

# +O'REILLY FILM+

## +VISUAL LITERACY+

### Documentary Films: A Checklist for the Active Viewer

LIGHTING	<p>Lighting can have great impact on our understanding of a film. It plays an important part in creating the atmosphere of any one scene.</p> <p>Lighting can emphasize / accentuate / disguise / reveal / conceal or imply.</p>
COLOURS	<p>What are the predominant colors? Are the colors controlled by the director?</p> <p>Grey / blue / white for example are quite harsh tones, while amber / pink / orange are used to suggest warmth.</p> <p>How is color used to evoke a reaction from the viewer?</p>
EDITING	<p>Editing allows sequences to be built up.</p> <p>The joining of shots (known as montage) allows film makers to manipulate time and space to create a particular mood through the different techniques that are used.</p> <p>Juxtaposition: does placing shots side by side have a special effect</p>
FRAMING	<p>When we watch a film, everything that we see is enclosed in a frame. What we see may seem perfectly natural, but it will have been carefully selected and arranged within the frame by the director. He or she chooses where to place people and objects, and where to place the camera so that we understand, or 'read' each shot in a particular way. What is being framed provides an important clue as to what is being emphasized. Points to consider in the use of framing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is being included or excluded from a picture.</li> <li>- Is our attention being directed or diverted for a particular reason?</li> <li>- Does the framing suggest that we are seeing something from one person's viewpoint, or from a neutral standpoint?</li> </ul>
CAMERA MOVEMENT	<p>Is the camera held steady or does it move around?</p> <p>What effect does this have on the ways in which we understand what is happening?</p>
FOCUS	<p>Is the focus hard or soft, and to what effect?</p>
NARRATION	<p>Is a voice over used to tell us about what is happening?</p> <p>How does the voice sound?</p> <p>What is it saying?</p> <p>When does the voice appear and why does it appear at that point?</p>
MUSIC	<p>What sort of music is played in the documentary?</p> <p>Original or pre-existing music?</p> <p>What moods are created by the music?</p> <p>What is the purpose of the choice of music?</p>