The Blind Side is a 2009 American docu-drama film written and directed by John Lee Hancock, and based on the 2006 book The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game by Michael Lewis. The storyline features Michael Oher, an offensive lineman who plays for the Baltimore Ravens of the NFL. The film follows Oher from his impoverished upbringing, through his years at Wingate Christian School, his adoption by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, and on to his position as one of the most highly coveted prospects in college football.

1. Write a brief outline of the main events of the story:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Now plot the events on the diagram:
1. Fill in the table with adjectives describing Michael Oher’s traits and proof from the film (think about his actions, conversations with other characters and the reaction of other people to him)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Trait</th>
<th>Proof from the film</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now describe Michael’s relationship with Leigh Anne Tuohy:
Setting

Briefly describe the setting (time and place) of the film.

Give examples of how the film maker highlights differences between Michael’s neighbourhood and the Tuohy’s’ in the film:
“As every housewife knows, the first cheque you write out is for the mortgage. But the second is for the insurance and the Left Tackle’s job is to protect the Quarter Back from what he can’t see coming—to protect his blindside.” Leigh Anne Tuohy’s explanation of the Left Tackles role in a voice over in the opening sequence.

“Forget sports. Look at the wall—Christian. We either take that seriously or we paint over it. You don’t admit Michael Oher because of sports, you admit him because it’s the right thing to do.” Coach Burt Cotton to Wingate School’s admissions board.

“I go to the bathroom, look in the mirror and say this is not Michael Oher. He entitled it White Walls.” Teacher Mrs Boswell reads out a piece of Michael’s work in the staffroom.

“I’ve seen that look many time. She’s about to get her way.” Sean Tuohy to SJ Tuohy the night they first invite Michael home.

“Just tell me one thing I should know about you, just one.”
“I don’t like to be called Big Mike”
“OK, tell you what. From now on, to me, you are Michael.”
Leigh Anne Tuohy to Michael

“I’ve been in Memphis my whole life and I’ve never been near here. You’re going to take care of me, right?”
“I got your back”.
Leigh Anne expresses her unease at shopping in the rough part of town to Michael when they go clothes shopping

“Does this happiness have anything to do with Michael?”
“No. It has everything to do with Michael.”
Sean Tuohy to Leigh Anne Tuohy at home one night.

“Aren’t you worried about Collins just a little? He’s a boy—a large, black boy sleeping under the same roof.”
“Shame on you.”
Leigh Anne’s high society friends struggle to cope with her generosity towards Michael—and she struggles to cope with their racist comments.

“Quit looking at me like that. I mean we study together at home don’t we?” Collins to Michael in the school library.
Essay Plan

Describe an important relationship in the film and explain why it was important.

Name your characters:
  1.
  2.

What do they have in common:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What are their differences:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Use the information from above to write an essay that explains the relationship between your two characters.

⇒ Write at least 200 words
⇒ Don’t forget TEDS
⇒ Write your answer on the next page
Intro to Film Study

When we watch a film in English, we are looking for the deeper meaning behind the images we’re seeing. Just like in a novel, we can break the film into different features.

Filmmakers use a range of techniques (see film glossary) to tell the story. The main features are:

1. **Character**: What they look like, how they speak, what they do, what happens to them. What other people say to and about them and how other people react to them. Most films have a main character and minor characters.

2. **Setting**: Time and place, country or city, past or future. These details communicate specific ideas which have an impact on the atmosphere (or mood) of the story.

3. **Plot**: Film makers select which information to show to the audience and in which order to show events. The order can affect our response to the character (s) and the message.

4. **Production techniques**: These include lighting, props, sound (including music) special effects, costumes, the use of colour, camera angles and composition (the way things are placed in a scene). Nothing is done by accident in a film! The film makers use these techniques to emphasise an idea or to create a specific mood.

5. **Dialogue**: Conversations between characters give us clue to what they are thinking (and why).

6. **Narration**: a narrator helps reveal and explain events. The film maker might use one narrator or several to help tell the story, and to comment on what is happening. The choice of narrator(s) is important because it gives us their perspective of events.

7. **The title**: will be linked to the story or the message. It can sometimes be a pun or another type of word play but will usually have extra meanings.

8. **Theme**: Most films explore a number of ideas. Often these are connected to something a character learns and therefore what we learn.
Theme

There are number of themes in The Blind Side which stem from the main idea that success in life is often closely related to the opportunities we are given, and what we do with them! Closely related to this is the idea that personal satisfaction often comes from things that money can’t buy. The main themes in The Blind Side are:

1. People can achieve success despite a disadvantaged upbringing
2. Stereotyping is a barrier to achievement
3. There is more to life than making lots of money
4. The importance of family

Now briefly describe a scene that demonstrates each theme.

1. Success is related to our environment and the opportunities we are given:

2. Stereotyping holds people back

3. Financial wealth is not the most important thing in life

4. The value of families:
Close Viewing

Close read the opening sequence and make observations on the following features:

What sounds do you hear?

What is said (voice over and dialogue)?

What visual effects are used (camera angle and type of shot, costumes, lighting, editing pace, composition):

From the opening sequence, list all the clues we are given about the plot, setting, characters and theme of The Blind Side:

What we learn about the characters:

The plot

The setting:

The theme:
Tell us what you really think...

You have been asked to write a review of The Blind Side for the ODT. Think about the film. What made it memorable to you? What were its strong points or perhaps its weak points? What type of film is it (action, comedy?) How does it compare to other films from a similar genre you have watched? Your review should be about 3-400 words long.

Make sure to include the following elements when writing your review:

1. Name the major actors and director
2. The Plot: what happened in the story?
3. The Theme: What were the ideas behind the story?
4. The Performance: How well did the actors play their pairs? Were they believable?
5. The setting: How believable was the setting? Would the movie have worked as well if it was set elsewhere?
6. The Music: How important was music in the film? Did it add to you understanding of the plot? Did it distract to the story or enhance it?
7. Overall impression of the film: Decide whether your review will be positive, negative or mixed. Would you recommend it to other people? Who would it appeal to? Who wouldn’t enjoy it? Why?
8. How will you rate it? Four Jaffas out of five? Five stars out of ten?
“This team is your family Michael. You have to protect them from those guys. Tony here, the quarter back, you have to protect his blind side. When you look at him, you think of me and how you had my back, you have his. And Ompaloompa here, he’s your tail back and when you look at him think of SJ and how you’d never let anyone hurt him.”
Leigh Anne explains American Football to Michael in a way he can understand.

“Yelling at him doesn’t work Burt—he’s a trust man. In his experience they pretend to care about you until they disappear.”
Leigh Anne gives Coach Burt some advice.

“OK. What did you say to him?”
“You should get to know your players Burt. He tested 98% in protective instincts. I said you could thank me later. It’s later Burt.”
Leigh Anne explains how she got Michael to start blocking to Coach Burt.

“I swore that I would never ask you this but how did you get out of there Michael?”
“When I was little and something awful was happening, my momma would tell me to close my eyes. She was trying to keep me from seeing her do drugs and other bad things. And when she was finished or the bad things were over, she’d say that when I count to three, you can open your eyes, the past is gone, the world’s a good place and it’s all gonna be ok.”
“You closed your eyes.”
Michael explains to Leigh Anne how he survived his childhood.

“But all the questions you asked were about why everybody else wanted me to go to Ole Miss. Not once did you ask why I wanted to go there.”
“Alright. Fine Michael. Why do you want to go to Ole Miss?”
“Because that’s where my family goes to school. That’s where they’ve always gone to school.”
Michael convinces the national football board (NCAA) employee that it was his choice to go to Ole Miss (University of Mississippi) after she accuses the Tuohy’s of taking him in just to get him into their old college.

“Why does she always do that?”
“She’s an onion Michael, you just have peel her back a layer at a time.”
Sean Tuohy helps Michael to understand Leigh Anne.