



Task 1 (A & B) Exemplar

Film Review: *Gravity*.

Gravity is a visually spectacular Science Fiction film that is captivating for both its stunning visual effects and also the suspenseful action, which features throughout the film. The film is rated PG 13.

It was directed by Alfonso Cuarón from a script he co-wrote with his son, Jonas Cuarón. Among his other films, Alfonso Cuarón directed *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* and *Children of Men*. The film took Cuarón almost 5 years to complete, mostly because of the complexity of the Computer Generated Imagery (CGI). *Gravity* was shot in 3-D, giving viewers a seat-of-their-pants experience of the breathtaking setting of the Earth from space.

Sandra Bullock has the lead role of Dr Ryan Stone, a biomedical engineer, aboard the space shuttle *Explorer* for her first mission. She is an award winning actress who also runs her own production company. Sandra Bullock is well known as a dramatic and comedic actress. She is supported by George Clooney, who plays Matt Kowalski, an experienced astronaut, commanding his last mission. He too, is an award winning actor across a range of film genres. This is a two-person cast, the rest of the participants in the film are composed of voices (mission control, crew of the *Explorer*). This has the effect of reinforcing the theme of isolation in the film. The two characters are utterly alone and in the vastness of space, reliant on their own efforts to try to return to Earth.

Whilst completing routine maintenance on the Hubble Space Telescope they receive a warning that debris from a satellite is hurtling towards them. Forced to abandon their repairs they return to the *Explorer* to find that it is badly damaged and the crew is dead. Kowalski creates a plan to use a Manned Maneuvering Unit (MMU) to take them to the International Space Station, which is 1450kms away, before the debris field comes back around. Once they arrive at the ISS they discover the escape modules already deployed; running out of options, they make a last ditch effort to reach the Chinese space station, *Tiangong*.

The 3-D cinematography throughout the film is visually stunning. The opening scene, an establishing shot of 17 minutes duration, is awe-inspiring, composed and put together from images from NASA and the Russian Space Agency. Whilst, the film story creates a gripping and suspenseful experience, it is the work of the cinematographers in creating the believably captivating scenes of space, with Earth as the backdrop that really enthrals. It was released as an I-MAX film, for this very reason.

Special effects make up around 80% of the film through CGI and accounting for a big part of the \$100 million price tag to make the film (it went on to make over \$720 million world-wide). It deservedly won the Academy Award for best Special Effects and Cinematography in 2013.

The film score, by composer Steven Price, also received an Academy Award. The sound track supports and reflects the long emotional struggle of Sandra Bullock's character.

In total, *Gravity* won 7 Academy Awards, including Best Director; it did not win for best picture, that honour going to *12 Years a Slave*. I would highly recommend the film for two factors: first, because it is such a remarkably beautiful piece of visual cinematography; and secondly, because it is a well-crafted psychological, action drama. I rate it at 4 stars. ★ ★ ★ ★

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:07 AM

Comment [1]: Name, Rating, Genre, Overall Comment of the film.

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:07 AM

Comment [2]: Director details.

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:08 AM

Comment [3]: Details of the actors

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:09 AM

Comment [4]: Overview of the storyline, without giving spoiler details.

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:09 AM

Comment [5]: Cinematography

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:10 AM

Comment [6]: Special effects details

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:10 AM

Comment [7]: Details of soundtrack

Linda Jolly 29/9/2016 10:11 AM

Comment [8]: Recommendation and rating of the film.