



# Understanding Film

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## Rebel Without A Cause

### 1. Parents and children

This film has an implicit psychological theory: that bad parenting is to blame for children's bad behavior. Discuss the relationship of either Judy and her parents or Jim and his parents.

Do this by choosing three scenes that reveal the conflicts in the family. Describe and analyze these scenes. Pay some attention to how the framing of the shots and the editing affects the scene.

### 2. In the deserted mansion

A new "family" is created in the deserted mansion, with Jim as the father, Judy as the mother, and Plato as the child. Pay careful attention to this scene. Describe as many of its features as you can (at least 5) which create the sense that these three teenagers are "family" for each other.

### 3. All that red!

As you watch, pay attention to the use of the color red in the movie, taking some notes to help you remember. Then, describe the use of this color throughout the film, and do some analysis: what is the effect of red in the film? what does it tie together? does it have a meaning?

### 4. Is it dated?

Fifties films sometimes strike a 21st century audience as oddly dated. What do you think? Does it still say something true and real about alienated youth, does it seem silly or distant, or somewhere in between? Explain your answer.