

SET - Theatrical Elements

Questions

These questions are meant to help you think about how the theatrical elements of a film are used:

- How does the film tell the audience where and when the story takes place?
- Is there anything significant about the physical surroundings the film takes place in?
- How is the light and the color of the light?
- Does the environment that the film takes place in change as the plot unfolds?
- What is the weather like when important events take place?
- Does the set design put pressure on the main character?
- Does the location drive the story forwards?
- Do any objects play an important role in the film or a scene?
- Is there anything significant in the way the characters dress?
- Does a character's dress change to show that the character develops as the plot unfolds?

Speak

Under the heading of "Theatrical Elements" or "Set" you look at where and when the film takes place and how the characters look. You also consider the use of props and symbols. In other words, you look at **what is shown in the picture**.

Stories in films are told in a specific time that may or may not be real. They are also set in a specific place that again may or may not be similar to the ordinary everyday world.

You might say that the story is bound to a certain reality. The mood of this reality is created, among other things, with **lighting** and with the help of different **props**.

Remember that nothing is ever coincidental in a film: When something is in the picture, it is there because it is important for the plot.

A character's **costume and makeup** is a way for the director to show what the character is like and which time and social class he or she belongs to.

Traditionally black clothes symbolise evil and white symbolises virtue and purity. A character in red often signals temptation, passion or love. Colour symbolism varies a lot from culture to culture.

Sometimes a character will change his or her costume to show that he or she has changed or grown.

Props or things play an important role as symbols of what the characters want or fear or of their inner conflicts. If a character is surrounded by shattered glass, it might say something about an inner state of frailty. A grown up character surrounded by dolls might try to hang on to a lost childhood.

It is important to pay attention to the setting of the different parts of the film. The setting can help you understand what goes on in the film.

Sometimes, the **setting may even drive the plot forwards**, for instance when a rainstorm forces the young couple inside the haunted house where horrible things will happen to them.

Think about how the director selected the best possible physical framing for the story, and about what the function of the location is.

The terms

Costume, Prop and Set Design are all relevant to this area of analysis.

Go to the playlist about "Set" if you want to learn more.