

Study Guide

Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince 2



Feature movies are a medium, an art and a business. Each of these elements plays a role. As a medium, movies represent ideas through the codes and conventions of sound and moving image. As art, they make personal and cultural statements to their audiences. As businesses, they create work for their creators and profits for their investors.

This guide, which extends the ideas presented in the second *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* episode of *Beyond the Screen*, may be used by teachers as they support their students, by parents who want to discuss the movie with their children, or by serious viewers who want to think beyond the screen.

Plot Synopsis The conflict between the Death Eaters and the Ministry of Magic has become so intense that it has spilled into the Muggle world. Harry, Ron and Hermione struggle with the challenges of evolving relationships, Draco struggles with an uncomfortable pledge, while Harry and Dumbledore use a collection of memories to discover the key to destroying Voldemort.

A. Cinematography

Cinematography refers to the representation of imagery in movies. It might include composition of a scene, lighting, focus, angle, distance and/or movement. Cinematography was used very purposefully in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

1. The cinematographer used three-point composition on several occasions. Three-point composition occurs when there are three points of interest in one shot, often at different distances from the camera. Three-point compositions create tension and interest for viewers.

One of these three-point compositions occurred in an extreme-low shot when Harry first arrives at the Burrow. Viewers see Molly, Ron and Hermione, on different floors of the Burrow, from below. Another time, Harry, Slughorn and Ron appear in three-point composition in Slughorn's office when Slughorn mixes the antidote to a love potion.

What other examples of three-point composition did you notice?

How do they add interest and tension to the story?

(Consider the confrontation between Draco, Dumbledore, Bellatrix and Snape.)

2. The cinematographer used colour carefully in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. During Harry's experiences of the memories, the scenes are presented with a blue tint.

How does the blue tint help viewers to understand that the memories are flashbacks?

There are other scenes that are presented in a blue tint, e.g., the washroom duel between Harry and Draco.

Why might the cinematographer use the same tinting for the memories that are used for the washroom duel?

How might the blue tint in the washroom duel influence viewers' attitudes towards the event?

3. Point of view (POV) is used very purposefully in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

In the first scene, Death Eaters tear across the skies above London, wreaking havoc and kidnapping a wizard. The camera begins by following these wizards, but then takes on their point of view, so that the viewers are

flying down the streets and crashing through a wall into Diagon Alley.

The camera takes Harry's POV when Draco paralyzes him and then kicks him in the face. Draco looks directly at the camera when he says, "That's for my father!"

Viewers see Luna's POV when she discovers Harry paralyzed and bleeding under the invisibility cloak. The scene is tinted pink and multiplied using a filtered lens.

Where else did you notice the effective use of POV?
(Consider the action that Harry watches from below just the tower summit.)

B. Editing

1. Editing is used effectively when Draco and others enter Borgin and Burke's to examine the vanishing cabinet. Among the short shots viewers see is one of someone holding dogs on a leash.

What might be the effect of seeing these short shots juxtaposed with Draco's presence in Borgin and Burke's?

2. Editing and other effects combine to increase the excitement of the Death Eater attack at the Burrow. When Harry pursues Bellatrix into the fields past the ring of fire, the camera is hand-held, there is a quick succession of short shots, there the sounds of running, brushing weeds, then silence.

How do these effects combine to make this an exciting experience for viewers?

C. Costume Design

Costume design plays a large role in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

1. Harry, Hermione and Ron have matured into more adult, physically-aware and sexually-active people. Their bodies have become more adult, and their costumes reflect more mature tastes and physical attraction. Recall a moment when the characters had to behave in a very mature, adult manner.

How did their costumes support their behaviours?

Recall Harry's and Hermione's clothing at Slughorn's Christmas party.

Did the costumes serve to make them seem adult, or uncomfortable in adult roles?

2. The costuming for Luna Lovegood needed to help portray a character that was bohemian and outrageous, but not silly. After all, Luna saves Harry from an embarrassing trip to London on the first day of the new school term.

Consider Luna's costumes. How well did their design help viewers see a person who is strange, but not silly?

3. Horace Slughorn's clothing communicates his values and personality to viewers. His actions portray a vain man who is impressed by celebrity. Consider his costume design. How well do his costumes support his character traits?
4. Draco Malfoy's discomfort and murderous intentions are supported by his costume design. Consider how the designer dressed the actor. How effectively did the costumes help viewers to see a conflicted teen who has been charged with committing murder?

D. Casting

1. Horace Slughorn is a new character to the Harry Potter stories. His memory of a conversation with Tom Riddle plays a key role in Harry's hero journey.

How does Slughorn's character influence Harry, Hermione and Ron?

What might viewers learn about Harry and Dumbledore when watching their interactions with Slughorn?

What might they learn about Harry's parents?

Jim Broadbent is a well-known UK actor whom viewers have likely seen in the many movies and television shows in which he has appeared. Mr. Broadbent had to capture Slughorn's snobbishness and weakness for celebrity ('He will try to collect you, Harry.').

Was Mr. Broadbent able to represent Slughorn's character as flawed but likeable, or will viewers dislike him entirely? Explain.

2. Two actors portray Tom Riddle at two different points in his life. Hero Fiennes-Tiffin portrays the boy in the orphanage in Dumbledore's memory. Frank Dillane portrays the Hogwarts student who asks about horcruxes in Slughorn's memory.

How well did these two actors portray the pathological child who became Voldemort?

3. Jessie Cave portrays Lavender Brown, Ron Weasley's temporary girlfriend. Ms. Cave had to be a love-struck flirt when Ron is a Quidditch star and a crushed reject when he moans Hermione's name while comatose in his infirmary bed.

How well did Ms. Cave portray these complex aspects of teen girlhood?

E. Humour and Gravitas

Each succeeding Harry Potter story has become more dangerous. Readers say that the novels have become 'darker,' a metaphorical way of describing the increasing dangers faced by Harry and his supporters. The movies have become literally darker, including scenes that occur at night, in darkened rooms, hallways or caverns. The makers of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* follow this trend, notably in the cave where Harry and Dumbledore find a horcrux.

But the filmmakers also tried to provide viewers with some humorous moments. Humour is used in stories to relieve the tension that builds from danger and action. Some of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince's* humorous moments are overtly funny, as when Ron is suffering from an intercepted love potion. Some of these are covertly funny, requiring viewers to recall moments from past Harry Potter movies, as when Professor Slughorn asked Hagrid if the recently-deceased Aragog had any family, and Harry chuckles, saying, "Oh-ho yeah."

What other examples of overt and covert humour do you notice in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*? How effectively do they help viewers relieve the tensions the build from death and danger?

F. Choices

1. Harry is dependent on Dumbledore often in this movie.

What does he learn from Dumbledore's attitudes and behaviours towards the Death Eaters' mortal threats?

How well do Harry's actions at the end of the movie reflect Dumbledore's influences?

2. Harry has often made moral choices that sometimes override his logical choices. For example, he chose not to kill Wormtail (Peter Pettigrew) even though he knew Wormtail had betrayed his father and that he might pose a threat in the future.

Where in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* did you notice Harry having to make moral choices?

What might viewers learn from his actions?

3. Other characters also make choices, e.g., Draco Malfoy and Horace Slughorn.

What moral and logistical choices did these characters make?

What might viewers learn from their actions?

G. Self Sacrifice

Harry Potter knows well about self-sacrifice. He knows that he owes his life to his mother's self-sacrifice, and he has experienced self-sacrifice in each of the previous movies.

Where do we see characters making self-sacrifices in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*?

What self-sacrifices does Dumbledore make?

What self-sacrifices does Harry make?

Does Draco make a self-sacrifice when he pledges to kill Dumbledore?

What might viewers learn from these characters' self-sacrifices?

H. Power

Voldemort states, "There is no good or evil, only power and those too weak to seek it."

Lord Acton wrote, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."

Which characters' statements and actions relate to these quotes?

Consider Dumbledore, Harry, Snape, Draco, Slughorn and Bellatrix Lestrange.

What might viewers learn about power from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*?

I. Journeys

1. Harry has followed his hero journey under the tutelage and protection of Albus Dumbledore. That relationship ends in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

How does Dumbledore prepare Harry for the remainder of his journey?

What other experiences does Harry have in this story that might prepare him for his ongoing conflicts with Death Eaters?

What experiences does he have that show that he is having the adolescent experiences that lead to adulthood?

2. Is Harry the only one that is becoming a hero?

What experiences do Hermione and Ron have that show their developing heroism?

How does Slughorn make important steps in his hero journey?

For more information on *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, visit <http://harrypotter.warnerbros.com/> and <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0417741/>

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