

Name(s) _____

Period _____ Due Date ___/___/___

The Usual Suspects

“The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist.”

~ Verbal Kint

Essential Guidelines:

- clearly state the question you are addressing
- properly head your paper
- edit carefully and cite plenty of evidence
- *please* use the Google Doc provided in our Google Classroom
- be sure to properly submit your final draft via the Google Classroom
- you *may* print a hard copy following our class guidelines and turn it in to the class basket, but I prefer the Google Doc

Part One – Literary Connections: Pick *one* of the following questions below and answer it as thoroughly as possible in 2 ¶s or less. Please cite evidence from the film and any other applicable source. Use examples from the film and/or other related films that would provide supporting evidence.

1. Consider and describe the **mood** and **tone** of this film. Does the **mood** change? Is there anything unique about the **tone** of this film?
2. Cite at least two concrete examples of **foreshadowing** used in this film. Also consider the use of **motifs** as a form of **foreshadowing**.
3. Cite at least two strong examples of **symbolism** used in this film. What purpose did these **symbols** have and were they effective?

Part Two – Cinematic Connections: Pick *one* of the following questions below and answer it as thoroughly as possible in 2 ¶s or less. Please cite evidence from the film and any other applicable source. Use examples from the film and/or other related films that would provide supporting evidence.

4. Discuss a memorable scene in terms of **Camera Placement: Distance from Object**. Refer to your vocabulary handout. Why were these shots used in this scene? What did the shots mean? Do you agree with the director’s shot selection?
5. Discuss a memorable scene in terms of **Camera Placement: Angle to Object**. Refer to your vocabulary handout. Why were these shots used in this scene? What did the shots mean? Do you agree with the director’s shot selection?
6. How did you think the **music** worked in this film? Did the soundtrack enhance any particular scene? Did the music match the **pacing** of the scene? Or, recall the use of music in the film that was ineffective and defend that perspective.
7. We know that there are essentially **three types of movement** in film: 1) the viewer’s eye searches and scans the screen, 2) characters or objects move in relation to the frame, and 3) the camera moves across, into or away from its own field of vision. Cite a memorable scene from this film for each of these **three types of movement**.

FILM ANALYSIS

The Usual Suspects Assignment · DeMiero

Part Three – Analysis: Pick *one* of the following questions below and answer it as thoroughly as possible in about 3 to 5 ¶s. Depth of thought and analysis is what counts here, *not* hot air. Please cite evidence from the film and any other applicable source.

8. **Film Noir.** In many ways “The Usual Suspects” is a throwback to film noir films of a bygone era. Do you think that Bryan Singer’s decision to treat this film much like other more established films of this genre was an effective decision? Why or why not? And since most fairytales have a point to make, was was the moral of “Moulin Rouge” in your opinion? HINT: Read Roger Ebert’s guide to film noir here: <http://www.rogerebert.com/rogers-journal/a-guide-to-film-noir-genre>
9. **Influences.** Cite at least two other films made prior to 1995 that you feel influenced “The Usual Suspects.” Please cite clear evidence to support your observations. Bonus: Can you cite any recent films that “The Usual Suspects” has influenced?
10. **What The What The?!?** So, do you want to try to explain this film? Many have tried, but few have succeeded. Here’s a short list of items you *must* address, however:
 - Outline what really did take place and what was fabricated by Verbal Kint.
 - Who is/was Keyser Söze?Good luck.
11. **Motif.** Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the piece’s major themes. Identify and discuss two or more different motifs in “The Usual Suspects.” HINT: Part of the function of a motif might be the effect it has on us or the contribution it makes to the atmosphere of the film.
12. **Your Choice.** Got a better question? Submit it and the best of the best will be used in future editions of this assignment. Of course, you also have to provide an essay response, too.

Notes:

Released1995
Director:Bryan Singer
Screenplay:Christopher McQuarrie
Music:John Ottman

Characters:

Stephen BaldwinMichael McManus
Gabriel Byrne.....Dean Keaton
Benicio Del Toro.....Fred Fenster
Kevin PollakTodd Hockney

Kevin SpaceyVerbal Kint
Chazz Palminteri.....David Kujan
Pete PostlethwaiteKobayashi
Suzy AmisEdie Finneran
Giancarlo Esposito.....Jack Baer
Dan HedayaJeff Rabin
Morgan Hunter.....Arkosh Kovash
Peter Greene.....Redfoot
Ron GilbertDaniel Metzheiser
Christopher McQuarrieCustoms cop
(see *IMDB.com* for more)