

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard

English Level 3

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 91480

Respond critically to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s)
through close reading, supported by evidence

An annotated exemplar is an extract of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade boundaries.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

	Grade Boundary: Low Excellence
1.	<p>For Excellence, the student needs to respond critically and perceptively to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making sophisticated, insightful and/or original interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically and perceptively to extracts from the films <i>The Dark Knight</i> and <i>Inception</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student makes insightful interpretations of the aspect of camera work, and how it is used to explore the relationship between characters. These interpretations relate the scene to the wider film to show the significance of the camera work to <i>The Dark Night</i> as a whole (1).</p> <p>The student sustains a strong link between camera work and its effect on audience and purpose. This interpretation is just sufficiently sophisticated (1) (2).</p> <p>The final paragraph in this section explores some of the influencing factors that could be behind Nolan's camera work choices. This begins to show evidence of original interpretation (3).</p> <p>For a more secure Excellence, the student could provide more examples of original interpretations.</p>

Christopher Nolan is an intelligent and sophisticated director who has created many award-winning films in his relatively short career. Some characteristics of his directorial style are; camera work with specific use of close-up's and cutting, lighting /colour to symbolise characters and use of sound to create tension and anticipation in the audience. I have chosen Nolan's 2008 masterpiece *The Dark Knight* and the highly-acclaimed *Inception* 2010 to study and analyse. Each film has scenes that incorporate all of Nolan's described characteristics and that help to give me a clear understanding of Nolan's directorial style. Nolan also uses these techniques to match how a modern audience views text presented in the media, due to the post 9/11 western world that we now live in, to give his viewers greater understanding of what is happening in his films.

Nolan uses camera work in both *The Dark Knight* and *Inception* to create tension within the audience and to emphasise characters' expressions and emotions to the viewers, leaving us in no doubt what each character is feeling. This allows the audience to understand each character more effectively and as a result it challenges us to think about how we might feel in the same situation.

A scene, in *The Dark Knight*, that Nolan uses effective camera work to enhance the audiences' view of the characters is the 'interview' scene that features Batman, Joker and Commissioner Gordon. When the scene starts, Nolan uses a high angled-long shot to show the Joker sitting alone in darkness. However, as the scene continues Nolan uses many close-ups on the faces of each character as they converse. When the close-ups are on the Joker, the audience gets a vivid depiction of all his gruesome make-up and sickly smiles. These close-ups make the audience nervous and worried because he looks so horrific whereas when the close-ups are on Gordon or Batman, expressions of numbness and confusion are evident on those characters' faces. Nolan is making the audience empathise with the 'good' characters — Gordon and Batman — and this is very effective because we feel as horrified and numb as they do when faced with the Joker. Further on in the scene, Nolan uses point-of-view shots from both the Joker's and Batman's perspectives to show to the audience what each character is seeing and as a result the audience gets a 'feel' for what the characters' are experiencing. For example, there is a sequence of shots involving both a low-angled Joker's POV shot on Batman and a high-angle Batman POV shot on Joker. In the first shot, the effect Nolan creates is that Batman is a very powerful and menacing character because the camera angle makes him look so big because it is low down. We as the audience empathise with the Joker because we can see from his perspective how he is being stood over like a naughty child by this menacing 'bigger' person. In the second of the two shots, the audience are presented with the Batman's perspective. The high angle allows Nolan to create the effect that Joker is insignificant and small and the Batman POV part of the shot shows the audience how he is seemingly in control of the situation because his enemy is so unassuming. This creates a juxtaposition that the audience picks up on because even though the camera work gives the impression that Batman is in total control — high-angled shots on Joker, Batman being the dominant force — the actual truth is that the Joker is the one in control.⁽¹⁾ This scene is very symbolic of the rest of the film because the struggle that is being played out here between the two characters is the same as their struggles throughout the film. Throughout the film the Joker tries to prove that the people of Gotham are all as evil and corrupt as he is whereas Batman presents the opposite view and fights for the people of Gotham in the belief that they are a good society. Nolan presents the audience with many scenes that are similar to this one. One example of this is when the Joker has two boats sitting in the harbour that are rigged to blow ... **[The paragraph continues with a detailed description and interpretation of another scene in the film]**

A scene in *Inception* that Nolan uses prominent camera work to challenge the audience's perception of the characters comes where Ariadne meets Cobb's wife Mal for the first time. In this scene, director Nolan effectively uses close-up's, cutting and over-the-shoulder POV shots to create tension and put emphasis on the characters' expressions and emotions and, as a result, the audience gets feelings of anxiety and nervousness that replicate what the characters in the film are feeling. For example, the first shot in the scene is a POV shot based on what Ariadne can see — a room that is all messy and in disarray. The

feeling that this creates in the audience is one of uncertainty and anxiety because we are unsure what is going to happen next. The following shot is a close-up of Ariadne's face which depicts emotions that are the same as those that the audience is feeling — anxiety, worry and nervousness....(2) **[The detailed description of the camera work in the scene continues]**...The shot then cuts back to a low-angled Ariadne-POV shot on Mal, which gives the impression that Cobb's wife is very big and menacing which gives negative connotations to the audience about what she may do to Ariadne. Nolan then cuts back to an over-the-shoulder, POV shot (from Mal's perspective) of Ariadne and this shot creates the effect that the audience are looking at a diminutive and weak character in Ariadne. From this shot it appears as if the schoolyard bully (Mal) is about to take advantage of a smaller and more vulnerable child (Ariadne) and the audience feels compelled to fear for the safety of Ariadne as Mal moves towards her. Nolan is very ingenious as he plays on the audiences' moral values as he gives the impression that a smaller person is being taken advantage of and, therefore, we as good members of society feel an obligation to want to help and support the weaker person that is in strife. These feelings in the audience come as a result of the numerous close-up's and POV shots that Nolan presents us with which almost force the audience to empathise with the characters, and then react with what we would do if put in the same situation in real life. This scene is also critical to the rest of the film because here the audience finally is presented with Cobb's background and how this influences some of the decisions he makes. As a result of this scene, the audience knows that Cobb made a promise to his wife Mal to 'come back for her' so the two of them 'could be together'... **[the student explores the significance of the scene to the rest of the film in more detail]**....

Christopher Nolan follows the new 'rules' in terms of camera work in the media when filming these two scenes. He is a part of the society we live in and therefore has knowledge of how information is presented in the normal world. In days gone by it would have been acceptable for directors to film violent scenes in a less intrusive manner where the audience does not see fully what is happening but can make accurate assumptions about what had happened. In today's world, the audience has a much larger appetite for seeing the 'full picture' thanks to the numerous reality TV shows and disaster footage specials that show emotion on the screen in vivid detail. Nolan had to keep up with the trend and make his films suited to what the audience demanded which is more intense violence and raw emotion portrayed through our TV screens. In *The Dark Knight* and *Inception* Nolan does just that with obvious close up's on the faces of the characters to showcase exactly what emotions they are feeling — Authority figures such as Cobb in *Inception* or Gordon in *The Dark Knight* are now shown to be human, and 'heroes' like Batman are shown to have doubts whereas previously they would just save society, no questions asked. Nolan is altering his directorial style to match the way that society wants to watch films now and because of this, is providing more appealing movies to the modern 'western' world. (3)

	Grade Boundary: High Merit
2.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to respond critically and convincingly to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making discerning and informed interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically and convincingly to extracts from the films <i>Gangs of New York</i> and <i>Goodfellas</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student begins an interpretation of the use of dialogue early in their report (1). There is a strong link between this aspect and convincing interpretations of meaning (2). The specific and relevant detail is integrated with discerning and informed interpretations to create a convincing report (3). Some critical response begins to show insight (4).</p> <p>To reach Excellence, the student could develop the critical response so that the judgements and interpretations show sophistication and originality.</p>

The films *Gangs of New York* and *Goodfellas* both directed by Martin Scorsese and are based in New York, the former in the 1860's and the latter in 1960's. Scorsese is known for directing gangster films with an historical accuracy. *Gangs of New York* was based on an era rather than a specific person's story. He took some artistic liberties with dates and personalities but based the story around characters known in the gang rings in the 1860's. *Goodfellas* however is based on a true life story of Henry Hill who was a member of a New York based branch of the Mafia. Winning an Oscar for his directing role in *The Departed* Scorsese is a critically acclaimed director who lends his talents well to psychological dramas and gangster films.

The use of Dialogue is important in both *Gangs of New York* and *Goodfellas* especially in the "Dead Rabbit" and "Funny ...How" scenes as it helps to build tension. The change in the way dialogue is delivered allows the audience to understand the characters of Bill Cutting and Tommy. The silence in the scenes also builds tension between the characters.

The "Dead Rabbit" scene in *Gangs of New York* contains no music and the dialogue fills the whole soundtrack. **The idea was for Scorsese to build tension as silence allows for no distraction for the audience, who have to focus on the power and meaning of the words being said by the two characters** (1). Lines from Sheriff Happy Jack Mulraney are delivered in an official, well-rehearsed manner which makes the audience feel as though he is saying what he has been told to say rather than what he wants to say. **The lines "My allegiance is to the law" and "I'm paid to uphold the law" allow the viewer to see that he is corruptible. The double meaning behind being "paid to uphold the law" is seen by the audience when the answer "What in heaven's name are you talking about?" is delivered as they realise that at the time he is paid to uphold the governments law but would gladly be paid by this gang leader to uphold Cutting's law if necessary** (2). Past conflict is hinted at as Jack was a member of the original Dead Rabbits who were defeated in battle in the beginning of the film with the coolness of the delivery of the lines "You may have misgivings but don't go believing that Jack, that way lies damnation." And the cold confident reply of "I am no danger of damnation Bill" as each man's deep seeded hatred over their religious differences and past conflicts become evident. The delivery of the lines reminds the audience of the determined stand off earlier in the film where both gangs are lined up prepared for battle. Scorsese uses silence in scenes where one character is trying to intimidate another to build a tension, scenes like the "Funny... how?" scene in *Goodfellas* and the scene where Billy Costigan arrests Colin Sullivan in *The Departed* and when Jimmy is confronted with his true identity at the end of *Shutter Island* all contain silence which fills the gaps between the words which is just as important as the words themselves as they allow the viewer to process the words and understand that these are important scenes where vital plot information is given out. It also builds tension in the scene as the viewer is left hanging on every word being said. This relates to the scene in *Gangs of New York* as it shows the power Cutting has over people who used to be his rivals and also alludes to the consequences of losing the battle for the "Dead Rabbits" and how they are forced to live in the shadow of a man who slaughtered their friends and family.

In the "Funny... how" scene of *Goodfellas* the dialogue allows for tension to build. Tommy's dialogue in the beginning of the film is fast and high pitched as if he is proud of his story. **This is important as his voice in the beginning of the scene contrasts to the slower paced, more controlled voice he uses with a lower tone as he becomes more serious. In the line "What do you mean the way I talk." The tone of Ray Liotta's voice changes and the contrast is made clear that he is taking offence to Henry's comment and indicates a change on mood of the scene to the audience. Also silence plays a huge part in creating and relieving tension in this scene** (3). In the beginning of the scene there isn't a moment of silence. Tommy is telling his story and in his pauses there are always people laughing, and even when they are laughing Tommy is talking over them adding in some comment or

another for comedic value. It gives off a very casual tone to the scene as you hear the clinking of people's cutlery and socially feels as though this situation could be happening in any restaurant. This allows the audience to relate to the situation as it feels as though it is just a group of friends going out for dinner. **The content of the story allows the audience to see that they aren't quite ordinary people though as it talked about Tommy getting beaten up by a policeman in a comedic way. As soon as Tommy begins to take offence to what Henry is saying there is silence between the lines. This puts the viewers on edge as they feel the awkwardness of the situation** (3). The silence also brings impact to the words that are being said, each question being asked pulls the audience in as they feel as though they are being asked the questions and are being forced to come up with a reply. The same effect is used in the film *Shutter Island* in the scene when Jimmy is confronted with his true identity. The silence in between the sentences allow for the audience to understand the importance of the scene in *Shutter Island*. The same applies for *Goodfellas* in that this scene is an introduction into Henry's mafia life. Including the silence and the change in Ray Liotta's voice Scorsese highlights the importance of this scene.

In the "Dead Rabbit" scene of *Gangs of New York* and in the "Funny... how" scene of *Goodfellas* are both edited to create tension, both beginning slowly and speeding up as tension increases. Their placement in terms of the film are important too as they give a reality check to the audience of the inside workings of a gang.

The editing of the "Dead Rabbit" scene of *Gangs of New York* is of a slow pace. It is done in this slow pace to bring emphasis to the scene and slow the pace of the film and is almost a lull for viewers to regain their place between two points of major conflict in the film. **[A detailed discussion of the editing in this scene follows but is not included in the exemplar]**

The editing in the "Funny...how?" scene of *Goodfellas* goes from a few shots which are cutting slowly, allowing the audience to understand the story being told by Tommy, to quick paced cuts between Tommy and Henry as the tension builds. **[A detailed discussion of the editing in this scene follows but is not included in the exemplar]** This gives a reality check to the audience as they see that everything has consequences and puts the job into perspective. Scenes like these are an important way for directors to foreshadow the collapse of what looks from the outside to be a perfect job. **In *Goodfellas* it foreshadows the inevitable fall of the mafia** (4).

	Grade Boundary: Low Merit
3.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to respond critically and convincingly to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making discerning and informed interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically and convincingly to extracts from the films <i>Titanic</i> and <i>Avatar</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student's discussion of sound effects and music is just convincing enough to meet the standard. At times the evidence is a little general, but there is enough specific evidence to support an informed judgement (1). More specific than the discussion on <i>Titanic</i>, the student's discussion of the impact of sound on this scene in <i>Avatar</i> draws discerning and informed judgements (2).</p> <p>For a more secure Merit, the student could shift the focus from description to providing interpretations and judgements, so that the critical response becomes consistently convincing.</p>

James Cameron has a very distinctive style of directing. All of his films are controversial and no doubt packed with dramatic music and effective camera angles to portray an important idea for each film. Some of his master pieces include *Aliens*, *The Abyss* and *True Lies*, but the films I choose to study are *Avatar* and *Titanic* (1997). For *Avatar* the scene I'm analysing is "The Falling Tree" scene and for *Titanic* I choose "The Sinking Ship" scene, both extremely dramatic and melancholic components of the films, each filled with extremely convincing techniques.

Element 1: Sound effects and Music

In *Titanic*, James Cameron strived to, and successfully did, make the viewer's feel as if they were encountering the experience of being on a sinking ship through the careful and effective use of sound effects and music. James Cameron's purpose in *Avatar* was to show destruction versus peace, which was again successfully shown through useful sound techniques.

The well-known song "My Heart Will Go On", from *Titanic*, is continuously played throughout the film. The tune stays the same but the style of song switches from being sung emotionally with Opera singers to being played sadly on Violin to being played intensely by louder and dramatic instruments. James Cameron's decision to use this continuous use of tune is effective as it makes the audience feel comfortable since they know the tune well, and the use of changing the source of the song just helps add something a little different each time, and also helps to set the emotion for that certain scene. James Cameron has the superb talent of being able to make the audience feel emotionally sick and distressed, on behalf of the characters. In the "Sinking Ship" scene, when Rose is being dragged away from saving Jack's life, the sounds being heard begin to fade in and out. In the background we also hear a heartbeat pumping. The way James Cameron portrays this sense of struggle is highly effective because, as a viewer, I felt her anger and frustration. James Cameron also uses convincing sound effects to make the audience feel as if they're living through this traumatic experience. The consistent sound of the ship groaning is heard throughout the Sinking Ship scene, as well as the frightening sound of waves rolling and crashing. Another sound effect added to the painful scene is the consistent sound of screams and cries, and the only time the hectic wails are cut out is when Rose is being lowered to her safety. At this point, all that is heard is the "My Heart Will Go On" tune, and this is an extremely emotional jerking section. **The overwhelming switch from sound effects to music is very memorable, and makes the viewer's feel Rose's pain, as if we're living in her shoes and we're losing someone close to us. James Cameron's main purpose of using these techniques (Sound Effects and Music) was to force the audience in to feeling as if they're on the Titanic and encountering this daunting contingency** (1). It was successfully reached, proven by the effect this film had on those who watched it, and the reviews it was prized with.

In *Avatar* James Cameron clearly enforces the idea of destruction verse peace, and does this through the use of Sound Effects and Music as well. At the beginning of the scene the huge 'Home' Tree is shown in all of its peacefulness, standing in the green forest, with only the sounds of nature being heard. Not long after huge aircrafts zoom around the corner and the near-silence is destroyed. An aggressive music track comes in to hearing as well, and along with the rowdy sound of helicopters, the natural sounds of the environment are drowned out. James Cameron's use of Music and Sound effects in this certain way is very cutting, and acts as a metaphor of the actual incident about to

take place; the aggressive Human's destroying the innocent Na'vi. Screaming is heard throughout the entire attack, and follows afterwards as well. This sound effect adds even more pain than the viewer is already feeling, so James Cameron's attempt to make this scene appalling and to emphasize the destruction was successfully reached. As Home-Tree falls to the ground, violins are heard and this adds to the emotions felt and makes us feel pain on behalf of the Na'vi. The sound track cuts out completely as the tree is on the verge of falling, and it's all silent except for the quiet rustling sound of leaves falling. This use of near-silence builds suspense and the audience holds on to see what's going to happen next. When the tree finally does fall, our ears are filled with the creaking and groaning of the tree, as if it's crying in pain. James Cameron's use of sound effects in this particular section personifies Home-tree and the destruction of it instantly makes the audience feel sadder because it seems as if the tree is alive (2). James Cameron also discovered the effect that a certain "bang" noise has on the viewers. He uses it in important parts within this scene, one of which is when Neytiri tells Jake to never return, and the bang is heard as if representing the shock that hits him, like a bullet. After Hometree is destroyed and the Na'vi begins to walk away, all that is heard at this point is their wails of distress, emphasizing despair. Violin then comes in, and it switches between the Na'vi, and the Human's back at base who are responsible for this mess. Both races are drowned with sorrow, so in this case James Cameron has violin representing the sadness felt.

[Report edited here – discussion of mis-en-scene compared in the two films]

James Cameron uses many techniques throughout *Avatar* and *Titanic* to prove the importance of respect, and how you can gain it. He used music to represent emotions and sound effects to concrete ideas in to the viewer's minds. Cameron successfully used Mis-en-scene to reinforce his ideas. One of the techniques within the films which overlapped were the compositions; Home Tree in *Avatar* goes from horizontal to vertical and the Titanic went from horizontal to vertical. These both represent the lives of the species effected and the main symbols, after a disaster, were on the opposite angle, showing that their lives were turn upside down. Along with many others of James Cameron's, these films showed him at his best and each really portrayed his directing style. They were both very memorable due to the choice of techniques, and very moving. These films resulted in a huge change of people's lives so James Cameron has proved to be a very successful director.

	Grade Boundary: High Achieved
4.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to respond critically to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making evaluative interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically to extracts from the films <i>The Shining</i> and <i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student links Kubrick's use of the steady-cam to an interpretation of the effect on the audience (1), and the evaluative comments on Kubrick's use of camera shots are detailed (2). The student's critical interpretation shows moments where the evaluation is convincing (3).</p> <p>To reach Merit, the student could focus the discussion on making discerning and informed interpretations and more consistent judgements.</p>

Stanley Kubrick was a very influential and controversial director. His films were noted for their unique cinematography, attention to detail and an inspired use of music scores. Kubrick covered many genres, including horror, comedy and science fiction. Kubrick was a perfectionist; he took painstaking care with each scene and working closely with his actors. Some of his trademarks included using classical music, surreal editing and his use of the steady cam.

Element one- Cinematography

Stanley Kubrick was noted as a director on the forefront of his art, his films and his production techniques were ahead of his time. Kubrick's use of the steady cam is no exception to this. *The Shining* was one of the first feature length films to use the steady cam. Stanley Kubrick decided to incorporate it into the film because it put the audience into the action, or in this case horror. During the scene in *The Shining* where Danny comes across the twins in the hallway, we follow Danny to this meeting through the eyes of the steady cam. Kubrick used this steady cam to put the audience in the perspective of Danny. **This increases the tension and suspense, also it adds to the surprise when the twins appear. We turn the corner as Danny does which is shocking because we feel all the horror the character is feeling** (1). This use contributes to the overall horror of the film which is often referred to as one of the scariest movies in cinema. The film's use of the steady cam popularized its use in feature films such as *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*.

Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was a very surreal film with surreal and unusual camera movement and techniques. During the scene where the primates encounter the monolith for the first time Kubrick uses a series of camera shots to draw us into the scene and give insight to the characters (primates) feelings. As the primates scatter the camera jumps to an extreme wide shot, then as the primates gain interest and courage to get closer to the monolith so does the camera. The camera changes to a long shot of the main primate, 'Moonwatcher', circling the monolith. **Finally, as Moonwatcher's curiosity compels him to touch the monolith, the camera changes to a mid-shot. This transition of shots helps us understand the primate's initial fear, curiosity and eventual connection to the monolith. Kubrick used this collection of shots so the audience could connect with the primates. The effect of this camera work helps the audience's emotional investment in the film and care about future events** (2).

Both these scenes' cinematography are used in drawing in the audience into the scene. Kubrick is a clever director and knows for a film to succeed the audience must be emotionally invested in the characters and events. Kubrick's camera work certainly achieves this and not through the conventional point of view shot.

Element 2 - Editing

2001: A Space Odyssey has possibly the most famous jump cut of all time, however there is another jump cut within the film that is not as impressive but still worthy of discussion. The encounter between the primates and the monolith ends suddenly with a jump cut to a shadow being cast on a barren desert. This sudden cut demeans the previous scene making it seem as though it was nothing, however the scene seems very important as it sets the rest of the film in motion. Kubrick did this to show that the first step of mankind was simply the first brick in the wall. The first step holds value however the jump cut shows that without future steps the first one is pointless. This contributes to the film's idea of human progression and how we never stop. One step is meaningless to us so we must strive for more, however

as we see further into the film, we can progress so far that it's dangerous. The jump cut teaches the audience that they should savour and appreciate every little progression they have before it jumps away.

In many of his films Kubrick uses subliminal messages to influence the audience. In *The Shining* Kubrick employs this trademark to incite terror in the audience. During Danny and the twins meeting we see flashes of the twins butchered with blood and an axe on the floor. We only see these flashes for half a second but this is what makes them terrifying. Kubrick uses the quick flashes to almost subliminally scare the audience. We don't see the image long enough to analyse it and understand it, but we see it long enough to register a connection to the corpses and blood. The flash gives us an outline of the scene and the audience fills in the rest in with the worst they can think of. Kubrick used the 'fear of the unknown' and 'assuming the worst' of humans to increase the horror of the scene. This is how the human mind works and Kubrick knew and exploited it. These subliminal images contribute to the scenes terror and unease (3). This technique was used in Robert Rodriguez's *From Dusk Till Dawn*. The audience sees flashes of this time a raped women; this has the same effect as the flashes of the twins. *From Dusk Till Dawn* uses quicker flashes which in my opinion are far more effective because they exploit the 'assuming the worst' part of the human brain. However it is most likely that *From Dusk Till Dawn* got its influence from Kubrick's *The Shining*.

Kubrick's editing style seemed to differ between films. This is interesting because many other aspects of his movies are similar. Both *2001* and *The Shining* have very different pace and editing techniques. Perhaps this is because Kubrick never directed the same kind of film twice. He was always switching genres and other aspects of his films. This is what made Stanley Kubrick the most influential and diverse directors of his time.

	Grade Boundary: Low Achieved
5.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to respond critically to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making evaluative interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically to extracts from the films <i>The Dark Knight</i> and <i>Inception</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student uses evaluative interpretations and judgements to discuss Nolan's use of lighting (1), and draws links between Nolan's use of lighting aspects across his films (2). The student makes a detailed exploration of Nolan's use of music, providing evaluative judgements of the effect of these aspects (3).</p> <p>For a more secure Achieved, the student could support the interpretations with specific and relevant examples from the films. The student could give more interpretation and evaluation about how the selected aspects of film create meaning.</p>

Christopher Nolan is a worldwide director whose action packed films have kept people guessing for many years. Dark lighting and music to add dramatic effect are all part of Nolan's directorial style. I have decided to view two of his films, *The Dark Knight* (2008) and *Inception* (2010). Each film includes dramatic lighting and suspenseful music which clearly display Nolan's style.

Nolan uses specific lighting as part of his directorial style. In both *Inception* and *The Dark Knight* he uses certain lighting techniques. In each film the audiences understanding of the situation of the scene in the film is enhanced by lighting, specifically the suspense and drama is built up for the audience.

In the same bank robbery scene of *The Dark Knight* Nolan uses lighting in a way to show the audience who the Joker is and build up the suspense. As the Joker's accomplices break into the safe the lighting is very dark with a green tinge across it. This dark lighting builds up dramatic effect to the audience as it is not very bright like it is in the bank it is dark and looks like it is in a room below the ground as there are no windows. This builds up suspense as the audience can tell by the lighting that it a place where no one goes and is very secretive and private and they are trying to break into it. When the Joker reveals himself Nolan adds a green lighting effect that signals his lack of humanity to the audience. The first time we see his actual face it is dark and greenish amongst his greasy hair and terrible clown makeup. **The lighting in this scene also helps the audience understand the intensity of the situation,** (1) obviously robbing a bank is high intensity but the low lighting effects adds to the dark and "thriller" type feel amongst the scene. This low lighting style is used all throughout the whole film as the story continues, Nolan keeps the lighting low and dark to add effect to the seriousness and danger of what is happening. Even in daytime scenes it is not fully bright and sunny he uses a dark tinge across the scenes to build up the suspense and seriousness of what is to come.

Nolan also uses these techniques in *Inception* to once again show the intensity or seriousness of a situation by keeping the lighting low and with dark screen tinges. In the zero gravity fight scene Arthur begins in a hotel room watching over his colleagues while they are in a dream. The room is extremely dark even though it is set out in the daytime. It has the effect of curtains being closed and a low light switched on. **Once again Nolan uses this dark hotel room as a secret private room where business is being done just like in *The Dark Knight* in the vault** (2). The low lighting in the room may appear to be while everyone sleeps but it also lets the audience understand the seriousness of this situation. As Arthur steps outside to the hallway it only has lights on the wall showing, Nolan uses these so that any shadows are able to be seen and this is exactly what happens. Arthur begins to be followed/chased by a enemy and Nolan uses the low lighting for the shadows to build suspense to the audience as it is very mysterious who the shadow is. When Arthur and the enemy are fighting in another hotel room, the lighting is once again dark and low, this time only the lamp shades are on which once again creates the shadow effect. When Arthur kills the enemy the lighting goes even darker to emphasis the danger and seriousness of the situation. Nolan creates a dark and scary setting with the use of low lighting and shadow effects.

Music plays a huge part of Nolan's directorial style, he uses specific instruments and beats to build up suspense for the audience. In both *The Dark Knight* and *Inception* Nolan uses high pitched violins to add dramatic effect to the specific scene. This is so the audience can feel scared for the characters and worried as to what is to come.

In *The Dark Knight* the opening scene has the Joker's accomplices breaking into a bank and holding everyone inside hostage. The music starts off with a low drum beat with a sharp synth that builds up as there is a zoom into the skyscraper, then as the window smashes a hollow drum starts to beat. Nolan uses each new instrument to build the story as it goes, he builds up the orchestra as the story builds. By doing this the audience is engaged as they know by the suspense being built up that something is going to happen. Nolan uses a lot of string instruments for high pitched noises in intense action scenes and a lot of low drum beats that build suspense as they sound like heart beats so therefore it makes the audience feel as if their heart is racing as to wondering what will happen next. He then cuts all the music so it is silent and makes the audience sit there and wait for something to happen but nothing ever does, it just begins to build up again. This effect on the audience has them drawn right in and absorbs them into the film as they focus on what is to happen (3).

Nolan also uses these techniques in *Inception* where the fight in the hallway in zero gravity begins. It starts off with a low steady drum beat as he is walking out of the hotel room. As he walks towards the elevator a faster drum beat starts and this builds up some suspension as to what will happen next, we then see someone else walk out of the elevator and this is when a high pitched violin starts. The sound is loud and screechy and uncomfortable for the audience to hear. The drum beat once again sounds like a heartbeat and Nolan uses this so the audience can feel as if their heart beat is beating as well and as it gets faster therefore expecting something bad is about to happen. As the enemy approaches the music stops again just like in *The Dark Knight*. Nolan does this so that the audience is anticipating what will happen next and is waiting for something bad to happen. As the fight starts there is a loud trumpet playing against the low drum beats. Nolan uses these high pitched and low beat instruments together to create a high intensity beat to follow the fight through, it makes the fight seem so much more intense and frightening because it's been so built up with the stopping and starting of music that he makes you really think about who will win.

Overall Nolan uses a wide range of instruments to create suspense building music to hype up and play on the audience's minds. He also uses a lot of building up then stopping and so on so that when something finally happens it is unexpected and that is exactly how he wants his films to be to the audience.

Nolan's mixture of high intensity music and dark lighting play on the audiences mind so they do not expect what happens next. This is how he creates such blockbuster films and has his own directorial style.

	Grade Boundary: High Not Achieved
6.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to respond critically to significant aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence.</p> <p>This involves making evaluative interpretations and judgements through a detailed exploration and consideration of significant aspects of text/s.</p> <p>This student has responded critically to extracts from the films <i>King Kong</i> and <i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i>, supported by evidence.</p> <p>The student includes a general reference to Peter Jackson’s style of camera angles (1). Specific and relevant details are given of cinematography in <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (2) and <i>King Kong</i> (3). The student begins to interpret the use of the multiple camera angles (4). The discussion of sound includes a general explanation of effects (5).</p> <p>To reach Achieved, the student could develop the explanation of cinematography to make evaluations and interpretations of how meaning is created. The student could support the interpretation of the use of sound with specific and relevant details from each text.</p>

When it comes to directors Peter Jackson is right up there, renowned for his take on classics such as *Lord of the Rings*, *King Kong* and *The Lovely Bones* he has always achieved excellence in his profession and is currently one of the leading directors in the modern world. The two films I have decided to cover are *King Kong* and *Lord of the Rings the Return of the King*. Both have similar attributes that are unique to Peter Jackson.

Peter Jackson is probably most famous for the use of the language feature **Camera Angles. Whenever you watch any of his films you will notice that with every scene there will be multiple camera shots of the same thing, Peter Jackson pays great attention to the detail forming a large variety of different viewpoints this genuinely enhances the viewing experience making it much more appealing to watch** (1). Even in short scenes it is obvious to see how much effort has gone into acquiring the perfect shots and that is what really sets Peter Jackson apart when it comes to directing. He makes use of the four basic angles consistently throughout each of his films, these angles are: Normal Angles, where the camera is angled in a neutral position which is generally considered as eye level. Low Angles, the shot is taken with the camera below the subject. High angles, the shot is taken above the subject. Tilted angles, the shot is taken with the camera out of vertical alignment with the subject. All of these angles are used at-different times to communicate key ideas with the audiences.

An example of Jackson's use of these multiple camera angles can be found in one of the final scenes in *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2) this is the scene where Aragorn is made king. The scene starts off as a huge long shot of the kingdom of Gondor, it is then quickly zoomed in to display a huge ceremony. The camera continues to zoom right up to the stairs where Aragorn is being crowned; it then turns into a Low Angle Shot, where the camera is looking from the bottom of the stairs upwards this creates an atmosphere within the shot because you take on the point of view of the spectators attending. As Gandalf raises the crown above Aragorn's head the camera angle changes to a close up on the crown, this further explains what is going on in the scene, it is now obviously clear that Aragorn is about to be made king. The camera then quickly switches to a close up of Gimly, who is nearby the shot takes special notice of his eyes as they tear up creating a sense of emotion in the scene. The camera then returns to a neutral shot of Gandalf holding the crown, panning downwards ever so slowly until the crown rests upon Aragorn's head there is a minor pause as the camera holds in place for a small moment allowing the audience to admire the crown upon the new Kings head, then a close up appears on Gandalf's face as he says "now come the days of the king" followed by a close up of the newly crowned king Aragorn, the camera then briefly exchanges close ups of both Gandalf and Aragorn to show the bond between the two. The camera angle then returns to the low angle shot of the stairs, to keep the audience involved before changing to multiple shots of the crowd from all different points of view, after various shots of the crowd the camera returns to a close up of Aragorn as he says: "This day does not belong to one man but to all. Let us together rebuild this world that we may share in the days of peace". Aragorn then breaks out in song as petals fall from the sky. In the space of two minutes eighteen different shots are taken, there are multiple angles for certain parts of it. For example the crowning of Aragorn there are four different angles that show different points of view. The first is the Low angle shot of Aragorn and Gandalf at the top of the stairs, the close up of the crown held in Gandalf's hand, the neutral shot of the crown being placed on Aragorn's head and the close up of Aragorn afterwards.

Another example of Peter Jackson's use of multiple shots can be found in a particular scene from *King Kong* (3). In this scene Ann Darrow, the starring actress is playing out a scene on deck and she and Jack Driscoll have a moment. The scene starts out with a zoom in on the camera and director, this is a neutral shot because it is situated roughly at eye level, this angle firstly lets the audience know what is going on (a scene is being recorded). The camera then changes to a neutral shot of Ann Darrow who comes prancing on scene, the camera angle pans to the right briefly to follow her movement. The angle then changes to a zoom out, letting the audience have a good look at what is going on. It then switches back to the neutral shot of the camera which then switches to a long shot of both the camera, director and Ann Darrow followed by an intense close up on the director's face, you can see by his emotions he likes what he is seeing. The camera then focuses on Ann's face as she reaches up and touches her cheek before zooming

out again to the long shot of the camera and Ann again. The good looking Jack Driscoll then walks into the long shot the camera then focuses back to Ann's close up, she looks up and is clearly distracted by Jack's presence, she gives him a sincere look, the shot then turns to a close up of Jack's face, he replies to her gesture with a cheeky smile. Quickly Ann realises her mistake and the camera returns to the close up of her as she appears confused, filming stops and a shot of the director looking at Jack in a concerned matter occurs. Within this short scene there are multiple shots of the director and his camera, Jack Driscoll and Ann Darrow. Jackson uses these different camera angles to communicate key ideas to the audience.(4)

Sound, especially music can really set a mood in a scene. It is interesting to note that even with a simple note of music the mood can change. Directors use this to their advantage to portray what they want out of a scene to communicate with the audience. Peter Jackson is obviously a man who enjoys using music, in fact *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy has one of the most epic movie soundtracks ever created. It is clear to see that Jackson specifically uses sound to base his films. An example of sound being used to set/change the mood in a scene can be found in a particular scene from *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. This is the scene where Aragorn, the heir of Isildur becomes king. As soon as the scene begins a soft piece of music begins playing, the tone is gentle, calm and settling. Without the sound of music the scene would become very dull and simply would not have the same effect. Jackson uses music throughout *Lord of the Rings* to create intense moods. In dark and more intense moments more sinister music is played.

Music is also effectively used in Jackson's *King Kong*. The scene where Ann and Jack have a moment together while filming is very intense and meaningful and music helps portray this sense of romance. The music played is gentle and smooth. Ann is on the ship's deck twirling and prancing, until Jack shows up and she is interrupted by his presence, the music changes to a very intense and emotional state and shows the connection Jack and Ann have together (5).

Throughout *King Kong* sound is consistently used to enhance the viewer's experience, Peter Jackson communicates his ideas using music. Ambient sounds are also played for scenes with great intensity, for example; when the film crew is in the dense jungles of Skull Island. These ambient sounds are uncomfortable to listen. Jackson is a master at using this type of sound, not only in *King Kong* but all of his movies, and is one of the reasons that have made him one of the greatest directors of all time, yes all time.

Not only this but sound is one of the true human senses it has the power to change how we feel, a soft gentle piece of music can brighten up the mood in any scene while a fast paced uncomfortable to listen to string can increase tension. All different kinds of sounds are used by Jackson in his movies to communicate his ideas to the audience. Each piece has a purpose and a reason for being there and it is this defining fact that keeps movies interesting. Jackson uses sound to communicate a general mood with the audience, he is famous for orchestrated pieces that show great emotion and passion and this really shows in his movies.

Conclusion

It is important to note that it is not just one language feature that makes a movie; it is a combination of all good quality features that creates a true hit. Yes having a good soundtrack can make a great movie, but combining that soundtrack with intense colours and dazzling camera angles will make that movie even better. This is why Peter Jackson is such a true master at what he does. He knows what it takes, and with his knowledge he has created some of the best movies to date.

We can only expect that in the future Peter Jackson will continue this roll that he is on and direct more fantastic movies. With upcoming titles such as *The Hobbit*, part one and part two we can only imagine how good they will be. He will continue to communicate his ideas to the audience using many different language features, most importantly: camera angles, colours and sound.