

F I L M
EDUCATION

The Count of **Monte Cristo**



Section 1: Introduction

UNDERSTANDING IMAGES

Before an audience enters a cinema to watch a film, they will already have been given some idea of what the film will be about. This information will have come from trailers, posters, mention of the film on radio, on television, in the press and on the internet.

One of the key functions of any advertising campaign will be the poster artwork that must give an audience a clue as to the type of film being advertised.

TASK

1. Look at the image below (student sheet 1, see image bank) which has been taken from *The Count of Monte Cristo* film poster. Look at it very carefully and decide what possible type of film it could be advertising.

What does it suggest to you?

What other film posters have you seen which have used similar types of images?

What would you expect the film to be about?

What events would you expect to take place in the film?

2. Now look at the second image (student sheet 2, see image bank). Again, look at it carefully and then answer the same questions as for the previous image.

By now you will have come up with some predictions about the story that the images could be suggesting.



student sheet 1



student sheet 2

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student sheet 3

3. Now look at the image above (student sheet 3, see image bank). This image is the full poster for *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Are your expectations different now that you can see the whole poster?

Look carefully at the images used in the poster.

- Can you suggest which genre the film would fit into?
- What sort of characters would you expect to see in the film?
- What might the story be about?

Consider the answers that you gave regarding all three images. How does your reaction to the three images differ?

Are there any similarities between your answers?

Compare what you have written to other people's answers in your group. How similar are they?

Did you give similar examples for the different types of film that the images related to?

What do your answers suggest about the ways in which films are advertised?

Now look at the trailer on the CD Rom for the film *The Count of Monte Cristo*. What additional information are you given here about what the film will be about, both from the point of view of genre and also of its story?

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WHAT IS IN A STORY?

From the first exercise you will have established that the film *The Count of Monte Cristo* comprises of a number of different elements. You will have made some suggestions as to what you might think the story is about. The opening sequence of any film gives information about the key elements to the narrative. As members of an audience we try to make links between these elements, to see how they might join together to form the basis of the story.

Here are the key story elements that we are given in the opening sequence of *The Count of Monte Cristo*:

The friendship between Edmond Dantès and Fernand	Danglers' hatred of Dantès	The political intrigue of the period in which the story is set	Dantès and Fernand's love for Mercédès
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How do you think these elements could be related? To add to the information look at the following descriptions of some of the characters. How do you think they might fit into the story?

- Edmond Dantès - a naïve and innocent sailor who is wrongly imprisoned
- Fernand Mondego - Edmond's friend who is also in love with Mercédès
- Mercédès - Catalan woman
- Villefort - magistrate who imprisons Edmond
- Danglars - shipmate of Edmond who is passed over in favour of Edmond for the ship's captaincy
- Jacopo - a pirate who befriends Edmond
- Abbé Faria - a prisoner in the Château d'If who befriends Edmond

Your last clue to the narrative is based on the title of the film - *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

In order to help you to construct your predicted story start writing down some questions, for example:

- What will the political intrigues have to do with a ship's captain?
- What part will friendship play in the story?
- How will the character of Mercédès add a complication to the story?
- How important might Villefort be in the story?
- What might happen between Danglars and Fernand?

Section 1: Introduction

PRODUCTION - FILM - AUDIENCE

As everything relates to the film itself, let us start by considering what the audience expect from a film? Write down a list of all the elements you expect from a film. It might be that you write down such things as ‘...it will tell a story...’, or ‘...the camera will move and let us see different views of the action...’. Think of as many details as you can.

The work that you have completed so far has looked at the ways in which the film industry has given you ideas about the film *The Count of Monte Cristo* and also your own expectation about what the film is about. Therefore, we could say that as well as the film itself, we have also examined the ideas behind it and also our expectations of it.

Every film that is produced can be looked at from three different perspectives. It is important to remember that these three different perspectives are all inter-related.

PRODUCTION - FILM - AUDIENCE

Firstly we need to consider the film makers:

- What ideas did they have in making the film?
- How did they give us an idea of what the film would be about?
- How did they expect us to understand what is happening in the film?
- How did they get the film made?

Secondly there is the film itself:

- How is it constructed?
- What is its relationship to other films that we may have seen?
- How does it embody both the film makers' ideas and also the audiences' possible ideas about what it is trying to say?
- What is the film's relationship to different worlds beyond film? How do the messages that it gives relate to other media and other experiences of both the film makers and also the audience?

Finally there is the audience for the film:

- How will they understand what is happening in the film?
- Will they relate it to other films in general?
- Will they relate it to other films which might fit into the genre of the film?
- What will be their expectations of the film?

You might like to look back at the work you have already completed to give you some ideas.