

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Breaking Away

*“I know I-tey food when I hear it! It’s all them ‘eenie’ foods... zucchini... and linguini... and fettuccine. I want some American food, dammit! I want French fries!”*  
 ~ Raymond Stoller

### Essential Guidelines:

- clearly identify 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. What **stereotypes** are established and then broken in this film? What **stereotypes** does this film perpetuate?
3. Why is this film titled “Breaking Away”? What are at least two reasons to support this choice of a title? Would you have titled it something different? If so, what and why?

**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. Analyze a memorable scene in terms of **Camera Placement: Distance from Object**. Refer to your Film Production Vocabulary handout. Why did Yates use these shots in these scenes? What did the shots mean? Do you agree with his selection?
5. Analyze a memorable scene in terms of **Camera Placement: Angle to Object**. Refer to your Film Production Vocabulary handout. Why did Yates use these shots in these scenes? What did the shots mean? Do you agree with his selection?
6. Analyze a memorable scene in terms of **Camera Blocking and Movement**. Refer to your Film Production Vocabulary handout. Why did Yates use these shots in these scenes? What did the shots mean? Do you agree with his selection?
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

Breaking Away Assignment · DeMiero · MTHS

**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. “Breaking Away” is ranked No. 8 on the American Film Institute’s 100 Most Inspiring Movies of All Time. Also, the Aug. 4, 2003 issue of Sports Illustrated listed “Breaking Away” as No. 8 on their list of the top 50 sports movies of all time. What do you think? Is this film inspiring? Is it a great sports film? Back up your opinion with plenty of evidence and support.
9. Film critic Roger Ebert points out a subtle point about “Breaking Away.” He states that director Peter Yates does a “tricky and intriguing thing” in this film. “(Yates) suggests the constant possibility of sudden tragedy. We wait for a terrible accident to happen, and none does, but the hints of one make the characters seem curiously vulnerable, and their lives more precious,” Ebert said. What were some of the possible tragedies that the four main characters avoided and how did these situations affect the development of those characters? Cite plenty of evidence to support your analysis.
10. “Breaking Away” won the Oscar in 1980 for “Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen” (Steve Tesich) and was nominated for “Best Actress in a Supporting Role” (Barbara Barrie), “Best Director” (Peter Yates), “Best Music, Original Song Score” (Patrick Williams) and “Best Picture.” The competition in 1980 (for films released in 1979) was particularly tough. The movies nominated for “Best Picture” were “All That Jazz,” “Apocalypse Now,” “Norma Rae” and, the winner, “Kramer vs. Kramer.” So, almost 30 years later, how do you think “Breaking Away” holds up as a film? Do you think it’s one of the great American films of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century? Or, do you think it’s overrated? Be sure to cite plenty of evidence to support your conclusions.
11. Film critics Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat state: “*‘Breaking Away’ is one of the best ever cinematic depictions of the adolescent experience. It accurately conveys the pain, confusion, frustration, and exhilaration of this transitional period. After empathizing with the four cutters’ depression and pariah status in the first part of the film, we can share in their glory at the end. In so doing, we tap into that kind of transcendent moment we all hope to experience at least once in our lives.*” What do you think? Do you agree with their analysis? Does “Breaking Away” portray an accurate picture of this time in a teen’s life? Cite plenty of evidence to support your views.
12. You be the instructor. Write a question that you think would have been better than any of Mr. D’s. Additionally, you must include an acceptable answer, too. The best of the best will be used in future classes.

**Notes:**

Release Date.....1979  
Director .....Peter Yates  
Screenplay.....Steve Tesich

**Characters:**

Dave Stoller .....Dennis Christopher  
Mike .....Dennis Quaid  
Cyril .....Daniel Stern  
Moocher .....Jackie Earle Haley  
Evelyn Stoller.....Barbara Barrie  
Raymond Stoller .....Paul Dooley  
Katherine .....Robyn Douglass  
Rod .....Hart Bochner  
Nancy .....Amy Wright  
Mike’s older brother.....John Ashton