

ATTACK THE BLOCK



**KING EDWARD VI SCHOOL
GCSE FILM STUDIES
STUDY BOOKLET**

GCSE Film Studies
Component 2, Section C: Contemporary UK Film
Attack the Block

KO Test 1	
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KO Test 2	
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KO Test 3	
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KO Test 4	
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KO Test 6	
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KO Test 7	
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KO Test 8	
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KO Test 9	
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KO Test 10	
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TOTAL	/10

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KO Test 11	
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KO Test 12	
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TOTAL	/10

KO Test 13	
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Reflections on Knowledge Organiser Tests: Metacognition

[illegible]

Attack the Block

[illegible]

Predictions

Prediction 1:

What do you think the film might be about, based on the title alone? Explain why.

Prediction 2:

What do you learn about the film from the poster?



- What do you think the film might be about now?
- How is this similar/different to your first prediction?

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Prediction 3:

Develop your prediction, based on the trailer

What sub-genres do you think this film would fit into?

Characters

Based on what you have seen of the characters in today's lesson and their appearance on the handout, try to match up the characters with the short description about them.

Character	Description	
Samantha (Sam) Adams		
Moses		
Pest		
Dennis		
Jerome		

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Biggz		
Brewis		
Ron		
Hi-Hatz		

Slang Translation

Slang Term	Translation
Allow it	
Bangers	
Believe	
Bare	
Brap/blat	
Bruv	
Bully van	
Butters	
Ends	
Fam	
Feds	
Food	
Innit	
Merked	
Peak	
Po pos	
Shiv	
Strap	
The block	
G'wagwan	
Wraps	
Big Gorilla Wolf Motherfuckers	

Viewing Questions

Chapter 1: The Wrong Place

1. How do you feel when Sam is walking alone and when she first sees the gang?
2. What are your first impressions of the gang?
3. What is the first indication that this is - at least in part - a sci-fi film?

Chapter 2: Beast of Brixton

1. How does your view of the gang develop when you listen to Sam and the older lady talk about them?
2. What do we learn about the gang when they're pushing their bikes back to the block?
3. How does this change our view of them?
4. What is your view of the two younger boys, "Probz" and "Mayhem"?
5. What is your view of Brewis based on when we first see him outside of the lift?

6. How do the gang respond to Brewis?

7. What is your initial impression of Ron?

8. When the gang discuss what to do with the alien, our views on them are altered. Explain how they change.

Chapter 3: Let's get tooled up

1. What is your view of Hi-Hatz based on what we see of him in this scene?

2. How do you feel when Moses accepts the drugs to sell?

3. What is the reaction of the gang to seeing the alien invasion from Ron's window?

4. Ron says that the gang are "quite sweet really"? How does this statement affect your view of the gang?

5. What do we learn about the gang when they return to their flats to "get tooled up"?

6. How do the gang appear to feel about aliens whilst they "get tooled up"?

Chapter 4: Triple the size

1. How does the gang's view of change when they find they see the alien?

2. What is your first impression of the live "triple the size" alien?

3. How do you feel when Moses is chased and caught by the police?

4. How are the gang presented as smarter than the police?

5. How do you feel when the aliens attack and kill the police?

6. What is your impression of Sam in this chapter?

7. How do Brewis and Ron provide comedy at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 5: This is sick

1. Is the confrontation between Hi-Hatz and the gang tense, funny or both?

2. Describe the way in which Tonks is killed.

3. Consider how Hi-Hatz deals with the aliens. What does this show about them?

4. What is Moses' plan of action for leaving the garage?

5. What is Pest's view of the situation?

6. How do you feel as the alien's chase the boys around outside of the block?

Chapter 6: Too much madness

1. How does the relationship between the gang and Sam change in this chapter?

Chapter 7: What's wrong with the area?

1. Describe the gangs reaction as they examine the alien that they have killed.

2. What is the effect of this reaction on the audience?

3. Why does Sam change her mind and tell the gang that she's coming with them?

4. What is your view of Hi-Hatz in this scene?

5. Why do they choose to go to Tia's flat?

Chapter 8: Actions have consequences

1. The girls seem unsurprised when they hear that Moses mugged Sam. What does this imply about Moses?

2. How does Pest think the relationship between the gang and Sam has changed?

3. Does Sam think it's changed?

4. a. How do Dennis and Jerome defend themselves when Sam shows her feelings about being mugged?

b. How does that make you feel about the gang?

5. Why won't the gang follow Sam's advice to contact the police?

6. How do you react to Dennis' death? It is scary/tense/gory/funny? Explain how.

7. How are the girls represented in a stereotypical way as they fight the aliens?

8. How are the girls represented in an **un**stereotypical way as they fight the aliens?

9. How is Hi-Hatz shown to be a more terrifying villain as he exits the lift?

Chapter 9: Fire in the hold

1. How does the smoke from the fireworks build tension in this scene?

2. How do you react to Jerome's death? It is scary/tense/gory/funny? Explain how.

3. How do you react to Hi-Hatz's death? It is scary/tense/gory/funny? Explain how.

Chapter 10: Maybe it's a what now?

1. Moses shows regret for his actions. Does this alter the way you feel about him? How?

2. How is Moses portrayed as a hero in this scene?

Chapter 11: Allow it

1. How are stereotypical representations of women challenged by the actions of Sam in this scene?

2. a. What do we learn about Moses in this scene that surprises Sam?

b. How might this go some way to justifying his actions?

3. How do you feel as Moses is chased by the aliens?

4. How do you feel when Moses makes it back into the flat after hanging from the flag?

5. How do you feel when Moses exits the lift?

Chapter 12: Moses is a legend

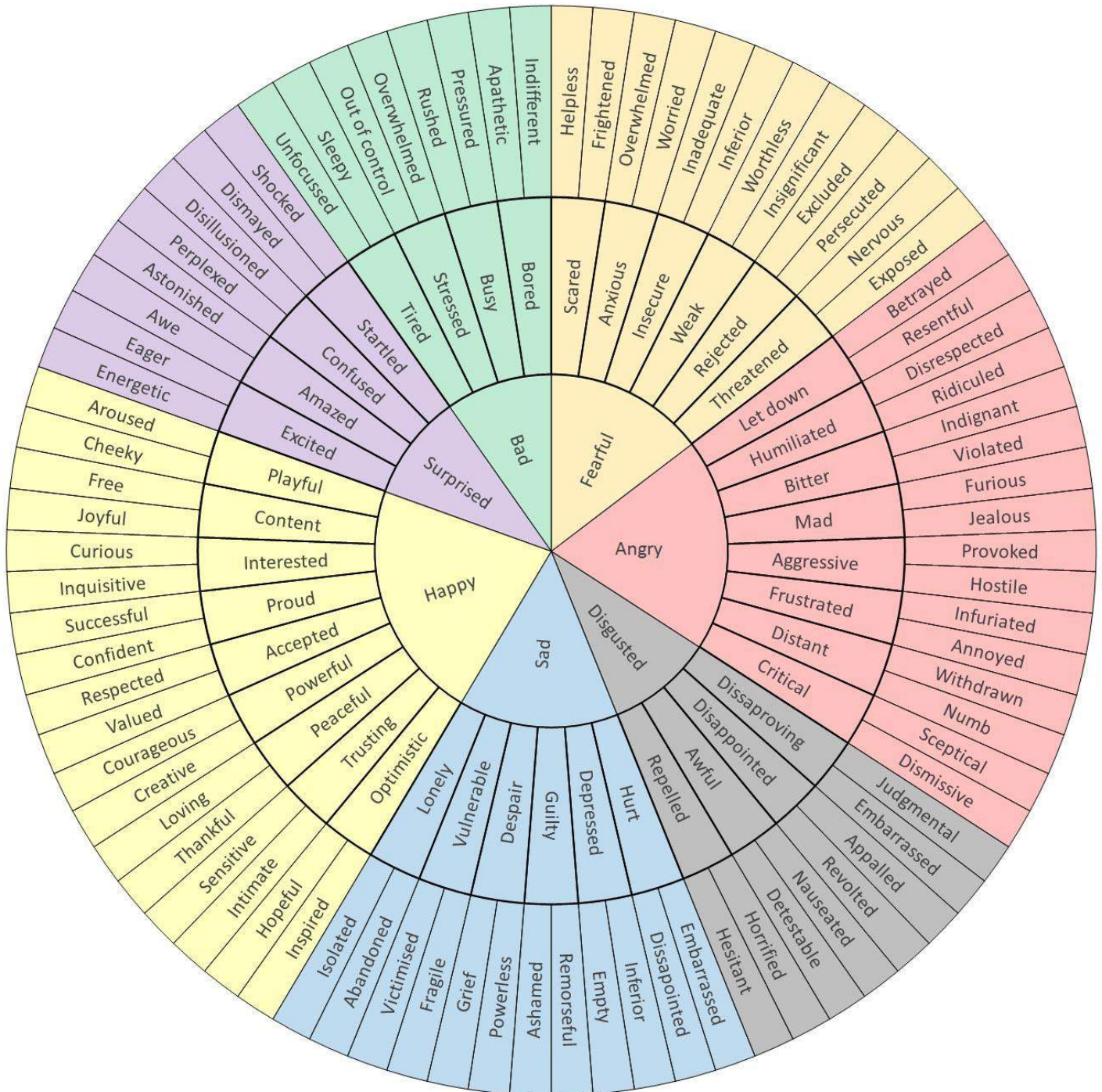
1. How do you feel about Sam at the end of the film?

2. How do you feel about Moses at the end of the film?

3. How do you feel about the Police at the end of the film?

Emotion Wheel

Use this wheel to help you describe how you feel about the characters and narrative.



Contexts

What do we mean by CONTEXT?

Area of context	Definition	What do we learn about the area of context from the viewing?	What do we still need to learn about this area of context?
Social			
Historical			
Cultural			
Technological			
Institutional			

Broken Britain

1) What happened in the 2011 riots? (videos 1 and 2)

2) 'Attack the Block' was released 3 months before the 2011 riots, which began in London.

a. What were the reasons suggested for the riots?

The rioters say (video 3)	Residents of the areas in which the riots happen say (video 4)
Peter Hitchens, right-wing journalist (video 5)	Duggan's family and 'Black Lives Matter' campaigners (video 6)

b. How are the factors listed above represented in 'Attack the Block'?

Factor	How it is represented in 'Attack the Block'?
Poverty/austerity	
Crime: opportunism or poverty in a capitalist society?	
Police racism	
Poor parenting	

4) a. Describe Heygate Estate, where 'Attack the Block' was filmed (video 7)

b. Read this extract from the BBC website.

Despite millions of pounds being spent on regeneration over the years, the Aylesbury Estate, together with the neighbouring Heygate Estate, are in the process of being demolished and rebuilt.

These two projects will cost £3.9bn and involve the construction of hundreds of new homes, shops and open spaces and the rebuilding of several schools.

But the film director Joe Cornish, who made the science fiction hit Attack The Block on the Heygate Estate, says he chose the area because it has a futuristic appeal.

"I came here first and foremost because it's huge, instantly familiar as part of British public housing and it's deserted.

"This architecture reminded me of sci-fi movies in the '60s and '70s like Clockwork Orange or Logan's Run.

"You could go back even to the film Metropolis where architecture like this was seen as something futuristic and aspirational. I suppose it was more viewed as a utopia like it was when it was first built."

Joe Cornish hopes his film will provide a unique memory of the estate.

"Once this place has been demolished it would have been immortalised in a handful of films.

"I guess it would have been portrayed in a very particular way but hopefully Attack the Block portrays it with a bit of escapism, fantasy, colour and upbeat-ness compared to the miserable way it has been portrayed in some other movies."

According to the extract, why did Joe Cornish want to film at Heygate Estate?

5) Representation of race

- a. Search in Google Image the term 'four black teenagers'. Summarize how the black teenagers are represented in the images.**
- b. Repeat the above exercise for the term 'four white teenagers'.**
- c. What is the difference in how they are presented?**

d. How are these representations reflected in 'Attack the Block'? Consider:

- the mugging scene
- relationship with the police
- by the end of the film

6) Joe Cornish's Influences

Read the interview with Joe Cornish from 'The Quietus'. Use it to help you answer the questions below.

Joe Cornish Discusses Attack The Block

Simon Jablonski , May 16th, 2011 09:35

We spoke to Adam Buxton about his Bug celebration last Friday, now it's the turn of his telly chum Joe Cornish as Simon Jablonski asks him about social realism and alien escapades in new film *Attack The Block*

Joe Cornish's feature debut *Attack The Block* is a chase round a council block that gives a very specific Anglicised tone to the much loved 80s sci-fi genre. Set in the deepest darkest depths of South London where no *Daily Mail* reader dare tread, a bunch of teenage rogues try to find some manner of outlet. After taking the wallet of a passing lady at knife-point, the gang beat the crap out of an alien that has the poor fortune to land near them. Unsurprisingly, the rest of the fleet of landing extra-terrestrials are pretty miffed by this and track the gang to their tower block, mercilessly ripping to pieces anyone that gets in their way. Wonderfully shot, the film's dimly lit, orangey glow allows it to nicely straddle the commonly contrasting atmospheric worlds of gritty realism and alien fantasy. A great deal of work obviously went into the aliens; most of the fear comes from what you don't see of them, but when you do catch a glimpse, they're fantastically smooth and realistic – even with glow-in-the-dark-teeth.

As you'll see below, one of the motivations for the film was to humanise an often unfairly targeted section of society. In the face of atrocious rot like *Harry Brown* – in which estate kids better resemble zombies – this is nothing but a noble intention. There are a couple of niggling problems with the film, however - and even though it feels a bit like bursting all the balloons at the fair, they probably warrant a mention. If the film's aim is to offer these kids a different voice, then setting them up as muggers and then butcherers does little to quell this. Their bravery and quest to preserve other inhabitants gets the audience behind them, but it's not really redemption for the mugging and bludgeoning the crap out of the first alien. Perhaps that's the point, though: that being made valuable by society instead of sidelined leads to constructive and productive citizens. Also, it is a slight concern that the beginning of the film relies on the aliens being vicious, indiscriminate killers, yet the last sequence relies on them only attacking certain people (saying too much would be a spoiler). And for a really anal observation, it seems unlikely that what are essentially massive dogs could master the complexities of inter-galactic space travel.

Aside from petty grievances, though, *Attack The Block* is fun and affecting - and The Quietus grabbed some time with Joe Cornish to chat aliens, muggings and sub-text.

Where did you get the idea for the movie?

Joe Cornish: It was two things, really. First thing was me and my girlfriend being carjacked in 2001 by a gang of kids in South London, where I grew up. The second one was watching *Signs*, the M. Night Shyamalan film which reminded me of a script called *Dark Skies* that John Sayles wrote for Spielberg years ago. It was never made and was fragmented and became *Gremlins*, *Poltergeist* and *E.T.*. And it just occurred to me that if that happened in South London, those kids that pulled me out of my car would probably be the first people I would turn to to protect me, so that was the kernel of the idea. And I also thought the idea of a tower block under siege was good, because I love movies that use a limited environment, [and] play with the space. And I just thought it would be cool to start a film with a group of kids mugging somebody and end with them being heroes to try to turn the audience's attitudes round. I thought if I could manage to do that in 90 minutes, then it might be a good story idea. That was back in 2001, and I've been working on it since then.

What happened during the mugging?

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JC: It wasn't that fun. The thing that was weird about it was that they were so young, and it seemed like a ritual. I'm a total pussy so I just gave them everything I had, but I could see how young they were and I could see how nervous they were, and I just thought it was weird. It seemed so unreal and unnatural, and stereotypical and clichéd. The kid that did it was young and as scared as I was, and it seemed like a pantomime or a performance. It seemed like we were playing out a scenario that we'd both seen on *The Bill*. He was playing the role of the bully and I was playing the role of the middle class victim. It was like a Michael Winner film. Although it is a reprehensible thing to do, it made me intrigued as to why that kid thought it might be an acceptable thing to do, and it made me wonder why a kid like that was living up that stereotype in that way.

So the main motivation for the film was to work out why a kid would go about mugging strangers?

JC: I had two routes of inquiry. One was into a kid like that and why he would find himself in a position where he thought that was a feasible thing to do. The other was that it made me think about all the fantasy films I'd loved when I lived round South London, and how I used to pine for things that happened in those movies to happen here. And I sort of put the two thoughts together. And yes I did a lot of research before I wrote the script. I talked to hundreds of young people in youth groups, and we did come across one or two kids who had done things like that in the past. Were they monsters? No. Were they feral and bestial? No. Did they understand right from wrong? Yes. But you know, the film is not an apology for doing that kind of thing, it's a sort of crazy alien-driven investigation into the life of a kid who finds himself doing that.

So subtext was quite an important aspect for you?

JC: Absolutely, it does have a subtext. I'm a big fan of John Carpenter and particularly his film *Assault on Precinct 13*, which is a very lean, mean and stripped-down minimalist siege movie, but it also has a strong sociological subtext; it's about something and you don't need to know that - and in fact, lots of people can probably watch it and not consciously appreciate that it has something to say - but I love that combination. I love how escapist and popcorny and just how out-and-out fun his films are, but at the same time there's a little bit of fibre and nutrition there as well. I was trying to do the same with *Attack The Block*. You can totally watch *Attack The Block* as if it was a stupid, crazy alien-chase movie, but hopefully viewers will pick up the fact that it is also an exploration of that particular character, Moses.

What was the biggest challenge moving from directing smaller projects to this huge scale feature film?

JC: I would say the biggest challenge is the speed with which you have to work, and how hard you have to work, and how fast you have to make decisions, and how quickly very important things go by. As a punter and a film-goer, I would be very judgmental about films. I'd say, 'That's shit and rubbish, and I could have done better'. I thought I knew it all. And I also thought that films were terribly considered and artful, like a painter stepping back from his canvas and rubbing it out and going back in. You can't do that - it's like a flippin' trolley dash. And every moment is hugely expensive and everything will go wrong - however brilliant the people you're working with are, things will go wrong, so you have to really think on your feet and do things really fast and improvise and stuff. But I loved it, it was fun.

The first two weeks I think I behaved like a prick, if you ask the crew. I really wasn't used to delegating at all, I didn't really understand the role of first AD [Assistant Director] so I was shouting and trying to run the set. Nira Park, the producer, had to take me to the side and say 'Joe, let the first AD do that'. And that was amazingly liberating, because you just sit at the monitor and just make the shots better.

Were the main cast planned from the beginning?

JC: We saw lots of actresses for Sam's character, but Jodie [Whittaker] just did a brilliant read in the audition. She just looks very real - she's attractive and sexy but not stupidly so. Do you know what I mean? Does that sound polite? She's that extra sexy type of real sexy, not that unsexy type of fake sexy - is that better?

I certainly had Nick [Frost] in mind for Ron. I didn't know whether he'd be up for doing it, but I always thought it was a good part for him. It's a strong supporting role. I thought it would be doable in terms of schedule and it was amazing that he was up for it - particularly for the young actors because he comes from a similar informal background. He's had no formal training, like a lot of my cast. So it's really encouraging for them to be in the room and acting with somebody who is a star, and also from a similar untrained background.

What was it like to work with untrained actors?

JC: As a first-time director I was more frightened about directing the full-time actors than the kids, because I knew the kids didn't have any frame of reference with which to criticise me. They couldn't compare me to other directors whereas Nick and Jodie and Luke [Treadaway] might go, 'Ah, he's not half as good as whoever'. But the kids were so enthusiastic about every aspect of the process and they're so enthusiastic to learn that it just stops it feeling like a day's work. It feels like a sort of exciting youth club.

Did you have to adapt your directing style when working with the untrained actors?

JC: I definitely had to calibrate the way I worked - my frame of reference and terminology. The main thing is to get them to trust you and get them to not be intimidated by the actual process of making a film, which is very fragmented, and try and do that in a way that they stay natural. But the film is so much about them, that they could tell us as much as we could tell them

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about the truth of the situations. It was very important that it was a democracy and not a dictatorship, and that there was a dialogue between us all the time. I wasn't always prescribing what they should do. Sometimes they feel so excited about being in a film that they think they have to act in a certain way, figure out their mannerisms and pose. The important thing is to say to them, 'Look, you don't have to do anything. You just have to be yourself'. Relaxing them and giving them the confidence not to do anything. We ran every single line of dialogue by them, and they changed it when they wanted to. They advised on costume, they advised on language. We used them as a kind of resource to make sure the film was credible, and would be truthful to other people of their age.

Was casting the gang and the kids a long process?

JC: We took months and months over the casting. We saw thousands of kids. We had a brilliant casting director called Nina Gold, and also a very brilliant woman called Lucy Pardy who found Katy Jarvis from *Fish Tank*, and is a kind of street casting specialist. We wanted the kids to be young. I had this thing where kids you usually see in these roles - especially kids you see in British so called 'urban' films - are often a bit too old for me. You think, 'You're 19, get a fucking job'. Whereas the kids that mugged us were young. They were in their early to mid teens. And I just thought they're kids, and you can't really blame a child. Just because they're in hoods or whatever and doing their thing, they're still children. I think society is pretty cruel and forgets that often these kids are just kids, so it was important to me that they were young. Plus it was cool to get a chance to show totally fresh faces.

How did you research the streetwise dialogue for the kids?

JC: We went to do a whole load of workshops with South London kids in youth groups, all decent kids. I fed out the story and I had a friend draw big illustrations and moments from the story, and I went in and said, 'Hello, my name's Joe and I'm writing a film. I want to talk to you about an imaginary scenario that might happen. Tell me what you would do. Who would you defend? Who would you protect? What weapons would you use? Where would you go? What would you do if this happened? Ahh, but what would you do if that happened?' And I did that scores and scores of times, to hundreds of different kids.

Were the kids you spoke to very responsive?

JC: Very much so. They were incredibly excited by the idea of an alien film being set in their world, because I think they're used to quite downbeat, depressing state-of-the nation stuff. And here was a film about grabbing a samurai sword and jumping on your mini moto and fighting aliens.

What was the inspiration for the aliens?

JC: I'm not telling you how we did them, if that's what you're after. I'd like to keep a little bit of mystery. They're certainly not *District 9* aliens - they're not CGI. It's never what creatures look like, it's how they're shot and how they're edited... the sound they make. We're using a combination of in camera stuff. It was very important for me that they were in the room with the kids - that they're present in the scenes, and that the kids have something real to react to. They were there and they were brought to life by an extraordinary chap called Terry Notary, who I met on the set of *Tintin*. He was the movement coach for the Viper wolves in *Avatar* and Silver Surfer in *X-Men*, and the Hulk in Louis Leterrier's *The Incredible Hulk*. He's the fastest quadruped runner in the world and he's a Cirque du Soleil performer; he's the most physically fit individual I've ever met in my life. When I met him I thought, 'Fuck, this is doable'. And he was one of the first people we signed on for the film, and he did a great job. The tone of the film overall is supposed to be 50% kitchen sink realism and then 50% escapist 80s style adventure movie, so the creatures are sort of that; 50% scary and 50% just idiotic and cool. So, the aliens are a combination of practical and digital, and I'm not going to tell you which is which.

Did the budget constrain your original intentions?

JC: Quite the opposite. I always intended this to be black and white and cost half a million at most, but big talk at Film4 and Optimum immediately raised the standards in productions values. And I'm amazed to be on sets this big with a cast this good and have an amazingly good crew: brilliant DOP, brilliant designer... we're just very lucky to have this production value. If anything, it slightly unnerves me.

a. What initially triggered Cornish to make 'Attack the Block'?

b. What thought and feelings did/does he have about this experience?

c. Cornish says that although you can watch 'Attack the Block' as a stupid, crazy alien-chase movie he hopes that people can pick up that it's an exploration of which character?

d. How did Cornish research the streetwise dialogues of the kids?

7) The best science fiction films are as much about the present as they are about the future.

a. What is a parable?

b. It has been said that 'Attack the Block' "a parable about learning to like black immigrants that is at the same time a fantasy about wiping them out". Using your previous research, explain how it can be seen as a parable about learning to like black immigrants.

c. Read the statements below and use them to help you explain in your own words how 'Attack the Block' can be seen as a parable about wiping black immigrants out.

The movie is entirely upfront about how it wants us to understand the aliens' ebony. The kids stand over the first adult monster they kill, and two of them speak out loud what they see: "Wow, that's black, that's too black to see. ... That's the blackest black ever, fam. ... That's blacker than my cousin Femi" —

Or there's this: One teenager warns another that an alien is about to attack by shouting "Gorilla!" —and then that's another clue.

For *Attack the Block* offers to enfranchise black Britons only by giving them creatures to kill who are blacker than themselves. A group of mostly black teenagers earns its citizenship by systematically cutting down the new crop of even darker arrivals

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Cultural Context

Use Youtube playlist on KingEdFilm – *Attack the Block Cultural Context*

1.

	What are the conventions of the genre?	Which of these conventions are evident in Attack the Block?
Sci-fi Video 1		
Action/adventure Video 2		
Comedy		
Social Realism Video 3		

2. Attack the Block is a HYBRID of sci-fi/action adventure/comedy/social realism. What is a 'hybrid'?

3. Attack the Block is part of a movement of British genre parody movies. Identify the genres of the following British genre parody movies:

a. Hot Fuzz *Video 4*

b. Shaun of the Dead *Video 5*

4. The fictional locations and surrounding areas in the film are named after British sci- writers: Wyndham Tower (John Wyndham); Moore Court (Alan Moore); Huxley Court (Aldous Huxley); Wells Court (H.G. Wells); Clarke Court (Arthur C. Clarke); Ballard Street (J.G. Ballard); Adams Street (Douglas Adams); Clayton Street and Clayton Estate (Jo Clayton); and Herbert Way (Frank Herbert). Why do you think that Cornish has chosen to do this? HINT: you may want to look up the term intertextuality to help you.

5. a. What does the word 'parody' mean?

b. Why do audiences enjoy parodies?

6. Influences of other films

	How is the influence evident in 'Attack the Block'?
American 80s sci-fi films Videos 6 and 7	
A Clockwork Orange Video 8	
'Gang' films (e.g. The Warriors, The Outsiders) Videos 9 and 10	
Die Hard Video 11	
Assault on Precinct 13 Video 12	

7. Why might a British audience like to see genres that are traditionally only the territory of Hollywood blockbusters transferred to a British setting and made by and starring British people?

1. What is meant by the term 'institutional context'?
2. Why have Sci-Fi films traditionally been made by large Hollywood studios?
3. Why are science fiction films usually expensive to make?
4. Hollywood likes science fiction films as they are 'formula films' with familiar genre conventions. What are the advantages of this?
5. Big Talk Pictures, Film4, The UK Film Council, and StudioCanal co-produced 'Attack the Block'. Why do you think several companies had to work together?
6. What is another name for a low budget film?
7. How do you think new technology has made independent and low-budget film making more possible?
8. What difficulties might producers have making films on a low budget?
9. Why do you think low budget films are often more unusual, innovative and risk-taking in their ideas?
10. What might be the implications of lower budgets on:
 - a. action sequences
 - b. special effects
 - c. casting
11. How do we know that Attack The Block is a relatively low budget film?
12. What does Joe Cornish say about the impact of funding on production?

- 1. Why did Cornish want the creatures to be animal-like, rather than able to do anything?**
- 2. What is rotoscope technology?**
- 3. What stages did they do through to get the movement of the creature as revealed by Terry Notary, the 'head alien'?**
- 4. What do Jodie Whittaker (Sam) and Cornish say are benefits about having actual creatures on-set (rather than CGI)?**
- 5. What was the desired effect that Cornish and Tom Townend (Director of Photography) wanted to achieve when they 'crushed the contrast' in AtB?**
- 6. Why was light taken out of the fur in post-production?**
- 7. How was the mouth changed in post-production?**
- 8. What else was changed in post-production?**
- 9. Was CGI ever used to create aliens from scratch?**

Aesthetics

Definition:

The main elements of film form used to achieve the aesthetic are:

How to analyse a shot

DESCRIPTION

1. Write down a literal description of the mise-en-scene
2. Identify the shot type
3. Identify the lighting techniques used

ANALYSIS

4. Why have these choices been made?
5. How are we meant to feel at that moment?
6. How does this shot relate to the film as a whole?
7. How does it relate to other films in the genre/s?



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The Block



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The Corridor



The Corridors – Lighting

Consider how lighting is used at the following points in the film:

- When the gang first walk down the corridor
- When Sam walks away from the gang after they come to her flat
- When Hi-Hatz walks down the corridor towards his death

What is the lighting in the corridor symbolic of?



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Ron's Weed Room



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Ron's Weed Room – Black Light



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Aliens



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Sam's Flat



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Tia's Room



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The Gang



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Achieving the Aesthetic: A contrast between the sci-fi aesthetic and realistic representation of South London

	Realistic depiction of South London	Sci-fi
Mise-en-scene		
Lighting		
Cinematography		

Key Sequence 1: The Opening

Mise-en-scene



What does the initial shot of the shooting star suggest about the possible sub-genre of the film?



What is the importance of the fireworks, in terms of narrative?



How is this shot stereotypical of South London estates?

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Why is this prop important?
Consider how it is used to show a change
in Moses during the film.



How might a knife be seen as a symbol
of 'Broken Britain'?

What is the function of this prop in the
scene?



What is the hoody a symbol of?

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How would you describe Moses' facial expression?

What does this show about him?



What does Moses' interaction with the alien show about him?



What do the BMXs suggest about the gang?

Which era of sci-fi films are BMX bikes found in?

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Cinematography



What is the effect of the use of smoke?



What is the effect of several close-ups of Sam?



What is the effect of this wide shot?

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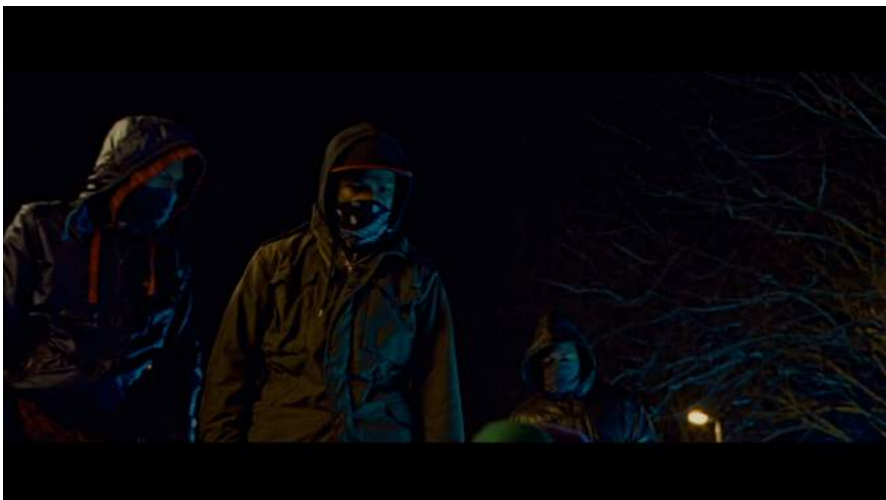


What is the effect of this ECU?



What is the camera angle here?

What does this show about the balance of power?



Moses is mostly positioned at the front of group and framed centrally.

What does this suggest about his role?

What is the effect of the low key lighting?

Is this conventional for hoodie horrors, sci-fi or both?

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What is the effect of the low key lighting?

Is this conventional for hoodie horrors, sci-fi or both?



How is Sam represented through the use of higher key lighting, in combination with brighter clothes?

Editing

1. How is Sam's narrative perspective privileged in the beginning of the opening scene?

What does this suggest about her role in the film?

2. How is Moses' narrative perspective privileged at the end of the opening scene?

What does this suggest about his role in the film?

3. What is the effect of cross-cutting between Sam (alone) and the group of boys?

4. What does the fast paced editing used when Sam is mugged emphasise about the attack?
5. What does the fast paced editing used when the alien attacks Moses emphasise about the attack?

Sound

1. How is the opening sequence similar to other sci-fi soundtracks?
2. What is the effect of the fireworks:
 - a. at 2.32?
 - b. after the alien lands?
3. We hear a fragment of 'Get that Snitch' from the car stereo. What are the effects of hearing this?
4. a. Describe the language used by Sam.

b. How is Sam's character represented through this language? (What impression do we get of her character)
5. a. Describe the language used by the gang.

b. How is gang represented through this language? (What impression do we get them)

Relation to the rest of the film:

- At the end of the clip, Moses wants his gang to help him attack the alien, they do not hesitate, how can this be linked to later in the film. How does this go against stereotypes of teenagers?
- Link the representation of Moses in this scene to the representation of him at the end of the film. How does Moses change?
- Link how Sam changes as well, here she is the damsel in distress but how does this change later in the film.

Answering exam style questions

- The exam questions for the *Slumdog*, *Attack the Block* and *Wadjda* are always stepped.
- The *Attack the Block* questions will always be about **film form**, **context**, **aesthetics** or a combination of these.
- The questions start off easy and require short answers, becoming increasingly more difficult and requiring more extended and detailed answers.

Example questions for 'Attack the Block'

- Identify **one** element of mise-en-scène.[1]
- Briefly outline one example of how this element of mise-en-scène is used in your chosen film. [4]
- Briefly describe the mood or style of your chosen film.[5]
- Explore how the mood or style of your chosen film makes the audience feel. Refer to at least **one** key sequence from your response.

In your answer, you may refer to:

- the visual look of the film
- relevant aspects of camera, editing, mise-en-scène
- effects created by lighting and colour. [15]

Let's have a go together:

- Identify **one** element of mise-en-scène.[1]

Top tips:

1. Identify key words
2. Make sure you know what the question is asking you
3. Collect your thoughts to address the question appropriately
4. Write a very brief response

- Briefly outline one example of how this element of mise-en-scène is used in your chosen film. [4]

Top tips:

1. Identify key words
2. Make sure you know what the question is asking you
3. Collect your thoughts to address the question appropriately
4. Write a brief response

c. Briefly describe the mood or style of your chosen film.[5]

Top tips:

1. Identify key words
2. Make sure you know what the question is asking you
3. Collect your thoughts to address the question appropriately
4. Write a brief response

d. Explore how the mood or style of your chosen film makes the audience feel. Refer to at least **one** key sequence from your response.

In your answer, you may refer to:

- the visual look of the film
- relevant aspects of camera, editing, mise-en-scène
- effects created by lighting and colour. [15]

Top tips:

1. Identify key words
2. Make sure you know what the question is asking you
3. Collect your thoughts to address the question appropriately
4. Write a brief response

Key Scene 2: Attack on the Police Van

Analysing Key Shots: Focus on mise en scène and cinematography

The Alien



Look back at your notes on **Technological Context**. What effects have been added in **post-production** to make the alien scary?

How do these techniques make the alien seem more scary?

How is the age of the gang emphasised by the **background**?

The Chase



Which **prop** emphasises the age of Moses and Pest?

Which element of **mise-en-scene** is a symbol of police authority?

How is the inequality in power shown in the mise-en-scene here?

How does this inequality in power link to the **social context**?

What is the effect of the **low key lighting**? What does it imply about the **setting**?

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Police Violence

Shot A



Shot B



How does the **body language** in each of these shots show the police as violent?

What about Moses' **costume** shows him to be a stereotypical teenage gang member?

Why do you think a **CU** has been used in Shot B?

How do you feel about the police and Moses in this part of the scene? Give reasons for your answers.

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Criminal?



Does the part of the sequence which features this shot change our view of Moses from earlier in the scene?
Explain why this is.

Alien attack

Shot A



Shot B



Blood is central to the **mise-en-scene** in both of these shots.

How is this emphasised through contrast with another element of mise-en-scene in **Shot A**?

How is this emphasised by the cinematography in **Shot B**?

In both of these shots, the characters' faces are obscured. What is the effect of this on the viewer?

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Contrast between Sam and Moses



Describe the appearance of the two **characters** in this scene.

	Sam	Moses
Costume		
Lighting		
Facial expression		
Foreground/Background		
Positioning in relation to bars		

Use your notes from this table to summarise how the characters are shown to be **binary opposites**.
Tip: you may want to use the terms **protagonist** and **antagonist**.

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Dennis the Hero



How is Dennis represented as a hero in this shot? Consider **mise en scène** and **cinematography**.

Editing

1. What is the effect of the **shot/reverse shot** between the gang and aliens in the opening of the scene?
2. A combination of **camera movements** and **editing** are used to create tension when the Police van chases the boys. What techniques are used and how do they create tension?
3. Whose **narrative perspective** is privileged in the majority of this scene?

What is the effect of this?

4. a. What is the **pace of editing** when the aliens attack?

b. What is the effect of this?

Sound

1. The typical sci-fi music we hear in this scene is similar to the opening scene. It is played as a quiet bed under the sound effects for the majority of the scene. What is the effect of this on the viewer?

2. Look back at your notes on **Technological Context**.

a. How was the alien's scream created?

b. What is the effect if this on the viewer?

3. **Sound effects** dominate the sound in this scene. Identify 3 that you particularly noticed and consider why they are used, rather than natural sound.

4. Identify an example of **dialogue** used for comic effect.

5. a. Describe the language used by the Police.

b. How are the Police represented through this language? Link to **Social Context**.

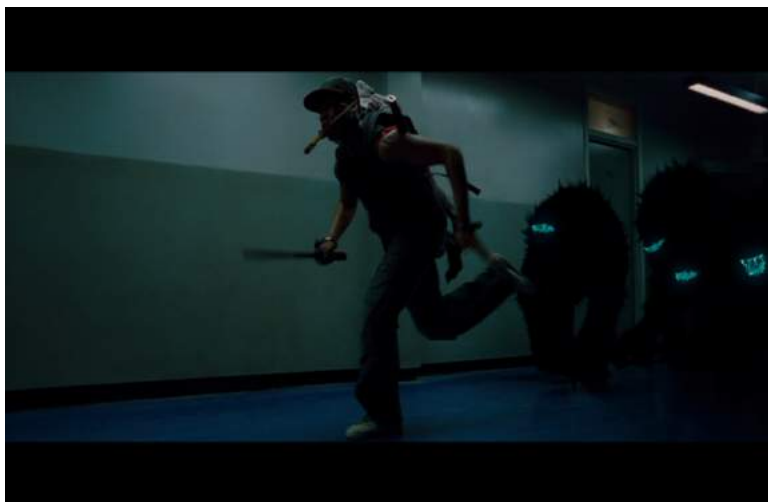
6. The **privileged narrative perspective** of the gang on the walkway is emphasised through the **dialogue**. What effect does this have on the viewer?

Key Scene 3: The Ending



How is the sci-fi aesthetic achieved in this shot?

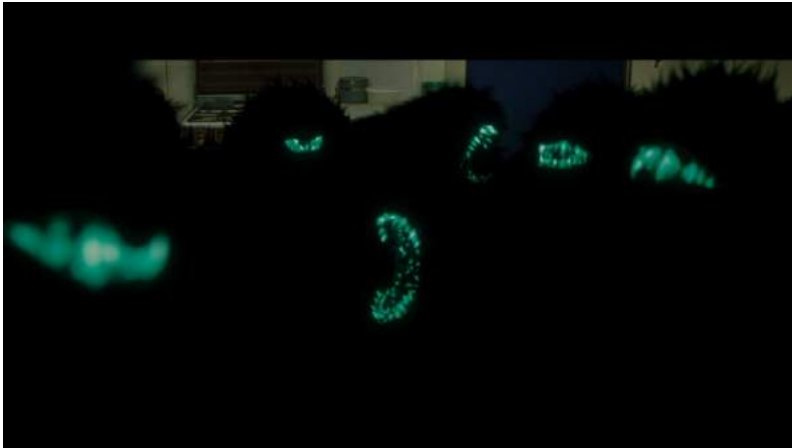
How is Moses represented as a 'hero' in this shot?



How is the 'sci-fi' aesthetic achieved in this shot?

How is Moses represented as a 'hero' in this shot?

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How does the framing of this shot combined with the mise-en-scene make the aliens appear even more menacing?

What are the post-production techniques used here to achieve the aesthetic of the aliens?

This is a delayed POV shot . We see Moses' reaction to this shot before we actually see the aliens ourselves. What is the effect of this on the audience?



This shot uses conventions of two genres. Identify:

- sci-fi conventions

- action-adventure

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How is Moses represented as a hero in this shot?

How is the British context foregrounded in this shot?

Why do you think Joe Cornish might have chose to do this?

A police searchlight is replicated through single-source lighting. What aspects of the social context does this remind the audience of?



How do you feel about Moses in this shot?

How is Moses represented in this shot?

Consider:

- mise-en-scene
- cinematography
- social context

Compare how you feel about Moses in this shot in with how you felt about him in the opening sequence.

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Which other scene does this remind you of?

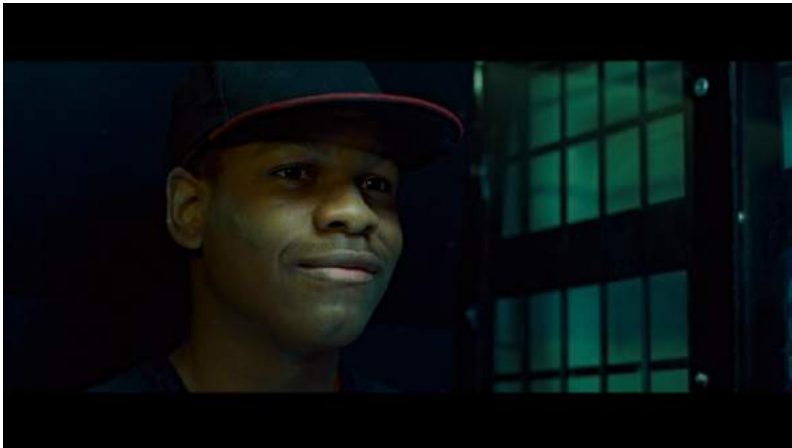
The way in which the police react to Moses is unchanged. Our view of him has changed. How does this affect our view of the police?



How is Sam represented in these final shots of her?

Has your view of her changed over the course of the film? How?

The over-the-shoulder shot directs the audience to focus on Sam rather than the policeman. Why do you think this shot has been chosen?



What is the significance of the differences between the two shots?

This shot is reminiscent of an earlier shot in the 'Attack on the Police Van' scene.



How is it similar?

How is it different?

Sound

1. a. Describe the **soundtrack** at the start of the sequence where Moses is being chased by the aliens.

Consider:

- instruments used
- pace
- volume

b. How does the music in this section create tension?

2. What is the effect of the **sound effect** of the fireworks prior to Moses leaping through the door?

3. a. How does the **soundtrack** change as Moses runs down the corridor?

Consider:

- sound effects
- instruments added

b. What is the effect of this on the audience?

4. Once in the flat, the **non-diegetic music** is quieter and the sound effects dominate the soundtrack.

a. What sound effects do we hear?

b. What is the effect of this on the audience?

5. As the explosion is shown, the music abruptly stops and is replaced by **diegetic sound**.

a. What diegetic sounds do we hear prior to any dialogue?

b. What is the effect of this abrupt change on the audience?

6. a. Describe the music as Moses struggles to get back in the building.

b. What is the effect of this on the audience?

7. a. What do the police say to Moses as the lift doors open?

b. What does this show about their view of Moses?

c. How does this relate to the social context?

8. What do the Ron and Brewis say as they are brought out of the block to add comedy to the final scene?

9. What does Biggz, Pest and Sam say that reinforces how the audience views Moses at the end of the film?

10. a. Who is the only character that the Police enter into **dialogue** with?

b. What does this reinforce about the social context?

11. a. How does the final chants of “Moses” and Pest’s declaration, “That’s for you man” contrast with the final shots of the film?

b. How does this make the audience feel?

c. How does this link to the social context?

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Attack the Block

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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