MICRO ELEMENTS OF FILM STUDIES

CINEMATOGRAPHY

ANGLES

- **HIGH** — The camera is above the subject
- **LOW** — The camera is below the subject
- **CANTED** — The subject appears tilted
- **EYE LEVEL** — Camera is level with subject's eyes
- **BIRD'S EYE** — Camera is high in the air
- **WORM'S EYE** — Camera is low on the ground

SHOT SIZE

- **EXTREME LONG SHOT (XLS)** — Subject is far away
- **LONG SHOT (LS)** — Whole subject can be seen
- **MEDIUM LONG SHOT (MLS)** — Top of head to thighs
- **MEDIUM/MID SHOT (MS)** — Top of head to waist
- **MEDIUM CLOSE-UP (MCU)** — Top of head to chest
- **CLOSE-UP (CU)** — Top of head & shoulders
- **BIG CLOSE-UP (BCU)** — Whole head
- **EXTREME CLOSE-UP (ECU)** — A part of the head

MOVEMENT

- **PAN** — Camera moves left or right-shaking
- **TILT** — Camera moves up and down-nodding
- **PED** — Camera looks forward, sliding up or down
- **DOLLY** — Camera moves forward, fixed position
- **TRACK** — Smooth sideways shot. Aka, 'crab'
- **ZOOM** — Camera lens moves forward or back
- **CRANE**
- **STEADICAM** — Not placed on tripod, held 'in hands'
- **POV** — From perspective of a person

LIGHTING & COLOUR
The brightness, colour, position and size of light. The overall colour, tone or temperature of a scene.

OTHER ASPECTS
Cinematography may also include features such as aspect ration, film stock, lens, depth of field and more.

MISE-EN-SCENE

SETTINGS & PROPS
Where the scene is, when the scene is and the objects used to show this.

POSITION OF PEOPLE AND OBJECTS
Where people have been told to stand or move based on what the script or Director has decided. Also applies for props—why are certain props in certain places and used or not?

COSTUME, HAIR & MAKE-UP
Clothes worn & style of hair.

FACIAL EXPRESSION & BODY LANGUAGE
How people move their body and faces

EDITING

- **JUMP CUT** — Sudden cut from one shot to another
- **FADE-OUT** — A fade from one scene to another
- **DISSOLVE** — Gradual fade as the image dissolves
- **CUT AWAY** — Film cuts to something else off screen.
- **WIPE** — Image wipes to reveal a new image.
- **MATCH-ON ACTION** — Is a cut that shows two views of the same action.
- **GRAPHIC MATCH** — One object is matched by one of a similar shape on the next shot.

PERFORMANCE

SHY
FLIRTATIOUS
ADVENTUROUS
IMMATURE
WILD
CAREFREE
COURAGEOUS
TRANSFORMATIVE
REALISTIC
SILLY
CHILDISH
AGGRESSIVE
CAMP
BRASH
RASH
IRRESPONSIBLE
CHEMISTRY
IMPOSING
CHILD-LIKE
METHOD ACTING

SOUND

EFFECTS

DEAFENING
HARSH
LOUD
SUBTLE
BRASH
MUFFLED
MELODIOUS
BANG
BUZZ
CRACKLING
SCREECH
SNAPPING
THUD
RUSTLE
HOWL
ECHOING
GROWL
WHIMPER
RUMBLE
ROAR
VOCIFEROUS

TYPES

- **DIEGETIC** — Sound the characters can hear
- **NON DIEGTEIC** — Sound the characters cannot hear
- **CONTRAPUNTAL** — Sound that is in contrast to the images
- **PARALLEL** — Sound that is similar to the images

SOUNDTRACK

BOMBASTIC
DRAMATIC
MOVING
SWEEPING
EVOCATIVE
PULSING
FAST
CRAWLING
PIERCING
SHRILL
PLAYFUL
DELICATE
CHILLED
SOARING
SPRITELY
IMPOSING
PACEY
REGAL
LANGUID
GLOOMY
SCARY

Attack the Block (Joe Cornish 2011)
Knowledge Organiser

Institutional information

Director:	Joe Cornish
Release:	October 27, 2011
Production company:	Film4, Studio Canal, Big Talk Pictures, UK Film Council
Country of production:	UK/France
Starring:	Jodie Whittaker, Nick Frost, John Boyega, Luke Treadaway
Genres:	Sci-fi; comedy; action; horror.
Other information:	Produced by Edgar Wright, Director of Shaun of the Dead. Joe Cornish's feature film debut.
Award nominations:	BAFTA nominated: outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer

Characters

Moses:	**Protagonist:** 'Gang' leader. A teenager. Age unknown for most of the film. Criminal as he mugs Sam. Kills the first Alien that lands and as a result is responsible for the alien invasion. Becomes the saviour by the end of the film.
Sam:	Young trainee nurse. Begins films as protagonist. Is mugged on her way home on fireworks night. Resents the young gang who mugged her but comes to work with them for the greater good.
Pest:	One of the gang members who looks up to and takes 'orders' from Moses. Is often the comedic relief in the film and offers audience some insight into life of a teenager by expressing what Moses does or cannot.
Brewis:	Zoology student stoner who comes to the Block to buy drugs. Is very much the 'fish out of water' in the situation.
Hi-Hatz:	**Antagonist:** feared gang member who runs the Block in terms of crime and drugs. Psychopathic, prone to violence and owner of the weed grown by Ron at the top of the Block.

Context:

Set in a South London, 2011.

Idea for film came from Joe Cornish being mugged by a teenage gang in similar setting.

Joe Cornish was a fan of creature features and Sci-Fi films growing up, including Star Wars.

Cornish interviewed various people in youth groups in London in order to find out what kind of weapons they would use if a real alien invasion occurred. He also used these interviews to develop the colloquial language for his characters.

The fictional locations and surrounding areas in the film are named after British sci-fi writers.

Film was released two months after the London riots of 2011. The representation of the working classes in the British Media has always been pejorative, but this event gave rise to iconic images which were used to demonise certain people.

"Hoodie Horror" films such as HARRY BROWN (2009) and ILL MANORS (2012) offer a negative view of a similar setting.

Narrative (The method and means by which you construct the events of a story into a plot)

Narrative structure:	Linear narrative, three act structure.
Narrative viewpoint:	Teen POV, young adult POV.
Binary oppositions:	Create conflict. Key oppositions are children vs. their parents, teenagers vs. adults and young people, in particular black teenagers and young adults and police oppression/profiling.

Film Style	Urban Realism	Classic sci-fi	Horror
Lighting	Low-key. Light provided via ambient elements such as lamp posts, fireworks and car headlamps. Whole block is bathed in shadows.	Inside; corridors are generally high-key; almost unnaturally so. Block itself features spotlights that resemble lights from a spaceship. Blacklights create unusual and unsettling light in the 'weed room'.	Many scenes either use low-key lighting, heavy shadows or very little lighting at all. As with other horror films, this is designed to restrict the audience from seeing every aspect of a scene to create tension.
Mise-en-scene	Recognisable items for teenagers; BMXs, moped, mobile phones, hoodies and caps. Fireworks and other weapons are 'realistic' in their origin.	Aliens as puppets are recognisable as a key sci-fi trope. Weapons are 'realistic' but weapons in general are key for sci-fi, especially when establishing or creating conflict.	The aliens themselves are often in-camera practical effects either as puppets or as stunt performers in suits. Practical effects have long-been used in horror films as way of producing visceral reactions and a 'realistic' style. This is continued with the use of the make-up and effects of the blood and gore throughout the film.
Camera angles, movement, shot size & lighting. [Cinematography]	Grey, dull and drab. Very reflective of typical high-rise estates. Colour palette reflects brutalist architecture and the atmosphere of social anxiety. Night-time evokes sense of criminality and hostility.	Teal, UV whites, silver & "blackest black" on the alien 'fur'. Smoke used in corridor to create tension, restrict view but also to resemble key scenes from other sci-fi films. Shots in corridors framed to resemble interior of spaceships.	During key scenes of horror, shot sizes can often be quite 'long', allowing audiences to see far into the distance to suggest where an enemy may come from. Some extreme close-ups are used to show reaction and the effects of people being attacked.

Themes/issues.	
Conflict:	Seen all the way through the film, conflict is key.
Adults vs. teenagers:	This is a development from theme of conflict. Doesn't just refer to conflict however-when the gang are seen running home for supplies we see the disconnect between adults and teenagers in a variety of ways. Note how Sam, Ron, Hi-Hatz and Brewis all approach the situation differently to the teenage gang.
Authority:	Police are seen as bullies and people who will not listen. Their authority is undermined by the aliens and their tactics are seen to be unsuccessful compared to the teenagers. Younger people in the Block have no respect for the police and by extension, almost all people older than them.
Invasion:	Whilst the aliens are the most obvious example of 'invasion', this can also be seen via the police 'invading' an area they are not welcome in. Invasion of privacy into their flat is an issue for the young girls.
Consequences:	From the beginning, the film deals with the idea of actions have consequences. The mugging of Sam nearly costs Pest his life when Sam initially refuses to treat him later on. The reckless actions of the teenagers throughout the film, especially Moses, have dire and often fatal consequences.
Redemption:	Moses gains redemption for his life of crime and poor choices. Near the beginning of the film it is established that Moses is a criminal and makes bad choices. We later learn that some of this is due to his need to survival and self-preservation-he appears to be largely alone and in need of support. His reckless actions in killing the alien cause the overall, main invasion and consequently the death of his friends, but his final act and the celebration of him as a hero, serves as a great example of redemption.
Sacrifice:	The most obvious example of sacrifice is of Moses at the end of the film, but we see examples of sacrifice throughout, some of principles others of physical acts.

Links to technology timeline:	
Soundtrack	Featuring a Dolby Surround 7.1 mix, Attack the Block features dialogue, a soundtrack, score and makes wide use of digital sound production.
Colour	Perhaps unsurprisingly, colour is used throughout. Night-time scenes are handled well and some post-production work on the colour grading has been done to create the specific look of the film.
Independent studio production	Not a product of one of the larger film studios .
Widescreen, not 3D	Attack the Block is presented in a widescreen ratio of 2.35:1
Some CGI, but mostly practical effects	Most of the special effects in this film are practical, meaning the use of puppets and models, rather then CGI. Some CGI was used to help *augment* the practical work however.

Key scenes	
The Opening Scene: (http://bit.ly/ATBKS1)	As with all films, this scene establishes character and scenario. In this case, the film establishes that it's set during Bonfire Night in London and, as obvious as it may seem, the mise-en-scene establishes that the film is set on Earth. Notice how the lighting gets progressively darker the more that Sam walks away from the hubbub of the tube station and the high street and towards the block. The mise-en-scene then shows how isolated and vulnerable she is in a recognisably uneasy urban environment.
The gang walk through the estate (http://bit.ly/ATBkeyscene2)	Another scene which helps to see the difference between the style of the world outside the block and the style inside. The gang are initially looking at the things they stole from Sam. As they throw them away it's as if they're getting rid of 'realistic' props. The focus then becomes the alien. As the gang approach the Block the walkways and low-key lighting that cast straight-lined shadows create a strange style. It resembles the retro futuristic style of a 70s sci-fi aesthetic, with muted colours and straight lines. When walking towards the Block, the lighting takes on a strange blue-hue, reminiscent of the aliens' teeth and an unusual colour for Earth. indicating that the Block is much more of a sci-fi setting than the 'real world' outside.
Trying to get to Ron's Weed Room (http://bit.ly/ATBkeyscene3)	This is a great scene in the way that it uses the conventions of horror to help develop the uneasy atmosphere earlier in the film. It also raises the stakes in terms of the on-screen violence and the peril for the main characters. We get plenty of scpecial effects and make-up to show the violence in the lift, but lighting & editing here are also important.
The final scene (http://bit.ly/ATBkeyscene4)	The final scene uses key generic conventions from the sci-fi and action genre films but crucially set in the urban environment which is used to help create the drama in the scene. It's also the most obvious example of Moses' redemption. The lighting is especially interesting here and key aspects of cinematography such as camera movement and the editing decision of having much of the scene in slow-motion is also an interesting choice that is worth analysing.
The Attack on the police-van scene (http://bit.ly/ATBKS2))	In a film full of sci-fi imagery, few scenes are as obvious as this one. The use of the UV light as a 'body scanner' is something that has been used in sci-fi films for decades. The lighting and mise-en-scene too is cleverly manipulated to create the sense that this setting is not 'realistic' or 'Earthly' in style. It also features some interesting interactions between the characters and we get a much clearer sense of who they are as people. The way that Moses offers to be the sacrifice and how people respond to this are great examples of the themes of consequences and redemption in the film.

DISTRICT 9 (Neil Blomkamp 2009)
Knowledge Organiser

Institutional information

Director:	Neil Blomkamp
Release:	2009 (UK)
Production company:	Wingnut Films, TriStar, Sony Pictures
Country of production:	South Africa, US
Starring:	Shalto Copley; Jason Cope; Nathalie Boltt; David James; Louis Minnaar;
Genres:	Sci-fi; comedy; action; horror.
Other information:	Produced by Peter Jackson; written by Neil Blomkamp with his wife Terri Tatchell; feature-film directing debut; adapted from 2006 short film called ALIVE IN JO'BURG.
Award nominations:	BAFTA nominated: outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer

Links to technology timeline:

Soundtrack	Featuring a Dolby Digital soundtrack which features dialogue, a score and makes wide use of digital sound production.
Colour	Mostly in colour but some black & white to imitate style of cheap CCTV footage.
Widescreen, not 3D	Shot and presented in 1.85:1 widescreen aspect ratio.
CGI:	Used to create new objects & characters as well as used to enhance action.
Steadicam:	Steadicam is used in many action scenes but also NOT used at times to create found-footage style.

Narrative Theorists

Aristotle:	Greek philosopher. 3 Act structure; beginning, middle and end. Later developed to be a 5 Act structure. Can be applied to many films including D9.
Tzetvan Todorov:	French-Bulgarian critic. Suggested that the narrative of all films go through 5 main stages: Equilibrium, Disruption, Recognition/Quest, Repair & New equilibrium.
Vladimir Propp:	Russian scholar. Analysed the basic plot components of Russian Folk tales to identify the most 'repeatable' narrative elements. Identified 31 functions of narrative and 7 typical characters.
Claude Levi-Strauss	French anthropologist who proposed a theory of 'binary opposites' which suggested that the majority of narratives in media forms such as books and film contain opposing main characters.These binary opposites help to thicken the plot and further the narrative; and introduce contrast.

Characters

Wikus van der Mewe:	**Protagonist:** Wikus is the first character we see on screen & is the character who we experience the narrative with. He is a sympathetic if somewhat selfish character to begin with. As the film progresses he transforms from human to alien and in doing so, becomes less selfish and more empathetic as a character.
Christopher Johnson:	**Protagonist:** aka CJ, is the alien character who acts as both a sidekick, a mentor & a scientist. Wikus knocking on his door is the inciting incident for CJ as he is bought into the main narrative and therefore, his goal of trying to get the aliens home becomes a key story which intertwines with Wikus' started goals of becoming human with both seeking the same black liquid.
Piet Smith:	**Antagonist:** Piet is Wikus' father-in-law and the head of MNU. At the start of the film he is introduced as a person of power and promotes Wikus, seemingly out of nepotism. However, Piet soon begins to see Wikus as a commodity and is quite serene when he condemns Wikus to death, lying to his daughter as he does. All of the negative aspects of Wikus' existence after the initial liquid accident are as direct result of Piet's decisions.
Koobus:	**Antagonist:** The most obvious example of a protagonist is Koobus. As the leader of the MNU 'military force', his character is firmly established when we first meet him when he aggressively talks to Wikus and then pushes the cameraman filming the events for MNU.
Obesandjo:	**Antagonist:** His story and Wikus' crosses when Wikus goes to him seeking to buy weapons established earlier in the narrative. He is the character who wants to transform in the way that Wikus does and who has the power to capture Wikus when he escapes. In this way, he is also an antagonist seeking to capture Wikus.
Sarah Livingston:	**Narrator:** One of the talking heads in the film who provide backstory to the aliens' arrival, MNU and other details. Her monologues to camera help provide important detail and shape to the overall narrative.

Narrative

Narrative structures:	Linear narrative, 3 and 5 act structure.;
Narrative viewpoint:	We align with Wikus helping to provide a restricted viewpoint. Some of the other characters such as Sarah have a omniscient viewpoint however.
Ellipsis:	Used to show 72 hours in just 2 via techniques such as montage; editing transitions like fade to black are also used.
Binary oppositions:	Create conflict. Key oppositions are aliens vs. humans, Wikus vs. Piet and young particular minorities being oppressed by the white people in power.
Exposition:	Taking heads; improvised dialogue; dialogue; news footage.
Foreshadowing/ Chekov's Gun:	Key moments involving props like alien weaponry and locations such as the Nigerian gang's 'shop' is set up early on.
Framing device:	The talking heads & found footage create an omniscient viewpoint.
Withholding & releasing	Used for tension, Wikus' fate is suggested but never revealed until late on. Similarly, the 'power' of the black liquid is not revealed until later on in the film.
Cause and effect:	Many moments in the opening 20 minutes of the film establish key plot points and moments that will have an effect later. For example, key characters involved in moments that cause changes to them & others.

Context:	
Social	Society structured in terms of class & privilege with the white men at MNU being the most 'power', whilst the refugee aliens having the least autonomy.
Poiltical:	Political decisions drive the narrative; those in power such as the Government, MNU & even Obesandjo seek to oppress & further their own causes by exploiting those who have no power.
Cultural:	The film establishes a world where the aliens are seen as outsiders & scavengers; they are segregated and demonised. The aliens idea of fun; de-railing trains, starting fires & eating rubber, are all seen as savage in the same way that the Nigerian gangs once were.
Historical:	Film is allegorical & metaphorical examination of apartheid. 'White' & 'black' segregation and discrimination is broadly replaced with humans & 'prawns'.
Institutional:	Blomkamp was originally due to make a film adapting the Halo video game series, but instead was hired by Jackson to create a feature-length version of ALIVE IN JO'BURG. DISTRICT 9 was made for $30m.
Technological:	CGI used throughout the film however, many practical effects were also used in creating props such as alien weaponry.

Themes/issues:	
Conflict:	Seen all the way through the film, conflict is key in driving the narrative.
Invasion:	Whilst the aliens are the most obvious example of 'invasion', this can also be seen via MNU 'invading' DISTRICT 9 and anyone 'invading' the Nigerian's shop.
Authority:	MNU are seen as bullies and bureaucrats who have no empathy for others. Wikus starts off as having authority and as a result, no empathy, but as he becomes less human his humanity for others increases. Authority is also seen in social class, as everyone who has more power or privilege, believes they have authority over someone they deem to be below them, for example, black South African's have authority over the alien refugees.
Segregation:	Segregation features heavily throughout the film as a narrative device to create conflict when one group enters an area designated for another group or when a group are forced into a specific area. Segregation is also used in the film as a metaphor to reflect real-life segregation in apartheid.
Xenophobia:	Xenophobia is the fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Often explained as the dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries, this would also apply to the distrust and dislike people have of the aliens. Of course, this is also something which is a metaphor for the xenophobic actions taken by the Government during apartheid.
Big-business:	MNU stands for Multi-National United. The film establishes them as a company who are going to move the aliens into District 10 but we later learn that they are also the world's second largest weapons manufacturer. This creates a conflict of interests in that what they are really seeking is a way to use the alien technology, rather than 'helping' the aliens. They are symbolic and representative of real-life 'big-business' companies who carry out work on behalf of Governments around the world, but often simply to make money, rather than help people.

Key scenes	
The Opening 3/10 mins: (http://bit.ly/D9clip1) (N.B: The opening 10 mins cannot be hosted on YT. Please use own copy of the film in regards to the first 10 minutes)	Film opens with a 'talking head' style interview with Wikus, our protagonist. He introduces himself and MNU briefly via a brief monologue that provides exposition in a montage style using ellipsis in the editing. We then have a voice over of Grey Bradnam who provides further exposition as we see images from Johannesburg before we see Grey on screen again as a talking head. We then have 'found footage' as a flashback of the time the humans met the aliens. Another talking head from Sarah Livingston helps to provide further exposition before we see more archive footage that helps to to establish the first act.
The first evictions: (http://bit.ly/D9clip2) (N.B: I'd recommend watching a slightly longer version of this clip if possible- ideally from approximately 00:10.17-00:15.12)	The rising action of this scene is still part of the first act as we learn how Wikus and MNU go about their jobs and how the aliens are treated. We also see what District 9 itself is like. This is presented in a montage style as we see key 'moments' from the morning in a variety of perspectives. We also discover key exposition about cat food and the aliens via the talking heads and voice overs. At this point, there is little being withheld in the narrative but plenty being established for cause and effect. Some of Wikus' dialogue is likely to have been improvised here.
The final scene (http://bit.ly/D9clip3)	This scene is the 3rd act of the 5th act depending on your narrative structure of choice. Either way, this denouement presents the finale to the main story of the film highlighting how it is a linear narrative structure. Throughout this scene, intercutting is used to show the different perspectives of the alien ship leaving and we get the framing device of the talking heads again explaining the possible fate of Wikus. On screen text provides further details and the omniscient viewpoint is shown through the use of many very high angle shots of the city and the population. The end of the scene provides a new equilibrium as we discover that Wikus has become an alien and has left a metal flower for his wife Tania.
Wikus and CJ break into MNU (http://bit.ly/D9clip4)	As with many other scenes, this features plenty of 'steadicam' movements to provide an intimate, 'found footage'/'documentary' style to the scene. It is also intercut with plenty of static images from a high angle in black and white that use the stereotypical visual cues of a CCTV camera. The scene is certainly part of the middle of the film and would fit into either the 2nd Act if you were to apply the 3 Act structure, or the 2nd and perhaps the 3rd act if applying the 5 Act structure. We see a key plot point established using cause and effect; CJ notices the tortured aliens and therefore eventually decides that he has to leave Earth asap.
Wikus sacrifices himself (http://bit.ly/D9clip5)	We see a transformation in Wikus's character here as he ultimately decides to sacrifice himself for CJ. In a 5 Act structure you may refer to this as Wikus's narrative as a human reach a Climax. In the film overall, it is closer to fitting into a 4th Act; falling action.