbolic qualities in story.

Another way in which the digital image is desirable for Lynch is the degree of control it provides at all levels of production. Colour correction was always a difficult process when working with celluloid film, and one that Lynch never enjoyed. The way that the technology functioned meant that it was a very laborious process. This was mostly because while viewing the edits, it wasn't possible to pause the film efficiently enough to discuss ideas regarding the colour palette. Lynch often had to 'shout opinions and instructions' over the top of the film while it was running, while his editors frantically tried to keep up by taking notes.

Digital technologies unhinged the dependence that film had on projection. It affords an opportunity to pause the film in post-production without risking damage, which means that colour correction can be done frame by frame at any pace desired. This allows Lynch to really explore the potential for colour in the practice of storytelling, opening up new ways in which he can experiment with the visual aesthetic of his films. Because of the advantages it offers in practicality, Lynch now exclusively shoots in digital.



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Figure 16.9 David Lynch shooting with digital technologies on the set of *Inland Empire* (2006). Lynch intentionally used a Sony camcorder set with standard definition in order to generate a slightly lower standard in visual quality. For Lynch, this was part of the desired aesthetic to convey not only story, but also to construct his directorial identity.

How James Cameron uses technologies

James Cameron is a leading figure in the film industry and in the use of filmic technologies. Cameron has a unique gift in creating and executing significant changes in the industry. This also informs the nature of his experimentation. Cameron could be described as not only highly innovative, but also a very big risk-taker. Risk informs his experimentation in film. This stems from his continual interest in raising the quality of the digital image by exploring emerging technologies.

In the mid-2000s, Cameron began advocating for a change in cinema projection to cater for digital cinema and 3D projection. Shortly afterwards, many cinemas across the world found themselves spending money accordingly. In 2011, Cameron attended a cinema convention and advocated for increased frame rates in production. He pitched the discussion around an improvement in aesthetics and the quality of the digital image. He stated that more and more filmmakers will be opting to shoot in increased film rates during production, and that this was the future of filmmaking. Cameron then aired a showreel he had put together that demonstrated his own experiments in conveying action through increased frame rates: 48 frames per second (fps) and 60 fps. He then advocated for cinemas to invest money in changing projection to cater for increased frame rates. Again, shortly afterwards, cinemas across the world paid a lot of money to install new hardware that could project film at specific frame rates, in accordance with the technical specifications of certain films being released. Cameron is planning on using 60 fps to convey action in his sequel to *Avatar* (2009).

Cameron states that he has always been a risk-taker. He says that for him, the prospect of experimenting with the visual image by dabbling in emerging technologies is not a scary undertaking. In his early career, he explored new ways to create spectacle in his films. The exploding buildings and liquid figures in *Terminator 2* (1991) was just one of the many ways in which his experimentation changed the way the visual image functioned in screen space. In 2009, Cameron achieved new innovation again by partnering with Industrial Light & Magic to produce the stunning CGI objects of *Avatar*.

Cameron can be seen to be quite calculating as well. *Avatar* sat on the ideas shelf for nearly 10 years because he wasn't satisfied with the state of technology and software to produce the required aesthetic. He waited until software became more efficient before deciding to produce the film. Cameron's recent push for 60 fps stems from a desire to shift aesthetics into a more immersive experience for the viewer. Coupled with 3D technologies, Cameron intends to redefine cinema yet again.

16.2 ACTIVITIES

1 Reduce the resolution size of the default image in your DSLR camera down to 720 × 576.
Experiment with the effect by shooting a scene outside in the sunlight, and then shooting a scene in the darker areas of a classroom. Upload the footage to a computer.
Construct an edited sequence out of the footage.
Analyse the footage for visual imperfections, **dissecting** each aspect of the shots and **examining** the aesthetics. This might be in the form of pixilation or other effects that appear in the aesthetic of the image.
Explain how you think these imperfections either interfere with or enhance the story.
2 **Experiment** with resolution sizes to see if you can find a unique aesthetic that could be used to convey story.

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17

Making and responding – Identity



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Part A: Ideas – for stylistic film

GENERATING IDEAS FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

There is a stage just before the writing and preparation starts on your production. This is the stage when the ideas are just rolling around, but they have not been developed. Sometimes it is called the concept stage.

Idea generation

Many people think that ideas for media productions just happen in one grand moment – a sudden lightning strike of inspiration occurs and the idea has arrived. Instead, those who work in the media industry say that getting an idea is not a sudden event, but a gradual process.

- **Ideas take time to develop.** The time taken to develop an idea is well spent. Whether you know it or not, in this concept phase you will be working. Even staring out the window daydreaming is a valid thinking technique. However, ideas also take work. At the concept stage, the most important thing is to keep undertaking the processes that will trigger the idea.
- **Fear of the blank page.** Staring at a blank page is a good way to induce writer's block. Anyone who has to come up with an idea can be baulked by an off-putting blank page. The easiest solution to this is to make the page 'not blank'. Put ideas down – anything is better than nothing. You don't need to have the perfect idea straight away. It is all part of the process.

Starting the ideas process (not waiting for the event)

A good idea is probably inside you right now. It is just a matter of going through some processes to try to bring it out. A key step in that process is to stimulate lots of ideas. Following is a list of strategies that are used by writers to get their imaginations stimulated:



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Figure 17.1 The blank page is said to be the writer's or artist's greatest fear. However, scriptwriting expert Linda Aronson does not advise screwing up the rejected pages. Instead, she suggests keeping all the ideas in view, and then asking questions about each idea to trigger development. Eventually one will come through with stronger potential. 'Any idea, however weak or crazy, is acceptable because it can lead by association to something useful.'

- **Brain dump.** This is also known as word vomit. Set yourself a time limit, and then write anything that comes into your head around the general areas you are working in. This tells you what is in the top of your head. Scan through and see if there is anything worthwhile.
- **Interrogation technique.** Ask yourself a series of 'what if', 'if only' or 'why' questions around the topic. Make serious questions, and then make ridiculous ones. Often absurdity will stimulate other ideas.
- **Google.** Conduct an internet search of some of the words from your topic and see

'If, as writers, we look back at how we got ideas for original work, almost invariably the answer is that something in the world around us provoked in us a response that demanded a story.'

Linda Aronson, scriptwriting consultant

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'If you want to have good ideas, you must have many ideas. Most of them will be wrong, and what you have to learn is which ones to throw away.'

Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner, quantum chemist, and founder of molecular biology

what the search algorithms come up with. Sometimes unusual connections will stimulate your own ideas. Sometimes a classic idea can be given a fresh perspective.

- **Crowd sourcing.** The internet has given us access to millions of people. Crowdsourcing is a modern term for getting the answer to something over social media. However, smaller groups can be just as effective at generating ideas. Assemble a group of friends with very different personalities – for example, a funny person, a thinker, a sociable person, a quiet person and so on. Task them with helping you come up with an idea.
- **I believe.** Make a list of statements to do with the topic that begin with 'I believe …'
- **One sentence technique.** Make up a series of small cards. Write a one-sentence idea on each card, moving quickly along without thinking too much. Use as many cards as you can. Later, spread them out and choose the most appealing.
- **Other media examples.** Make a list of all the television shows and movies you can think of that deal with the topic. Beside the titles, write the angle or premise they have used. Now see if you can come up with any fresh angles on the idea.



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Figure 17.2 Before internet searches there was still daydreaming, brain dumping and sentence cards. Coming up with an idea is hard – it is difficult even for highly experienced Hollywood scriptwriters.

Developing ideas

Once you have come up with three or four possible ideas, the next stage of the process is to develop them. It is best to develop all of the ideas rather than choosing one too early. It can be difficult picking winners until the process is completed. Postpone any judgement until after the development stage. The following steps will help develop all your ideas.

Step 1: Brainstorming and mind mapping

'Brainstorm means using the brain to storm a creative problem and to do so in commando fashion, with each stormer attacking the same objective.'

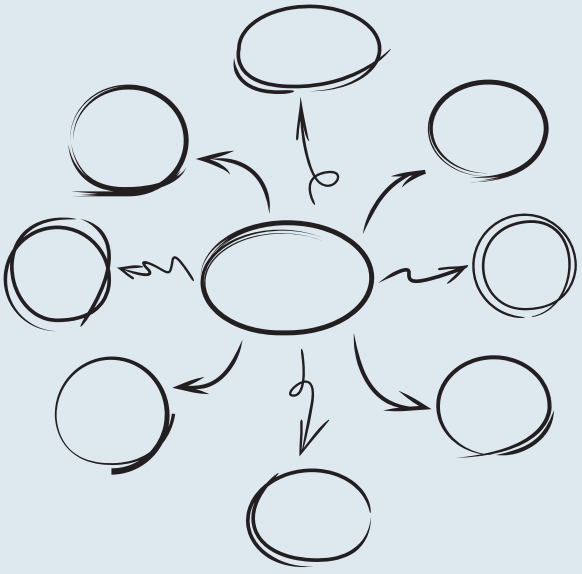
Alex Faickney Osborn, creator of brainstorming

- **Brainstorming.** This well-known process for developing creative ideas originated in an advertising agency in 1939. Usually it is a group process in which people are given a topic and they then call out ideas. No one should be critical of the ideas, and all ideas should be accepted. Brainstorming can also be done as an individual activity.
- **Mind mapping.** Drawing up mind maps is a common technique for depicting the results of brainstorming in diagram form. Usually the idea being developed is placed in the centre of the diagram or map. Ideas then branch out from this centre point. This is sometimes called a spider diagram because of its web-like structure.

Media production mind maps

Using the following steps can be a helpful approach to brainstorming a mind map in media production.

1 Draw an oval in the centre of a blank page. Write the name of the idea to be developed.



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Figure 17.3 A design for a mind map. It can be useful to place direct production possibilities in a larger frame around the outside of the mind map where ideas are being developed.

2 Take all the associated ideas you can think of and attach them to the central idea using lines.
3 Around the outside, frame the mind map with ideas for images, scenes, characters or plots that are going to be useful for your media production.

Step 2: The three Ws and one H

Ask four basic questions of your ideas, say British media educators Nick Dimbleby, Richard Dimbleby and Ken Whittington.

- **Why?** Media productions are usually expected to educate, inform or entertain. Work out why you want to produce your idea. Having a strong purpose will make the idea easier to develop.
- **What?** Ask yourself what content you want to put in your production. As time goes by, that may change. However, it is useful to have a good sense of content before starting.
- **Who?** For whom is the production going to be made? A sense of audience is the most important element to keep in mind all the way through the production.
- **How?** You will need to explain how you are going to present the text to the audience. Technical matters can be added here to further develop the ideas.

Step 3: Considering genre and stylistics

Genre can be useful for developing ideas because genres are repeatable. You will have seen many genre examples, which can act as models.

Genres have a step-by-step structure. Recall what you know of this structure, because it has developed around similar concepts to your own. For example, consider settings, typical characters, plot sequences, openings and resolutions.

Use each aspect of the genre structure to stimulate thoughts about what you could do with your own idea. For example, what might be a good setting? What sorts of characters would you expect?

Twist the genre by challenging genre expectations to further stimulate your ideas. Instead of using typical examples, choose surprising and different ones.

Step 4: Laying out the ideas

Time-based media productions (such as video) and static media (such as print) that are based in a sequence can benefit from physically laying out the ideas on cards and moving them around to achieve the best order. To do this, you will need some blank cards. Paper or light cardboard cards are best for this – they have a flexibility and ease of use that is difficult for a computer to provide.

1 Take all the ideas for scenes (or pages or articles) and place each one on a card of its own.
2 Lay them all out in the sequence you think they will appear in the production. Move the cards around until you think you have achieved the best sequence.
3 Look for gaps or places where the audience may become confused. Create new cards to span the gaps.
4 Check that you have good start and finish cards.

17.1 ACTIVITIES

Experiment with three or four of your own ideas through each of the stages suggested in this section, concluding with a series of cards laid out with the media production planned from beginning to end. Try different combinations to discover how a variety of ideas could work.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVITY THEORY

Edward de Bono is one of the few people who can say they have helped change the way the world thinks. De Bono led research into creative thinking, and the concepts he developed have now become so widely known that almost everyone has heard of them.

Vertical and lateral thinking

De Bono argues that there are two sorts of thinking processes in creativity: vertical and lateral. Both are useful and of equal value.

Vertical thinking

Logical step-by-step thinking was labelled 'vertical thinking' by de Bono. Vertical thinking is the kind used in mathematics. It is rules-based, and often looks for a right or wrong answer. Vertical thinking uses logic to think in a sequence and arrive at a predictable conclusion. Experts say that vertical thinking accounts for up to 90 per cent of the thinking that people do. Vertical thinking allows for deadlines to be met and everyday tasks to be completed in efficient ways.

Lateral thinking

Taking in ideas and solutions from all over the place, using a kind of random creativity, is called 'lateral thinking'. De Bono coined the term in 1967, and subsequently wrote several books about it. Lateral thinking does not follow the usual logical and predictable thought patterns of vertical thinking. Instead, lateral thinking gets ideas from left of field. It can be inspirational, because it seems as if the idea came from nowhere. However, lateral thoughts are usually connected in some way to the original stimulus – it is just that the connection is somewhat unusual or illogical. Lateral thinking involves looking at the world from a number of perspectives.

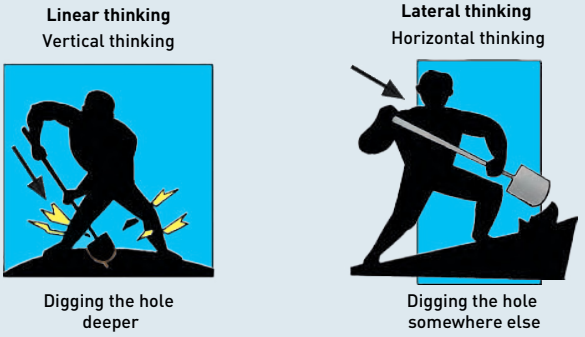


Figure 17.4 Edward de Bono explains vertical thinking and lateral thinking by referring to different approaches as digging a hole. Vertical thinking pursues the objective single-mindedly and step by step – like digging a single deep hole. Lateral thinking jumps around, looking at digging shallower holes in different locations. Neither lateral thinking nor vertical thinking is superior; they are simply different ways to think, each having their advantages and drawbacks.

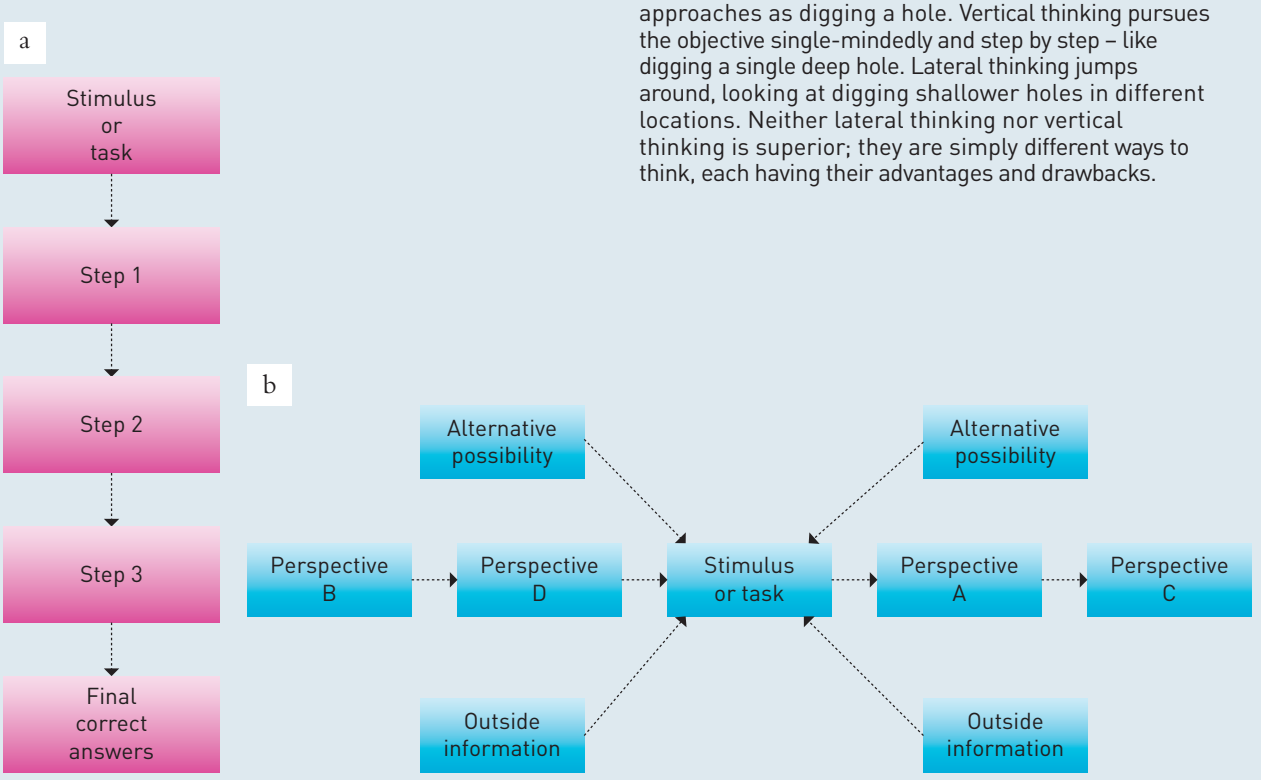


Figure 17.5 (a) Vertical thinking and (b) lateral thinking.

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Using vertical and lateral thinking in media

Lateral and vertical thinking can be used to create media texts that are successfully 'real but unusual', according to screenwriting coach Linda Aronson. She uses the analogy of driving a car: lateral thinking is the accelerator and vertical thinking is the brake. You need both the accelerator and the brake – you cannot drive without using both.

Vertical thinking is good for the following:

- Creating according to genres and patterns.
- Creating characters that are types or stereotypes.
- Making sure ideas are realistic.
- Checking that ideas are not clichéd or over the top.
- Working out what needs to be done.

Lateral thinking is good for the following quite different tasks:

- Coming up with new and unusual ideas.
- Coming up with lots of ideas.
- Finding the emotional core of an idea.

Six thinking hats

De Bono has six thinking hats, each one of a different colour for a different purpose. The idea behind the hats is to encourage particular types of thinking around an original idea.

Working with the six hats

Whether you are in an individual or group situation using the six hats, all thinking has to be determined by the colour of the hat. In a group, it might be a good idea to have a chairperson who manages the processes, perhaps by holding up a coloured card to indicate what thinking is being used. Most of the time is spent with the yellow, black and green hats. You will spend a smaller amount of time with the white hat. The red hat is often dealt with in brief bursts because emotions tend to change once they are spoken about for too long. The blue hat is for process/overview, and is only used when you are thinking about how you are using the six-hat method. The blue hat is used at the start and finish of the six hats sessions.

Table 17.1 De Bono's six hats of thinking. Putting on a hat of a different colour encourages a different type of thinking. Purposefully taking on a new perspective about an idea or problem forces you to think of alternatives.

HAT COLOUR	TYPE OF THINKING
Green hat 	Creativity: • growth • new ideas • options
Yellow hat 	Benefits: • logic • positive vision • feasibility
Blue hat 	Overview: • control • decision • processes
Black hat 	Critic: • risks • obstacles • caution
Red hat 	Emotions: • feelings • hunches • intuition
White hat 	Information: • facts • data

17.2 ACTIVITIES

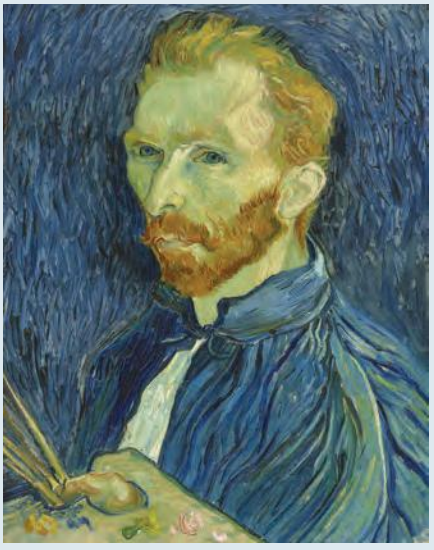
1 **Experiment** with lateral thinking to come up with as many new and unusual ideas for your media text as you can think of. Lateral thinking will draw in all sorts of thoughts from outside sources.
Choose three of the ideas from your lateral thinking to develop more fully using vertical thinking. Vertical thinking will 'flesh out' the idea, decide on genres and consider feasibility.

2 **Experiment** with new ideas in a small group by using the six thinking hats method to explore the possibilities of an idea you are considering for a media text. The six thinking hats method encourages parallel thinking. List all of the ideas people have while each hat is being used. Underline the best three for each thinking hat.

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FINDING YOUR STYLISTIC AESTHETIC

Literature, music styles, natural forms, traditional cultures and eras can steer screen productions in subtle, structural ways. Direct visual references can also be applied through shooting and post-production stylistics. Critics have grouped visual artists (such as painters) into movements according to styles, giving clear cues to identify influences.



Shutterstock.com/Everett - Art



Getty Images/AFP/Piotr Wittman

Figure 17.6 Visual inspiration can be applied very literally, as in the world's first fully painted feature film, *Loving Vincent* (2017), by directors Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman. The film is based on Vincent van Gogh's life. Kobiela trained as a painter and says she listened to van Gogh's diary quote: 'We cannot speak, other than through our paintings.' Each frame in the film is an oil painting, executed in his distinctive style (as seen in van Gogh's *Self-portrait*,1889). The film narrative is an animation of 6500 still images.

Steps to your stylistic aesthetic

Stylistic productions can occur in film, documentary, animation or digital games as a result of deliberate decision-making by key personnel in the crew.

While some use the **director of photography** title interchangeably with cinematographer, the director of photography need not actually operate the camera and is assumed to have a level of control over the lighting provided by the **gaffer**. Just as a professional musician is able to play in various genres, a director of photography will alter their stylistic approach for the demands of a particular production.

Step 1: Experimentation and inspiration

Narrative films, documentaries, animations and digital games can all draw on the elements managed by directors of photography. Non-linear forms, such as virtual reality environments or free-range levels within digital games, may not have a fixed frame to communicate meaning – however, the placement and choice of virtual lighting and colours still contribute to meaning and mood.

Russell Boyd, director of photography, says his passion is lighting. He offers simple tips for would-be filmmakers:

- Know how each scene is placed within the larger story.
- Watch rehearsals.
- Use lighting choices to create the mood.
- Talk through the look with the director, as directors of photography and cinematographers may manage more or less of the mood, depending on how the director likes to work.

'A cinematographer is a person with technical expertise who manipulates light to transfer visual information by the use of a camera into aesthetic moving images, onto motion picture film or electronic recording systems.'

Australian Cinematographers Society, cinematographer.org.au

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Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 2

Figure 17.7 Inspiration – Frederick McCubbin, *Violet and gold* (1911), oil on canvas. According to the National Gallery of Australia, Australian painter McCubbin was heavily influenced by the French Impressionist Claude Monet's observation that 'Light is the chief sitter everywhere'. McCubbin produced many iconic works of the Australian landscape that helped romanticise the native bush.



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.8 Experimentation – The film *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) was visually inspired by the Australian Impressionist painters of the 1880s and 1890s. Known as the Heidelberg School, they painted the Victorian countryside. Russell Boyd, the director of photography, captured an ethereal quality to the light by using a bridal veil over the lens, proving that simple experimentation with a physical solution can be just as effective as the creative use of digital tools.

Step 2. Selecting for an aesthetic

Just because you can doesn't mean you should! Choose from your aesthetic repertoire to suit the project, as shown in the diversity of Russell Boyd's international successes and iconic Australian 'looks' in many films: *The Way Back* (2010), *Ghost Rider* (2007), *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003), *Liar Liar* (1997), *White Men Can't Jump* (1992), *Prisoners of the Sun* (1990), *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *Phar Lap* (1983), *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), *Starstruck* (1982), *A Town Like Alice* (1981), *Gallipoli* (1981), *The Last Wave* (1977) and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975).

Boyd tells film students that he learnt from a director to 'use the frame to tell the story'. Composition and placement of objects are powerful means of communication. So too is control over lighting source and direction, camera frame rate and depth of field, colour and movement. Examples of Boyd's work can be seen in the following figures.



Shutterstock.com/REX/Kobal/Australian Film Commission/BEF/Picnic/David Kynoch

Figure 17.9 Arrangement and location – In *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), the enchanted character of Miranda steals attention from the other cast, while several shots remind us of the mystery of the rock, looming large.



ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.10 Colour and *mise en scène* – In *Master and Commander* (2003), the near monochromatic frame, the use of the set and eyelines convey the perilous situation for the characters.



Alamy Stock Photo/Universal Archives GmbH

Figure 17.11 Depth of field and costume – In *Prisoners of the Sun*, also known as *Blood Oath*, military uniforms in combination with the blindfolds suggest an execution. With multiple characters in the frame, the question for the audience will be, 'Who is shot first?' or 'Who am I supposed to identify with?' In either case, the question is resolved by the technical answer of the depth of field offering a point of focus.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 17.12 Diagonals and direction – More than just an aesthetic composition in *The Way Back*, the uphill march is into the direction of the burning sun and adds to the sense of struggle. The visibility and 'feel' of the sand is being affected by frame rate choice.

Academy Award-winner Boyd along with other cinematographers such as Dean Semler, John Seale, Andrew Lesnie and Donald McAlpine have had such prolific careers that they have shaped the look of international screens and the way Australia sees itself. Whether fictional or historic stories, the work of the cinematographer and their technical decisions have shaped the way we view the imagery of our country and the world, just as the work of other artists did before them. The powerful aesthetic tools are available to all filmmakers.

17.3 ACTIVITIES

1 Use visual art movements as a basis for stylistic experimentation. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	ANALYSE	SYNTHESISE
Construct a digital folder of still images from various art movements that feature obvious **conventions** and distinctive styles for you to **arrange** on a timeline within your **moving-image** editing program.	**Analyse** the **technical and symbolic codes** as they apply in the medium of the artwork (e.g. paint) as if you are a critic, **interpreting constituent parts** of the artwork and **evaluating** the overall impression of the work. Set up a reverse camera angle as if from the point of view of artwork on the gallery wall to record the critics' **judgements**.	**Synthesise** an arts review program segment by **combining** the still image **element** of the researched artworks with the filmed critical reviews to create a **moving-image media product** timeline. Discover a post-production **technical practice** (e.g. within editing tools) to impose a **creative** style on the video of the critics that matches the **creative** style of the art they are reviewing, e.g. Pointillism = extreme film grain. Colour, contrast and distortion should also be experimented with.

2 Locate and examine a number of well-known paintings by Frederick McCubbin. Respond to the areas of investigation in the following table.

APPRAISE	EXPLAIN	APPLY
Appraise the works of McCubbin and their **significance** in romanticising the Australian landscape, **systematically identifying** objects that prompt the viewer to **draw conclusions** of an implied narrative in the works.	**Explain** the use of **symbolic codes and conventions** in the **representation** of the Australian natural landscape in outdoor scenes of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* or another film text featuring people, places or events in a pioneering Australian setting.	**Apply** literacy skills to **communicate** the common representations, visual elements and props you **recognise** in your selected film text from the works of McCubbin. **Cite** the **appropriate** McCubbin paintings with formal **referencing** in the written discussion of your scene/s.

3 **Analyse** the work of any one of the Australian directors of photography mentioned in this section. View trailers or short clips of their **moving-image media** work to **examine technical codes** they have employed. **Consider** which films have similar stylistics and **make judgements** about how you could group them together according to aesthetic **criteria**.

4 **Explain technical** and **symbolic codes** in a recent stylistic digital game, film or television project of your choice, using a table to produce a significant account of the production. Ideally, it should be a **moving-image media** product you enjoy or know well.

Your selected media production:	
TASK	**PROMPTS FOR YOUR RESPONSE**
Explain by **recalling** the concept for your chosen example.	*Give the scenario of 'the world' of the production and character circumstance.*
Explain by **identifying** a previous style, director or *auteur* as influencing the production.	*You could include a production* **institution** *as an influence.*
Explain by **clarifying** how the technical and symbolic codes communicate the scenario of that 'world' to the audience early in the text.	**Technical codes**: *units of meaning generated in shooting and post-production.* **Symbolic codes**: *units of meaning generated independent of production processes.*
Explain by **recognising** specific stylistic choices made in technical and symbolic codes, linking them to other contemporary or historical use.	*Direct references could include architecture, shot composition, costuming or a soundtrack.*
Explain by **illustrating** the portrayal of a person, place and event through linking each of the three with a sign, symbol or code and convention that generates meaning.	*Include a paragraph for each one.* **Sign**: *points to a meaning other than itself through a similarity.* **Symbol**: *does not resemble the thing it represents.* **Convention**: *techniques in a particular genre – i.e. ways of combining codes.*

Part B: Production for stylistic film

LIGHTING FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Photographs are time machines – a frozen moment captured from some time in the past. Originally, crystals of silver halide reacted chemically to photons of light; later **CMOS** (complementary metal–oxide–semiconductor) chips produce numbers in a computer processor to record images. These optical machines have a preferred range of light to work in. The limited brightness range of early moving-picture photography drove the glass-roof studio designs in France. The bright Hollywood sunshine helped to establish a home for US movies.

Meeting the functional range of a camera and lens combination is the first purpose of lighting. As sensitivity increased, experimenting on the extremes of that range helped artistry to develop. Lighting can set mood and also imply time and action off-screen. Much like framing, lighting can reveal *and* conceal – hiding objects within the frame and directing attention.

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The variable elements in lighting design are intensity, direction or quality, colour and source. Each element can be selected for artistic effect.

In the camera, **aperture** controls the amount of light passing through the lens, while the **shutter speed** determines how often the light is progressing out of the lens and entering the image area. Mechanically, dark filters of **neutral density (ND)** restrict the brightness of the light on its journey within the camera and, electronically, the **gain** (or **ISO**) boosts the image signal artificially.

'Painting with light' must be done with the camera in mind. There is a 'conversation' of **exposure** between light intensity and the seesaw of aperture and shutter speed. Gain, ND filters and the reflective quality of the objects to be filmed also need to be factored in. Lighting is not about the brightness the crew is standing in – it is a relationship with the recording and display devices.

Studios

Studio-based television often looks inferior to film as the lighting is compromised for multi-camera coverage on a fixed grid. Most cinematic productions use the single camera method, which allows each shot to be tailored for an individual filming position. Lighting can also be arranged for the best solution to that particular take.

Cameras do not respond to light like the human eye, so even an untidy garage can function as a studio by altering the lighting intensity and directional quality. Like exterior location filming, good risk management practice must be observed for safety.

Elements of lighting

Intensity

The dramatic difference between the images in Figure 17.14 is due to **contrast ratio** – not the light intensity itself, but the ratio of the intensity between the brightest and darkest areas. When the ratio is low, there is little difference in exposure between the background and the subject. Therefore, everything is visible. When the ratio is high, the vast difference means a correct exposure for the subject drops the background detail to nothing, thanks to the functional range of the camera. If the correct exposure for the dark background is selected, tools will be seen on the wall and the subject will be vastly overexposed.

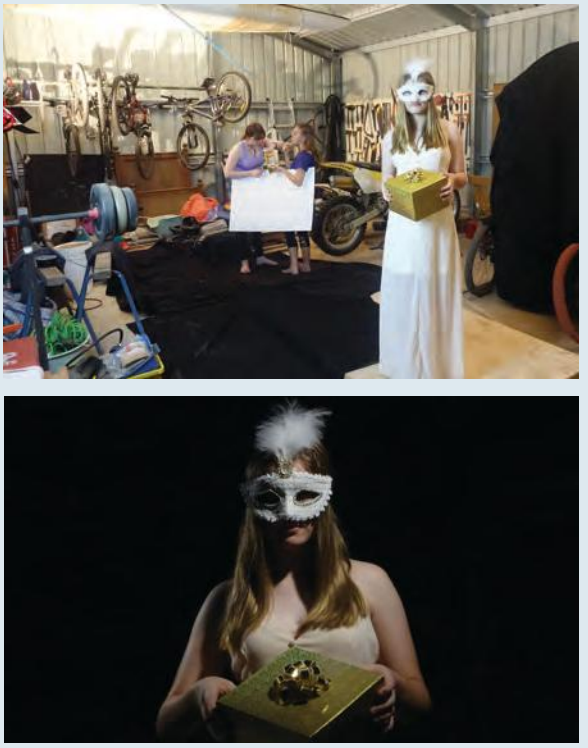


Figure 17.14 (Top) Filming lights illuminate the walls and the camera reveals full detail. Dark-coloured cloths are secured over the brightest areas of reflection. (Bottom) Repositioning the light, using barn doors and reducing camera exposure to match the brightest object makes the background disappear: it is the same set with the same camera and lights, just pointed a different way.

High-key lighting

If the ratio of fill light to key light is close, with each contributing to a bright scene where details are very visible, it is considered **high-key** lighting. Often used in comedies and musicals, it carries a happy connotation through soft lighting with low contrast. This leads to fewer areas of black while mid-tones are brighter, so the lighter shades dominate. A physically higher lighting position is better able to hide shadows on the floor, perfectly suited to studio lighting grid set-ups with the camera at traditional eye-heights. High-key lighting brings with it less need for focus pulls and more need for makeup.

Low-key lighting

High-contrast ratios between lights that produce a sombre mood are known as **low-key** lighting. Areas of black dominate the frame in these subdued scenes of low light, made possible by grainy, fast films. Historically, they were stocks chosen for black-and-white news footage. Lower numbers of less powerful

lights make the production more portable, with cameras able to use low angles and even include the ceiling. Use of physically lower lighting points means the shadows are visible in the frame.

Chiaroscuro

Having a high ratio between the fill and the key light means the mid-tones drop away, often disappearing altogether if a single key light is used. This produces **chiaroscuro** lighting (high contrast, low key), named after the Italian words for 'bright' and 'dark or obscured'. Chiaroscuro lighting lends itself to defined shadows that can become the subject of the shot rather than the character. Strong side-lighting produces depth, and without the fill it creates a **tone drop-out** effect that is an exaggeration of the black-and-white film stock.

Light meters

Cinematographers use **light meters** to measure the amount of light. **Incident light rays** and **reflected light rays** are measured to determine the intensity of incoming light, and the reflected brightness of an object is measured to see if it will show up in the frame. Beyond a certain point, dark grey will become black.



Figure 17.15 Traditionally, light meters were analogue devices. Nowadays, light meter apps are available for smartphones to help judge the contributing intensity of each light.

Adjusting light intensity

With the lighting elements in place, the balance of object brightness will need to match the story-telling intention and support the recording of a good-quality image. To adjust light intensity, try the following:

- Choose a different-coloured object or a different-sized light.
- Adjust the **flood-spot** setting or brightness faders where the light has these controls.
- Pass the light through **scrim** or **spun**, or even point the light away and use a **bounce-board** to reflect it back.
- Alter the **barn doors** to change the amount of light spilling forward.
- Move the light in relation to the subject.

The change of intensity is governed by a rule from physics that applies to radiation and sound, the **inverse-square law**. This rule states that light intensity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the light source. This is written as $I \propto \frac{1}{d^2}$.

The inverse-square law is particularly useful for translating to cameras. Standard camera **f-stop** settings are f-16, 11, 8, 5.6, 4, 2.8, 2 and 1.4. Each f-stop allows twice the amount of light into the camera as the stop before it. The larger the number, the smaller the aperture, so the larger opening of f-11 will let in twice the light of f-16. The inverse-square law states that moving an object away from the light reduces intensity at a predictable rate. Going from

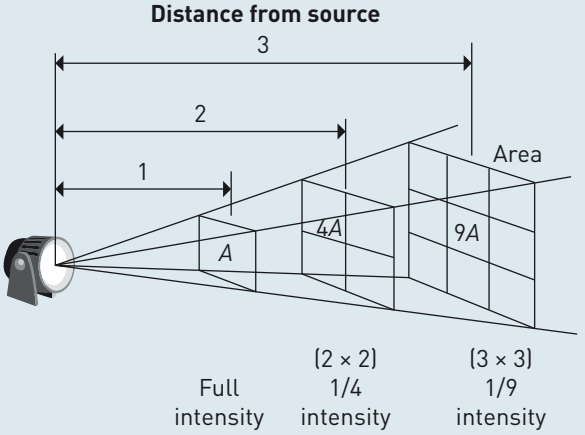


Figure 17.16 The light intensity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance. 2 × 2 = 4, so at 2 metres from its source the light intensity is one quarter of what it was at 1 metre from the source. 4 × 4 = 16, so at 4 metres from its source the light intensity is one sixteenth of the 1-metre intensity.

a gap of 1 metre to a gap of 2 metres will produce one quarter of the intensity. That equates to half of a half, which fits very neatly with the f-stops. If only that single light is being used, the camera needs to adjust two f-stops when the light is moved away. No matter which f-stop setting it starts on, doubling the distance needs a two-stop adjustment.

Therefore, adjusting the distance (with due respect for the hot lights) is an effective way to adjust intensity, particularly at close quarters.

Directional quality

Quality of light refers to the softness or single-point harshness. This can be grouped with direction of light. Having many harsh lights close together produces a softness as they fill in for each other, like the effect of lighting a stadium. Most **LED (light-emitting diode)** panels are just a series of lights very close together. As a result, LED panels have a limited application. They produce soft light with low heat and power consumption, but they cannot concentrate the full intensity into a single beam.

Creative shadow manipulation is more suited to a single-point LED or a **tungsten** filament light, especially if a 'spot' adjustment can be used to produce sharp shadows. Relative distance from the light will also affect shadow sharpness, along with the size of the light-emitting surface.

Some strategies for adjusting intensity (such as scrim, spun, reflectors, barn doors and flood setting) also alter the quality of light because the apparent area of the light source is changed.

Three-point lighting is an effective starting point for direction of light, either for a glamorous look or to remove lights individually for mood. In addition to standard key, fill and backlights, consider some alternatives:

- **Ring lights.** Wrinkles on a model's face can be eliminated with a light that surrounds the lens. Coming from the same angle as the camera fills in the texture, which looks flattering.
- **Catch lights.** Lights can be placed to create a sparkling highlight in the subject's eyes when taking close-ups. Catch lights are often evident in pupil reflections.
- **Ceiling bounce.** One powerful light can soften all of the shadows with a gentle fill from the overhead reflection.
- **Hair light.** A backlight trained specifically on one character's position will define them and increase background separation. This can be from a low placement, or sometimes as a top light, relying on shine.
- **Rim light.** A backlight above and behind the subject illuminates the majority of the figure or object for visual separation of backgrounds and objects.

Colour

Emotion, time and location aspects are communicated through colour. Measured in the Kelvin scale, the colour temperature of location lights depends on the chemical element involved. Streetlights can use a variety of materials to produce light of different colour temperatures: sodium vapour (yellow), mercury (green), xenon (blue), halogen (white) and fluorescents (purple or greenish).

Lights for filming must have a consistent colour across scenes. The two standard settings are tungsten and daylight. Many types of **bulbs** are available in 'daylight', which is a bluish colour of 5600 K. Tungsten lamps are quite orange, around 3200 K, which corresponds to the indoor setting on cameras for the warmer orange light. Cameras can be programmed to recognise white according to the lighting condition they are in. The automatic function of white balance is normally very effective in responding to the light colour. Situations that mix different colours of light can create a problem. The camera may make a compromise or have to adjust from shot to shot. Locations with mixed light colour call for manual control of the white balance.



Shutterstock.com/kondrukhov

Figure 17.17 The physics of light determines its behaviour. Blue light is more easily refracted, giving it more punch than other colours for backlighting. Conversely, warmer light tends to travel straighter, explaining why yellow is the best colour for fog lamps and streetlights in misty areas. The longer wavelength of red light is not as easily bent, but the shorter wavelength of blue light is more easily scattered as it passes through the smoke.

Exteriors in shaded areas tend to look bluer from the reflected skylight. Under large trees, the yellower light direct from the sun is screened out, while the blue bounces in from surrounding sky. Colour temperature also varies with the amount of cloud cover, time of day and latitude.

A solution for mixed colours when filming indoors is to exclude all daylight by drawing curtains. Professionals may also use orange-tinted **85a** or **85b filters** to wrap the windows. The colour of the light outside is changed to match tungsten by using the orange film. More commonly, lighting inside is matched to daylight. Blue filters can be pegged over tungsten lights to match the outside, and LEDs can be dialled to the blue setting. The decision to turn on domestic lighting may add little useful light. It may depend on the colour temperature of the lamps matching the desired look for the scene.

Post-production allows for subtle white balance adjustments and outlandish colour tints to be added. However, the effect of this is different from adjusting lights on location. Exaggerated colours can be applied to individual lights using 'party **gels**' of strong colour pegged to barn doors.

Colour reflection from green-screen studio walls can ruin the digital effect by discolouring whites and reflective surfaces, spoiling the sharp edge of the masking. **Magenta** gels can be used, sometimes called a **negative green**, to counter the unwanted reflected colour.

Lighting sources

Variable light sources (such as the sun on a partially cloudy day, moving shadows from wind in trees, or shifting patches of light as the sun moves) can disrupt the consistency of takes. Changes in light can be disguised by using a scrim over the subjects. **Sail cloths**, **silks** and **grifflons** are large-format lighting **diffusers** for exteriors.

Additive lighting

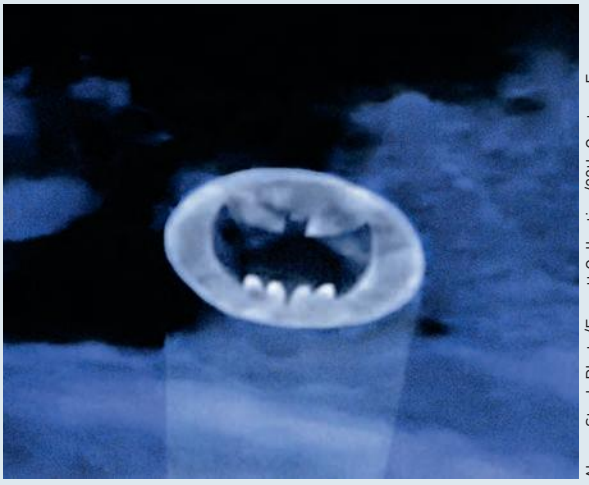
Directing a light source into darker areas is referred to as **additive lighting**. This is the conventional way to draw out details with light. Lamps that contribute light from within the frame are referred to as 'practicals', but they are often not bright enough to make a useful contribution. Additional lights may be carefully aimed to boost the output of a practical. Fireplaces are also relatively dim, and reverse shots of fireside faces often need to be creatively boosted.

Subtractive lighting

When the source light is too uniform, flags or cutters can be used to cast shadows. This is called **subtractive lighting**. Sometimes taking light away may be desirable. If a black cutter is used near a face, it creates a 'negative bounce' – absorbing light from one side to bring direction to a diffuse light source, increasing modelling and texture.

Selective blocking of light

Light can also be selectively removed from directional sources to help them blend with the set. **Cookie boards (cucoloris)** create patterned shadows from stencils mounted on clamps such as a **C-stand**. *Film noir* is well known for the symbolic use of venetian blind shadows that are easily simulated through lighting design, even without a window.



Alamy Stock Photo/Everett Collection/20th Century Fox

Figure 17.18 Technically, the Bat Signal is a **gobo** (not a cookie board). A gobo is placed on the light and is intended to create a more precise shape with the light. At the same time, a **snoot** wraps around the whole beam to contain the outer edge.

Day for night

Imitating night can also be enhanced with selective blocking. The technique is used to allow cameras to work in a preferred light level, but it can look very artificial. Exposure can always be darkened in post-production and have extra blue added, as long as there is an adequate image to work with. Images should not be severely underexposed at the shooting stage. Some filmmakers advise only shooting on overcast days, but direction of the sun is more of an issue than cloudy or sunny conditions.

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> 'Many game designers vary light contrast and colors to direct the participant's attention to important artifacts. Such lighting effects may indirectly affect participants' choices and actions.'
>
> **Magy Seif El-Nasr and Ian Horswill**, in their paper on Expressive Lighting Engines for games

High contrast is not a problem (and it often looks more convincing without mid-tones), but overhead sunlight is difficult to disguise.

Editing the colour balance and contrast is useful, but doubling up on daylight gels and party gels on the actual film lights is very effective for close shots.



Figure 17.19 An actual piece of tree foliage used to cast a shadow is known as a **dingle**. Its pattern has many uses on set including high contrast shadows for night shots.

Lighting style

Expressive lighting

Hyperbole can be used in lighting. A ridiculously perfect rim light around an action hero is part of the language that the audience accepts. Perfectly manufactured, overly glamourous imagery is common, but is a version of expressive lighting. Many chase scenes and show-downs take place under flashing lights, cascading sparks and rotating spotlights. These industrial grunge sets are also expressive, exaggerating the mood of the action.

Expressiveness is also achieved through the overly minimal lighting of the *film noir* chiaroscuro.

Quirky and abstract lighting can work like a German Expressionist set, drawing attention to its own exaggerated form.

Expressive lighting can also be very realistic and still have an aesthetic purpose. A character turning off a practical lamp at a moment of defeat accentuates the dramatic aspects. This is a meaning beyond the task of producing illumination, yet it is realistic imagery.

Naturalistic lighting

Sensitive cameras have allowed the amount of light needed on set to fall over the decades. Natural light can often be the primary source, making it very difficult for viewers to see that lighting has been added to the scene. Many filmmakers and advertisers are very interested in manufacturing a look of authenticity, and naturalistic lighting reinforces this. Less studio-looking studio lighting can also be generated by tactics such as allowing actors to walk through holes in the lighting, passing through shadows as they move, not providing rim lights for all positions, using light sources that are justified from within the frame by windows or practicals, and having shadows that are cast from props themselves.

17.4 ACTIVITIES

1 **Experiment** with the range of aperture settings needed for **moving-image media** equipment to keep consistent exposure at various distances.
   - Locate a room and set up a camera aimed at a piece of paper.
   - Set up the brightest single light you have, or set a reflector in daylight from a window. Place the paper 1 metre from the light source.

- Framing only on the paper, adjust the camera's settings (shutter speed, ISO and so on) to set the aperture to the highest number f-stop possible for a correct exposure **in the context**. Note the settings of the camera.
- Use a tape measure to **discover** and record the furthest distance the paper can be moved from the light source within the room.
- With other settings constant, refer to the inverse-square law to **solve the mathematical problem** of calculating the new f-stop required at the furthest point in the room while maintaining correct exposure for the paper.

2 **Construct** a **moving-image media** shot in *film noir* style.
- **Design** a cookie board from assembled objects at even spaces, or cut strips in card to simulate a venetian blind cookie board.
- Recreate the *film noir* **convention** of an actor looking out through the blinds. Position a light to cast shadows into the scene.
- Place the camera to disguise the lack of a genuine window and record some action.
- Add some lines of voice-over and appropriate music for a 1940s **moving-image media** product.

3 **Explain** the lighting **features** of three still advertising **images** and the **practices** in production.
Identify the light sources used to illuminate the images.
Present the three ads in a way that allows lights to be drawn in position outside the frame.
Mark all light sources within the frame and indicate the **characteristics** of each light according to the four elements of lighting. Where possible, list technologies used.
Demonstrate understanding by identifying use of known lighting conventions.

4 **Experiment** with the three-point lighting **convention**.
Refer to page 36 for three-point lighting information and a diagram guide.
Lock the camera in position and record a **moving-image media** experiment with three individual lights on independently.
Film again with each light off, **trying out** the combinations two lights at a time.
Edit the footage in a series of jump cuts that displays the full **variety** of combinations of the three lights.

5 **Experiment** with lighting **methods** to solve the reverse-engineering **problem** of replicating the thumbnail images in Figure 17.20 using a **variety of techniques**. Record the images you reproduce, including 'behind the scenes' shots for each set-up.



Figure 17.20

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SHOOTING TECHNIQUES FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Excluding selected parts of the 'real world' is a critical planning step, particularly for location shooting. For stylistic productions, the *mise en scène* must reveal and conceal according to the era, mood and logic underpinning the moving-image media sequence (see chapter 5). This key determinant may limit where the camera can be pointed.

Composition and framing

Placement within the frame and the power of the visual interest will manipulate your audience. Technology used by the advertising industry reveals why classical composition has been effective in directing attention. We look to the areas of interest with a western world's left-to-right tendency. 'Reading' of images happens so fast it is considered involuntary.



Alamy Stock Photo/David Caton

Figure 17.21 Eye-movement tracking of Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889) indicates that viewers look to the brightest star and begin to think about stars as a concept, according to Gufran Ahmed, data scientist and researcher at Jazan University. We then preferentially look to the left of the composition to find a connecting idea (other stars) and begin reading that idea along leading lines.



Tobii AB

Figure 17.22 Faces are magnets for attention. Eye-movement tracking of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci demonstrates the power of characters in composition. Viewers look to all of the faces but spend the most time on the central face of Jesus, even looking to his eyeline and gesture. Key product information can be placed in such areas for commercially motivated images.

Compositional strategies

Visual artists refer to the elements and principles of design to analyse a still image. Many of those elements and principles apply to moving images. The most relevant aspects can be grouped together as a set of filming strategies for interesting composition.

Intersections

- **Converging lines.** A focal point can draw the eye initially, sparking the first pass of the image and then a second or third circuit in which greater detail is absorbed. In Figure 17.22, the perspective lines reinforce the centrality of Jesus in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* (c. 1490s).
- **Diagonals.** A straight line becomes a diagonal through perspective and camera placement or by tilting the camera for a Dutch angle (see page 24). Any oblique angle will tend to add energy and dynamism. Verticals tend to look elegant and horizontals restful.
- **Rule of thirds.** The well-known compositional technique produces a pleasing result as it almost automatically creates emphasis and balance. It can infer a diagonal relationship even if one is not visible between objects on intersections of opposite thirds (see chapter 2, page 27). When using the thirds rule, it must be adjusted to suit the aspect ratio of the medium – however, this is a rule that can be broken.

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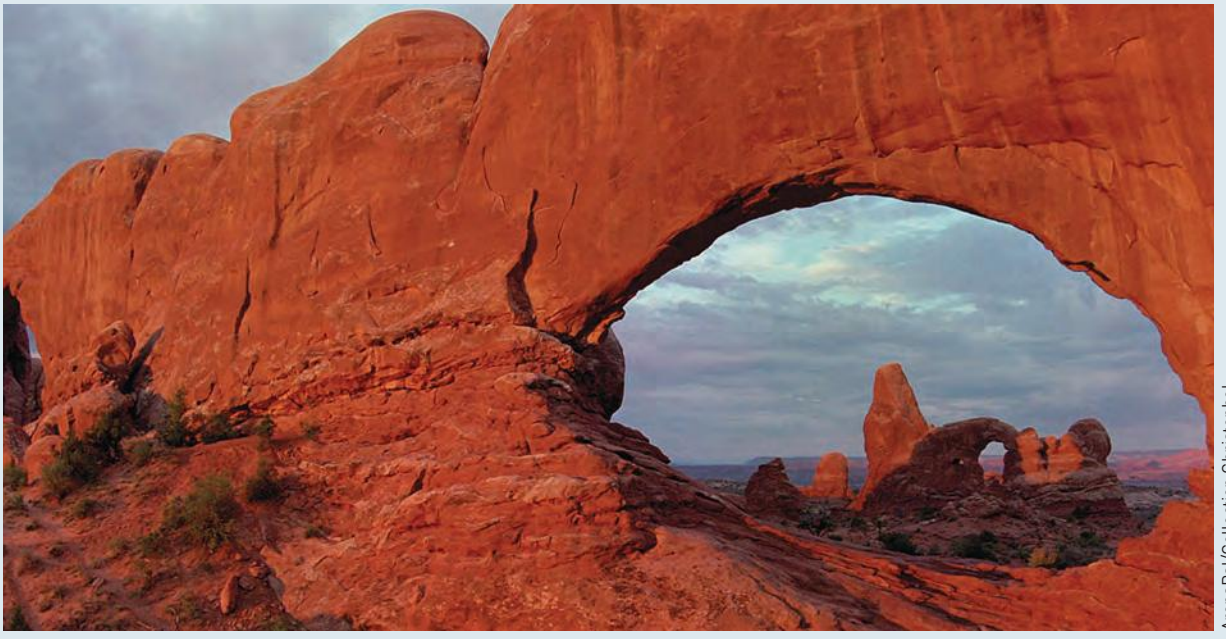
Alamy Stock Photo/2929 Productions

Figure 17.23 Bisected composition. A strong horizon line can make a shot look like a flag with two distinct zones battling for dominance. If a visual bridge is provided by an object or a movement, it can be a refreshing experiment. In *The World's Fastest Indian* (2006), the motion of the vehicle and character acts as an attention gateway, drawing the eye and spanning the distinct halves. The flightpath of a bird or an inanimate visual ladder can achieve a similar bridging effect.

Relationship

- **Balance.** The suggestion of an even frame does not only come from obvious symmetry. One small object can create an equal match for an apparently larger object through strength of colour and the illusion of mass or density. This can be further complicated by the suggestion of distance and knowledge of the object.
- **Asymmetry.** Tension or anxiety in the audience may be heightened by using an unbalanced asymmetrical composition. A balanced asymmetry will be less disturbing, but still adds energy to traditional balance.
- **Negative space.** Empty spaces 'want' to be filled. This can increase anticipation, or even isolation and disappointment in longer takes. These 'holes' between objects can provide looking space for an eyeline, movement space for characters and objects, or an invitation for another character to appear. They can also provide opportunity for audiences to project a conceptual idea such as thinking space, or an escape from the physical scene the character is placed in.
- **Frame within a frame.** Depending entirely on the relative placement of the camera, this technique requires an imaginative eye to take advantage of the possibilities. Filmmakers must not settle for the first view that they have of the location. A walk through the whole 360 degrees of the 'set' gives an opportunity to recognise what the location provides. High and low vantage points should be explored before determining what to add to the scene.

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ArenaPal/Collection Christophel

Figure 17.24 Others have filmed this hole in Utah – yet, in *Baraka* (1992), even the time of day adds to the compositional elements. This shot makes use of diagonal, rule of thirds, asymmetrical balance, depth, complementary colours, mass, and frame within a frame, within a frame, within the frame.

Distance

- **Claustrophobic frames.** Lack of space between characters and the frame hides information from the audience. Suspense is built by the viewer's desperation to see what threatens the character. Audiences are forced to 'look around the next corner' only at the rate permitted by the filmmaker. Digital games can achieve the effect via placement of walls, portals and other objects. First-person play can also be unnerving if the field of view does not provide adequate warning of hazards. In a romance scene, this close framing may provide intimacy – however, if an extremely restricting frame lingers, it can become a threat.
- **Perspective.** Wider angle lenses and straight lines emphasise perspective difference between the foreground and the distance. Placing the camera close to a wall surface or an object can achieve a similar result, exaggerating the size difference, even on a mid-range lens setting.
- **Low angle.** Placing the camera low is the classic way to convey a powerful subject. It can also increase the feeling of distance by capitalising on the perspective distortion of a floor, or to allow an open sky to dominate the frame.

Camera movement and motivation

- **Leading lines.** Like arrows on a sign, the eye is drawn to follow a branch, a horizon line or a road. Audience attention is directed along these lines. When the frame is moving, these directional elements can provide the reason for a **motivated move**, initiating a pan, tilt or crane. Audience attention is again following the lines, but in a controlled reveal. These motivated movements tend to work the same way that a viewer naturally wants to follow a character that moves, or the desire to follow an eyeline that strays off-screen.
- **Three-dimensionality.** Layering objects in the foreground, midground and background ensures a perception of depth. Distance is emphasised by differing shades of colour in the layers and by manipulating focus. Dolly and tracking shots can be accentuated by dressing the set with objects at varying distances from the lens so that the differential speeds draw attention to the motion of the camera. A series of objects or perforations allow for a continual sense of movement more than large, solid objects obscuring the background.

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Compositional strategies work together

Each of the compositional strategies can guide the formation of an artistic frame – more as ingredients than absolute rules. Unlike painting and photography, which are trapped by time, the moving-image media are freed from being frozen. They are able to move in and out of these compositional recipes as the shot progresses.

A game or virtual reality environment may be designed to provide a certain vista through an opening as an invitation to the next challenge, or perhaps the player may happen to align with the virtual objects through chance.

Television, film and animation have an aesthetic advantage: the audience is forced to endure the duration of the shot. Each one of these artistic features can occur at the start, middle or end of a moving frame. The linear narrative filmmaker knows that even if a shot is ugly, it can be saved by ending on an inspired composition through moving the characters, objects or the camera. A shot can be awkward and even improvised mid-take if it is bracketed by beauty at each end.

Camera movement equipment

Skateboards and wheelie-bins have often been employed at great risk to the equipment and the filmmaker in pursuit of a moving shot. Safe methods for moving camera shots include **tri-dolly** (clip-on tripod castors), **pipe dollies** constructed from angled skateboard trucks, **Steadicams** to increase stability through camera inertia, and full-scale film dollies that can carry a camera operator and focus puller. Even a tabletop in a restaurant can provide a crude dolly track if a camera **slider** is not available. A **sink dolly** can be made with a towel under the camera to reduce friction when moving it on a kitchen bench.

In-built image stabilisation on cameras and phones reduces the need for equipment in some circumstances, but digital stabilising can sacrifice quality and produce noticeable frame lag. 'Warp stabilisers' within editing tools iron out bumps, as does slow motion, providing the 'strobe' of individual frames does not become obvious. Deliberate frame drift can be a stylistic decision that often conveys realism or 'being in the moment'.

In *Au pays des mages noirs* (*In the Land of the Black Magi*, 1947), Jean Rouch's wandering frame captures the frenzied villagers looking possessed. The handheld effect became a matter of philosophical choice for Rouch, and influenced the French New Wave (see page 392) and such films as *Cloverfield* (2008), *Black Swan* (2010), *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and the choreographed long take near the climax of *Children of Men* (2006).

Vertical movement can be achieved with **jib arms**, cable suspended rigs, **cherry pickers**, helicopters and drones. Motion to start the rising or falling movement is not always smooth and may need to be trimmed out of the shot. A small, handheld crane up with the human body can be as spectacular as a large movement if the foreground is thoughtfully dressed to amplify the movement.

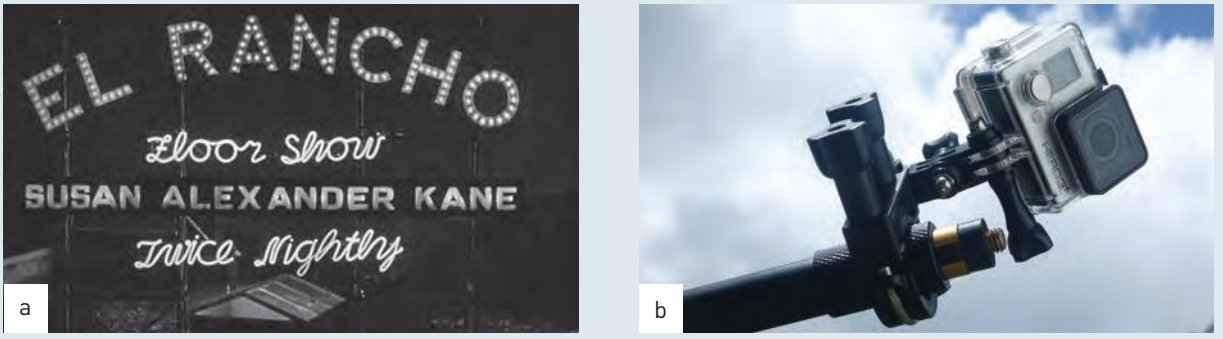


Figure 17.25 Many accessories are available to stabilise filming on a whole range of domestic and professional equipment. Avoiding tripods may create the illusion of less work through faster set-ups. However, this time will often be more than consumed in the processing of footage or simply identifying a frame to cut on that does not produce a directional jump.

'I had lost my tripod early on in some rapids and didn't know how to shoot ...'

Jean Rouch, the pioneering French filmmaker described shooting his documentary in Africa

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ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 17.26 (a) *Citizen Kane* (1941), directed by Orson Welles. The sign was constructed to come apart during a crane shot, creating a gap for the camera after the lens had passed through. Long continuous takes with a combination of choreographed movements can create an epic feel. (b) The problem of camera movement into a confined space can now be solved with a GoPro and a boom pole.

Joining camera moves

'Morphing' is a computer-assisted method for joining two shots by gradually altering the shape of objects. Striking results are produced by mixing one human face with another, famously used for Michael Jackson's 'Black or White' (1991) music video, but the technique can also be used to connect individual shots as one. Directors who desired extremely long takes were once limited by the length of film that could be loaded into a magazine, meaning the shot would run out at a predetermined time. The 'invisible cut' was a solution. Actor movements could be contrived to enter a pitch-black lift or block the camera by walking to the lens with a dark jacket. The moment of black could be used to reload the film and produce a seamless cut. *Birdman* (2014) uses this technique as well as zip pans and digital object wipes to create continuous shots.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) gives the impression of a much longer take between two complicated moving camera set-ups in different rooms. As the camera leaves the famous shower scene to focus our attention on the newspaper, a cut is hidden in the black-and-white tone of the wall. Another example can be found in Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948). Panning at a constant speed gives the impression of a single move, and is easily executed with some planning and a softening dissolve.



Alamy Stock Photo/Moviestore Collection

Figure 17.27 *Poseidon* (2006), directed by Wolfgang Petersen. Individual shots can be blended with digital imagery to create stunning moves. Industrial Light and Magic worked a computer render farm for a week to process the 4000 frames of fluid dynamics and a completely digital ship. Compositors used hundreds of layers on *Poseidon's* opening sequence.

Visual metaphor and figurative use of imagery

Figurative imagery is when the visuals in the frame make a statement about a connected concept that we cannot actually see. In literature, figurative writing refers to something beyond the literal. Devices such as metaphors, similes, hyperbole, symbolism and personification add layers of inferred interpretation. Screen language is able to use the equivalent of these to create a kind of 'figure of speech' that has a meaning beyond the literal words or shots themselves.

Metaphor is created when the audience understands the similarity between two different concepts. 'All the world's a stage' is a metaphor by William Shakespeare. It can easily be a simile by substituting '*is* a stage' for 'is *like* a stage.' On screen, the difference between metaphor and simile could hinge on the force of the connecting transitions.

> 'The image-maker proposes food for thought without stating any determinate proposition. A visual metaphor is a device for encouraging insights, a tool to think with.'
>
> **Noel Carroll**, *Beyond Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*

Table 17.2 Figurative language and suggested screen equivalents. While simile and metaphor can play a very direct role in making meaning, other devices may be employed to create a connection that is relatively shallow but improves visual flow.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE		LITERARY DEFINITION	SCREEN EQUIVALENT
Common examples	Simile	Finds common aspects of two different things by saying one is 'like' the other.	Cutting between shots of two different subjects that are connected in some way.
	Metaphor	An imaginative claim that one thing 'is' another, made clear by common aspects of the two.	Cutting between shots of two distinct subjects using a graphic match in the transition to force direct comparison.
	Hyperbole	An extreme exaggeration to draw attention.	Using extreme shot sizes (such as ECU) and extreme camera angles (such as extreme HCA). Also using slow motion.
	Symbolism	An object or event represents something other than itself.	Motifs with internal story meaning of an image with external cultural readings, e.g. a flag at half-mast represents mourning a death.
Further examples	Alliteration	Starting consecutive words with the same sound.	Consecutive shots with different versions of the same kind of object, e.g. different makes of helicopters.
	Anaphora	Repeating the same word(s) to begin each clause.	Consecutive shots with the same direction and speed of camera or object movement.
	Antithesis	Two opposing ideas brought together.	Juxtaposition of contrasts such as safety and danger, rich and poor, or complementary colours.
	Assonance	Similar vowel sounds in the middle of consecutive words.	A particular colour theme embedded in a series of props, costumes or landscapes.
	Euphemism	Using substitute expressions to avoid content that may offend.	Clichés function as accepted vocabulary, such as cutting to fireworks after an extended kiss.
	Onomatopoeia	Words that describe sounds by approximately imitating them.	Overlapping scene audio that synchronises with action from the other scene.
	Oxymoron	Terms that do not normally sit together, such as 'seriously funny'.	Characters and objects in incongruous settings, such as a Surrealist dream.
	Paradox	Self-contradictory statements such as 'fighting a war for peace'.	Contrapuntal sound, presenting an opposing emotion in the vision and the audio.
	Personification	Human qualities are used to describe inanimate objects.	Animation of various forms.
	Synecdoche (a form of metonymy)	One small sample of an activity or object represents the whole.	Close-ups without connective establishing shots, e.g. train wheels turning on the tracks represent the entire journey.

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Figure 17.28 This shot is halfway through a dissolve between a shot of the radio telescopes and a second shot of a pair of hands offering a bowl with an antique book in it. The exact placement of the similarly shaped telescope dish and bowl force the audience into a direct comparison of the ideas in each image. The open hands suggest receiving something by offering the bowl. The book seems old and precious, possibly religious. The radio telescope is facing directly up to collect technical information from outer space. The elements suggest a metaphor to the audience – that technical searches for significance in the universe are also spiritual searches. The closely matched alignment of the visual elements help push beyond simile into metaphor, visually arguing that one concept *is* the other.

Digital support for the metaphor

The 2005 version of *War of the Worlds* features a series of **graphic matches** that play with scale. One graphic match transition seems to say, 'one rain drop *is* a whole world of its own', and this is key to the plot. Without the metaphor, that's just one big leaf! Unlike in the famous graphic matches of Stanley Kubrick and Alfred Hitchcock, a high degree of accuracy in size and placement is achieved digitally.

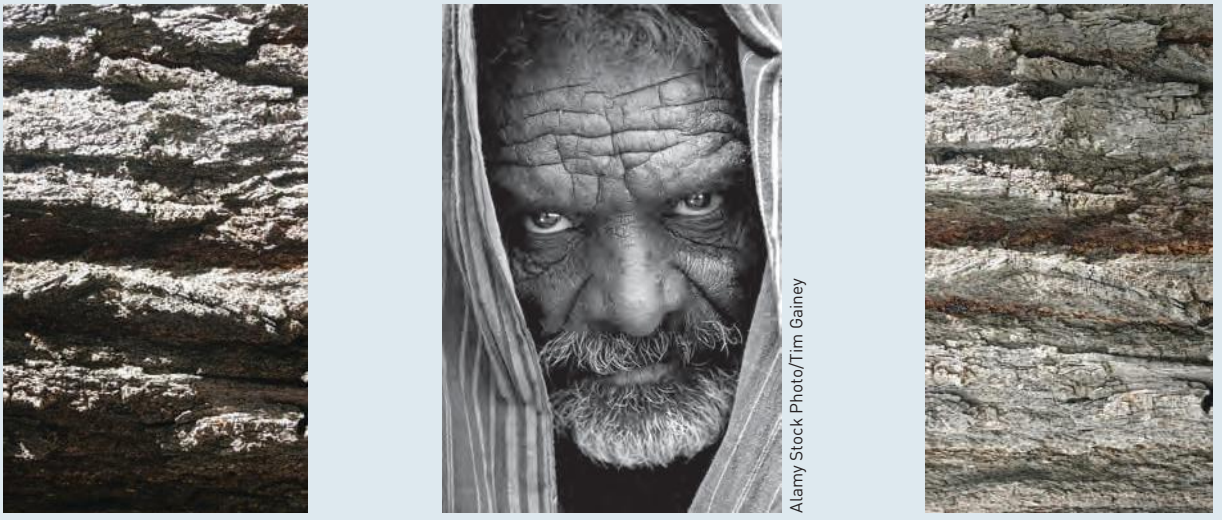


Figure 17.29 Shots can be zoomed, stretched and dragged to perfectly match an object of any scale. The giant 'X' sculpture behind the crowd in Mexico, as shown on the screens, can be aligned with an X from a naughts-and-crosses tabletop game. Key frames can be added to animate a moving graphic match during dissolves and pans.

Complicated graphics are not always needed to create a metaphor. *Parenthood* (1989) features a simple sound effect followed by a swaying motion of the camera as a father feels he has lost control. The analogy of a rollercoaster ride is clear in the scene from the technical codes. The power of the rollercoaster as a symbolic metaphor comes from an earlier monologue in the film that establishes Grandma's wisdom that 'life is like a rollercoaster'. Juxtapositioning of audio and a bland *mise en scène* can also produce sophisticated metaphor without graphic spectacle.

Shooting for metaphor and simile

Screen language dictates that consecutive shots are initially assumed to be related. This can create a contrast or a simile, depending on which way



Alamy Stock Photo/Tim Gainey

Figure 17.30 Rotating the frame of the tree bark in post-production makes the horizontal lines match the elderly person's forehead furrows. Choosing the high-contrast image of the bark is also hyperbole, exaggerating texture and strengthened by the horizontal orientation.

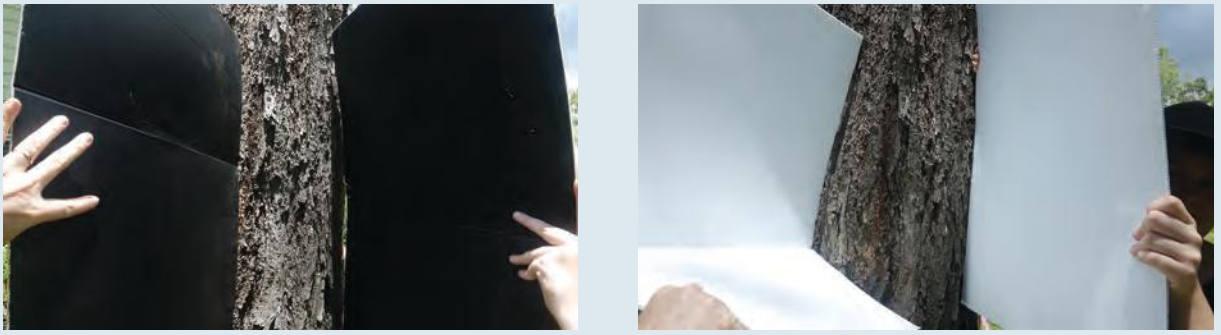


Figure 17.31 (Right) White bounce-boards will reflect daylight to soften the contrast and produce a 'nicer' image of the bark. However, to maximise the harsh texture, reflectors are not desirable. (Left) Using black cutters reduces sideways spill light by absorbing the bounce to turn the sun into a single-point key light. This increases the contrast and texture to create the exaggeration.

the audience goes. Therefore, it is important to manipulate images for similarity if the intention is to create a visual metaphor.

Technical and symbolic codes must support the preferred reading. The juxtaposition of ageing human skin and tree bark implies a connection of longevity – perhaps experience or wisdom through personification of the tree. Keeping the same colour and tones is suggesting the images sit together in a cohesive visual sentence, but the high contrast lighting creates a stronger link. The same patch of bark looks quite different due to planned location lighting to support the metaphor.

For documentary, figurative imagery is often used in the dramatisations of events. This could be slow shutter speeds to create a blur of memory, or creative use of focus. When the audience engages with nonfiction moving-image media, it carries great emotive power. There is less need for extreme visual hyperbole or flamboyant technical manipulation.

The controversial portrayal of the town of Cunnamulla in Dennis O'Rourke's documentary *Cunnamulla* (2000) concludes with a shot at the rail siding. Characters discuss lack of opportunity for them in the town and talk of leaving for Brisbane, 800 kilometres down the track. The final frames literally show the sun setting at the end of the rail line. This metaphor for their future is constructed by a creative selection of *mise en scène* on location.

Using symbolism

Symbols represent a meaning that has been translated from another context. The connection between the symbol and the meaning is constructed rather than natural. Written language is a set of agreed symbols that refer to spoken language, not because every letter looks like a sound it represents, but because there is an accepted system of meaning for each symbol on the page.

Relying on clichés and stereotypes is not all negative. It is an efficient way of communicating a common meaning that can save valuable screen time. These elements can then be combined in novel ways to explore less predictable layers of meaning.

Symbols that rely on external, cultural elements can provide a pre-programmed interpretation, although audience knowledge and age can disrupt or blunt the intended meaning. A raised fist may be a sign of triumph or resistance to many, but not all may be aware of Nelson Mandela using it in South Africa as a victory salute. History students may recognise the Nazi mass rally references in *Star Wars,* where others will just see a disciplined military scene.

In a factual film, it is straightforward to link a smoke stack with pollution as a direct symbol. However, more narrative work within a screen text would be needed to illustrate a connection with specific birth defects or an internal health problem that does not have an obvious visual outcome.

If the meaning of a symbol is entirely established within the world of the film, the plot must carefully build this understanding through various contexts to ensure audience members have a shared understanding of the symbol. *Inception* (2010) establishes a totem associated with each character as a reality check on their journey through dreams. The audience is taught the entire meaning of this simple prop symbol within the narrative of the movie.

Abstract elements

Purely abstract visual art relies only on the elements of the work – the intention being to bypass references to objects in the real world. For example, abstract art can force the audience to respond to combinations of blue and white instead of a literal sky with clouds.



Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 2

Figure 17.32 Piet Mondrian's *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow* (1930). Mondrian was not trying to represent a map or a particular object, rather he was exploring the relationship between the colours and the illusion of mass from their placement – elements also found in moving frames.

Film editors can identify connecting visual themes in seemingly random **rushes**. Found footage or unstructured filming still present suggestions of a rhythm than can be accentuated through selection and repetition. Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles* (1952) seems a chaotic 'abstract expressionist' painting without a topic, selected by critics as a good example of the movement. Modern analysis of the image has revealed that there are smaller paint splatters that resemble the shapes on the larger scale – an example of fractals, which are found in nature and defined in mathematics. This may explain the appeal it has over another random collection of splatters. The subject of the painting is the paint – the colour, the rhythm, the depth and patterns that have built up.

Abstract screens

An Andalusian Dog (1929), also known as *Un Chien Andalou*, is a film by Luis Buñuel with collaboration from Salvador Dalí. It was a Surrealist production that goes some way to being an abstract film. Previously, in 1924, the Dadaist Fernand Léger produced a film that relied heavily on filmmaking techniques to capture audience interest. *Ballet Mécanique* (1924) repeats a limited number of images to the point that they cease to add new information. The film then becomes about the rhythm of the



Blue Poles, 1952 (oil, enamel, aluminium paint & glass on canvas), Pollock, Jackson (1912-56) / National Gallery of Australia, Canberra / Purchased 1973 / Bridgeman Images.
© Pollock-Krasner Foundation/ARS. Copyright Agency, 2018

Figure 17.33 Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, oil, enamel, aluminium paint and glass on canvas. In 1973, the Australian Government controversially paid $1.3 million for one of Pollock's most famous works. In 2016 it was valued at $350 million.

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edits, the motion of the camera, and the random kaleidoscope patterns that have no literal meaning at all – like true abstract art.

Experiments in purely abstract film do not usually enjoy commercial success. Mainstream films risk being considered self-indulgent if the innovation is perceived as overly experimental. The 'light journey' in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) by Stanley Kubrick had a narrative excuse for the abstract segment. It also contrasted with a highly realistic portrayal of the future in other scenes. The special effects tapped into a 1960s mood for experimentation and a fascination for psychedelia.

Video- and computer-generated artworks are often found in modern art galleries. They will commonly emphasise the elements of the mediums (brightness, movement, colour, edits) over the importance of depicting objects. But even in a gallery setting, the representational imagery and abstraction are likely to work together.

17.5 ACTIVITIES

1 Compositional strategies. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	EXPERIMENT	ANALYSE
Construct a **systematic** collection of examples for each of the compositional strategies listed in this section using a still camera or locked-off tripod on an in-house excursion. **Arrange** the visual **elements** according to the described **conventions** as the priority for each of the strategies.	**Experiment** in groups of two or three with three compositions around your current **context**. Record a wider shot of a leading line within a static frame. Referring to eye-tracking research, **discover** where your audience is most likely to look within your three frames and mark on your images the likely points of **interaction** with audience attention. **Experiment** with the leading lines by using them as a cue for the alternative **technique** of directing attention in a closer **moving-image** 'motivated move' (e.g. pan, tilt or dolly). **Experiment** with an end point on the leading line that fulfils the **brief** of a natural end to the move, and place a product within view near that end point.	**Analyse** the **constituent parts** in the composition strategy of an image designed for the **purpose** of promoting a product, service or opinion. **Examine** the directing of audience attention and indicate the elements through a combination of explanatory text and markings on the image. **Analyse technical and symbolic codes** evident, and **consider** how they support the compositional strategy in the explanatory text. **Analyse** the success of the sum of these **techniques** in capturing the attention of a particular audience.

2 Three dimensions and movement. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

EXPERIMENT	EXPERIMENT	EXPERIMENT
Experiment with two takes of a tabletop tracking shot using objects from your current **context**. Use the friction-reduction **method** of a camera on a jumper, carefully slid sideways to observe the apparent movement. Repeat the shot with props placed at **various** distances to **discover** what most accentuates movement of the benchtop **sink dolly**.	**Experiment** with **various** stabiliser **techniques** in a small group. Turn off the stabilising in your camera device and walk quickly but smoothly along a corridor. **Try out** the camera stabiliser by repeating the exact same motion. **Experiment** with a post-production warp stabiliser effect applied to both takes to **discover** which of the four **methods** gives the desired result.	**Experiment** in a group of three with a handheld crane from a personal possession on a tabletop to **discover** the identity of the owner at the end of a timed 5-second take. **Experiment** with a slow motion applied at 80 per cent. Calculate and film a take length to maintain 5 seconds of rendered footage. **Experiment** to determine at what percentage of speed reduction the individual strobe of frames is a **problem**. Calculate the real-time filming needed for a 5-second shot at the slowest acceptable speed.



17.5.1 What is a sink dolly?

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3 Joining shots. Respond to the areas of activity in the following table.

CONSTRUCT	EXPERIMENT	SYNTHESISE
Construct a list of **conventional** descriptions of camera movements that morph together to form the 2-minute above-water title shot for *Poseidon* (2006). **Construct** a list that **systematically** identifies the shot sizes the camera progresses through for each of the movements.	**Experiment** in groups of two or three with two tracking shots executed in front of objects of the same colour in different locations, such as doors. The **brief** is to fill the frame with the door at a certain point, and to have a constant speed for both shots. **Experiment** with cutting points in post-production to **try out** the illusion of connecting the spaces. **Experiment** with a variety of colour corrections and tints to **solve the problem** of different lighting for a seamless transition.	**Synthesise** a graphic match between two shots with one similar shape within the frame. **Solve the technical problem** of lining up the objects precisely, then dissolving between the shots.

4 **Symbolise** figurative language with a screen equivalent for your own context. List specific possibilities you could incorporate in your own production from the list in Table 17.2. Suggest further equivalents for rhyme and rhythm.

5 **Structure** a chain of abstract still photographs (like the game known as 'Chinese whispers') in a group. One person **selects** an interesting image or texture in extreme close-up, hiding the full context and adding some image treatment. The image is digitally shared with the next person who must find their own secret object to photograph with the **purpose** of obscuring the subject while creating a sympathetic response to the image they have been sent. Each image **systematically** builds on the previous one. **Sequence** the images in order and return to the first as a conclusion. Add a soundtrack to create an abstract **product** and debate what meaning or overall aesthetic has been generated.

6 **Experiment** with filming natural and manufactured shapes to **discover** fractal-like patterns repeated on different scales. Alternatively, create your own environmental sculpture on that principle using sticks, leaves or stones and film the fractal pattern as an abstract piece.

EDITING FOR STYLISTIC PRODUCTIONS

Montage editing

Musicians do not improvise guitar solos by striking a series of random notes at totally unpredictable times. Knowledge of the musical key and reference to timing is needed, even if broken up by the odd sliding note and some syncopated beats. Patterns must also be recognised in montage editing – choosing to repeat a blurred movement several times in a row or cutting in the middle of a movement to another.

Soundtracks can often provide motivation for a montage in stylistic and narrative production, illustrating a character's physical or emotional journey. Therefore, cutting to the beat of a song is a good option but it should not be overplayed. Just like sentence lengths in a paragraph, some variation is desirable. Colour may be used as a linking device to cue a cut between shots of the same colour, and movements provide natural points of exit. It can feel awkward if a motion is partially completed on a cut, unless that motion is continued in the next shot.

Generally, there should be a sense of completion for a shot or a series of linked shots. Montage editing is the art of making a series of jump cuts 'feel' cohesive. Over time, it is possible to develop an innate sense of an editor's rhythm.

Collision of images

Seamless cohesion for Hollywood-style continuity editing (see page 395) requires extra attention to particular details. Eyeline angles to the camera in most conversations should be relatively similar. If one subject is looking only 10 degrees off the **barrel of the camera**, the other end should mirror that angle in order to suggest that the camera is close to the line of action. It should suggest the viewer is turning their head on the spot as if observing from a similar camera

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position. A 90-degree profile needs to be roughly reciprocated in the reverse shot of an eye-to-eye conversation, otherwise it is difficult to suggest they are in the one room. *The King's Speech* (2010) features reverse angles that share a reciprocated angle and lack of looking space, skewing the negative space away from the two lead characters. This keeps the shots connected in the one space and adds a sense of isolation from the world, with intensity towards each other.

Tripods should not be set up for the comfort of the camera operator. In a conversation, the taller character should be filmed from slightly below their eye height, even if the shot is not a point of view, and the reverse for the opposite character.

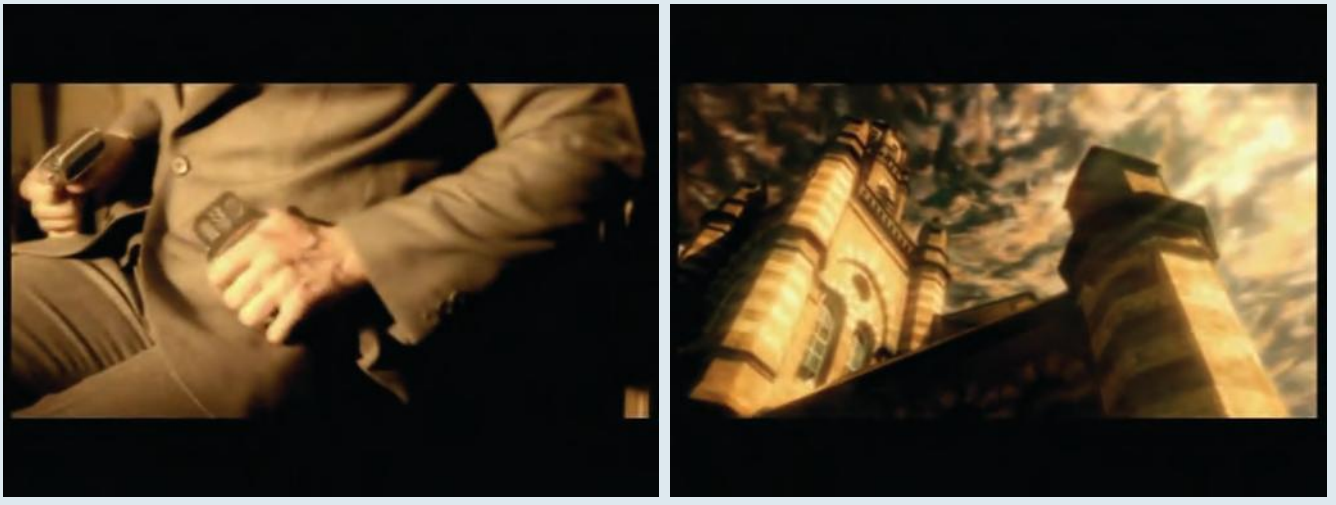
Differentiating or connecting locations can be supported by colour correction. **White balance** can be adjusted or a tint can be added to help the audience recognise (even subconsciously) the slight change in the atmospherics of the venue. Background sounds and **atmosphere tracks** will allow the audio to support this, adding a convincing polish to the collision of images.

Associative editing

Direct visual comparison via graphic matches and so on is not required if the audience's general knowledge can do the same work. Cutting from highly visible cigarette smoke to a bushfire creates a visual link that does not need to have a cause and effect via narrative – it can be just a connective device to improve visual fluidity.

Like the telling of a joke, the priming of an audience to receive the mental association between shots must be carefully planned in the set-up so the 'punchline' falls efficiently into place, even in stylistic productions. The Silverchair music video for 'The Greatest View' (2002) has a strong stylistic element throughout, and a shot near the end of a seatbelt fastening as the building shakes. The association of preparing for take-off is strong enough to justify the outrageous conclusion of the building blasting off like a rocket.

Dialogue or other audio can play a major role in generating associations. One example from a UK television crime production makes use of it in narrative to increase shock value without affecting the program rating. A discussion occurs between a detective and a forensic officer over a body just pulled from the river. '*Well, I suppose we will know more after the autopsy*', the detective says, as a close-up on the face shows a body bag zipping up. The abrupt shot change to the next scene is accompanied by a loud screeching noise when a saw penetrates bone and two halves of meat are pulled away. The mid-shot then reveals the unrelated character of the butcher, wrapping up meat in a delicatessen for the detective's dinner.



[Left and right] Photos from music video, Silverchair 'The Greatest View'. Directed by Sarah-Jane Woulahan and Sean Gilligan for Squareyed Films.

Figure 17.34 In an associative editing trick, the passengers buckle up airline-style seatbelts before the whole building lifts off from its Brisbane location. Looking like rockets from the outside, the 'Old Museum Building' sits firmly beside the current Ekka grounds.

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(Left and right) ArenaPal/Performing Arts Images

Figure 17.35 Graphic matches are not needed for viewers to understand that train passengers are sorted and processed in a similar way to chickens. Most audience empathy rests with the animals over the people in one of many associative editing examples from *Baraka* (1992).

Experimentations in production

If valuable things are discovered by chance, it is referred to as serendipity. These happy accidents can occur in the production process, and the observant filmmaker is able to respond creatively to discoveries.

Using mistakes

Out-takes should not be deleted. Unused takes can be reviewed for dream sequences, flashbacks or fight scenes. Accidental, frenetic movement that is out of focus can often provide effective quick-cut montage material or a transparent overlay in slow-motion to depict reminiscing.

Collaboration is valuable for recognising unintended potential in footage. Often the camera operator will only see their error, rather than a constructive use. Directors or writers can be so attached to a scene, based on the time already invested in setting up shots, they are not prepared to scrap it. This is a good argument for having an editor as a fresh eye – someone not emotionally attached to the effort on set.

The process of deletion is also experimentation. It could be switching off a dialogue soundtrack or removing an entire scene that does not progress the narrative. Professionally, these changes are facilitated by having scriptwriters on set to work on emergent changes to dialogue and having test audiences to rate different edited versions of a film.

Plan to experiment

Before a set-up is broken down, at least a sample of footage should be played back to check the quality of recording video and audio, especially for things not apparent such as mobile phone radiation interference with the audio recording. Another standard practice should be to record cutaway (and cut-in) footage from the scene that does not rely on continuity to allow flexibility in editing. Large crews have a second unit that can be tasked to film establishing shots and the general environs as cutaways while the main crew continues with the cast. The second unit may even shoot hand-double cutaways of defusing a bomb (for example), and their footage presents various solutions for telling the story.

Especially for expressive pieces, deliberate over exposure, recording 'on air' zip-zooms, hunting and re-framing, and focus pulls can all provide rich pickings for an editor prepared to find patterns and connections in such takes. Space on a memory card is cheap compared with the investment of time: maximise the visual resources from which to mine in post-production.

Do not let the technology take charge. Automatic functions have their place in certain situations – however, the creator of the image should be in charge of the equipment, not the other way around. Take manual control of focus points and exposure to direct audience attention and emotions.

'The camera thinks it knows what you want to focus on. But it doesn't know.'

Hooman Khalili, director of *Olive*



Figure 17.36 One of the camera rigs for *Olive* (2011), assembled by the team after they deconstructed a 1940s film camera to solve the technical challenges themselves. Among the solutions was a final touch of attaching the phone with double-sided tape – a surprisingly basic solution for a film that cost just under half a million dollars to make.

The first film shot on a mobile phone to gain theatrical release was *Olive* (2011), filmed on a Nokia N8 smartphone. The makers of *Olive* modified the smartphone to disable the auto zoom and auto focus in order to take creative control. They tried to commission a bespoke camera construction from professionals, but had no takers. Team collaboration, reverse engineering and experimental creativity would have to do.

17.6 ACTIVITIES

1 **Synthesise** a short scene of a person entering a room, sitting at a table and having a discussion with one other character. Use all the relevant **practices** to **combine** separate shots in the Hollywood continuity style for a **moving-image product**. Use a clapperboard to mark the takes, but keep the camera running for the entire set-up of the shoot.

2 **Structure** an abstract sequence using only the out-takes between set-ups of the Hollywood style. **Make adaptations** to the cutting points, **selecting** footage for rhythm, colour and repetition, and **arranging** the **sequence** for abstract priorities, such as editor's rhythm, while and totally disregarding the narrative **purpose**.

Part C: Writing reflective statements for stylistic film

REFLECTIVE STATEMENTS

Reflection is a continual and vital part of the process of creating moving-image media products. Artists reflect on their work to evaluate which techniques supported their purpose and which processes were most effective at achieving desired outcomes, and suggest changes to improve future work.

A reflective statement is generally completed once the moving-image media product is finished, but it can be worked on throughout the creation process. To write a reflective statement, it is important that you, as the artist:

- summarise a project workflow used to create your moving-image media project
- describe stylistic ideas
- describe experimentation with languages and conventions
- outline the development and refinement of stylistic conventions throughout your creative process, considering (for example):
  - influences – internal, contextual and stylistic
  - symbolism
  - structure
  - style.

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This section will examine how moving-image media artists reflect, and help students to use this knowledge to create their own reflective statements. Once you have read through all the sections and completed all the activities in order, you will have constructed a reflective statement on your own moving-image media product.

Outline of workflow

The first step that a director such as Baz Luhrmann takes – that of working out the story – is not the universal first step of all other moving-image media artists. Some innovative products are created through spontaneous, process-based explorations. Others are planned in a linear fashion down to the last shot.

Moving-image media artists do not follow one universal process. The process of creation may be varied and involve spontaneously, particularly when experimenting. A clear understanding of the stylistic intent and purpose are critical to a successful resolution of a product.

In a reflective statement, you, as the artist, will need to reflect on your processes of creation – the steps or processes you took to develop and realise your product, and why you chose to work in these ways. How did your stylistic intent influence your creative process?

To establish a workflow, you, as the artist, need to know your purpose or intention in creating your product, and your influences. Have you been inspired by a particular artist, and therefore wish to follow a similar process? Are you creating a Dada artwork, and therefore enacting the anarchic and experimental process of this movement? Reflecting on your intent and influences will help you to develop a workflow.

The following case study of director Warwick Thornton illustrates how a moving-image media artist's stylistic intent guides their workflow.

Case study

Moving-image media workflow: Warwick Thornton (1970–)

In the romantic drama *Samson and Delilah* (2009), award-winning Australian filmmaker Warwick Thornton showed the strength and resilience of two teenagers to central Australia. The clarity of and passion behind this intention, influenced by personal and social contexts, is evident in Thornton's stylistic choices and process in the creation of *Samson and Delilah*. The film has a distinct, deliberate style, wherein the storytelling is highly visual and uncluttered, using symbolic location shooting, and exploring tenderness and beauty within brutality.

While some moving-image media artists create through organic, experimental processes, Thornton's workflow in creating *Samson and Delilah* followed a traditionally linear production structure of pre-production, production and post-production. This process is summarised in Figure 17.38.

Drawing on stylistic, contextual and internal influences, Thornton formed a stylistic intention. This intention drove the development of story in pre-production, informed the choices made during production, and synthesised the product through post-production.



Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.37 Warwick Thornton's *Samson and Delilah*. Every moment in the film is designed to further Thornton's stated intention of showing the strength of the two young people at the narrative's centre. The film won Thornton the Caméra d'Or award for Best First Feature Film at the Cannes Film Festival. The workflow Thornton used to create this film followed a relatively traditional pre-production/production/post-production structure.

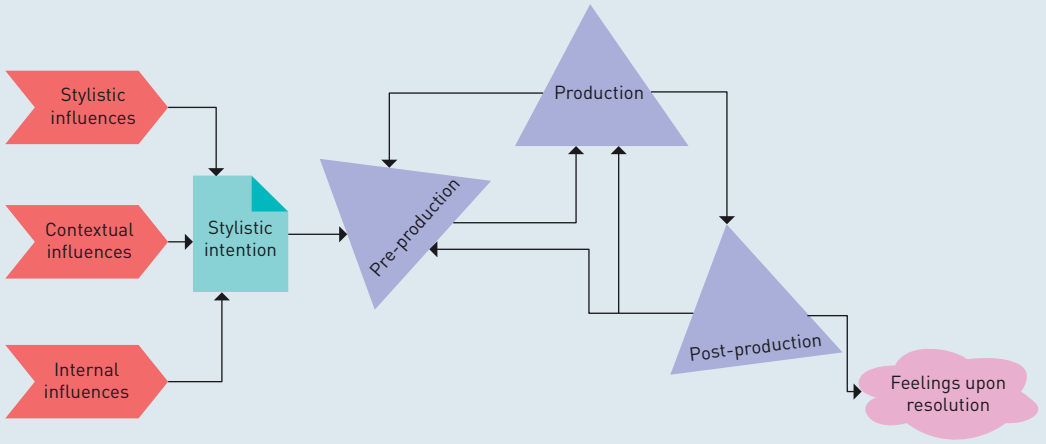


Figure 17.38 A 'traditional' workflow begins with influences forming a stylistic intention, and this guides the pre-production process. Production follows, and then the synthesising process of post-production. Backward arrows represent reflection and review that occurs at various stages. In production and post-production, review of rushes or events may lead to an adjustment of the pre-production documents such as the script. The workflow on a project involving experimentation does not always follow the 'ideal' path of pre-production to production to post-production, but may revisit steps along the way.

Stylistic influences

Thornton's work shows the influence of the landscape of central Australia. This has fed into the artistic style he has built through his short-film work such as uncluttered visuals and dialogue, and location shooting.

Contextual influences

Thornton's storytelling and characters in *Samson and Delilah* were fuelled by social and cultural context, particularly attitudes towards substance-abusing teenagers in central Australia. In an interview with Crikey, Thornton explains that, 'One [character] is a sniffer and one is not. It was designed for Central Australia because we do write these kids off there … Elders in Aboriginal communities have been taught that kids who sniff get brain damage, so as soon as they see a kid sniffing they think "well they're rubbish now, they're brain damaged." …That is the world I was working with.'

Internal influences

Thornton has spoken about how he embraces his Aboriginality: 'I've got something unique to say,' he explains. Thornton's Aboriginality is a continual influence on his work. His films prior to and after making *Samson and Delilah* tell stories about Indigenous Australians.

Stylistic intention

Motivated by these influences, Thornton crafted a film that tells an uncomplicated, beautiful love story – love being a theme that transcends cultures – 'with a good ending'. He has spoken of an intention to 'show two incredibly beautiful children who have fought all their lives … and how we should be celebrating them and backing them up. I wanted to show that to Central Australia.'

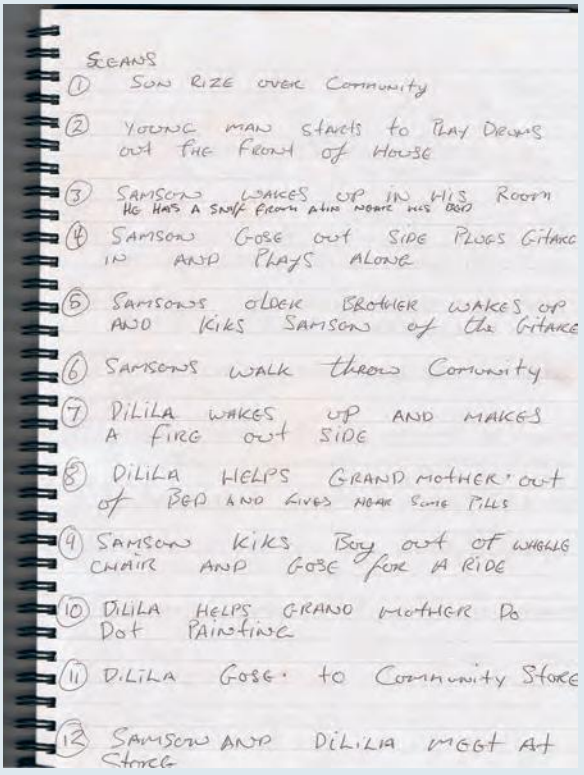
Pre-production

Thornton's pre-production process involved the following steps:

- Outlining the entire narrative in terms of structure and story. This is done instinctively, according to the stylistic intention. This hand-written document consists of a several-sentence summary of each scene.
- Writing a first draft of the script. This is typed up into a conventional script format and fleshed out from the outline.
- Revisiting the script, fleshing out each scene in more detail and taking feedback from trusted sources such as his producer, script advisers, and his wife and writing partner.

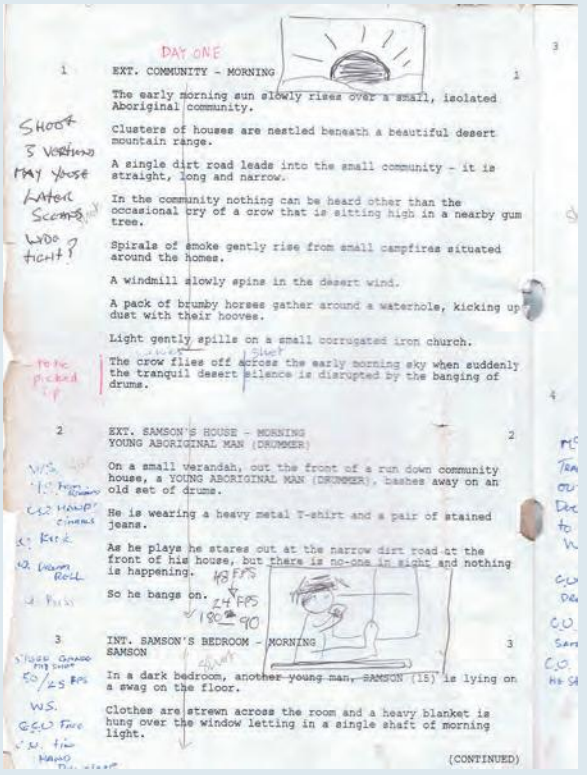
This process can take many years; *Samson and Delilah* was written over about one year. Much of this time is for gestation, allowing things to organically grow and change, for problems to be solved and the script to be strengthened.

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SCENES
1. SUN RIZE OVER COMMUNITY
2. YOUNG MAN STARTS TO PLAY DRUMS OUT THE FRONT OF HOUSE
3. SAMSON WAKES UP IN HIS ROOM HE HAS A SNUFF FROM ALICE NEARE HIS DAD
4. SAMSON GOSE OUT SIDE PLUGS GITARE IN AND PLAYS ALONE
5. SAMSONS OLDER BROTHER WAKES UP AND KIKS SAMSON OF THE GITARE
6. SAMSONS WALK THROW COMUNITY
7. DILILA WAKES UP AND MAKES A FIRE OUT SIDE
8. DILILA HELPS GRAND MOTHER OUT OF BED AND GIVES NEARE SOME PILLS
9. SAMSON KIKS BOY OUT OF WHEELE CHAIR AND GOSE FOR A RIDE
10. DILILA HELPS GRAND MOTHER DO DOT PAINTING
11. DILILA GOSE TO COMMUNITY STORE
12. SAMSON AND DILILA MEET AT STORE

(Left and right) Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.39 First step in the pre-production process: outlining the story. Page 1 of 5 of Warwick Thornton's original story outline of *Samson and Delilah*, where he outlined each scene.


DAY ONE

1 EXT. COMMUNITY - MORNING 1

The early morning sun slowly rises over a small, isolated Aboriginal community.

Clusters of houses are nestled beneath a beautiful desert mountain range.

A single dirt road leads into the small community - it is straight, long and narrow.

In the community nothing can be heard other than the occasional cry of a crow that is sitting high in a nearby gum tree.

Spirals of smoke gently rise from small campfires situated around the homes.

A windmill slowly spins in the desert wind.

A pack of brumby horses gather around a waterhole, kicking up dust with their hooves.

Light gently spills on a small corrugated iron church.

The crow flies off across the early morning sky when suddenly the tranquil desert silence is disrupted by the banging of drums.

2 EXT. SAMSON'S HOUSE - MORNING 2
YOUNG ABORIGINAL MAN (DRUMMER)

On a small verandah, out the front of a run down community house, a YOUNG ABORIGINAL MAN (DRUMMER), bashes away on an old set of drums.

He is wearing a heavy metal T-shirt and a pair of stained jeans.

As he plays he stares out at the narrow dirt road at the front of his house, but there is no-one in sight and nothing is happening.

So he bangs on.

3 INT. SAMSON'S BEDROOM - MORNING 3
SAMSON

In a dark bedroom, another young man, SAMSON (15) is lying on a swag on the floor.

Clothes are strewn across the room and a heavy blanket is hung over the window letting in a single shaft of morning light.

(CONTINUED)

Figure 17.40 Page 1 of the final screenplay of *Samson and Delilah*, with Warwick Thornton's annotations and storyboards. This is the third step in Thornton's process – finalising the screenplay and planning shots.

Production

Most of Warwick Thornton's films have been shot on location, usually in central Australia. These locations are central to both narrative and style. Moreover, his films often make use of non-actors as well as trained performers. This is sometimes also a practical choice, since there are few trained and experienced Indigenous actors, particularly teenagers, so sometimes there is no option but to work with non-actors. This is changing, though, as the industry grows and more roles exist for Indigenous actors. Using non-actors allows Thornton to achieve a raw, visual realism, as the performances of his first-time actors exploit non-verbals.

In the production of *Samson and Delilah*, as on all of his films, Thornton acted as director of photography – meaning he, as director, was able to precisely align every shot, movement, angle, all *mise en scène* and lighting choices, to his stylistic intent. In his multiple production roles, Thornton was able to successfully set the tone and story of the film in the first shot.



Courtesy Scarlett Productions

Figure 17.41 Cast and crew on location during the filming of *Samson and Delilah*. In the foreground are Marissa Gibson (Delilah), Warwick Thornton (director) and Rowan McNamara (Samson). Samson was Alice Springs–teenager McNamara's debut role, and Delilah was Gibson's first main role. Utilising new actors is a common feature of Thornton's process.

Post-production

In this final stage of the production process, Thornton worked in collaboration with his editor, Roland Gallois, to structure the footage into a resolved moving-image product. Informing this structure was the original film script. To select the best footage for inclusion in the final product, and maintain a tight focus on character and story, the director and editor evaluated takes according to the film's stylistic intent. To reinforce the meaning created, and in further alignment with his stylistic intent, Thornton worked closely with Liam Egan, the sound designer, to create the atmospheres in the film. Because there is hardly any dialogue and very little music, the soundscapes and atmospheres are especially important for the storytelling.

Feelings upon resolution

Both internal and external factors (such as reviews, awards, box office takings and so on) can influence an artist's judgement on their completed work.

The final resolved product that was *Samson and Delilah* received numerous awards and accolades – from the only 5-out-of-5-stars agreement in 2009 from critics Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton on ABC's *At the Movies*, to winning the Caméra d'Or award for Best Debut Feature at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival and being shortlisted for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. The film also achieved remarkable success at the box office in Australia.

Moreover, Thornton achieved social advocacy and provoked thought among his specific central Australian target audiences. As he explained to *Filmink:* 'with *Samson and Delilah*, we have the sniffing and the lack of parenting, but if a community recognises itself in there, then it needs to make changes. When they watch the film, they might think: "We need to stand up and be stronger."'

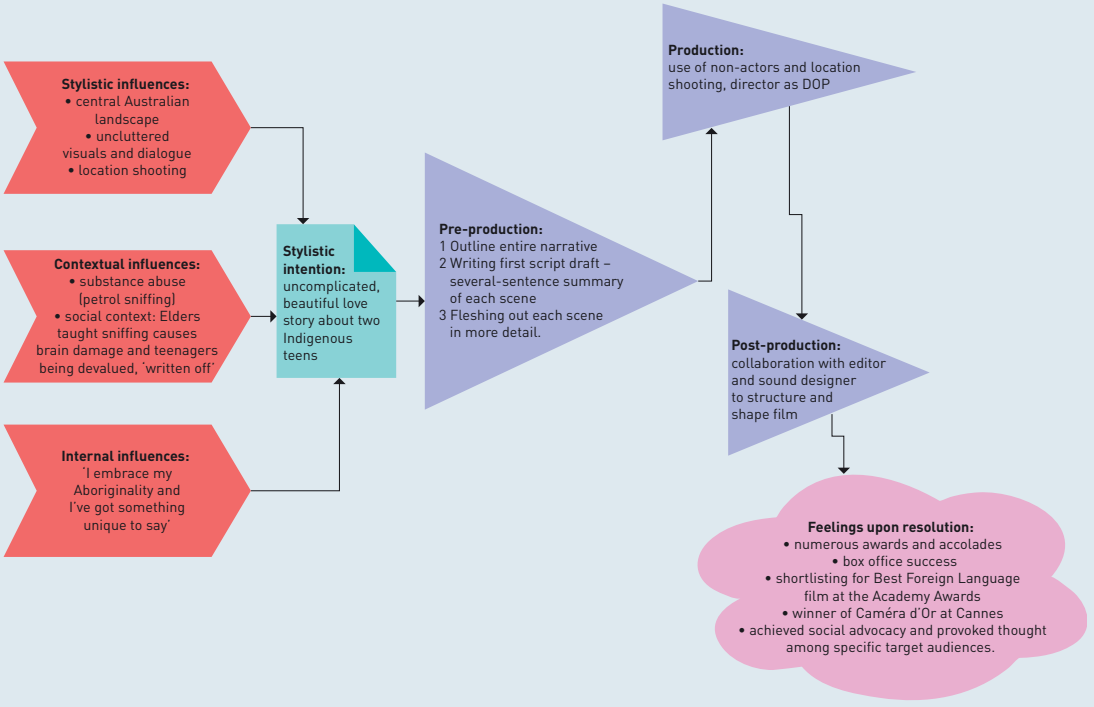


Figure 17.42 A diagrammatic summary of Warwick Thornton's workflow in the creation of *Samson and Delilah*.

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17.7 ACTIVITIES

1 View Warwick Thornton's film *Samson and Delilah*. Use the information in Figure 17.42 and in the previous section to respond to the following activities.
Explain Thornton's workflow on *Samson and Delilah*. **Demonstrate** understanding of the director's process by writing in first person.
Analyse Thornton's process for experimentation and synthesis. **Examine** the **constituent parts** of his workflow and **interpret** the moments that allowed for experimentation and synthesis. Continue to write from the director's point of view.

2 Consider a moving-image media product you are about to create. Use the graphic organiser in Figure 17.42 to respond to the activities below.
Structure your intended workflow.
Apply literacy skills to make this diagram into a statement **communicating** your workflow.
Analyse your workflow outline once your project is completed, **examining** its **constituent parts** and **evaluating** the strengths and weaknesses of your process. **Make judgements** about why you chose to work in particular ways.

STATEMENT OF STYLISTIC INTENT

Like Warwick Thornton, all moving-image media artists have an intention. This drives the choices made during the creation of their artworks, and their continual reflection surrounding the effectiveness of choices. This intention may be process-based, stylistic or a response to context.

As a moving-image media artist, you will need to reflect on your own intentions in creating your product. What drove your choices? How did you judge whether a shot or a sound effect was effective? What was your overall intention and how did you fulfil this?

The following case study of director Baz Luhrmann will outline how a moving-image media artist details their stylistic intent.

Case study

Statement of stylistic intent: Baz Luhrmann (1962–)

The intention of Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann in making films is to create stories about love. He communicates these stories through a highly stylised cinematic form he calls the 'Red Curtain'. This style was established in the creation of his first film, *Strictly Ballroom* (1992).

Luhrmann has spoken very clearly about his stylistic intention with the 'Red Curtain': to use a highly stylised cinematic language that forces the audience to participate actively in the viewing experience, through challenging any constructs that relate to realism. Luhrmann says he intends for the audience to be always aware that they are watching a movie. As a result, he does not prioritise plot, telling 'predictable' stories, but rather *how* a story is told. 'One of the primary ways of telling this kind of story is that the audience must know from the beginning how it is going to end, so that within the first 10 minutes you know how it's going to end.'

Consequently, Luhrmann says he draws on techniques from a variety of internal, contextual and artistic influences that help to ensure his moving-image media products align with this stylistic intent. He says he deliberately embeds elements of song, dance and theatricality, drawn from Bollywood cinema, Hollywood musicals, Italian opera, music video, and his childhood memories of his mother's ballroom dance experiences into the narratives of all of his films. Each film uses a 'device' to unfold a no-surprises narrative.

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Strictly Ballroom uses a narrative about ballroom dance to heighten a familiar 'ugly duckling' story;

Romeo + Juliet (1996) is edited, shot and scored like an MTV music video, and interspersed with moments reminiscent of Mozart's comic operas. Its fast, futuristic world ensures that the audience remains engaged through every familiar line of Shakespeare's text;

Moulin Rouge! (2001), a pop-pastiche musical, explodes with Bollywood-influenced colour, song and dance that comedically energises a tragic star-crossed lovers tale.

In his deliberate and purposeful selection of languages, representations and technologies, Luhrmann ensures that his stylistic intention of heightened cinema language is realised, and his audience are therefore actively engaged through his films.



Alamy Stock Photo/Ronald Grant/ M&A/AFFC/BEYOND FILMS

Figure 17.43 Ballroom dancers Vanessa Cronin (Leonie Page), Liz Holt (Gia Carides) and Tina Sparkle (Sonia Kruger) in their competition finery. All choices in Baz Luhrmann's film *Strictly Ballroom* are driven by his stylistic intent. He calls this the 'Red Curtain' style, and one aspect of this style is the use of a device to heighten reality. In *Strictly Ballroom*, this device is ballroom dance. The exaggerated and colourful world of competitive ballroom dance is present in every frame of Luhrmann's film, realising his stylistic intent.

17.8 ACTIVITIES

Imagine you are Baz Luhrmann preparing notes on your stylistic intent, using the 'Red Curtain' approach to *mise en scène*.

Construct a statement of stylistic intent for the 'Red Curtain' trilogy.

Explain any key stylistic influences, contextual influences and internal influences that have affected your work as a moving-image media artist. **Identify** how these influenced your completed moving-image media product.

Apply literacy skills to clearly **communicate** your creative vision in making your moving-image media artwork.

EVALUATIVE REFLECTION UPON RESOLUTION

Every product made provides a rich opportunity for reflection and thus growth as an artist. By evaluating and reflecting on their own work, a moving-image media artist is able to further develop their technical proficiency, consolidate their style and increase their innovation.

To structure evaluative reflection, you, as the artist, may consider looking back at your work through the following lenses.

Influences

- What were my key influences?
- How did these influences affect my work?

Symbolism

- What symbols or visual metaphors did I create in my work?
- How did I create these?
- Why did I create them – for what purpose, intention or meaning?

Experimentation

- How and why did I experiment:
  - with technologies?
  - with representations?
  - with languages?
- What ideas, values, processes, expectations, representations and so on did I challenge in my work?
  - How did I challenge?
  - Why did I challenge, in terms of my intent?

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Structure

- How did I structure my product?
- How did this structure help me to tell my story or explore my theme?
- How did I structure my workflow or creation process? How effective was this?

Style

- What is my unique style as a moving-image media artist?
- How is this style manifested in this specific product?
- How did I use representations, technologies and languages in this product to construct this unique style?

Overall

- What might I do differently next time? Why?
- How can I push myself further?

17.9 ACTIVITIES

1 Select a filmmaker and view a key film text, such as *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel.
Research the background to the artist and the making of the film.
Explain the intention of the film, **demonstrating** your understanding of the artist's context.
Analyse the moving-image media artist's influences and stylistic intention, **examining** constituent parts of the film that appear to reference other influences. **Make judgements** about the workflow processes the artist used, based on the graphic organiser (see figure 17.42) and your **evaluation** of their own probable stages. Based on your research, **make a judgement** about the artist's feelings upon resolution of their work.

2 Imagine you are the artist in activity 1 above, and you have just completed your film.
Appraise 'your' final product, **applying** your **judgement** from the task above and the evaluative reflection questions from this section in a reflective statement.

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GLOSSARY

180-degree rule (crossing the line/axis of action): positioning of consecutive camera angles on one side of an imaginary line of attention within a scene that is normally not broken without a transitional shot.

30-degree rule: shooting and editing for continuity but jumping more than 30 degrees when showing the same subject in consecutive shots.

85 filters (a-c): orange filters used to convert blueish (daylight) lamps or windows to match the colour of a tungsten light source.

Act (noun): significant section in a story made up of individual scenes that may bring new locations, time frames or characters to the story and allow breaks for the crew to reset a stage for live productions.

Action line: chain of events that constitutes the main plot line in a narrative.

Additive lighting: conventional way of targeting an object of interest by directing light on it, or supplementing a natural light source to gain the desired brightness.

Aesthetic: term from philosophy that essentially means the appreciation of beauty. In film, it often refers to the ways in which a visual image is constructed as appealing.

Affordance: 'action possibility' that is made available by the nature or design of something.

Agency: ability to make choices and act as a free agent.

AGL: above ground level, as opposed to sea level.

Algorithm: set of instructions, procedure or a formula used in a calculation, usually by a computer.

Analogue media: media forms that use materials from the real world, such as tape or film, to transmit their message.

Analogue renaissance: a movement towards renewed interest in the qualities of older analogue technologies, such as vinyl records and celluloid film.

Animatic: pre-production tool used in filmmaking and animation where storyboard images are edited together with intended timing and sounds/dialogue. This creates a rough version of the production to test if it is a workable concept

Antagonist: character who acts against the protagonist, as an opponent or adversary. Also of classical Greek origin, the word 'antagonist' is built from *anti*, meaning 'against', and *agonistes*, meaning 'one who is engaged in a struggle'.

Anthropomorphism: giving human characteristics, emotions or features to animals, objects or other nonhuman entities

Aperture: variable opening in a lens which allows the light rays to pass through to the 'picture plane', where the image is created.

Artefact: object that has been created by a human, usually a cultural object or some kind of tool or technology.

Assistant director (AD): person who assists the director with coordinating production activity and supervising cast and crew.

'Atmos' (atmosphere) track: recording of apparent silence from each location to mix over continuity editing, further enhancing the illusion of unbroken real time.

Attribution: acknowledging credit for contributing concepts or authors, or indicating a personal opinion (as opposed to fact) in narration, superimposed titles, or article by line in screen media.

Audience availability: time that people have to view media products.

Audience expectations: beliefs audiences have about a future media experience.

Audience 'reading' practices: ways audiences can understand texts. They include dominant readings, negotiated readings and resistant readings.

Audience: individuals or a group of people who are involved in using and making meaning of some kind of media product, and for whom that media product was made.

Augmented reality: when technology (such as a smartphone) is used to superimpose images or video over a view of the real world.

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA): federal government body that regulates aspects of media content and technology.

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***Auteur* structuralism:** combination of *auteur* theory and structuralism. Focuses on connecting different films by revealing hidden thematic elements that the films share. For example, a film like *Jaws* will share many thematic similarities with *Duel*.

***Auteur* theory:** view that a film director creates the dominant vision for a film and fills a similarly central role to that of the author of a novel.

Backlight: lighting that comes from behind a subject and tends to create a silhouette, or light placed behind the subject to separate them from the background to better create an outline around them

Ballast: power supply for HMI lights that facilitates the ignition of the arc at high voltage and then regulates the current to maintain consistency of light.

Barn doors: small, adjustable metal panels fitted by hinge to the film light itself to cut the light, creating areas of shadow around the beam.

Barrel of the camera: (to look down) an eyeline directly into the lens.

Binary opposition: paired opposites that are often engaged in a power struggle, such as active/passive, good/bad, rich/poor.

Binary: consisting of a division into two.

Bollywood: nickname for the Hindi-speaking film industry based in the Indian city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). The name Bollywood is produced from a combination of Bombay and Hollywood.

Bounce-board: rigid reflector of pure white that creates a more diffuse effect than direct light.

Broadcast: communication that is spread widely and directed towards a broad or mass audience.

Bulb: glass tube containing a filament (commonly tungsten in smaller filming lights). A manufacturing weak point may be visible as a nipple and should be pointed out of the light to avoid excess heat.

Cartel: group of individuals or companies involved in controlling access and prices of legal and illegal goods or services

Case study: research method investigating a particular product, question or real-life situation.

Catch lights: directed specifically for eye highlights.

Causal agent: person, object or event that affects the course of the narrative.

Ceiling bounce: technique for quickly producing softlight by aiming lights up for interiors.

Censorship: prohibition of sections of a text considered unsuitable to be seen by audiences.

Cherry picker: industrial cane mounted on a truck or trailer also used in filmmaking to create aerial movements with camera and operator in a suspended bucket.

Chiaroscuro: high-contrast lighting that produces deep shadows – an effect produced by low key lighting.

Choose your own adventure stories: series of books written in the second person where the reader assumes the role of the main character, and can make choices along the way that affect the outcome of the story.

***Cinéma vérité*:** style of film-making, especially of documentaries, that attempts to authentically and realistically portray people and events, avoiding technical artifice through the use of handheld cameras, jump cuts, non-professional actors and so on.

Circular plot structure: narrative structure that begins at the end of the story before relating the chain of events that led to that conclusion; a common device in *film noir.*

Citizen journalism: individual and social engagement in media creation, reporting and filtering, typically involving user reporters on user-generated news and opinion sites and blogs, and mobile technology.

Citizen scheduling: process by which citizens or consumers can create their own viewing schedules or program times.

Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA): the federal regulator overseeing Australian airspace and Australian aircraft, except the military.

Classification: system of allocating texts to particular categories.

Climax: point of high tension or drama in which the protagonist faces success or failure.

CMOS (Complementary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor): type of memory chip in computing that can be used as an image sensor in cameras, as electrons are produced in response to light hitting the chip.

Code: system of signs that gain their meaning by shared understanding.

Cognitive bias: a tendency to interpret facts according to pre-existing assumptions or entrenched processes.

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Collision of images: juxtaposition of two images with different meanings to create a third meaning; first identified in early Soviet cinema, the technique formed the basis of almost all Hollywood special effects before the arrival of computer-generated imagery

Commutation: transferring or commuting a code into something else to discover its meanings.

Complication/conflict: in classical narrative, the story's chain of events is set in motion when the orientation, normality or equilibrium at the start is disturbed by the introduction of complications or conflicts; only when these are resolved can equilibrium be restored.

Compression of time: shortening screen time to move the story forward.

Connotation: associated thoughts that any particular sign brings to mind, for example a rose has connotations of love.

Context: conditions surrounding the text. May include the time of production, the language, the society, the natural environment etc.

Continuity editing: editing style favoured in Hollywood and designed to create consistency and smooth progress in the narrative. Cuts are made on action to distract audience attention from the transition. Also known as 'invisible' style.

Continuity: maintenance of the same actions, dialogue, costume, setting details and props in different shots or takes of the same scene. When this does not occur it is said to be a continuity error.

Contrapuntal sound: music or other sound that contrasts with the film image, providing a commentary on it or creating a third meaning. Also called asynchronous sound.

Contra-zoom, dolly zoom, triple-zoom reflex: specialised camera zoom that allows the camera to zoom in while at the same time tracking back in the opposite direction, creating a disorienting change in perspective; also called a dolly zoom, triple-zoom reflex or trombone shot.

Control: power that is wielded over others that reduces their agency.

Conventions: accepted ways of doing things and repeated patterns that audiences are familiar with.

Convergence: blurring of boundaries between different telecommunications media, such as between television and the computer, or between text, images, video and sound in multimedia products.

Cookie boards (cucoloris): constructed objects mounted in the light beam to create patterned shadows.

Counter-stereotype: portrayal that deliberately sets out to challenge a dominant stereotype, for example by portraying a minority group in a more positive light.

Crane shot: device by which a camera is moved up or down a mechanical arm or crane, or raised and lowered at an angle to create a special effect

Crowdfunding: the practice of funding a project by collecting money from a large number of people who each contribute a relatively small amount, typically via the Internet

C-stand (century stand): a robust, articulated stand for clamping equipment in place, such as cutters.

Cultist: someone who is a follower of cult texts.

Deep focus: film technique using lots of light, a small camera aperture, a wide-angle lens and fast film, which ensures that everything in the shot, from foreground to distant background, is in focus

Demography: mapping of segments in society that share similar characteristics. For example, youth is a demographic group that shares the characteristic of being in their teens. Other demographic groups could be based on income, ethnicity, gender etc.

Denotation: in communication, the naming or describing of a sign, for example' a rose is a tightly petalled flower with a strong scent'.

Denouement: final stage of the narrative when all the loose ends are tied up.

Diegesis: the world of the story including the setting, characters and events.

Diegetic element: anything that is from the world of the story that can affect the plot, characters or setting.

Diegetic sound: sound from within the story (the diegesis) that can be heard by the characters.

Diffuser: a range of materials that are used to soften incoming light to reduce reflections and produce indeterminate shadows. These may be applied to a window and appear in the picture or used to alter the quality of the set lights.

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Digital actor: computer-generated actor that can be based on a human actor, or be created without a human as a reference.

Digital footprint: records of interaction online of downloads, contacts, sites visited etc. stored across various networks.

Digital media: media that use a binary code system to represent information.

Dingle: piece of tree branch used to create an improvised shadow.

Director of photography (DOP, DP): person responsible for the look of cinematography by manipulating exposure and lighting choices.

Director's oeuvre: This is a term used in *Auteur* studies to indicate a group of films that not only belong to a director, but are connected by thematic elements. For example, Spielberg's 'Man versus Monster' oeuvre would include *Jaws*, *Duel, Jurassic Park* etc.

Discourse: way of thinking and understanding the world and the language (written, spoken, visual or otherwise nonverbal) used to describe that view.

Disequilibrium: state of continuing upheaval that occurs once the disruption has upset the equilibrium and begun the chain of events.

Dispatcher: according to Propp's theory of narrative character roles, the character who sends the hero off on the quest.

Distinct media: separate media platforms.

Disturbance/disruption: action that begins the chain of events and upsets the equilibrium.

Divergence: process of multiplying the forms of delivery of a media product.

Diversification: process of enlarging a company by taking over or merging with other companies.

Documentary truth: heavily debated idea that truth in documentary ought to be an exact replication in every detail of the real-world event. This has changed to reflect 'the essence of truth'.

Dollying shot: tracking shot in which the camera is moved through a scene by means of a dolly (a tripod on wheels).

Double exposure: single image formed of two images, created through exposing film to light twice, or layering one image over another through editing. (Also see 'superimposition'.)

Dystopian: imagined state or society featuring significant injustice/suffering, a kind of hell – the opposite of utopia.

Engagement: depth and nature of a user's investment in a media product. A user's engagement is the sum total of their behaviours, attitudes and desires in relation to a media product.

Equilibrium: state of normality that exists at the beginning or end of a narrative.

Essence of truth: idea that the pro-filmic event need not match the putative event in such an exact way. The general point of the putative event is all that needs representing.

Establishing shot: usually a long shot that establishes the scene. It shows the whole scene and the key characters within it.

Ethical dilemma: ambiguous moral situation where solving at least two problems may be mutually harmful to the other issue, or create more.

Expanded time: technique of film editing that draws out some events or actions to create or increase tension.

Experience economy: transformation of experiences into saleable products (commodification), often seen as the next step for the marketing of entertainment and media products.

Experimentation: trying out or testing new ideas or methods, especially in order to discover or prove something.

Exposure: amount of light creating an image in the camera and the subsequent apparent brightness.

Eyeline: imaginary line drawn from a person's eyes to the focus of their attention; what they are looking at.

Fan: an enthusiast or someone who is highly engaged.

Film movement: particular period of time that features a new way of filming. Some movements end, others do not.

***Film noir*:** American movie genre associated with the 1940s and 1950s; moody and bleak, unsettling films with dark, shadowy themes about life and crime in the underworld of big cities foreshadowing a device by which the early introduction of a seemingly unimportant element discreetly hints at a later development in the story.

Firewall: hardware and software barriers to limit access to computer networks based on authorisation, or subscriptions in the case of paywalls.

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First act: initial section of a story that typically establishes the protagonist, their main problem, and goal.

First cinema: mainstream commercial cinema such as Hollywood production.

Flood-spot: control to adjust the intensity of lights by moving a bulb within a parabolic reflector.

Fly on the wall: when the filmmaker attempts to hide their own presence when recording events. The purpose is to avoid any direct effect upon unfolding action.

Foil: narrative character who, by way of contrast, highlights the strong, positive characteristics of the protagonist.

Foreshadowing: device by which the early introduction of a seemingly unimportant element discreetly hints at a later development in the story.

Fourth wall: division between the audience and the fictional world on the screen or stage. The idea comes from the traditional indoor theatre stage which presents three walls to the audience, with the fourth being the open space under the proscenium arch through which the audience watches.

FPV (first-person view): as if seeing from a drone or game character.

French New Wave: revolutionary experimental, intellectual film movement of the late 1950s and 1960s, spearheaded by young writers and critics from the journal *Cahiers du cinéma*.

F-stop: calibrated settings of focal ratio according to a formula of focal length and diameter that determine the amount of light passing through the lens.

Gaffer: person in charge of the electrics on set, often the owner of the lighting equipment and contributor to its creative placement.

Gain: electronic amplification of the picture signal to increase the apparent sensitivity to light and boost dark images.

Gel (lighting): colour filter of transparent polyester (previously gelatin) used in theatre and photography.

Generation: people born and living at about the same period of time, or the time taken for a population to be born, grow up and have their own children – generally assumed to be about 25–30 years.

Genre: category or type made up of repeated sets of codes and conventions.

German Expressionism: style of film production that emerged in Germany after the First World War and lasted until the mid 1920s; typically featured horror narratives, eccentric, bizarre characters and performances, and distorted sets and *mise en scène*.

Globalisation: worldwide interlinking of communications (and trade) networks.

Gobo: stencil for casting shadows, technically placed on the light itself, as for stage productions.

Graphic match: two images edited together where the content of the pictures have similarities of a graphic or image-based nature. These could be of shapes in the picture content, scenery, lighting design or character actions.

Grifflon: large fabric suspended in a trampoline-type frame, usually with a black and reverse white side.

Hair light: illuminating hair from above or behind.

Haptic visuality: in reference to celluloid film, is the 'look and feel' related to the surface texture of the film, which in turn affects the general aesthetic in the image produced. Some people argue that this is the 'grain' of the image.

Haptic: relating to the sense of touch, and used in technology to recreate a sense of touch in devices such as mobile phones, digital games and virtual reality objects.

High key: lighting with bright fill and key lights, bringing low contrast softlighting, often from a physically high position.

HMI light (hydrargyrum medium-arc iodide): gas arc light with no filament producing daylight colour temperature just under 6000 Kelvin and dangerous ultraviolet. Tungsten electrodes are energised in mercury and metal halide gas using an alternating current.

Homage: demonstration of respect or dedication to someone or something, often by reference, allusion or imitation.

Horizontal integration media: industry diversification through 'sideways' expansion; for example, a movie company's spreading its activities into other leisure industry areas such as holiday resorts.

Hybrid texts: texts that use combinations of genre features from several different genres.

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Hybrid: something made from the combination of two (or more) different elements.

Hybridity: blending of elements from different or opposing genres or movements. The result of this combination is a 'hybrid text'. For example, animation combined with documentary.

Hyperlink: non-linear link within content, allowing the user to navigate to related information

Hypertext: system of data organisation allowing nonlinear access to information

Icon: picture representation of an action or task found in software, on the internet and in multimedia; also a sign that resembles the object it refers to.

Identification: placing oneself in the position of the character in a narrative; also unconscious copying of a character's or person's actions or adoption of their beliefs; sometimes exhibited by video game players as a consequence of intense and close involvement with a particular character or character type

Identity: individual character or the state of who they are. Identity is important in media theory since it connects with how people relate to the media.

Immersion: a deep level of mental involvement.

Impressionism: movement aiming to convey emotional 'impressions' and sensations, fleeting moments in the form of light and colour.

Incident light rays: light emitted directly from the light source.

Innovation: act of introducing new ideas; being original and creative in thinking.

Interactive documentary: documentary usually delivered over the internet using interactivity as central to the audience experience.

Interactive film: story-based movie where the audience can determine the progress of the narrative.

Interactivity: process involving communication through an ongoing exchange of messages that produces a change in each participant as it goes along.

Internet provider (IP): company that does not necessarily own infrastructure, but can re-sell retail access to wholesale internet connections.

Intertextuality: process by which one text makes references to other texts to create more complex meanings.

Inverse-square law: formula for calculating various forms of radiation according to the distance from the source.

ISO (International Standards Organization): an agreed measurement of sensitivity to light which replaced the previous American standard for film (ASA).

Italian neo-realism: a film movement of the mid 1940s to mid 1950s that set out to reveal the often harsh everyday realities of life in postwar Italy using natural, often unscripted dialogue, non-professional actors and documentary-style location shooting. Common themes are poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation.

J-cut: overlapping sound edit where the next scene is preempted by sound before the picture is seen.

Jib arm: small crane arm, usually mounted on a tripod.

Jump cut: sudden cut between shots, often used by realist directors to remind the audience that the film is a construction and to encourage viewers to make their own judgements on the film's 'reality'.

Juxtaposition: to place two images or objects side-by-side to create an effect, often a contrasting effect.

L-cut: overlapping sound edit where the previous scene audio trails over the following one.

LED (light emitting diode): type of light using an electrical component that produces energy-efficient bright light.

Leitmotif: sound or melody that is associated with a particular character.

Light meter: device for measuring appropriate exposure at points within the set.

Localisation: grouping together of clusters of people with similar interests that could be local, or worldwide but with a narrow set of interests in common.

Low-key lighting: low-intensity key light, mounted low, which casts shadows across the faces of the actors and areas of the set

Lyrical: expressing the artist's emotions in an imaginative and beautiful way.

Machine learning: computer programming using feedback from previous results to predict and select future responses. Accuracy of prediction dramatically increases with data volume and repetition of scenarios.

Magenta: red-purple colour, when combined with cyan and yellow produces white light.

Mainstream: considered normal, with beliefs and ideas that are accepted by most people

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Match-cut: strong similarity of size, shape, movement and placement of visual elements in consecutive shots. (see Graphic match)

McCarthyism: unfair persecution or investigation in the manner of a 'witch-hunt' that refers to the conduct of US Senator Joe McCarthy's 1950s public hearings into communism.

Meaning: importance or significance of something – in this case, of a sign, code or convention.

Media process: stage of media production for a media text in each media form, beginning with the idea and moving through to final distribution.

Media text: product of the media.

Mentor-antagonist: character who causes problems for the protagonist but eventually teaches them to begin a process of personal growth.

***Metteur en scène*:** director who is a good technician, but doesn't have a noticeable personal style.

Migratory consumption: consumption of media products on one platform and then moving to another to continue consumption of a related product.

***Mise en scène*:** includes all the elements that together produce the look and feel of a shot, including set, costume, make-up, acting, props and colour.

Mixed reality: computer-generated imagery viewed by the audience in combination with the real world and anchored to it by positioning technology, allowing for interactions between the two and adjusting in real time for a viewer's perspective.

Monopoly: market dominated by a single service provider or seller.

Montage (American): editing technique often used to shorten time by assembling a series of shots in a fastpaced sequence, often set to music.

Montage (Soviet): theory developed by Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein that demonstrated how the juxtaposition of separate shots with different meanings could create a third meaning.

Motif: object, image or idea that recurs in a film or book.

Motivated move: the camera is visually prompted by on-screen movement or composition.

Multimedia: combination of text, images, audio, video and/or animation in an electronic form.

Multi-platform consumption: consumption of narratives within the same story world across multiple platforms.

Multi-platform story-telling: technique of conveying to audiences a single story, or several stories, from the same story world in a planned way across a range of media platforms.

Narrative genre: type of media text that uses storytelling codes and conventions such as plot, character and setting.

Narrative: how the storyline is communicated to the audience. Narrative is the way of telling the story.

Narrowcast: communication that targets special interest groups or is limited in terms of demographics, location or duration.

Naturalisation: process whereby something is repeated often enough that it eventually comes to be seen as a normal or natural portrayal.

Navigability: able to be navigated, steered or guided by the user.

ND (neutral density): filter to darken the image without any change in the colour.

Negative green: use of magenta to neutralise the reflected green from studio wall bounce.

Niche audience: audience segment that is very specialised in terms of interests.

Non-diegetic elements: anything the audience can hear or see that is not directly from the world of the story (such as orchestral music used to heighten emotion).

Non-diegetic sound: sound from outside the world of the movie that cannot be heard by the characters, including soundtrack, narration and voice-overs.

Objective truth: truth that is not affected by any human bias. It is arguable that there is no such thing as objective truth in film.

Oligopoly: market dominated by a few service providers or sellers.

Overshot: extremely high camera angle giving a bird's-eye view of the subject.

Panning shot: from 'panorama', meaning to sweep the camera from one side of a scene to the other.

Parallel sound: music or sound that is parallel in meaning to the image or conveys a similar message to that in the image. Also called synchronous sound.

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Passive footprints: digital history of users acquired without their knowledge or explicitly asking for permission to accumulate data.

Phenomenological: method of inquiry in philosophy that argues objects and events exist in the subjective human consciousness and do not necessarily exist independently outside of the human experience.

Photonarratives: creation of a story through sequencing of photographs.

Pilot production: sequence or production that shows the intent of a completed film, TV show, web series, game or other media product.

Pipe dolly: camera dolly that uses plastic plumbing pipes for tracks and skateboard trucks.

Platform: medium, site or service that operates as means of delivering media content to audiences.

Plot: part of the story that happens on screen.

Point of view (narrative convention): viewpoint from which a story is told, for example from the point of view of a particular character or as first person (self).

Point of view shot (technical code): perspective from which the camera is looking, OR a shot that is meant to show what a character is seeing.

Polysemy: capacity of signs and symbols to have many meanings.

Presence: sense of being there in the story.

Primary sources: original product/experience being investigated e.g. film, game, TV show, multiplatform production.

Pro-filmic event: Also known as the 'event as filmed', this is the recording of the real-world event.

Propp's narrative theory: Vladimir Propp identified seven character functions that commonly appear in folk tales.

Protagonist: leading character in a narrative. The term, originally associated with Greek drama, is based on the Greek *proto*, meaning first or leading, and *agonistes*, meaning one who is engaged in a struggle.

Realism: film style that aims to portray life as it really is and presents on screen what is supposed to be the actual experiences of the characters.

Real world: also known as the historical world. This is actual life. Many argue that it is not possible to represent the real world because the camera is of a symbolic order.

Reflected light rays: light bounced back off an object, determining how brightly it will 'read'.

Register: different range or scale that has quite different tones or qualities from others. For example, communication can be organised in different registers such as language, or music, or visual signage.

Regulation: process of control or a rule set by government authorities.

Relationship line: chain of events (sometimes secondary) in a narrative that, according to Linda Aronson, complements the action line and allows the audience to explore the emotional relationships between characters.

Release form: used for actors, locations and images, it gives permission for the reproduction of images of such things in various media platforms.

Remediation: process of representing the codes and conventions of one media platform on another.

Representation: objects in screen space 'represent' or come to 'stand for' other objects usually in real life. Representations are often regulated to ensure they do not make incorrect suggestions.

Rhythm: sound or movement that is regularly repeated as a pattern.

Rim light: lighting an object from a position above and behind to define the outline from the background.

Ring light: a circular light surrounding the lens.

Rushes: raw footage from the camera, pre-editing.

Sail cloth: large-format diffuser cloth for lighting.

Screen Australia: federal government agency that supports Australian screen development, production and promotion.

Screen space: actual space of the screen itself. What is presented by the camera.

Scrim: translucent material used to diffuse lighting.

Seamless: describes classical Hollywood invisible editing – the audience is distracted from noticing cuts by changes in size, position, or continuity of movement.

Second cinema: art-house or independent cinema.

Second-screen television: using a second screen such as a smartphone to interact with a main program on television.

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Secondary sources: are written/created about, or in response to, the primary sources e.g. articles, reviews, textbooks, video essays.

Segue: in sound editing, a smooth transition from one sequence into another. The term comes from an Italian word meaning 'to follow'.

Semiotics: study of the signs and symbols of communication.

Setting: time and place of a narrative.

Shooting ratio: total amount of footage shot compared with the length of the finished production.

Shot: usually the time span between when the camera is turned on and when it is turned off again; sometimes taken as being from the time the camera is turned on until the camera is moved to a new position.

Shutter speed: the amount of time the image making device is exposed to incoming light. Often digitally simulated rather than literal.

Sign: basic unit of semiotic communication and anything that refers to something other than itself – for example a rose can signify (or be a sign for) love.

Signifier: part of the sign that we can see (or hear, or touch).

Silk: large format diffuser, often in a trampoline-style frame to cover actors in direct harsh sunlight.

Simultaneous time: the act of cross-cutting from one event to another in a different location to give the impression that the events are occurring at the same time.

Sink dolly: bench-top camera moved past close-range objects (as in a kitchen) using only a cloth under the camera body to allow smooth movement.

Slider: table-top dolly device for small cameras.

Snoot: tube around the outside of a light to direct a beam with minimal spill.

Sobriety: of a serious nature, or communicated in a serious way.

Social activism: act of fighting for a change in society.

Social realism: television or films in the realist tradition that make a social or political comment.

Social triangle: triangular area of a face between the two eyes and the mouth; experiments tracking the eye contact of people in conversation have shown this region to be the main focus of eye movements.

Sound bridge: sound used to link one scene to another. Sound can continue on into the next scene or begin before the scene has changed.

Soundscape: sound or combination of sounds that forms an immersive environment.

Soviet montage: Russian film movement of the 1920s that developed the montage technique of editing.

Spectacle: in film, generally a moment of narrative intervention, when story 'pauses' in order for the viewer to appreciate something of an aesthetic nature. How this is executed differs greatly.

Speculative fiction: stories dealing with nonexistent content, such as the future, the fantastic, or a supernatural scenario.

Spheres of action: roles that characters play within general areas of story action – from Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folk Tale.

Spun: fibrous translucent heat-resistant material for diffusing lights at the barn doors or light body.

Star: performer who is featured in a range of media texts other than the original, and whose fame feeds back into further fame and future performances.

Steadicam: gyroscopic camera mount that smooths out camera movements by using weights and counterbalances to allow the camera to 'float' on a mechanical arm.

Stereotype: oversimplified, clichéd image, repeated so many times that it establishes a pattern.

Still: a term used by crews so as not to confuse photography with moving-picture recording of shots.

Stop motion animation: technique where physical manipulation of an object makes it seem that it moves on its own. Often used to animate objects. Shot frame by frame, with the object moved incrementally each frame, the illusion of movement is created when the frames are played back as a sequence.

Story world: setting, characters and plot events that form part of a larger narrative. A story world can be shared across several media platforms.

Story: all of the events that happened, including those that are not depicted on screen.

Stylistic intent: purpose or intention driving the artist's stylistic choices.

Subjective truth: truth that is affected in some way by human bias. Essentially there is a change between the actual historical real-world event and the recounting of that event in film.

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Subjectivity: of being based on or influenced by that which is in the mind rather than in external reality – personal emotions, ideas, beliefs, etc.

Subtractive lighting: using cutters as negative bounce boards to absorb light and control modelling on the subject.

Superimposition: laying one image over another, often in post-production, so that both images are still visible.

Surrealism: movement emerging in the 1920s that takes hidden, personal and dream-like non-rational worlds and expresses them in art forms.

Suspension of disbelief: process by which audiences agree to suspend their critical faculties in order to believe in an unlikely story.

Sweding: remaking a movie shot-by-shot as fans on a limited budget with cheap effects and consumer-level technology.

Symbol: sign that does not resemble the thing to which it refers.

Symbolic code: system of signs that may refer to cultural meanings beyond the screen texts and create associations for the audience. Symbolic codes include costume, props, the body language of actors, objects and visual symbols.

Take: version of a shot or scene produced each time it is filmed.

Take-down notice: issued to internet service providers against material (usually on-line) by a copyright owner or by government agencies for content that breaches Australian law.

Technical code: system of signs that are embedded in the text at the time of production and created using the technology of production; including shot sizes, camera angles, camera movement, framing, editing transitions, etc. A way of using production techniques from the recording and manipulating process itself that conveys meaning through repeated use.

Technology panic: fear that grips society when a new technology is introduced.

Theremin: Russian musical instrument, patented in 1928, played by motioning hands in the air through an electro-magnetic field and used in sci-fi theme music and by rock band, Led Zeppelin.

Third cinema: political or revolutionary cinema. *See also* first cinema and second cinema.

Three-act structure: traditional narrative structure based on the three stages of orientation, complication and resolution.

Tilt: vertical pan whereby the camera pivots either up or down while mounted on a tripod.

Tone drop-out: photographic effect of removing the number of gradations of grey tones.

Tracking shot: film shot in which the camera is moved along the ground sideways, forward or back; originally moved along tracks.

Traditional: long established.

Transportation: process by which a viewer becomes 'lost' in a story.

Triangulate: principle from trigonometry allowing an unknown point to be located from exact distances to three other known points in a two-dimensional plane.

Tri-dolly: clip-on dolly castor for a tripod.

Tungsten: A metal used in lighting filament that produces a warm colour temperature of 3200–3400 Kelvin.

Turning point: point at which a decisive change occurs in the progress of the cause–effect chain of the narrative, leaving the characters with a new set of problems to solve. Turning points are usually the outcome of a climax.

Two-shot: shot with two characters in the frame, usually a dialogue shot where both characters can be seen in conversation.

Uncanny Valley: refers to the dip in a graph of how appealing an object is as it gets closer to human likeness. As a character is anthropomorphised it is more appealing, but when a character is almost human, audiences find the effect uncanny and the character loses its appeal.

Unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV): ranges from remotely piloted models to self-guiding military aircraft.

Unorthodox: opposite to what is accepted as 'normal' or traditional.

Uses and gratifications theory: media influence theory suggesting audiences use media to fulfil certain individual purposes and needs.

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Vertical integration: expansion of a company's investment interests into other companies whose products are either up or down the chain of production.

Virtual reality: when a person's view of the real world is replaced via headset by a simulated environment that can be photorealistic or computer generated.

VLOS (Visual line-of sight): in relation to drones, close enough for accurate flying using the operator's naked eye.

Voice-of-authority commentary: form of narration that also appears in documentary. This is a voice that commentates action while the person speaking is seen in screen space.

Voice-of-God commentary: form of narration that is common in documentary. This is a voice that commentates action without being seen.

Webisode: episode that is part of a series distributed for online viewing as 'Web television'. The format is available for online streaming as well as downloads and may or may not have been aired in a television broadcast.

Wet weather cover: contingency plan (usually indoors and scheduled for the end of a shoot that can be brought forward) if fine weather exterior scenes cannot be filmed.

White balance: programming of the camera to calibrate colour according to the hue of light.

World cinema: cinema from countries outside the English-speaking world.

Zip-zoom: very fast zoom where most of the image is blurred except for the start and finish.

Zoom shot: shot that magnifies or enlarges its subject rather than moving closer.

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