

AS/A FILM STUDIES

FM1

GUIDANCE ON EXTENDED STEP OUTLINE

(revised September 09)

As a result of problems some centres experienced with clarifying to candidates what kind of information (and how much) they needed to put in square brackets, it has been decided that two amendments will be made for assessment in 2010.

1: Candidates will complete a box to identify which key micro elements are being employed in the scene and provide a brief description of their use

2: In their scene descriptions, candidates will only need to identify in square brackets the relevant micro feature implied in their extended step outline.

This should allow candidates to:

- concentrate on visual descriptions which imply the micro features they are focusing on
- avoid lengthy descriptions of micro features which take them away from scriptwriting visualisation skills.

Teachers will be aided in their assessment of the degree to which candidates are focusing on micro features appropriately by the explicit reference to micro features used in square brackets.

Extended Step-Outline Sheet

Scene No		Page No	
Slugline			
Endpoint of last scene			
Characters in scene			
Point of scene			
Conflict			
Ending / central question			
Key Micro elements employed and brief description of their use			
Scene description (without dialogue) focusing on key micro aspects (mise-en-scène, camera, sound, editing, etc)			

Notes

The 'extended' step outline

Scriptwriters commonly use a step outline as a planning tool for producing scripts. For AS Film Studies, this film industry planning and visualising technique is being adapted: it is being 'extended' to include the micro details of the scene being outlined. A further adaptation of the step outline for AS Film Studies will be the insertion of micro identifiers in square brackets within the scene description.

The extended step outline will thus provide students with the opportunity to develop ideas for a series of scenes – between five and eight is required, totalling 1000 words – whilst still developing visualising skills. As a guideline, the average length of a scene for this extended step outline is envisaged as between 175 and 200 words (excluding the context boxes above the scene description and excluding the micro indications in square brackets). **The word count for the extended step outline will thus be based on the words of the scene description alone.**

Devising an extended step outline

Looking at the Step Outline sheet above, you will see that half the page is given over for a scene description and it stresses 'without dialogue'. The reason for this is to give you space to describe the setting and what is going on without worrying about what is said or how it is delivered. This allows you to visualise the setting, the action and the micro aspects without reliance on dialogue and means you will be focused on mise-en-scène, on sound, on how it might be shot and even how it might be edited, or performed. (Although this is not directly your concern as a scriptwriter, it should be on your mind. If it is, you can more easily write a scene to suggest the way it could be shot.)

Below is an example of an extended step outline for **one** scene (you will be creating about five) as is proposed for AS Film Studies. There are three versions of this one scene to illustrate how you can demonstrate a focus on different micro aspects: the first focuses on lighting, the second on sound and the last on performance.

Scene No	28	Page No	41
Slugline	Int. Flight Deck of the space freighter 'Pole Star'. Day		
Endpoint of last scene	Canton scrabbles desperately to reach the Failsafe lever as the Gyroscope powers up, lighting the hull of the ship.		
Characters in scene	Hunt, Fischer, Cruise, Rodriguez		
Point of scene	To show that Hunt is a better flight commander than Fischer		
Conflict	Hunt's desire to see Fischer fail set against the consequences for all of failure		
Ending / central question	Hunt is forced to countermand Fischer to save the ship / Will they be able to escape before the oxygen fails?		
Key Micro elements employed and brief description of their use	Lighting – the lighting inside the craft will be muted and shadowfilled with a harsh, bright, light from the gyroscope entering through the windows in shafts. This is replaced by an equally cold interior light when the shields descend. Coloured lighting from the consoles and screens etc is used to define character and to emphasize emotion or dramatize a situation. The muted lighting creates areas of sinister dark shadow.		
Scene description (without dialogue) focusing on key Micro aspects (mise-en-scene, camera, sound, editing, etc)			
<p>Console lights flicker illuminating Cruise from below with coloured lights [lighting].</p> <p>He looks across to the shadowed [lighting], leather Captain's chair where Fischer sits crouched forward. A nearby sun flares. The sunshields descend with a worn</p>			

mechanical sound. Fischer leaps and crouches to see Canton, as the shields descend.

Bulkhead doors clang as Hunt and Rodriguez enter. Rodriguez, sweat covered and disheveled looks to Cruise. The console lights turn red [lighting]. A pulsating siren begins. Hunt runs to Fischer, whose face is lit by the red from the consol [lighting]. Hunt grabs his face and lifts his wildly flicking eyes to hers, but he cannot look at her and he retreats into the shadow [lighting]. Hunt turns and barks instructions. A moment of hesitation. Cruise and Rodriguez look from a red-lit Hunt, to a silhouetted Fischer [lighting].

A distant rumbling explosion rocks the ship. They are thrown to the floor. The Gyroscope camera activates. Rodriguez leans over a monitor, bathed in blue light, sweating [lighting]. On screen an interference-strewn image of Canton appears unmoving, as the lights on the Gyroscope come close to reaching the top [lighting]. Picking herself up, Hunt barks a command, and Cruise hits a button. The Gyroscope lights power down, the monitors and lights on the console slowly die [lighting]. A fading screen displays descending bars and a flashing oxygen warning. Another explosion rocks the flight deck and they are thrown into darkness.