**GCSE MEDIA STUDIES – REVISION
SECTION A**

Introduction

This booklet is to support the preparation for the Section A unit examination for OCR GCSE Media. This workbook will enable you to work through the series of sessions led by your teacher and help you to start thinking about the kinds of tasks you will be asked to undertake once in the final examination.

As part of the work it is expected that you will be preparing case studies on two films from the Action Adventure genre. For this, you will be working independently with some teacher support to prepare to answer the three styles of tasks in Section A of the examination.

The final section of the workbook provides a series of possible research activities, some practice tasks and a glossary of relevant terms.

All of this material has been used in a large examination centre and proven very successful in preparing students of all abilities for examinations in Media Studies.

You will use this material for stimulus and to consider the media issues but will be writing the responses up in your exercise book. **These will be a vital part of your revision and research.**

OCR GCSE Assessment Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to assess candidates' ability to:

1. Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed (AO1).
2. Analyse and respond to media texts/topics using media key concepts and appropriate terminology (AO2).

Action Adventure Film

This unit is designed to prepare you for the GCSE Media Studies examination for 2017.

It is not the intention to 'teach' anything new, rather to bring together in one place the ideas, theories and knowledge that you have acquired during the rest of this course.
It is organised into 4 basic sections – **Genre, Narrative, Media Language, Representation**– with a series of activities for you to complete that are all designed to support you in attaining the best possible grade that you are capable of.

Action Adventure is, at first glance, a relatively straightforward genre to study – it seems to offer quite a set, almost rigid, structure in its use of conventions of action, character and narrative - but delve a little deeper and even the big set piece Hollywood blockbuster provides an interesting area of study that demands that we employ the same complex skills and understandings as those of other areas of our study.

I've enjoyed putting this unit together – it's made us think much more about the formats involved and how these often unknowingly shape our view of the world we live in, affects what we believe, and has become entwined as an element in how we act. It is quite simply, a powerful widely watched media format and, as such, deserves careful study.

The examination will have a series of tasks in Section A that will test your ability to write with knowledge and understanding on the genre - why representations are so important, the role of narrative, the criticisms of stereotyping and the sustaining of harmful ideologies around gender and nationalism. You will need to provide **specific examples** in your answer and to access the higher grades you will be required to discuss the **connotations** of such representations or narrative devices in the wider genre and their impact on audiences.

The work over this unit will give you the opportunity to develop and practise these things.

What will they ask you to do in the examination?
The three tasks ask you to (a) analyse/discuss narrative in the clip, (b) media language in the clip and (c) representations in the clip and then relate this to your understanding of these elements in other Action Adventure films that you have explored. You will need an overall grasp of:

- Conventions of the genre including describing the genre, typical content, typical narrative structure etc. (including why these things are used, why the audience like them / how they respond to them etc.)

- Stereotyping and Representation of women, men, heroes, villains, ethnic minorities, and disability (including the effects on the audience, and why such elements are used)

Genre

As you will have explored elsewhere in your programme of study with your teacher, genre is **a relatively simple description of the many elements that might link two or more media products** – the presence of aliens in a sci-fi; of saloons in a western. As your learning progresses **you will be asked to think a little more deeply about genre and discover that it is also a very complex part of the study of how and why media products [such as TV programmes; computer games; posters etc.] are made**.

For the first part of this unit on news we need only focus on the surface features of this genre, what we call **the format** of these products. As the lessons go on you will be looking in greater detail at the more complex ideas that Action Adventure films communicate.

Session 1

In responding to the three tasks in **Section A** you will be being assessed on your ability to respond to two of the OCR Assessment Objectives - **AO1** and **AO2**.

- **AO1**: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of media products and the contexts in which they are produced and consumed
- **AO2**: Analyse and respond to media texts/topics using media key concepts and appropriate terminology

Task 1C: Copy the chart into your exercise book/folder and then complete it.

FEATURES	SPY KIDS	HOT FUZZ	SKYFALL	CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
IMAGES [who/what is shown]				
COLOUR PALETTE [what colour tones are used]				
TITLES [what do the titles suggest about what these films will be about]				
REPRESENTATIONS [how things are shown – gender etc.]				
NARRATIVES [how these stories might be told – humour; violence etc.]				
OTHER IDEAS [stars; franchises; etc.]	CONSTRUCTING OUR LEARNING: RE-THINKING OUR KNOWLEDGE			
	At this stage we are using the knowledge you have gained of these elements during the course so far			

Session 2

For Section A, you need to become familiar with the style and content of Action Adventure films. The examination requires that you recognise that films in this genre use widely accepted conventions in their content, narrative structure, and representations and that you are able to consider the impact of these on the audience reception of such films.

Whilst the first sessions focus on basic elements of the **mise-en-scene**, you must be clear from the start that for success in the examination your understanding needs to go beyond this. You must be able to explore **representations, themes, plotlines, and the ideologies** that have made this genre a staple of Hollywood production.

While action has long been an element of many films, the Action Adventure as a genre of its own began to develop in the 1970s.

The Action Adventure genre has its roots in a variety of other genres that, at different times in cinema history, have been popular with audiences. The Action Adventure might best be viewed as a **hybrid** genre, as it marries the conventions and expectations of the action film with many other different film styles such as the western, the war film, the thriller, the spy film, the swashbuckler, the disaster movie, the historical and the martial arts.

Action Adventure is a hybrid of elements of these other genres. In addition, it may also borrow features of two other narrative elements that can also be found in other film genre - Comedy and Romance.

In the early 1970s, the global box office success of the James Bond movies with their potent mix of action and adventure seemed to be the only form of film capable of luring audiences back from the televisions that had taken over as the first choice for entertainment.

While action has long been a component in many different film genre [The Western; The War; The Science-Fiction], the Action Adventure genre is acknowledged to have really begun to develop in the 1970s with the increase in stunts and special effects. Film-makers began to copy what they saw as the winning formula of the James Bond films [*Doctor No*; *From Russia With Love*; *Goldfinger*; *Thunderball*, etc.] at first fusing the detective genre with the action style in films such as Bullitt, the Dirty Harry films. Later, the popularity of the martial arts films of Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris added momentum to this. In the 1980s the films of Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Spielberg-Lucas film collaborations such as the Indiana Jones series all developed the genre of film as spectacle full of Action Adventure and romance, which post 2000 developments in CGI technology enabled films to take even further.

Action Adventure film is a genre where the main character – the hero or heroes - is **suddenly thrust into a series of challenges that they must overcome** if they are to defeat the enemy or save others from a seemingly overwhelming threat to their lives or way of life.

Success requires that **the heroic figure[s] perform physical feats, often indulging in extended fights and/or frenetic chases.** The narrative plot has twists and turns that the heroic figure[s] must survive. In their survival they also offer **audiences a sense of nobility or honour in the face of great opposition.** As we shall see, the narrative is of Good versus Evil, and the expectation is always that Good will eventually triumph.

Story and character development are generally secondary to explosions, fist fights, gunplay and car chases.

Task 2B: In what way do the titles of these films indicate to audiences that they are part of the Action Adventure genre?

From the films that you know, what elements can you identify in the content of these films that make them Action Adventure?

JASON BOURNE	PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
BEN HUR	PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME
MAD MAX	CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
JURASSIC PARK	ROBIN HOOD
SKYFALL	THE REVENANT
CAST AWAY	BLOOD DIAMOND
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	TROY
THE MUMMY	SHERLOCK HOLMES
KINGSMAN	CROUCHING TIGER: HIDDEN DRAGON
KING KONG	WATERWORLD

Work with a partner to create a response to the task using the table in your workbook and reproduced on the next slide. You are asked to come to understandings about the way titles are used to construct a marketing image of films. From understanding this, you ought to be able to apply the same approach to any film title.

FILM	HOW TITLE INDICATES GENRE?	ELEMENTS	HOW IT FITS
SKYFALL	• Enigmatic title – mysterious meaning yet suggests threat [we do not learn the actual reference until the climax of the film] • Part of the Bond series – so has brand recognition	• Quest for answers/save the existing way of life • Heroic figure against odds • Thrilling action sequences • Spectacular locations	Action Adventure - spies
PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME	• Adventure/historical – Princes; romance of ancient Arabia/Persia • Mysterious *Sands of Time* suggests epic quest • Sense of magic and legends	• A wronged hero seeks to clear his name • Evil villain [a wicked uncle] who seeks control • Romance with exotic Princess • Thrilling sword fights and action sequences • Spectacular settings	Action Adventure – Fantasy / magical swashbuckler What are termed 'swords & sandals' sub-genre such as *Alexander* or *Kingdom of Heaven* or *Troy*

For films that are unfamiliar and you are uncertain of the elements or how it fits, then leave those columns blank and your teacher will go over these in the feedback.

***If your teacher has allowed access to a computer and the internet, then you should look these up and fill in those columns or this may be set for home learning.*

RESEARCH TASK – home learning assignment

FOR SESSION 15 – *date tbc by teaching staff*

We will be covering much of what you will need to know for Section A of the examination but you will be better prepared if you have a case study of your own. Your long-term assignment for home learning is:
Research into a current or recent Action Adventure film and one from pre 2000. You will then use this material to prepare a short written presentation for the class.

• Research the genre [what elements are included in your selections],
• the institution who produced the film,
• the star[s],
• the success,
• the plot
• the hero/villain/threat
• the audience [numbers and demographic],

THIS IS VITAL RESEARCH TO ENABLE YOU TO PREPARE AND RESPOND TO THE UNSEEN MATERIAL AND TO ANSWER SECTION A IN THE EXAM

Summarise by comparing the two films and how they fit the Action Adventure genre

Session 3

Title sequences and opening credits are very important in establishing audience ideas as to what a film is about. Music, graphics and the content of opening credits all help the audience in terms of getting into the right frame of mind for watching the film. For a love story we might want to induce a mellow mood, for a cops show we might want to create a mood of excitement. For Action Adventure the mood will be a sense of action, of spectacle. Perhaps the music will be epic, or upbeat [depending on the sub-genre] - and the opening credits are key in shaping this in the audience mind.

Please refer to the Element Table on the next page to complete your work.

ELEMENT	FILM 1	FILM 2
MUSIC		
TITLES [THE NAME; FONT]		
LANDSCAPES		
LIGHTING		
COSTUMES		
ICONS		
CHARACTERS		

Session 4: Audience Pleasures

In much the same way that titles and opening sequences are an important part of the way that a film product 'talks' to its audience, the film trailer is a vital part in how a film finds its audience in the first place. The trailer is a key element in first notifying audiences of the film's existence, and then in persuading the potential audience to see this film. This is done by highlighting the pleasures that the film offers. A trailer for a horror film will attempt to indicate that the film offers a scary/frightening/tense experience; a comedy that it will be a funny film etc.

The Action Adventure genre, being a hybrid, must offer a range of pleasures to its potential audience.

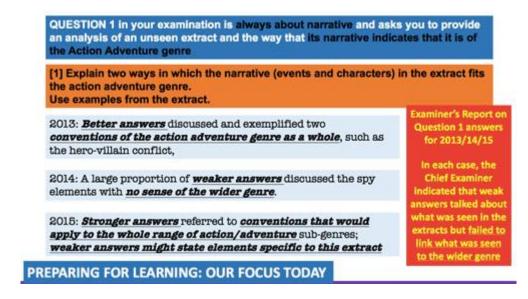The Action Adventure format based on disasters or real-life events must seek to offer the pleasures of the Action Adventure – e.g. spectacle; heroism; quests – with those of the real-life drama – an insight into '*what really happened*'; '*what would it be like if…*'; a sense of the '*truth*'; our human interest in those caught up in events such as Tom Hanks in ***Captain Phillips*** or the 2016 film ***Sully***.

Session 5: Todorov Narrative Structures

In Media Studies, we need to be certain that we understand the difference between narrative and story

- Story is the basic outline of a series of connected events that are in some way connected by a character or by some link which is often called the plot

- Plot is the way those events are sequenced together, the order in which they are presented to the audience

- Narrative is not only the order of events presented to an audience but the way those events are presented, including the choice of shots, editing, mise-en-scene etc.

Therefore, when analysing a narrative we are for the most part considering the construction of the story i.e. the way it has been put together, not the story itself.

QUESTION 1 in your examination is always about narrative and asks you to provide an analysis of an unseen extract and the way that its narrative indicates that it is of the Action Adventure genre

[1] Explain two ways in which the narrative (events and characters) in the extract fits the action adventure genre.
Use examples from the extract.

2013: *Better answers* discussed and exemplified two *conventions of the action adventure genre as a whole*, such as the hero-villain conflict,

2014: A large proportion of *weaker answers* discussed the spy elements with *no sense of the wider genre*.

2015: *Stronger answers* referred to *conventions that would apply to the whole range of action/adventure* sub-genres; *weaker answers might state elements specific to this extract*

Examiner's Report on Question 1 answers for 2013/14/15

In each case, the Chief Examiner indicated that weak answers talked about what was seen in the extracts but failed to link what was seen to the wider genre

PREPARING FOR LEARNING: OUR FOCUS TODAY

So, we need to keep in our mind at all times the idea that we must always link our analysis of the two narrative elements of events and character to the wider knowledge we have of this genre. **We must keep making the point that we we are explaining is typical of all films in this genre.**

Session 6: Binary Opposition

Claude Levi Strauss and Roland Barthes, had the insight that the way we understand words depends not just on any meaning they themselves directly contain [*connotation*], but much more by our understanding of the *difference* between the word and its '*opposite*' or '*binary opposite*'. They saw words acting as symbols for society's ideas, and that the meaning of words, was partly built on a relationship between words rather than a fixed meaning: a relationship between opposing ideas.

E.g: Understanding of the word '*coward*' depends on the difference between that word and its opposing idea, that of a '*hero*' as much as it does on what 'coward' means.

Other oppositions that should help you understand the idea are *youth/age*; *masculinity/femininity*; *good/evil*.

Levi-Strauss noticed another feature of 'binary opposites': that one side of the binary pair is always seen by a particular society or culture as more valued over the other

Levi -Strauss

Though his work was focused on narrative, his interest was not in patterns or the order in which events are arranged in a plot. He looked instead at **the deeper idea of the narrative as concerning the conflict between ideas and beliefs**. His interest was in the arrangement of themes. He saw most as centering around obvious and usually extreme opposites, hence he called this theory binary opposition.

He focused his work on the way that narratives in media products were arranged around the dominant ideologies of society. [Dominant ideology is the set of common values and beliefs shared by most people in a given society, framing how the majority think about a range of topics.] Key binary oppositions might be:

Law > Order
Weak > Strong
Civilised > Lawless
Domestic > Wilderness
Innocent > Corrupt

Binary Opposition

He found that **narratives were arranged around conflicts between those who represented the dominant ideology and forces that challenged or threatened that ideology**.

A villain in a narrative represented not only their own interests [e.g. *stealing money; gaining power*] but a wider idea of evil, so that the narrative battle between the hero and the villain becomes one of good versus evil; right versus wrong etc.

In these narrative oppositions the audience are encouraged to take the side of the dominant ideology and see in the triumph of the hero the triumph of our own way of life, of what we believe to be right.

On a deeper level, Levi-Strauss said that binary oppositions formed the basis of humanity's understanding of reality.

Stories unconsciously reflect the values, myths and beliefs of a culture and these are usually expressed in the form of oppositions in the narrative.

Binary Opposition is obviously applicable to narrative because narrative [as Todorov demonstrated] always works to resolve a conflict. There is always an inherent opposition between a hero and a villain in a story.

Session 7: Propp and Narrative Roles

Propp and Media Studies

Propp's work has become reduced to a list of seven character types who are key in what he called '*spheres of action*'. These were character types who were common in the narratives that he studied and whose actions shaped the narrative. The fact that he compiled a list that has been shortened to seven key types [*his original list was much larger as was his list of over 30 types of narrative strands*] means that Propp's lists are easy to learn and we run the danger of believing that by simply learning this list we can analyse media narratives.

If only life – and exams – were that simple! As we have seen, modern media products such as Action Adventure have evolved from simple narratives into complex hybrids with complicated character types so that our *traditional 'hero' and 'villain' are less easy to define in Propp's strict definitions*.

We live in a world of increasingly sophisticated narratives which deliberately defy the conventions of traditional folk tales. For example, *Can you apply Propp consistently if the hero is female?* [If Katniss is the Hero, then who is the Princess?]. *Can you substitute "science" for "magic" and if not then who is the donor? Are all narratives about struggles between heroes and villains - or do we oversimplify them if we try to claim that they are?* Propp's theory basically relies on 'good' and 'bad' characters, and we seem to have moved beyond fairy tale into a era of what is termed *moral relativism* - a state where many narratives [like the Nolan **Batman** series] revolve around the conflict between characters who are not easily identified as a protagonist and antagonist, hero or villain.

Session 8: Heroes & Villains 1

QUESTION 1 in your examination is always about narrative and asks you to provide an analysis of an unseen extract and the way that its narrative indicates that it is of the Action Adventure genre

2013: Better answers discussed and exemplified two *conventions of the action adventure genre as a whole*, such as *the hero-villain conflict*..... the **underdog hero** fighting against the odds, the gang of villains..... and used terminology such as '*generic convention*', 'iconography', '**binary opposition**', '*heroic protagonist*', and '*villainous antagonists*'.

Some answers lost marks by **failing to establish the heroic nature of the protagonist** in the genre, less successful answers **referred to media theory**, particularly Propp and Todorov *instead of identifying conventions within the extract*

2014: Better answers picked two elements from the generic repertoire: the mission, the jeopardy, the chase, the underdog heroes and so on

2015: Better answers discussed their heroism and villainy, or discussed particular aspects of the hero. These included: the heroic protagonist being controlled by a government authority in some way; chaos, which the hero has to sort out; the heroic protagonist going off-grid or being a maverick.

Session 9: Heroes & Villains 2

An antihero (or anti-heroine) is a protagonist who lacks conventional heroic qualities such as idealism, courage, or morality. These individuals often possess dark personality traits such as disagreeableness, dishonesty, and aggressiveness. These characters are those who audiences usually considered "conspicuously contrary to an archetypal hero".

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QUESTION 1 MARK SCHEME

Level 4 (8-10 marks)
- Explains two generic narrative features.
- Shows thorough understanding of appropriate generic conventions.
- Ideas and arguments supported by evidence
- Precise and accurate use of terminology
- Ideas expressed clearly and fluently in well-structured sentences with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

TWO conventions
Understand *generic conventions* not just in this example
Can select evidence from the example of the convention
Uses terms accurately is indicator of higher level

Level 3 (6-7 marks)
- States two generic narrative features
- Shows sound understanding of appropriate generic conventions
- Offers sound textual evidence (at the top of the level for the 7)
- Ideas expressed with some clarity and fluency; errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar do not obscure meaning.

CONSTRUCTING OUR LEARNING: RE-THINKING OUR KNOWLEDGE

This is how **your examiner** is told to mark **your Q1** answer

2013 HOT FUZZ: *Examples of conventional features*
- hero and villains
- conflict and violence
- hero starts as an underdog
- a 'damsel in distress' rescued by the hero
- jeopardy or peril.

2014 SPY KIDS: *Examples of conventional features*
- Heroes and villains
- Exotic location and/or spectacle
- Conflict and violence
- Jeopardy or peril
- Mission or quest
- Underdog heroes

Source: OCR Examiner's Mark Scheme 2015

2015 SKY FALL: *Examples of conventional features*
- hero
- underhand villain
- good versus evil
- jeopardy – a chase
- stunts
- exotic location
- violence (allow 'guns' if linked to conflict/violence)
- hero's sidekick (not just 'sidekick')

The key narrative features often present in the exam clips as conventions of Action Adventure films:
- Heroes/villains
- Conflict
- Violence
- Exotic locations jeopardy/peril
- Hero as underdog

Session 10: Narrative Location

The location for Action Adventure is crucial to the attraction of this genre to audiences. Ever since Bond films made it a point to feature exotic new locations in each film – usually Bond's missions involve a brief tour of several countries in each film – the location of Action Adventure has been a key element in its genre conventions.

Locations usually offer the exotic – the islands of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, the desert and jungle wilderness of *Indiana Jones* series the wealthy playgrounds of the Bond movies, the globe trotting of *Mission Impossible* with its use of many of the world's most wondrous buildings, the unseen mystery of the *Da Vinci Code* series [*Da Vinci Code*; *Angels & Demons*; *Inferno*]

But locations can also be part of the sense of jeopardy of Action Adventure.

Think of the island worlds of the *Jurassic Park* series or the island of *King Kong*. The lands of Mordor…

Isolation is part of the conflict of humanity vs nature, dark forces are associated symbolically with places of darkness and inhospitable, unwelcoming landscapes.

Such locations contain threats in the sense of being dangerous in themselves – cliffs feature heavily as threat in Action Adventure, sandstorms, floods and strange creatures. Sometimes the weather in such places is the subject of the jeapordy of the film – the winter of *The Grey*; the storms of *Everest*; the fires of *Volcano*.
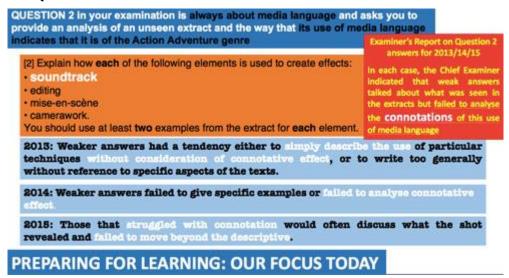
Many of the locations of films in the genre deal with isolation where threat is more real, help less close at hand, and the hero has to rely on their own resources: *Indiana Jones*, *The Mummy* series, *Jurassic Park* series. The OCR 2016 exam used a sequence from *Captain Phillips* where the jeapordy of being isolated on the ocean, miles out to sea, vulnerable to Somali pirate attack was key to constructing the narrative tensions.

How location is used to drive narrative in the Indiana Jones films:

- Mysterious locations for 'magical' element of the plot

- Sense of quest – long lost civilisations; mythical mysterious powerful artefacts

- Sense of threat and jeopardy – isolated; traps; savage environments

- Romantic – sense of legends; treading in uncharted regions

- Treasure – exotic gold of the Incas or the ancient civilisations

- Sense of isolation – American in unknown worlds; living off wits and inventiveness

- Stunts - teetering bridges; underground railroads

- Spectacle – the spectacular lost worlds; pyramids; huge temples

- Damsel in distress – rescuing the 'princess' character from untold perils of the location.

We should recognise and understand that location – where a narrative is set – is part of the narrative analysis. **Locations affect the narrative** almost as much as a character might. **Locations set tone, mood, atmosphere.** It is a stereotype, but most Romantic comedies take place in bright sunlight, summer days, fields of corn! Horror takes place in dark locations, castles, eerie old houses at midnight.

Session 11: Q2 Soundtrack

QUESTION 2 in your examination is always about media language and asks you to provide an analysis of an unseen extract and the way that its use of media language indicates that it is of the Action Adventure genre

Examiner's Report on Question 2 answers for 2013/14/15

In each case, the Chief Examiner indicated that weak answers talked about what was seen in the extracts but failed to analyse the **connotations** of this use of media language

[2] Explain how **each** of the following elements is used to create effects:
· **soundtrack**
· editing
· mise-en-scène
· camerawork.
You should use at least **two** examples from the extract for **each** element.

2013: Weaker answers had a tendency either to simply describe the use of particular techniques without consideration of connotative effect, or to write too generally without reference to specific aspects of the texts.

2014: Weaker answers failed to give specific examples or failed to analyse connotative effect.

2015: Those that struggled with connotation would often discuss what the shot revealed and failed to move beyond the descriptive.

PREPARING FOR LEARNING: OUR FOCUS TODAY

The music soundtrack is a key element in the way that film attempts to shape and define how audiences respond to the narrative and to the characters and events within it.

Music is used in two main areas – **pace and tone**.
PACE: In simple terms, fast high tempo rhythmic music = fast action/ creation of tension: slow dreamy music = thoughtful moments; romance; mystery
TONE: - guitars; heavy drums = sense of positive, epic events; drama orchestral pieces – strings and cellos indicate peril; sadness; eerie
These can be mixed and matched in a variety of ways. Action Adventure tends to the epic, the large scale with dramatic music that can be both full of action but also of tension and thoughtful passages – think *Lord of the Rings*; *Star Wars* to see the possible range within a film.

Session 12: Q2 Editing

On the most simple level, editing refers to *the way that shots in a film are joined together*.

The term "cut" is derived from the way in the past in which film editors would have to physically cut the strips of film and piece them together with tape.

Films use different cuts [transitions] to *signal the relationship between different shots*:
Cuts: A transition between two shots that share the same physical and temporal [they are happening at the same time] space
Dissolve: a gradual transition between two shots that show a change in space/time
We must do more than just identify the kind of transition, we must discuss the effect this has on how the clip develops, its **Connotations**. *How might the editing add to the sense of tension, mystery, peril jeopardy? How might it show us something about a character – the hero, the villain?*

Session 13: Q2 Mise-en-scene
Mise-en-scene
Mise en scène encompasses the most recognizable attributes of a film – the setting and the actors; it includes settings, costumes and make-up, props, and all the other natural and artificial details that characterize the spaces filmed. The term is borrowed from a French theatrical expression, meaning roughly "put into the scene". For us, **the most important point is that mise-en-scène not only describes the stuff in the frame but the way it is shown and arranged**.
Setting
Setting creates both **a sense of place and a mood** and it may also **reflect a character's emotional state of mind**. It can be entirely fabricated within a studio – either as an authentic re-construction of reality or as fiction or use real locations. Locations can be important in setting some of the ideas of the film – the relative powerlessness of mankind when compared to the wondrous natural settings – *Everest*; *The Grey*.
Costume

Arguably the most easily noticeable aspect of mise-en-scene is costume. Costume can include both makeup or wardrobe choices used to convey a character's personality or status, and to signify differences between characters. Costume is an important part of signifying the era in which the film is set.

In biographical films, costume and make-up is an important aspect of making an actor resemble a historical character.

Lighting
Most common is 3 point which ensures the lighting appears as natural
as possible. There are no obvious shadows and we can see clearly what is in the frame

High-Key

Very bright lighting. No shadow used to create an unrealistic brightness

Low Key

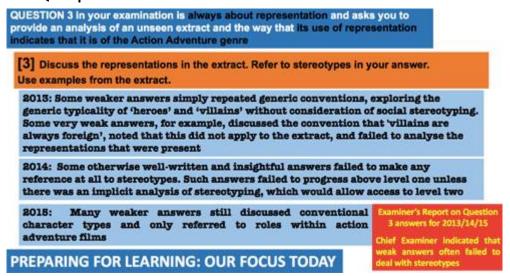Atmospheric, creates stark contrasts between light and shadow.

Early film had a static camera with only one shot, the wide shot that allowed audiences to see everyone in the scene. Directors grasped at the first developments in camera technology that allowed a greater choice of shots, as this enabled film-makers to focus audience attention where the director wanted it to go and opened up the possibility of different types of narrative.

Today, with the development of even greater digital camera technology and CGI, there are many types of shot that can now be used for specific purposes. These include mid-close up; long-mid shot; crane shots; lift shots; hand-held etc.

For our purposes, we can focus on the key groupings of shot types – distance, angle, effect, movement.

	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	USAGE
Distance	Extreme close-up	Focusses the audience's attention on small details and these shots are often used more for artistic effects	discomfort of character
	Close-up	Head and shoulders are in the frame. Used if the director wants to focus our attention on one particular thing. This is often character's facial expression	Establishes relationship with character and their thoughts/feelings. Enables us to see key details.
	Mid-shot	Enables us to observe some details of movement/action	Enables focus on dialogue
	Long-shot	Shows us the whole character, drawing attention to costume and body language. Can be used to offer perspective	Suggests action is more important than what is being said.
	Wide shot	A view is so far from the subject. Often used as an establishing shot.	Suggests location. Setting important to establish character/feeling/tone of the scene.
Angle	High angle	A shot looking down on subject	Suggests subject is weak.
	Low angle	A shot looking up at subject	Suggests subject is strong
	Canted	Unusual angle suggesting off-balance	Used in horror/sci-fi to suggest fear
Effect	Two shot	A view where two subjects in frame	Suggests relationships
	Point of view	We see what the character is seeing	Relationships to subject and what is being seen
	Birds eye	A view from above a sequence	Suggests distance and scale eg war films, battlefields
Movement	Pan	Camera moves on horizontal from fixed position	Follow movement but keep action centre screen
	Zoom	Camera moves in or out on subject from fixed position	Heightens involvement as we close in
	Track	Camera physically moves	More natural movement as we follow action

Sesssion 16: Q3 Representation

QUESTION 3 in your examination is always about representation and asks you to provide an analysis of an unseen extract and the way that its use of representation indicates that it is of the Action Adventure genre

[3] Discuss the representations in the extract. Refer to stereotypes in your answer. Use examples from the extract.

2013: Some weaker answers simply repeated generic conventions, exploring the generic typicality of 'heroes' and 'villains' without consideration of social stereotyping. Some very weak answers, for example, discussed the convention that 'villains are always foreign', noted that this did not apply to the extract, and failed to analyse the representations that were present

2014: Some otherwise well-written and insightful answers failed to make any reference at all to stereotypes. Such answers failed to progress above level one unless there was an implicit analysis of stereotyping, which would allow access to level two

2015: Many weaker answers still discussed conventional character types and only referred to roles within action adventure films

Examiner's Report on Question 3 answers for 2013/14/15

Chief Examiner indicated that weak answers often failed to deal with stereotypes

PREPARING FOR LEARNING: OUR FOCUS TODAY

How people, events, ideas, locations are represented in films is important. It suggests how society in general thinks about such matters, and you will have seen in your previous Media Studies work that this can also be seen to influence attitudes in society if films too often unthinkingly recycle representations. Film representations can support and sustain negative ideas about gender, age, nationality etc.

The use of **stereotyping is an element that you MUST respond to** in your answer to Q3.

Clearly, we cannot cover all possible representations, so we will focus on those that have occurred a number of times and look at how these might be dealt with whilst looking at general rules of analysing representations

TASK 16B Add 3 other elements in the middle column for each of the characteristics in column 1 of physical; mental; character attributes associated with masculinity in this genre. Use column 3 to provide examples, as in the table below where the first ones are done for you

CHARACTERISTIC	REPRESENTED BY	FILM/CHARACTER
Physical	• Character demonstrates feats of strength or fights hand to hand	James Bond in Skyfall fights hand to hand in small room and defeats enemy with a knife
Mental	• Determination to succeed no matter the odds against them	In Everest the climbers show huge determination to reach the summit despite the conditions.
Character	• Loyal to friends	Indiana Jones in Raiders of the Lost Ark places himself in danger to rescue his friends

Session 17: Q3 Representation

We need to remind ourselves of some theory here. Films are often shot from the male point of view. They are shot as if the audience is men only. This means that the men on the screen will be expected to act 'manly' and the women are objectified for the pleasure of men to look at them, the camera lingers over shots of female body, women wear sexualised clothing – even if they are the hero [think Lara Croft; Cat woman; etc]. This was called the 'male gaze' and was a theory of Laura Mulvey. Shots, looks, actions, and costumes of women are designed to gratify the needs of the male audience.

For much of the history of the Action Adventure, **the stereotypical role of the female character was the attractive damsel in distress** who would often either manage to get in the way of the action, divert the hero from his quest, or cause the hero to fall into situations of jeopardy. Naturally she would eventually '*fall for his oh-so-obvious charms*'. There has been a move for more equality of women in Action Adventure with women taking the lead in films such as **Hunger Games** and playing more dominant role in films such as **Twilight**. The fantasy adventure sub-genre has Cat-woman, Black Widow etc. representing more masculine character traits. And this is perhaps the issue - female Action Adventure characters still either have to be the traditional 'princess', act like men, or find themselves sexualised by their costumes

Session 18: Q3 Representation

A very common representation in Action Adventure is that of nationality. With stories that often sweep across the globe, or are focused in exotic or isolated locations, it is inevitable that there will be a representation of different nationalities and different social structures or belief systems.

A genre with its roots in the Western and the Adventure film is bound to have enemies or villains that are of a different nationality to the conventional action hero – the white, male, Christian, westerner.

Such representations have lead to the view that Action Adventure stereotypes can be negative, and certainly are a repeated element of the narrative. Whilst you may not be asked to comment on how you view this, you will almost certainly be asked to comment on the nature of the representation of nationalities in a clip as has been the case in 3 of the previous 4 examinations.

Often, the representation of nationalities or ethnicities that are non-Western [American] relies on **stereotypes** of pagan religions, low value of life, inhuman treatment, torture and cult like religious ceremonies or beliefs. These are **what have been termed in media theory 'the Other'**. Put simply, things or people that are **'not like us'** are the Other. As such, their beliefs are seen as 'wrong' and their cultures as 'alien' and of lesser value than our own. **The**

qualities of the Hero [who represents us] are shown to be of greater worth by their comparison with those of 'The Other'. What you recognise now as a case of good old Binary Oppositions.

Session 19: Q3 Representation

In this session you will be asked to respond to a Question 3 task on Representation based on a clip from the genre. You will be expected to answer this in your book/folder as directed by your teacher.

Session 20: Exam Task

In this session you will be asked to respond to an examination task based on a clip from the genre. The task will allow you to test your understanding of the work completed so far. You will be expected to answer this in your book.