**Stage 2 English – Film Analysis Essay Scaffold (1000 Words)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Topic Sentence: Give a sentence that summarises this paragraph.** *The Director, Sean Penn, employs (technique) to communicate (theme).* **Explain: HOW does this technique communicate the theme?** Explain how the technique works, what it aims to do to a viewer, why the Director used it. **Evidence: Provide EVIDENCE from the text; How EFFECTIVELY does it work?** Events, Screenshots, Quotations of Dialogue and HOW this aids the viewer.   
**Link: Link this paragraph to the next; what is common between them?** *E.g. “This level of ‘freedom’ can also be found in the use of the soundtrack.”*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction (150-200 words)**   * Main details: year, director, title, genre. * Context: small plot summary (1-2 sent.) * Explain the theme to a degree * Preview the techniques used * Preview the degree of success |  | | |
| **Freedom** | **Explain How Technique Communicates Theme** | **Evidence From Text** Event, Screenshot, Quotation (Time) | **Effect on Audience**  What are audiences made to think? |
| **Body 1: Technique 1:**  **TEEL (200 words)**  **Cinematography** | Cinematography communicates the idea of freedom through: wide shots, close shots, landscape shots  Wide shots =  Close shots =  We tend to associate closeness with society and feeling claustrophobic, like Chris does. | Shot of landscape – first time in Alaska – (time?)  Shot of family lunch – close up – (time?)  When Christopher goes into the wild in Alaska we se…  Compared with the deinner scene, where he feels squashed by his parents, blah… | The claustrophobic close-ups of family and society  Versus  Open space and isolated figure of Chris in the landscape makes viewers feel… |
| **Body 2: Technique 2:**  **TEEL (200 words)**  **ALASKA SCENE**  **DINNER SCENE** | Cinematography  Soundtrack  Editing |  |  |
| **Body 3: Technique 3:**  **TEEL (200 words)** |  |  |  |
| **Conclusion (150-200 words)**   * Ultimately, **evaluate** to what degree do these techniques communicate the central theme? * **Evaluate**: How effective is the text? * **Evaluate**: Was the Director successful? |  | | |

**Stylistic Features:**

C Grade: refer only to EVENTS from the film as loose evidence

B Grade: refer to EVENTS and A TECHNIQUE, eg. Cinematography, as evidence

A Grade: refer to a TECHNIQUE, e.g. Cinematography, sealessly explaining the director’s use of it in this scene, how it relates to the theme as a whole, how successfully it impacts on the viewer. In a paragraph you might even compare and contrast two events to prove a point… One from the beginning and one from the end to demonstrate the proptagonist’s emotional growth.

**Body 1: Technique 1:**

**TEEL (200 words)**

**Cinematography**

**Topic Sentence?  
Explanation of the idea?  
Evidence?  
Effect on Audience?  
Link to next idea?**

The Director, Sean Penn, uses cinematography to communicate the idea of freedom. He uses long and close shot types and angles to give a sense of scale, especially noticeable when Christopher is in the wild, or in society. Chris comes from a stifling family situation with a broken family arrangement that is not truly happy and highly materialistic. His own ideals of minimalism and seeking experiences rather than material goods contrast this. Penn demonstrates this through the use of claustrophobic close-ups of family, especially Christopher’s father (Fig. 1). Shot from a neutral angle, but obnoxiously close, the audience understands just how domineering these people and influences are on Christopher’s life. When Christopher finally goes ‘into the wild’ we feel the sense of freedom he does: the landscape is shown in wide shots (Fig. 2) and shows his thankfully isolated figure against the landscape. When comparing the two styles of cinematography, it is obvious Penn is communicating the effect of freedom on Christopher’s perceptions – through freeing or claustrophobic shots – which the audience then understands. This sense of ‘freedom’ can also be found in Penn’s use of editing.

View two films that explore similar themes and complete an analytical essay in response. For example, view Into *the Wild* directed by Sean Penn and *Tracks* directed by Robyn Davidson.

Select one idea explored in both texts such as:

* freedom and independence,
* isolation and loneliness
* humans and nature
* family
* survival.

Write an essay in which you analyse how Robyn Davidson and Sean Penn explore one of these ideas.

Techniques:

Editing (non-linear)

Cinematography: hand-held style, wide open landscape shots, close-in society shots

Soundtrack: Eddie Vedder’s folksy music

Mise en Scene: costume, lighting, setting, design

*The Lady in the Van* is constructed so that a difficult story is made more palatable for the audience. How successfully does Nicholas Hytner uses a range of film techniques to achieve his goal?

Students read a novel such as *I’m not scared* by Niccolo Ammaniti and choose from 2-3 essay topics, such as:

Analyse the stylistic features Niccolo Ammaniti employs in *I’m not scared* to explore the idea of fear.

How does Ammaniti recreate the atmosphere of childhood in the novel *I’m not scared*?

Students respond to a film such as the *Life of Pi* directed by Ang Lee or another appropriate film. For example:

‘The Ang Lee film *Life of Pi* has been heralded as a visual masterpiece. ‘Is the film version of *Life of Pi* just a visual effects movie or is there a compelling story? Use evidence from the film to support your answer.

Students respond to a novel such as *The Night Guest* by Fiona McFarlane or another appropriate extended prose text. For example:

‘Fiona McFarlane, in her novel *The Night Guest*, uses a variety of stylistic features (e.g. the metaphor of the tiger, shifts in time and memory, and narration from Ruth’s perspective) to make the reader feel confused and lost, much as Ruth, the main character, might feel suffering from dementia. **Students analyse two or three of these stylistic features and assess their effectiveness in developing the ideas in the text**.’