

Section 2: Narrative

WHAT HAPPENED? - Narrative 1

While the film is fresh in your mind log the events of the story of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in the chart (student sheet 4, see image bank). Next to each event you log, write down which genre you think the event is connected to. You may find that some events can be related to more than one genre. There is a third column that, for the moment, you should leave blank.

How far were your expectations of the film fulfilled? Look back to the work that you completed in the first two sections of this study guide. Tick off all of the expectations that were correct. You will probably have noticed that without even seeing the film there will have been certain **conventions** which you will have guessed correctly. Why should this be?



If you look at the answers you gave to the questions about the three ways in which you can consider a film, you will notice that the film makers will have in mind what an audience will expect from a film. Therefore, any film will relate to other films that you have seen, even on a basic level of having a beginning, a middle and an end. As most films fit into genres and because you have already seen films from that genre you already have certain expectations.

If you have a younger sister or brother you might like to watch a film with them. As they do not have your experience of watching films and the knowledge that you have of different kinds of films they will probably ask lots of questions about what is happening and why certain things are happening. These are the kind of questions which you, as a seasoned film watcher, no longer ask as you have seen a large number of films and will already understand the conventions of plot, characters and settings involved in different genres. You will understand why certain characters behave in the ways they do. You may not instantly realise this but if you think about how you watched *The Count of Monte Cristo* and what questions you asked yourself at different moments in the film then you will see that you probably did not ask the basic questions that your younger sister or brother asked. You know the answers already and accept these points as being a normal part of a film. However, it is worth thinking about these basic points, realising what we take for granted and the ways in which we assume that a film will tell its story and give us information.

TASK

Before moving on to the next section, think about the ways in which the film *The Count of Monte Cristo* informs us about what is happening, what the characters are like, where the film is set and what type of film it is. Make a short list and then continue on to the next section.

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THE STORY - Narrative 2

Cast your mind back to the opening sequence of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and answer the following questions:

OPENING SEQUENCE

1. How did the film pose a number of questions that you wanted answering? What were the questions?
2. What settings are we shown? Do the settings help us to understand what will happen or do they give us information about the characters?
3. Is there anything in the first part of the film that you did not understand? Was anything that you did not initially understand explained later in the film?
4. Was there anything that, even at the end of the film, you did not understand?
5. From the opening sequence of the film, what type of film did you expect to see? How did this fit in with the expectations that you had noted in your earlier work?

The opening of any film sets an **enigma** - a series of questions that we want answered. The story then goes on to answer these questions.

On the narrative chart that you have started to complete mark in each section where the questions posed in the opening sequence started to be answered. You may find that certain scenes helped answer more than one of the questions that were posed at the start of the film.

A film develops its narrative in ways that are similar to other forms of storytelling. This is best shown in the chart on the right (student sheet 5, see image bank).

How does this idea about storytelling fit in with *The Count of Monte Cristo*?

Copy out the chart again but this time write in how the film *The Count of Monte Cristo* **poses the enigma**, resolves the story etc.

On your narrative chart, mark in the scene where you think the film moves from one phase of the story to the next.

