The Shawshank Redemption- Independent Questions

*This sheet is designed to ensure you have a thorough understanding of the 4 elements of this film we have looked at through the filter of “freedom”.*

*You should complete each section as a blog post on your personal learning blog. The link to this is on the class blog site under “students”.*

**Setting**

* Our film covers time from the 1940’s through to the 1960’s. It is set in Maine, New England, America. What were some influential events happening during this time in this place? Do we see evidence of these in the film? Why would the director deliberately include or exclude this element of social context from the film?
* Each setting in the film represents a different element of freedom. Summarize each setting with a focus on freedom. Include techniques the director uses to emphasize this. **Bonus Points:** Some settings also reinforce the lack or presence of hope. Analyse how this is achieved and why hope and freedom are so closely linked.
* Obviously, the prison is the largest setting in the film and where most of the action takes place. Analyse how this prison setting is similar/different to your idea of a prison. Then look at the prison system in New Zealand. How is the prison in Shawshank different/similar to our prison system today? **Bonus Points:** remember that this film is American. Look at how American prisons have developed and how similar/different Shawshank is to these.

**Symbols**

*Symbols are people, places or objects that represent an idea. Many symbols appear throughout the film.*

Pick 3 of these symbols that we have discussed or were presented by the symbols group. Analyse where, how and why they were used in the film. Discuss the significance of the “real world” meaning of each symbol. Comment on what they imply about freedom/hope/guilt. **Bonus points** if you manage to show how the symbol links to all three ideas.

**Characters Journey**

* Pick 3 characters from the story and explain how they change throughout the film. Use specific quotes and events to support your answer.
* Using the 3 characters you have selected from above, discuss how “freedom” means something different to them. Explain how the director presented this (dialogue, shots, lighting etc.)
* Each character has a conflict playing out through the film. Classify this conflict (for your three characters from above) using “The Big 5” and explain how the overcome or succumb to this conflict. Use examples from the text to support your answer.
* Think about how Andy could be considered or compared to a Christ like figure in the film. Explore what it is that sets him apart from the others, how he influences the inmates around him. Use evidence from the film to support your answer.
* Red narrates the film. Discuss how he can be seen as “The God of Shawshank Prison”. Why is this both a powerful and destructive thing for his journey as a character in this film.

**Ideas (Theme)**

*In The Shawshank Redemption, the major themes are intertwined. One cannot exist without the other. In order to find freedom, the inmates must have hope. In order to have hope, they must overcome their guilt. Only when they find their freedom can we call them “redeemed”.*

* Discuss how hope and freedom are connected in this film. It is almost like one represents the other. Use evidence from the film to support your answer.
* Analyse how guilt might act as a mask for both hope and freedom in the film. Use examples from the film to support your answer.

**External Ideas**

* Research what “purgatory” is. Make an argument for or against the following statement: Shawshank Prison is a form of purgatory.

Support your argument with evidence from the text.

* Both Philadelphia and The Shawshank Redemption address the boundaries that can be placed on ones freedom. Compare and contrast the way in which both films explore this idea. Consider internal and external boundaries for both films. **Bonus points:** If these films were set in the year 2017, do you think the external boundaries placed on characters from both films would be the same. Justify this answer with examples from the real world. If you believe that external boundaries would be different, evaluate the impact this would have on internal boundaries.
* Find a critical review of The Shawshank Redemption. While reading it, highlight anything you find interesting. At the end of the reading, evaluate how you could use parts of this review in your essays- what does it focus around, any good quotes you could use in your essay etc. **Note:** A critical review is the summarization and evaluation of the ideas and information in a work of literature. It expresses the writer’s point of view in the light of what they already know on the subject and what is acquired from related texts.
* Many people claim that The Shawshank redemption is “considered one of the greatest and most essential movies ever.” To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement. Justify your answer with evidence from the text and external sources.