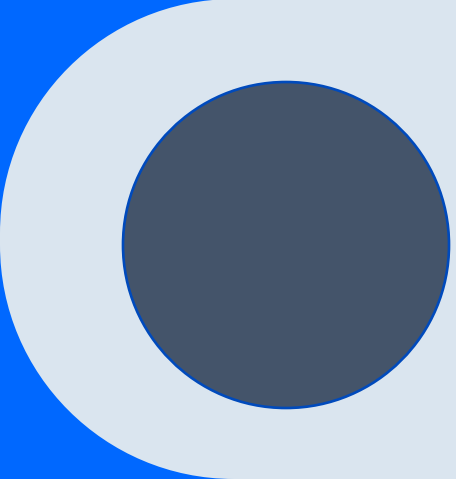





Enriching Knowledge Series: Understanding Film Language and Cinematography



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Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

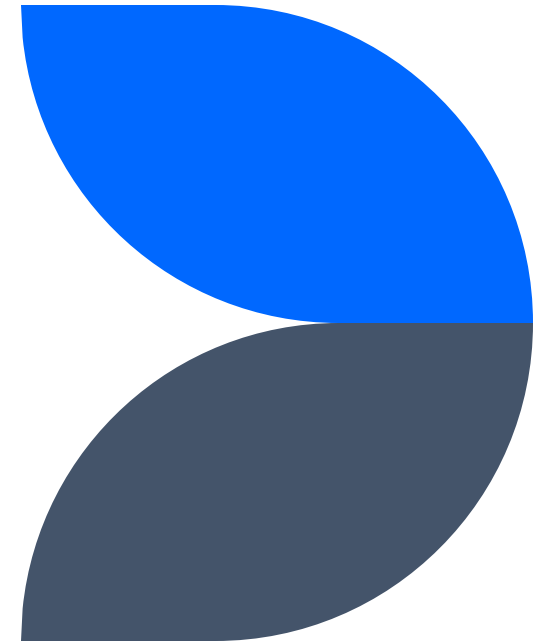
- Identify and explain fundamental cinematic techniques.
- Analyze how filmmakers adapt literary texts into visual storytelling.
- Implement practical film analysis activities effectively in the classroom.
- Guide students in selecting suitable films for their SBA.

The place of film in the Literature in English Curriculum and assessment

- Analytical essay length: **2,000–2,500 words**
- Students analyze at least **one film, filmmaker, or film genre.**
- Essays should **present original analytical insights.**
- **Avoid extensive reliance** on widely available online resources to prevent plagiarism.
- Essays must demonstrate a clear understanding of **cinematic techniques** and their **thematic implications.**



**Why do we need film in
literature education?**



Suggested Films for Effective SBA Analysis

- Vertigo* (Lighting)
 - 1958, Dir: Alfred Hitchcock
- Life of Pi* (Cinematography)
 - 2012, Dir: Ang Lee
- Psycho (Sound)
 - 1960, Dir: Alfred Hitchcock
- 2001: A Space Odyssey (Editing)
 - 1968, Dir: Stanley Kubrick

*Used in the HKDSE Assessment Framework before. They can only be used as teaching texts to prepare students for SBA

Overview of Cinematic Technique

Fundamentals of Cinematic Techniques

- Shot Scale
- Camera Angles
- Camera Movements
- Lighting Techniques
- Editing Styles
- Sound and Music Design
- Influences the audience's
 - emotional response
 - comprehension of the story.

Shot Size



Extreme Close Up (ECU)



Close-Up (CU)



Medium Close Up

Shot Size



Medium Shot (MS)



American Shot / Cow Boy Shot

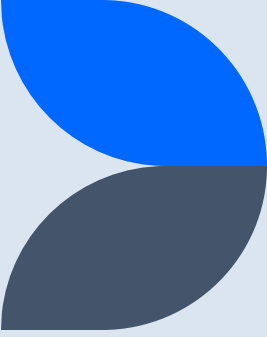
Shot Size



Full Shot



Long Shot



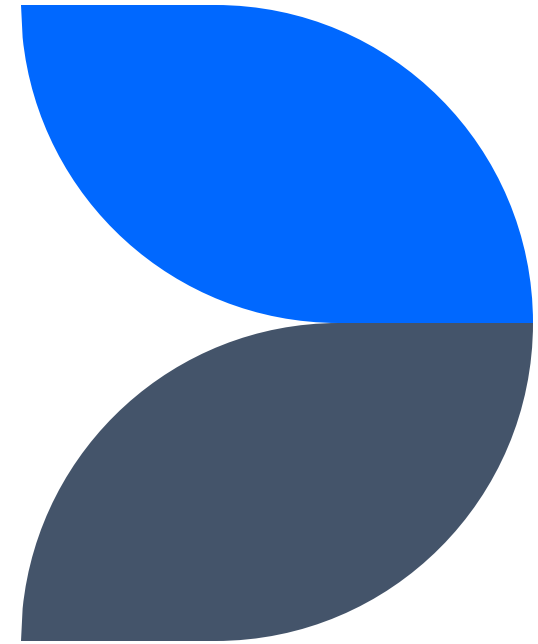
Shot size is not equal to the lens for the shot.

Wide Shot not EQUAL to Wide Angle



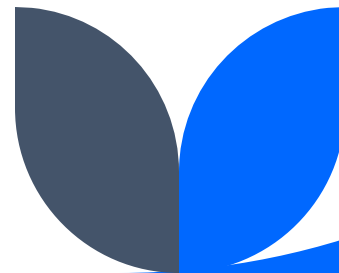
Types of Shots

The Contextual meaning



Types of Shots (1)

- Establishing Shot
 - A wide shot used at the start of a scene to clearly show the setting or location, helping orient viewers in space and context.
- Reaction Shot
 - A close-up or medium shot focusing on a character's reaction or emotional response, emphasizing their feelings and adding emotional depth to the scene.
- Insert
 - A close-up shot showing a specific detail (like an object or action), usually crucial to understanding the narrative or context.





Establishing Shot

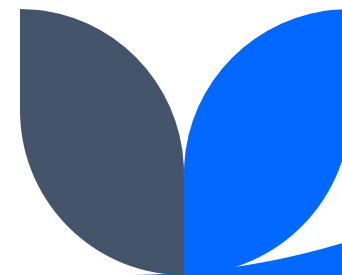
Types of Shots (2)

Cutaway

A brief shot inserted into a scene, typically unrelated directly to the main action, used to emphasize context, build tension, or smoothly transition between moments.

Point-of-View (POV) Shot

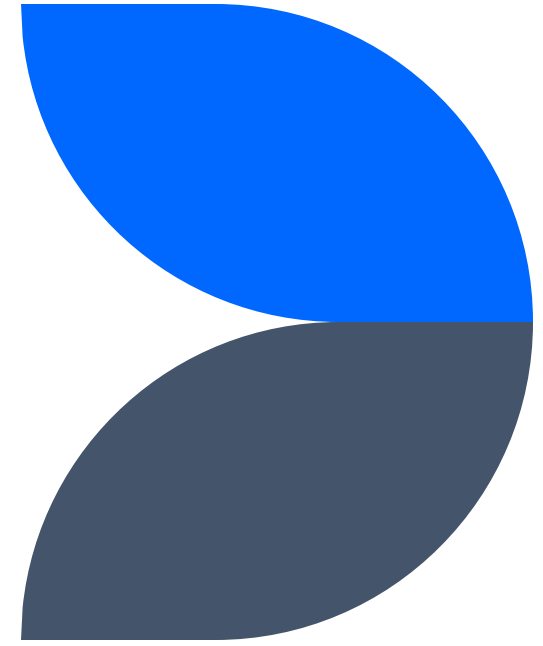
A shot filmed from a character's perspective, allowing the audience to experience events directly through the character's eyes, enhancing viewer empathy and immersion.





Point of View

Shot Angles



Shot Angle (1)



High Angle



Eye level

Shot Angle (2)

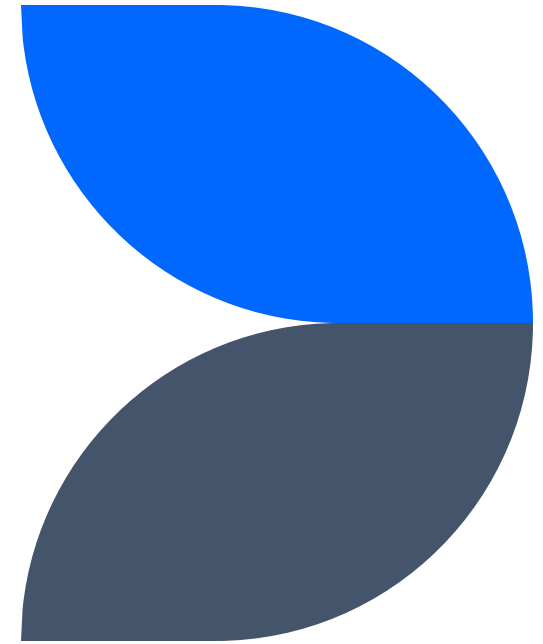


Low Angle



Dutch Angle

Camera Movement

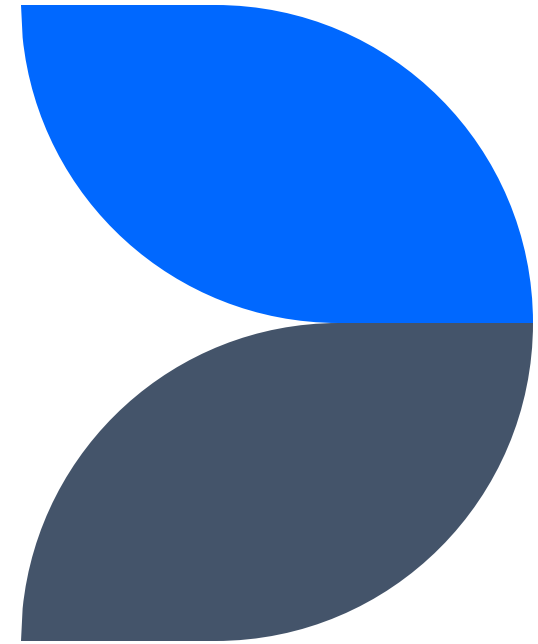


Camera Movement

- Static shot
- Pan
- Tilt
- Dolly
- Truck
- Handheld
- Etc.

Lighting

Functional, but unnoticed



Lighting → High Key Lighting

- Bright, evenly lit scenes.
- Creates optimism



Lighting → Low Key lighting

- Dark scenes, sharp contrasts, dramatic shadows.
- Creates suspense, mystery, tension



Lighting → Motivated

- Light sources that are visible or suggested within the scene itself.
 - Realistic & natural
 - Narrative-driven
 - Logical shadows and highlights

Blade Runner



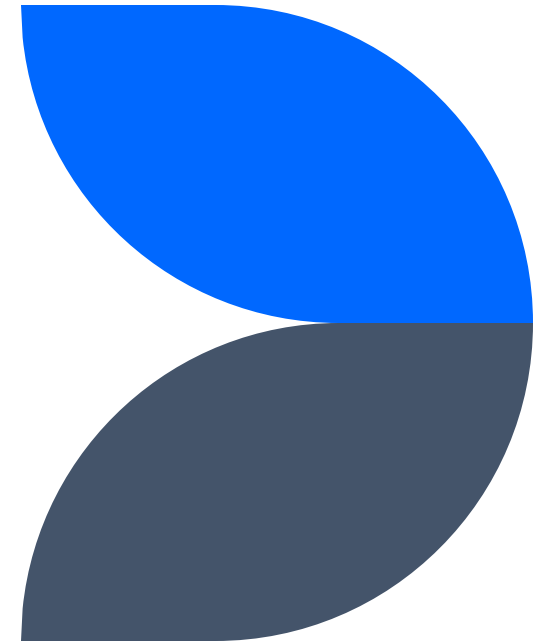
Lighting → non-motivated

Artificial or stylistic lighting not explicitly explained by visible sources within the film's reality.

- Expressive & Thematic
- Not constrained by reality
- Dramatic emphasis

Editing or not?

Long take vs Montage



Long Take

An extended, uninterrupted shot lasting significantly longer than conventional editing standards.

- Real-time immersion
- Performance-focused

Significant example

- 1917 (2019), directed by Sam Mendes
- La La Land (2016), directed by Damien Chazelle

Montage Editing

Originating in early Soviet cinema of the 1920s, including Battleship Potemkin (1925)

- Condense time
- Thematic connections
- Deliver symbolic and emotional message

Battleship Potemkin

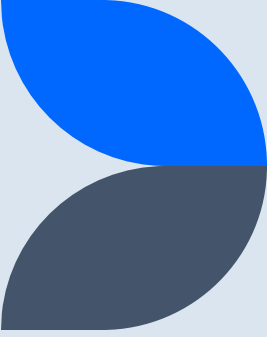


Example of Montage



Example of Montage

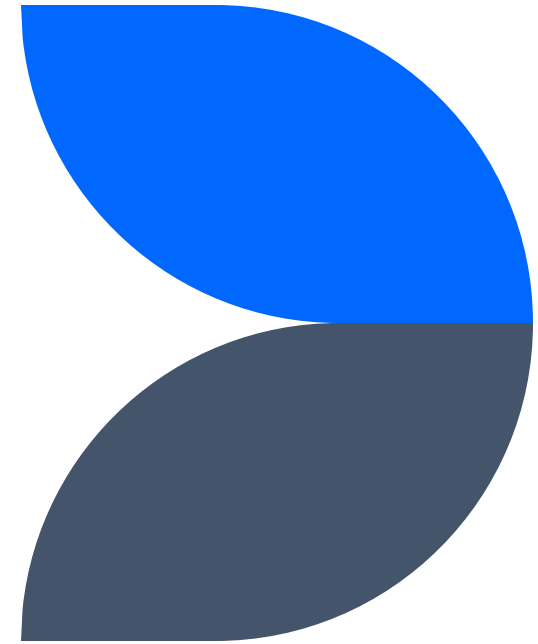




Montage is about how $1 + 1 > 2$

Sound

Sound and Music Design



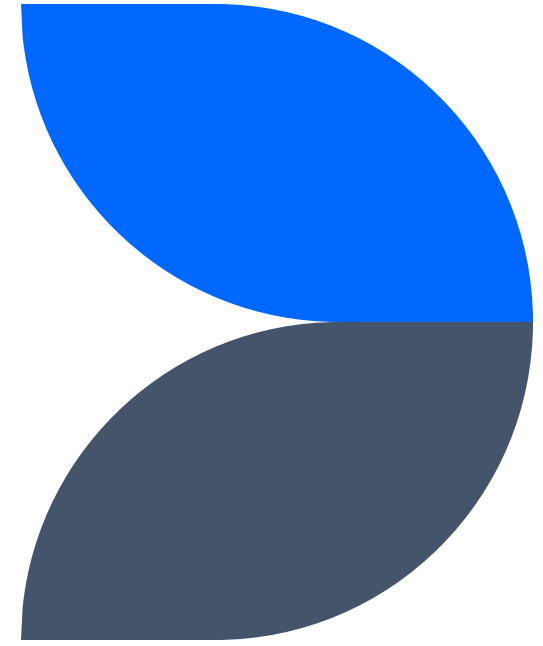
Music Design

- Emotional Impact → tension, sadness, excitement and joy
- Narrative Support
- Character Association
- Setting Atmosphere
- Symbolism

Sound Design

- Diegetic
 - Character inside the film can also hear
 - E.g. footsteps, door creaks
- Non-Diegetic
 - Symbolic audio layers
 - Voice-over (VO) narration
- Silence is also a sound design

From Text to Movie



Analyzing Films Adapted from Written Texts

- Text (Fiction / Script) → Visual (movie)
- Why do we need to analyze Film Adaptations?
 - Filmmakers' choice
 - Deepens appreciation of both the original text and its cinematic version.
- Encourages critical thinking about how visual storytelling transforms literature.

Keys in Narrative Structure

- How filmmakers restructure the original story to suit film pacing.
- The choice of which narrative elements to emphasize or omit.
- Effect of nonlinear vs. linear storytelling techniques.
 - Following the time

Character Development in Film Adaptations

- Difference in Text and Movie
- Visual representation of characters (casting, costume, makeup).
- How actors' performances add depth to represent characters.

Symbolism

- Visual Communication
- Motifs
- Character Symbolism

Fidelity vs. Innovation in Film Adaptations

- Fidelity: Faithful to the original literary source.
 - Honours author's intent, appeals to purist fans.
 - May restrict creative interpretation.
- Innovation: Creative reinterpretation or reimagining.
 - Offers fresh insights and appeal.
 - Risks alienating fans of original texts.

Let's compare

A young Indian boy - PI AT AGE FIVE - surfaces from a pool, gasping. He looks up at the large chest and skinny legs of Mamaji (late 30s). Mamaji reaches down to scoop Pi out of the water.

MAMAJI
A mouthful of water will not harm
you - but panic will.

Mamaji carries Pi back over to the water's edge.

MAMAJI (CONT'D)
Remember to breathe. Don't hold
your breath. Good boy.

Mamaji unceremoniously tosses Pi back in.

"It did the trick!" said Ravi, wildly spinning his hand above his head. "He coughed out water and started breathing air, but it forced all his flesh and blood to his upper body. That's why his chest is so thick and his legs are so skinny."

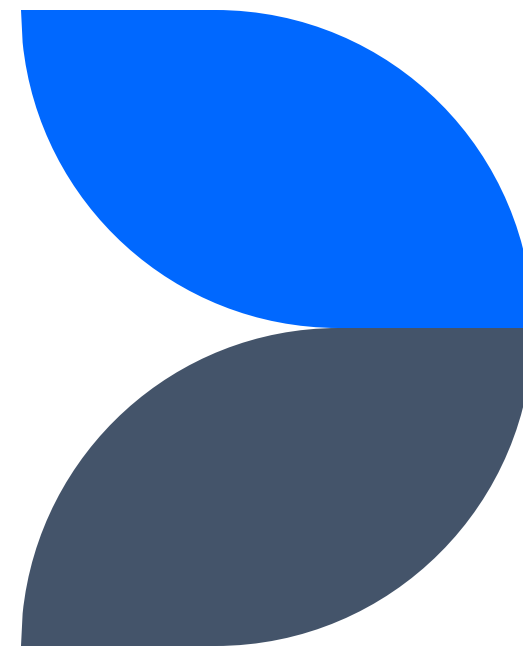
I believed him. (Ravi was a merciless teaser. The first time he called Mamaji "Mr. Fish" to my face I left a banana peel in his bed.) Even in his sixties, when he was a little stooped and a lifetime of counter-obstetric gravity had begun to nudge his flesh downwards, Mamaji swam thirty lengths every morning at the pool of the Aurobindo Ashram.

He tried to teach my parents to swim, but he never got them to go beyond wading up to their knees at the beach and making ludicrous round motions with their arms, which, if they were practising the breaststroke, made them look as if they were walking through a jungle, spreading the tall grass ahead of them, or, if it was the front crawl, as if they were running down a hill and flailing their arms so as not to fall. Ravi was just as unenthusiastic.

Mamaji had to wait until I came into the picture to find a willing disciple. The day I came of swimming age, which, to Mother's distress, Mamaji claimed was seven, he brought me down to the beach, spread his arms seaward and said, "This is my gift to you."



Let's work tgt😊



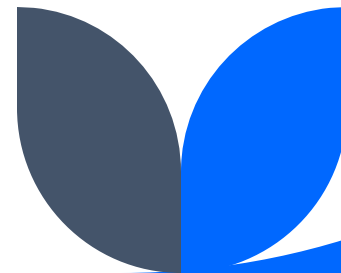
Scene Analysis Workshop

Watch a selected scene carefully

Identify cinematic techniques, including

- Camera angles
- Lighting
- Editing style
- Sound and music effects

Focus on how these techniques affect **narrative** and **thematic interpretation**.



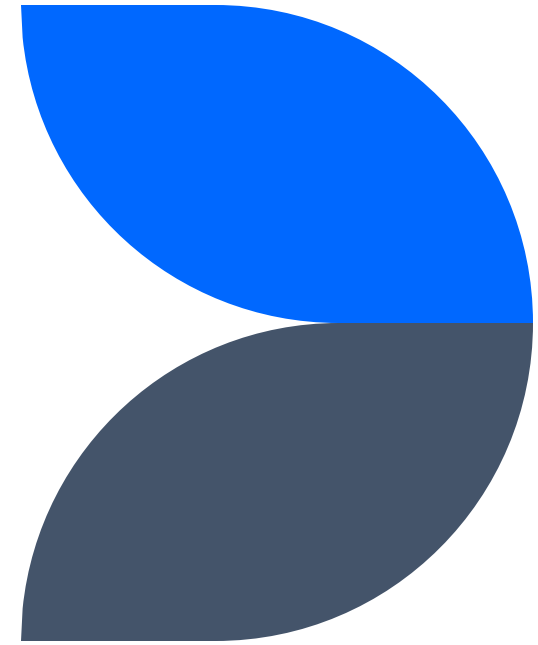
Group Discussion & Sharing

- Form a group of 4 to 5
- Summarize your analysis
- Identify techniques found.
- Present interpretations and thematic connections.

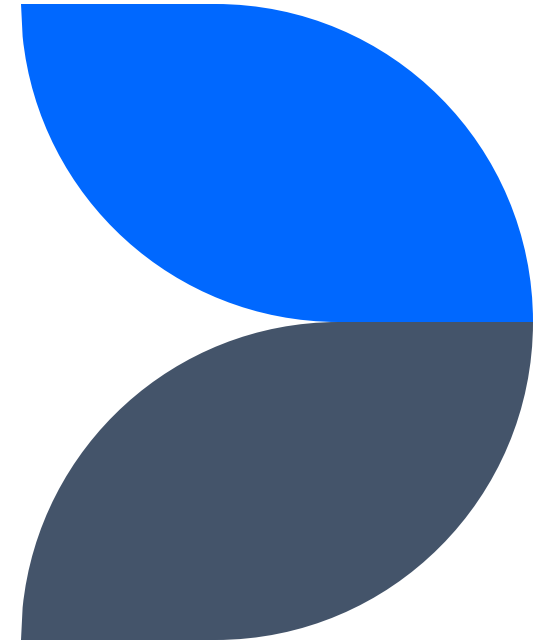
Saving Private Ryan



Some useful resources



Experience Sharing



Suggested Classroom Activities

- Quick Scene Decoding
- Visual Motif Hunt
- Soundtrack Swapping
- Freeze-frame Dialogue
- Adapt-a-Scene Writing

Activity 1 : Quick Scene Decoding

- Purpose → Trains students to rapidly recognize cinematic techniques and their impact.
- Form Students in group of 3 – 5
- Choose a scene based on their preference
- Ask students to quickly identify at least 2 cinematic techniques.
- Share immediate emotional or narrative effects.



Activity 1 Example : The Matrix Reloaded

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

Activity 2 : Visual Motif Scavenger Hunt

- Purpose → Encourages deeper observation and critical thinking about symbolism.
- Provide students with short film clips
- Students identify ***repeated*** visual motifs or symbols.
- Illustrate what visual motifs express



Activity 2 Example : Interstellar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3lcGnMhvsA&t=2s>

Activity 3 : Soundtrack Swapping

- Purpose → Demonstrates the influence of sound design on storytelling.
- Select a short film clip with distinct special sound design.
- Students replace the soundtrack with alternate music or sounds.
- Discuss how different audio choices alter emotional or narrative interpretation.

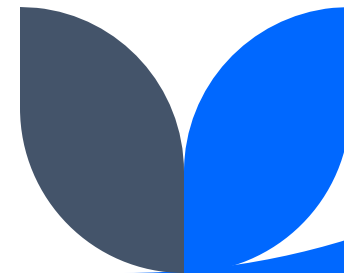


Activity 3 Example : The Social Network

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

Activity 4 :“Freeze-frame” Dialogue

- Purpose → Develops interpretative and creative writing skills, deepens understanding of character motivations.
- Pause a dramatic or ambiguous film moment.
- Students write new dialogues or inner thoughts (VO) for the characters.
- Discuss interpretations and how dialogue influences understanding of the scene.



Activity 5 : Adapt-a-Scene Writing

- Purpose → Builds understanding of visual storytelling and adaptation processes.
- Students choose a literary scene and adapt it into a brief screenplay format.
- Specify camera angles, gestures, setting details in their writing.
- Share scripts and explain cinematic choices.



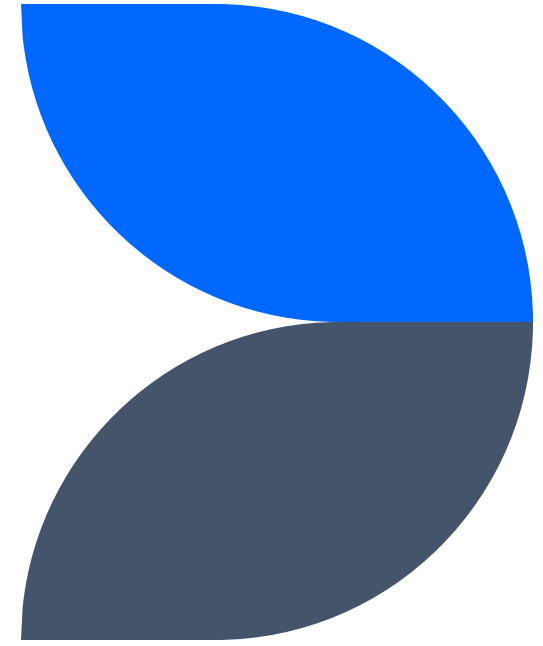
Useful Resources

- EDB worksheets and guides for film analysis.
- Online platforms and reference links for extended learning.
- Curated list of films suitable for SBA projects.

Film Analysis

- Analytical Potential
 - Choose films with depth and complexity, offering plenty of material for critical and thematic analysis.
- Originality and Creativity:
 - Avoid overly popular or commonly analyzed films to encourage fresh, original student perspectives.
- Thematic Alignment:
 - Films should align well with the literary themes, narratives, or concepts students are studying.
- Appropriate Content:
 - Ensure films are suitable in content, complexity, and maturity for students' age and educational context.

Q & A ??



Thank you for joining us😊