SKIN

AFTER WATCHING THE FILM

Picture: Danish Film Institute

Analytical and thematic approach

1. **Summarise the film's plot**
   Work in groups of four.
   a. Person 1 gives a summary of the first part of the film
   b. Person 2 rephrases what Person 1 just said, as far as possible using different words. Next, Person 2 summarises a bit more of the film.
   c. Person 3 rephrases what Person 2 just said, as far as possible using different words. Next, Person 3 summarises a bit more of the film.
   d. Person 4 rephrases what Person 3 just said, as far as possible using different words. Finally, Person 4 summarises the rest of the film.

2. **Setting and environment**
   Describe the film's physical setting and social environment. Discuss how the characters live, look, behave and speak. Use as many adjectives as possible. Find specific examples from the film to support your statements. You can use the below image for your description.

Frame grab 8:25

3. Characterisation

Characterise the main characters: Jeff, Troy, Christy and the African-American man from the supermarket.

a. What do they say directly about themselves?

b. How are the characters described by what they say, how they act, their language and their relationships to other characters? You can listen to the following conversation: 05:56-06:29.

c. Which character(s) do we have sympathy for, and why?

d. Are the characters portrayed as flat or round characters? Argue your opinion.

e. Do any of the characters evolve?

f. What does it add to the story that there is a child in either group?

Frame grab 12:27

Find specific screenshots and dialogue from the film to support your statements.

4. Actantial model

Analyse the film, using the actantial model. Place the picture of Jeff in the subject's position and the remaining pictures where you think they will fit. Change the perspective twice by placing first Troy's, then the African-American man's picture in the subject's position.
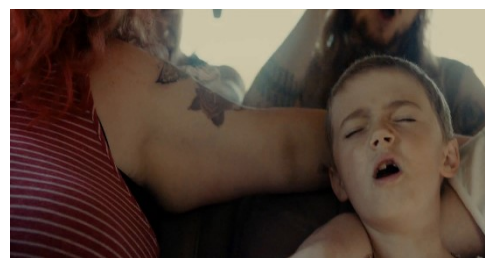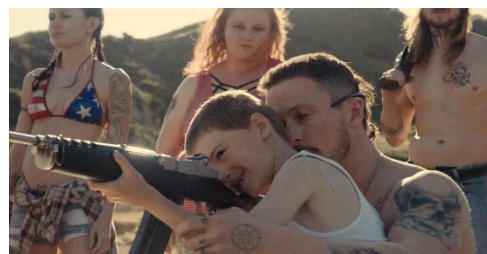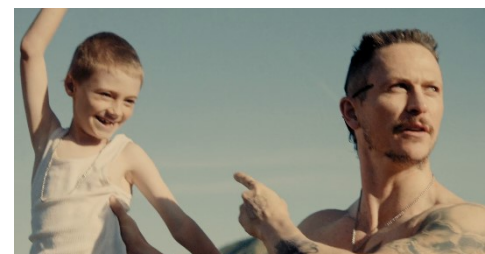
Sender ⟶ Object ⟶ Receiver

Helper ⟶ Subject ⟵ Opponent
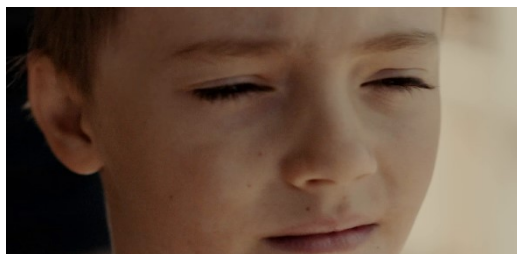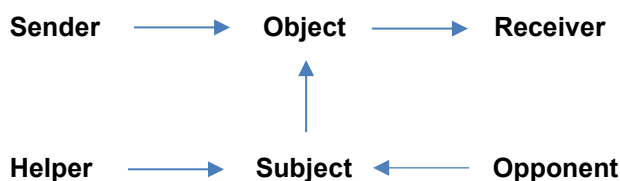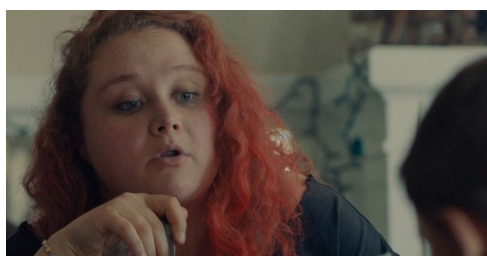

Troy

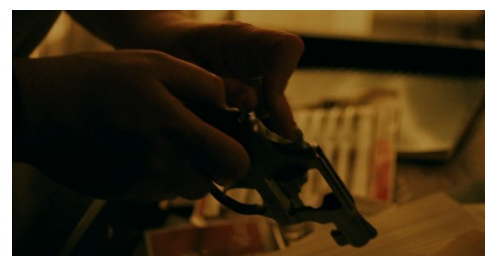**The gang**

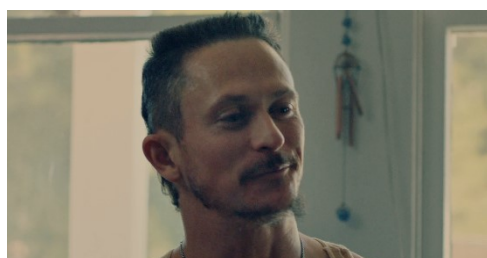**Father-son relationship**
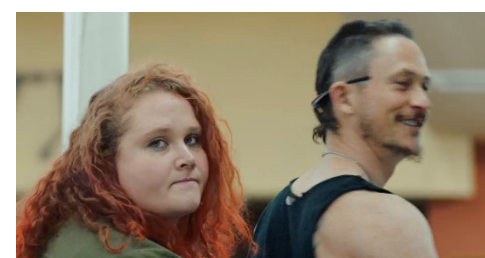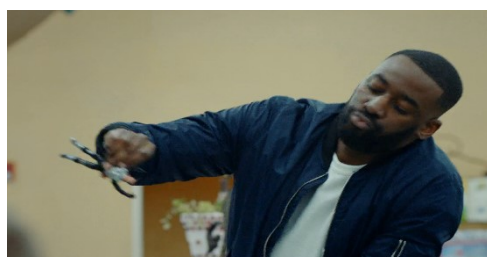

Culture

Shooting

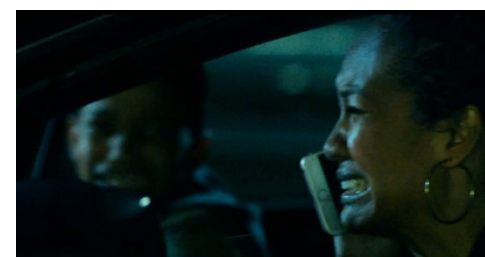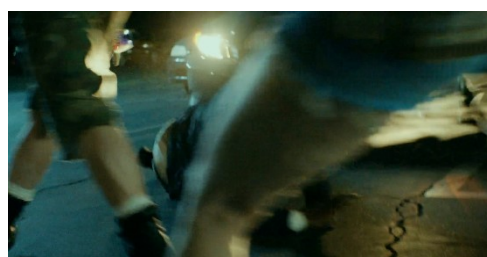**Recognition/pride/next generation**

Mother

Protection

Jeff

Intolerance

African-American

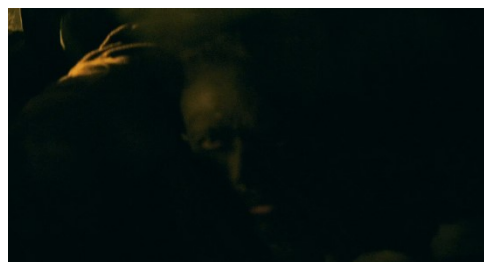

Fear

Violence

Son
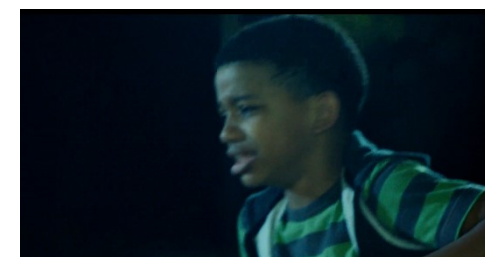
The gang

Revenge

5. **Symbolism**
   a. List the symbols of each group or gang.
   b. How easily recognisable are they and what are their functions?
   c. Do they have positive or negative connotations?
   d. Explain the meanings of the different symbols in the film, including the snake, the milk and the film's title.
   e. Look up the meaning of *allegory*. Argue either for or against the use of allegory in the film.

6. **Theme and message**
   Working in groups of two, write down as many themes as you can think of. Each group will then write down two of these on the blackboard. In class, each group will argue for their choices. Afterwards, the class will rank the themes in order of relevance.

   What do you think the film is trying to tell the viewers, and do you think it does so successfully?

7. **Context**
   The director, Guy Nattiv, made a feature film in 2019 of the same name, with the same actress, Danielle Macdonald, and the same general theme. Watch the trailer for the feature here and read about it. Write down the similarities and differences between the two films. In the right circle, write down all the elements that are unique to the short film. In the left circle, write down all the elements that are unique to the feature. Where the two circles overlap, write down what the two films have in common.
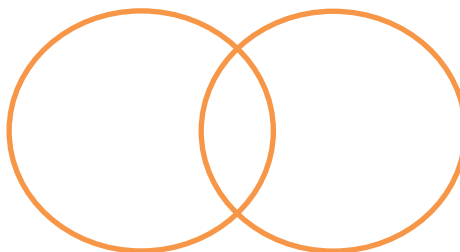
8. **Discussion**: In groups of four, stand up and debate the following statements as described:
   Speaker 1: **Point 1**, **Round 1**: Argue that the African-Americans tattoo Jeff black, so he can experience what it is like have dark skin. **Point 2**, **Round 2**: Argue that had Jeff not been shot, he would have learned not to be a racist.
   Speaker 2: Disprove Speaker 1's point and make your own point in response.

Speaker 3: Disprove Speaker 2's point and make your own point in response.

Speaker 4: Disprove Speaker 3's point and make your own point in response.

Cinematic approach

9. **Applying cinematic terms**

   Look back at Exercise 1 from 'Before watching the film'. Which of the 10 terms are most relevant when analysing this film? Find specific examples of the terms in the film and comment on the effect they have.

10. **Dramaturgy**

    In groups of two, discuss whether the film fits the three-act model below, drawing specific examples from the film to support your arguments. If you do not think the film fits the model, what could be changed about the film to make it fit better?

Three-act model
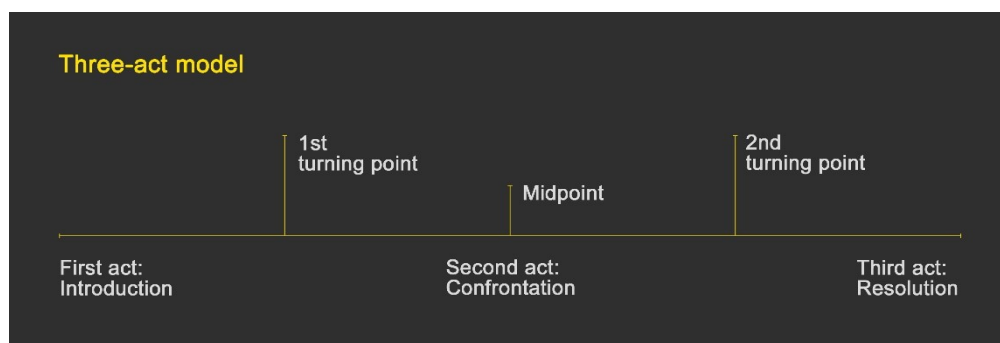
11. **Creative assignment**

    In groups of two, write and draw a storyboard, using the same action and characters but for a feature film. You may want to consult the website https://www.storyboardthat.com. Focus on new scenes and scenes you want to elaborate on.

Grammatical and written approach

12. **Contextual grammar**

    The below is an excerpt from a review of the film. There are six grammatical errors. Find and correct them.

    Jamie Bells tough performance carry this forthright, earnest … drama based on the true story of a far-right American skinhead called Bryon Widner and his attempts to leave a neo-Nazi white-power cult. This involved the agonisingly removal of his grotesque facial tattoos with their various Hitlerian symbols and fantasy nordic insignia. It's a vivid metaphor for the denazification process.

    The film is being written and directed by Israeli-born film-maker Guy Nattiv. He was a Oscar-winner this year for his short film, Skin – which has no relation to this feature, other than a shared thematic concern with racial conflict. https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/sep/27/skin-review-jamie-bell-neo-nazi-drama

13. Written assignment

Look at the two pictures below. The left image shows the main character, Byron, from 'Skin', the feature. The right one shows his father, Jeff, from 'Skin', the short film. Write 200 words on how people tend to judge others by their physical appearance and discuss to what extent it is possible to change that. Give specific examples from the film.

Feature

Short