

WALL-E Directed by Andrew Stanton

This film is set 700 years in the future when the earth has become uninhabitable as a result of consumerism and neglect. The human race has evacuated a toxic, barren and litter ridden earth, leaving behind trash compactor robots to clean up. For hundreds of lonely years, WALL-E (Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-class) has been routinely compacting and collecting rubbish. A spaceship lands and deploys a sleek search robot named EVE (Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluator) when he discovers a seedling plant growing amongst the garbage. This fertile symbol of hope for the recolonisation of earth takes both robots on an adventure that changes the destiny of their kind and of humanity.

FILM TECHNIQUES

Just as novels utilise the power of language, films utilise a range of techniques to engage their audience and develop their ideas. There is very little dialogue in *WALL-E* so the film relies more on a variety of camera shots, lighting and sound to create meaning.

CAMERA SHOTS

The size of the shot the audience sees in the frame is defined by the proximity of the camera to the subject.

EXTREME LONG SHOT

An extreme long shot is a landscape or vista scene. It is often used to establish the world of the narrative, to clarify the setting and signal the atmosphere.



LONG SHOT

A long shot includes a full length figure and some of the surroundings. This can establish character or action and show links between characters and their setting.



MEDIUM SHOT

A medium shot shows a person from the waist up. The audience can view facial expressions and body language. It develops character or shows action.



CLOSE-UP

A close-up focuses intently on the face, hands or feet of a character or an object at close range. This emphasises emotion and increases tension.



CAMERA ANGLE

The angle of the camera contributes to the atmosphere of the scene. It also suggests the importance or power a character holds.

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT

In a high-angle shot the camera is above the character or object. This has the effect of making the object appear weak, inferior or under pressure.



EYE-LEVEL SHOT

An eye-level angle shows a character at the same level as the camera. It encourages the audience to not only see the character as an equal but also to see the world of the film from their perspective.



LOW-ANGLE SHOT

In a low-angle shot, the camera is below the character or object. This has the effect of making that character seem powerful and important.



CAMERA MOVEMENT

Moving the camera in particular ways focuses attention on particular characters, objects and actions. It can also contribute to the tension by slowly revealing part of a scene and make the audience feel part of the action. There are four main types of movement:

TRACKING – Mounted on wheels, the camera runs parallel to the action, keeping pace with the movement of a character. This captures the intensity of action and the emotions of characters.

DOLLY – The camera, again mounted on wheels, zooms in (dolly in) or zooms out (dolly out). This movement forward or backward can intensify the drama and provide details about the surroundings.

PANNING – The camera remains in one position but rotates to follow the action. This often reveals scenery, establishes setting or provides a moment of further important detail.

TILT – The camera again remains in one position, but tilts up and down. This can be used to follow the subject or move slowly from head to toes of a character. This can heighten empathy, tension or humour of a scene.

LIGHTING

Lighting plays an important part in creating atmosphere. Consider also colours which are emphasised and the symbolism of them.

HIGH-KEY: High key lighting is free from dark shadows and is sometimes used to create an optimistic atmosphere.

LOW-KEY: This lighting emphasises shadow and is often dark and suspenseful.

BACK LIGHTING: The light comes from behind the subject, creating a silhouette, creating a sense of mystery and foreboding.



SOUND

In addition to what the audience sees, consider also what they hear.

When listening to **DIALOGUE** consider the volume, tone and pitch of the characters' speech.

Also listen carefully to the **MUSIC** (score) accompanying a scene as it is a powerful generator of atmosphere. Consider also its volume and style.

Just as influential as sound, is the lack of it. Consider when **SILENCE** occurs and why.

CLOSE STUDY OF SELECTED SCENES

SCENE 1 – Out There

- Watch the opening sequence of the film with the sound muted. What images and colours are dominant? What kind of world is this? Which camera shots assist this impression?
- Watch these first few minutes again this time with the sound. How does the music change the tone?
- What is WALL-E's role in this world? Which camera shots guide the audience's understanding of this purpose?
- How is the audience's understanding of this world developed in the next scene?



SCENE 4 – A Day at Work

- Describe WALL-E's daily routine. What characterises his habits?
- What does WALL-E's relationship with the cockroach reveal about him?
- How does Stanton want the audience to feel about WALL-E? How is this encouraged?
- How is humour generated in this scene?
- The discovery of the plant is a pivotal moment in this scene. Which film techniques are used to indicate this?
- At the end of this scene WALL-E notices and follows the red dot. Which film techniques are used to develop suspense?



SCENE 5 – EVE Arrives

- What is WALL-E's first impression of EVE? Which film techniques show this?
- What does EVE's flight through the sky reveal about her character? What does the music contribute to this moment?
- Why does EVE's first shot at WALL-E shock the audience? Of what does this remind us?
- Explore the contrasts between WALL-E and EVE.

- e) Consider what this scene reveals about:
 - i) Power
 - ii) Freedom
 - iii) Appearance and Reality
 - iv) Science and Technology

SCENE 9 – WALL-E’s Favourite Things

- a) What are some of WALL-E’s favourite things?
- b) Why does he want to share them with EVE?
- c) Explain what the exploration of them reveals about both WALL-E and EVE?
- d) What happens when EVE sees the plant? Why does this occur?
- e) Outline WALL-E’s response to this. What does he attempt to do in the next scene? What does this reflect about how he feels about EVE? How do film techniques echo this?

SCENE 20 – Escape Pod

- a) What is suggested about technology when we see WALL-E trapped in the escape pod?
- b) What film techniques are used to show EVE’s distress when she sees the pod explode?
- c) Why is this an important turning point in the relationship between WALL-E and EVE?
- d) What does this scene convey about freedom?

SCENE 24 – It Only Takes a Moment

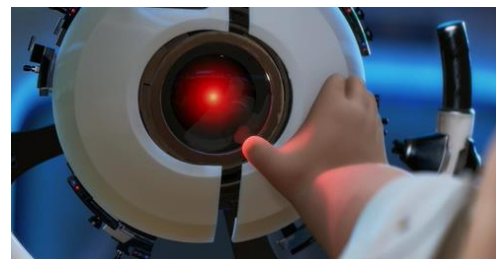
- a) Why is the captain surprised when he sees the images of Earth from EVE’s memory?
- b) What is the Captain’s realisation at this point in the film? How does a high angle camera shot and music emphasise this?
- c) Describe the character of the Captain. What does he represent about the current state of the human race?
- d) The security footage that EVE sees functions as a flashback. What is its purpose?



SCENE 25 – Code A113

- a) When the Captain gives the plant some water he says “You just needed someone to look after you.” What does he realise once he articulates this important statement? Which film techniques are used to reinforce his realisation?
- b) Describe the character of Auto. How are film techniques used to develop his character in this scene?
- c) What kind of shot is used of the former captains of the Axiom? What in particular does it illustrate?
- d) Who is the most powerful character in this scene? Explain your answer.
- e) Consider what this scene reveals about:

i) Power	iii) Appearance and Reality
ii) Freedom	iv) Science and Technology



CLOSE STUDY OF CHARACTERS

For each of the characters below, complete the following questions:

1. Which adjectives best describe this character?
2. Select one of these adjectives and outline a scene which illustrates this quality.
3. How does this character's physical appearance reflect their personality?
4. What is the purpose of this character in the film?
5. What kind of music would best accompany this character? Explain your choice.
6. Which colour would best symbolise this character? Explain your choice.

WALL-E

EVE

The Captain

Auto