ACTION ADVENTURE
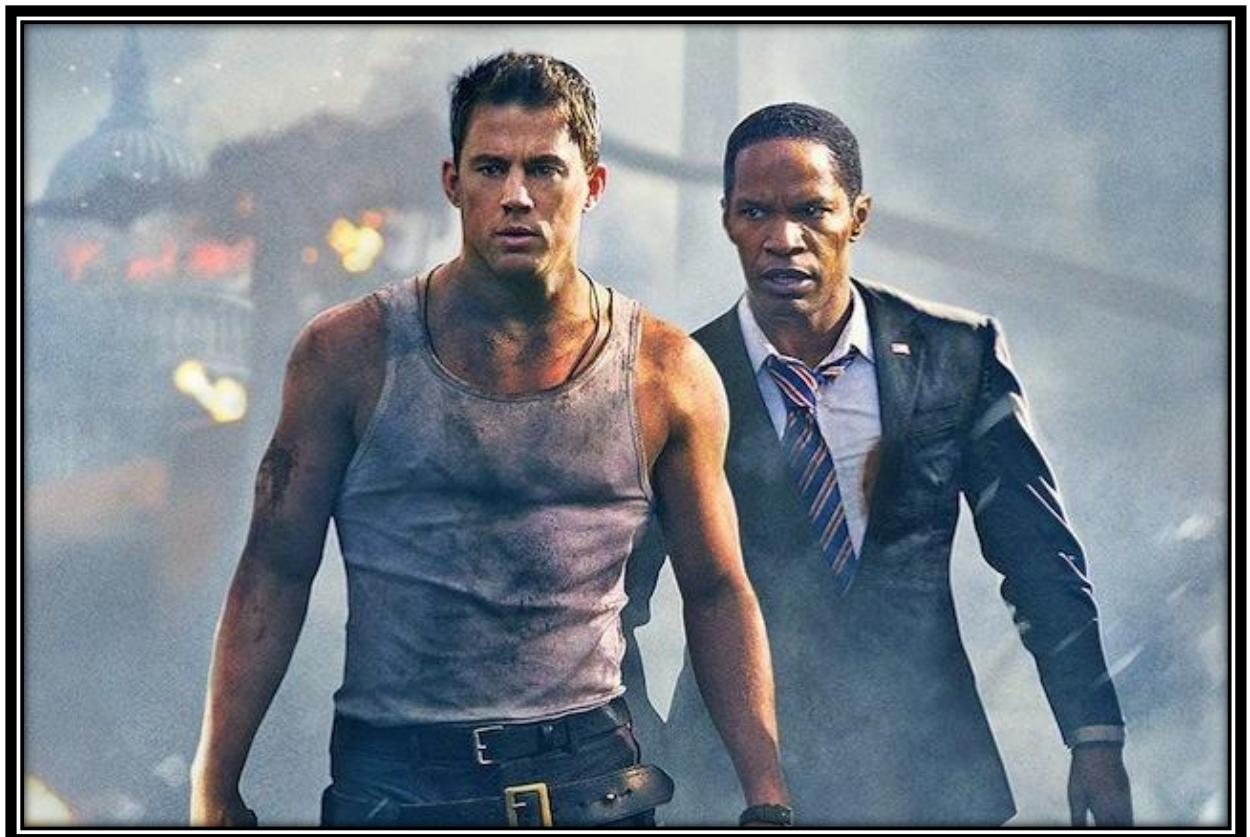
MOCK

REVISION BOOKLET

2015

ACTION ADVENTURE FILMS

Answering the exam questions

Question 1
Explain how characters/event fit with the generic conventions of action adventure movies

- Identify clearly the character/event from the extract
- Give some further description of the character/event so it is easy to identify the film
- Explain which generic convention it fits explaining how it is typical of other action adventure movies

Question 2
Explain how the following are used to create effects that fit the action adventure genre
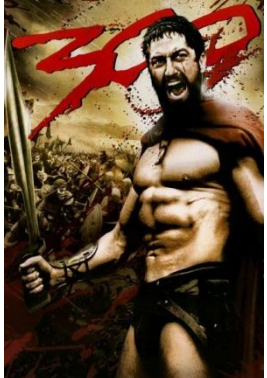
- Try to use two examples of each – camera, sound, mise en scene, editing
- Identify clearly the example from the extract and describe it well enough for the examiner to know which part of the extract you are referring to
- Use the correct terminology
- Explain clearly how the example fits the genre, explaining how it is typical of other action adventure movies.

Question 3
Representation

- Identify clearly the examples from the extract you are using and describe it well enough for the examiner to know which part of the extract you are referring to
- If you are describing a character find at least two examples from the extract to support your comment
- Use the correct terminology
- Refer to MISE EN SCENE, CAMERA, SOUND and/or EDITING to support your comments
- Make sure you refer to RE-presentation NOT presentation. You are not describing what a characters is like, i.e. 'she is a sensitive character because she is crying' but HOW SHE IS REPRESENTATIVE OF OTHER STEREOTYPICAL CHARACTERS i.e. women are often portrayed as Damsels in Distress who need rescuing by a man she fits this stereotype because she is crying and scared'

GENERIC CONVENTIONS OF ACTION ADVENTURE MOVIES

TYPE OF ACTION MOVIE	EXAMPLES	TYPE OF ACTION MOVIE	EXAMPLES
Thriller – modern day usually involving criminals/secret agents/chases		**Comic Book/Superhero –** films based on characters from comics	
Disaster – catastrophe that affects lots of people		**Quest –** adventure to find something/someone involving danger/peril	
Fantasy/Science Fiction – set in an imaginary world often with magic		**Military –** In a war or military setting	
Historical/Epic – based in an historical period – often involves great battles		**Science Fiction – –** set in space or on a different planet	

GENERAL CONVENTIONS

spectacle, speed, suspense, combat

- Spectacle – spectacular stunts; explosions; fight sequences
- Action Sequences
- Remarkable stunts showing almost impossible actions
- Highly choreographed fight sequences/battles
- Graphic displays of injury
- Chase sequences
- Impressive special and visual effects making the impossible possible
- Binary oppositions – good vs evil

NARRATIVE

Binary Opposites

- good vs evil
- man vs nature

Adventure

- exciting twists and turns
- a race against time
- moments of potential peril that the main characters have to come through.
- A fight between good and evil with the forces of good triumphant at the end.
- Fast moving plots that provide excitement and tension

Overcoming Obstacles

- central characters working towards a final goal (such as seeking treasure).
- Characters are up against the odds – they have to work in difficult/impossible conditions

Structure

- Narrative closure – all problems resolved and the hero triumphant/treasure found/villains defeated

SETTING/LOCATION

- Vast, exotic, glamorous, fantastical locations. These can range from desert landscapes to urban settings.
- Extreme locations that cause challenges for the central characters – high buildings/mountains, confined spaces
- Busy, well-populated locations – potential danger and destruction to everyday people/civilians/building
- Characters find themselves battling with the challenges presented by it e.g. surviving earthquakes, struggling through jungles etc.
- The evil lair – the place where the bad guy is – often controlling his mooks and keeping an eye on the hero's progress.

CAMERA/EDITING/SPECIAL EFFECTS

- Fast editing
- Slow motion
- Undercranking (time speeded up)
- Aerial shots
- Bullet time (incredible slow motion)
- Whip pans
- Establishing shots, extreme high angle and low angle shots to show scale
- Steadicam
- Use of CGI

SOUND/LIGHTING

- Epic sweeping orchestral soundtracks to fit with spectacle
- Fast tempo dramatic music to accompany chase scenes
- Enhanced foley sound effects to increase the sense of spectacle (foley sound is natural sound effects added in post production – punches, footsteps, gunshots etc)
- Off screen noises to add tension
- Short snappy dialogue – action is more important than words
- Ambient lighting
  - Colour filters – red – danger/blue – cold
  - High key – extreme shadows

MISE EN SCENE

- Weapons
- Vehicles used for chase or combat
- Costumes relating to character and action – black/leather/uniform/utility belts/boots/masks
- Gadgets

CHARACTERS IN ACTION ADVENTURE MOVIES

THE HERO

The stereotypical hero, is usually a American man. The hero, generally has muscular attributes and is good looking, often attracting female attention. The hero, is good at fighting the Villain and can usually out wit them.

ANTI-HERO

The Anti-Hero, can be the main hero of the film but is not entirely good as the stereotype of the hero. The anti-hero, usually has a troubled past and can be quite selfish.
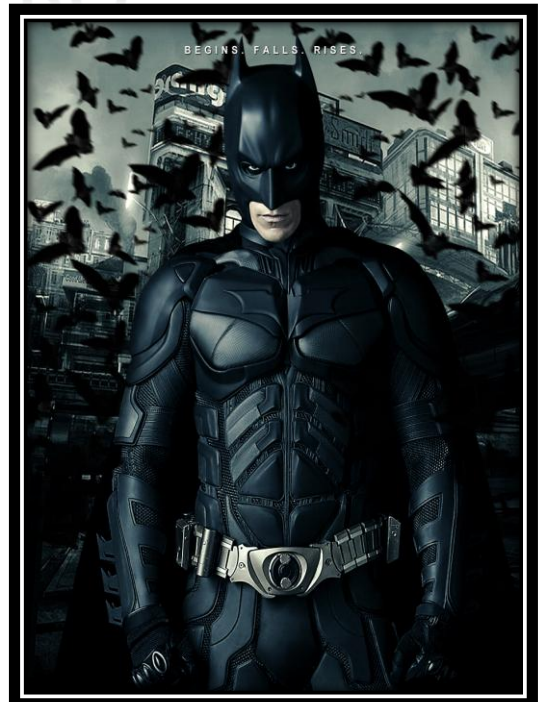
VILLAIN/ BAD GUY

The villain is usually selfish and evil, they often have a backstory with the hero and wants the hero dead. The villain is sly, sneaky, clever, knows the hero's weakness and is usually in control for most of the film

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

The Damsel in distress is often beautiful and becomes the hero's love interest. The Damsel in distress is often in a position where she needs rescuing she is usually vulnerable and cant protect herself.

THE ACTION GIRL

The action girl challenges the stereotype of the Damsel in Distress, the action girl can often protect herself by fighting. Action girls appear to have similar male qualities with the ability to use weaponry and fight. Some action girls start outs as a Damsel in Distress.
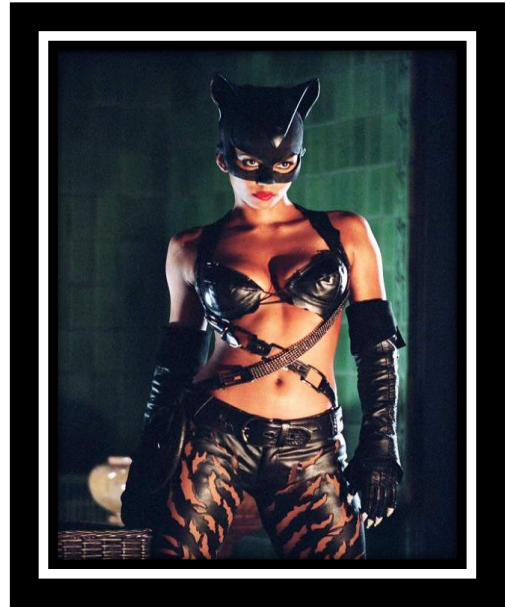
ACTION SURVIVOR

A character who gets caught in the adventure but is equipped to deal with it- they often don't get injured but they are not much help to the group.

ACTION DUO/SIDEKICK

The action duo/ sidekick is usually the hero paired with a more intelligent character who often uses his knowledge to get them out of dangerous situations

MOOK

A mooks are dispensable bad guys who the hero kills and injures lots of them. They are often in association with the villain and work for him or are allies
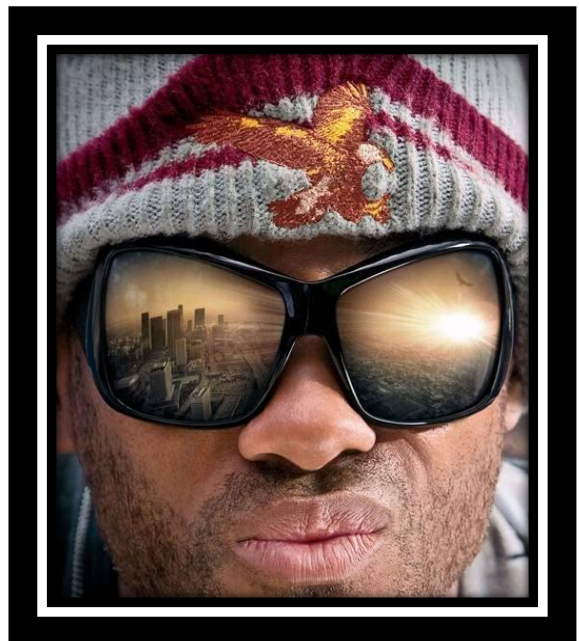
HERO TEAM

The hero team, is a group of people, who all have the same motive- to defeat the bad guy. They work together to solve problems. Sometimes one or more of the characters dies before the end of the movie.

THE MAVERICK

The Maverick is the character who goes against the rest of the team, but usually comes to their senses at the end of the film.

Types of Sound

- Diegetic Sound
  - Sound that is part of the film world such as dialogue, traffic, birds etc.
- Non-diegetic Sound
  - Sound added to create effect such as:
    - Music soundtrack
    - Theme Tune/Motif
- Sound Effects/Foley Sound
  - Sounds used to enhance diegetic sounds i.e. explosions, fighting
- Ambient sound
  - Sound that creates atmosphere– this could be diegetic or non-diegetic

The Purpose of Sound in Movies

- To create atmosphere/emotion
- To increase tension/pace
- To enhance setting
- To identify character
- To enhance the special effects
- To signify a change in action and/or mood
- To enhance/exaggerate diegetic sounds

Editing

- When we edit we change something. Filmmakers change their raw filmed footage into a film that makes sense and creates an effect for an audience.

- When editing filmmakers need to decide:
  - What to keep and what to take away - CUTTING
  - What order to put the shots in - SEQUENCE
  - What happens between each shot - TRANSITION
  - How long a shot remains on screen before changing to the next shot - *PACE*

Cut in

The shot cuts to a close up in Shot B of something in Shot A. This allows the audience to focus on something important.
In this shot from Spiderman Shot B is a close up of Peter's hand so that we can see the spider is on it.

Cut Away

Cutaway shot

Without a cutaway shot

A cutaway is used to take the focus away from two shots showing the same action so that the action doesn't seem jumpy.
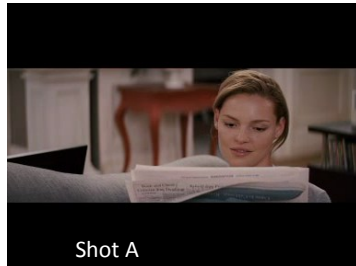
Shot Reverse Shot

Shot A
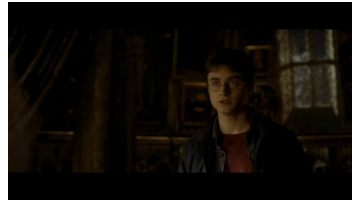
Shot B

Shot A

Usually used to show conversations between characters
Shot A changes to Shot B then back to Shot A
It helps the audience to focus on the facial expressions of each character as they are talking
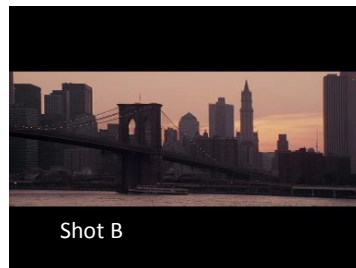
Dissolve

Shot A

Dissolve

Shot B

Shot A gradually changes to Shot B

It gives the impression that time has passed

Cross Cut

Shot A

Shot B

Shot C

Shot D

Shots switch between two different locations to suggest that the actions are happening at the same time. Often this creates tension. In this scene from The Wedding Planner the taxi driver loses control of his car at the same time Jennifer Lopez loses her shoe in the road...eeek!

Moving Image Glossary

General

Convention	A common set of standards used to make texts easily identifiable.
Connotation/connotates	What you associate with an image or the deeper or hidden meanings and associations. For example: The use of a spaceship set, green lighting and make-up which makes the actors look like aliens connotates to the audience that this is a science-fiction film.
Signify/signifies	The associations that a sign or symbol refers to. For example: The antagonist has a gun which signifies he is violent.
Mise-en-scene	This term is used in film to describe what is in the frame/scene and why. There are several areas to consider when talking about mise-en -scène: • Setting & location • Props • Costume and make-up • Character performance (Body language and facial expression) • Blocking (character location & positioning in relation to other characters or objects) • Lighting
Lighting	Lighting quickly creates an atmosphere on screen. If it is dark and shadowy we might be made to feel uneasy, as in a thriller; if the lighting is bright we feel happy and confident. The filmmaker can use lighting to draw our attention to a person/object or equally, to hide them.
Hybrid Genre	When the films could be categorised as more than one film genre. For example an action/adventure comedy or an action/adventure sci-fi.
Protagonist	The hero
Antagonist	The villain

Camera Shots

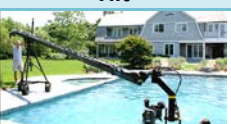|	
Establishing Shot	Tells the audience where we are; establishes a location. For example, a shot of an office building or restaurant.
Long shot	Shows entire body of a character, shows background/location.
Mid/medium shot	Shows torso and some background.
Close-up	Head and shoulders, usually used to draw focus to a specific character or object.
Extreme Close-up	A specific facial feature fills the frame to ensure the audience focuses on that facial feature and the characters emotion/reaction.
Point-of-view shot	Helps us to see the action from a character's viewpoint and thus empathise with them.
	Two characters fill the frame.

Two-shot	
Over-the-shoulder	This shot looks over an actor's shoulder, looking at another actor to show that they are having a conversation.

Camera Angles	
Eye-level	The audience is at the same height/level as the actors/characters.
High angle	The camera is higher than most of the actors, and looks down on a character/actor. This can show the audience difference in height, power, etc.
Low angle	The camera is lower than most of the actors, and looks up on a character/actor. This can show the audience difference in height, power, etc.
Canted angle	The camera is at an awkward angle to show the audience something is "off" in the scene. To make the audience feel uneasy, confused, or build tension in a scene.
Birds-eye View (Aerial)	The view from high above, as if you were looking from the perspective of a bird.
Worms-eye View	As if the camera was on the ground, and you were looking through the eyes of an insect/worm from the ground.

Camera Movements	
In the same way that framing can be used to enhance our involvement in the film action, the way in which a camera is moved can be used to direct our attention to emphasise a particular viewpoint. Camera movements include:	
Pan	Where the camera moves across from side to side from a fixed position.
Tilt	Where the camera moves up and down from a fixed position.
Crane Shot	Where the camera, mounted on a crane, moves around at a distance above ground level; capable of achieving high elevations and movements.
Tracking Shot	Where the camera follows the action, moving along tracks or a dolly.

Hand-held	This technique is often used to suggest a greater sense of authenticity, for example it could be used to provide 'eye witness' accounts of situations, linked to the point-of-view of a particular character or characters. Can also be used to create tension within a scene; a greater sense uneasiness.
Steadicam	Often used to create the illusion that the audience is in the action, while providing smooth and wide-range of motion.
Dolly Zoom	A cinematic technique in which the camera moves closer or further from the subject while at the same time adjusting the zoom to keep the subject the same size in the frame. The effect is that the subject appears stationary while the background size changes.
Shallow Focus	Part of the image is in focus while the rest is out of focus or blurred. This draws the audiences' attention to a particular action/character.

Editing

The term editing refers to the changing shots within a piece of film. The speed with which this happens has important role in creating atmosphere. For instance, if there is a car chase on screen, the editing will be rapid, making us excited. A countryside picnic scene, on the other hand, will probably feature slow editing; we relax and take in the details on the screen.

Continuity editing	The system of cutting used in most mainstream films. The intention is to establish the illusion of continuous action and keep the audiences' attention on the story.
Non-continuity editing	Use of editing style which draws the audience attention to the film making process to reveal that film is 'constructed', not 'natural'.
Shot-reverse-shot	This is when one character is shown looking at another character (often off-screen), and then the other character is shown looking "back" at the first character.
Cross-cutting	Cross-cutting is an editing technique most often used in films to establish action occurring at the same time in two different locations. In a cross-cut, the camera will cut away from one action to another action, which can suggest the simultaneity of these two actions but this is not always the case. It can be used to build suspense.
Fast-paced editing	When scenes are edited together using lots of shots cut together quickly. Has the effect the action is taking place quickly and can build tension.
Dissolve	The gradual transition from one image to another.
Cut	An abrupt transition from one shot to another. Usually it is used to maintain continuity editing.
Wipe	A transition from one image to another. One image is replaced by another with a distinct edge that forms a shape. For example a simple edge, an expanding circle, or the turning of a page. Makes the audience more 'aware' they are watching a film.
Fade	Transition generally used at the end of a scene to signify to the audience an end of action. Generally action will fade to black.
Jump cut	Two shots of the same subject are taken from camera positions that vary only slightly. It causes the subject to appear to 'jump' in an abrupt way, drawing the audiences' attention to the editing.
CGI	Computer generated imagery. Any still or moving image created using software.
Slow motion	A post-production effect in which time seems to slow down.

Sound

Diegetic sound	Sound which has a source on-screen. For example: dialogue.
Non-diegetic sound	Sound which does not have a source on-screen. For example: music or voiceover.
Sound bridge	The sound from one scene continuing to the next or the sound from the next scene being used before the audience see the relevant images. It gives the sense that the film is 'linked' together.
Synchronous sound	Sounds which are expected with what is viewed. For example in a birthday party you expect to hear laughter, singing and music
Asynchronous sound	Sound which does not match or is unexpected with the images on the screen. Can be used to build tension, suspense or emotion.
Voiceover	Non-diegetic sound of a person speaking over a scene.