

1.1 - Institutional Information

Director:	John Hughes	Release:	June 1986 (USA) Feb 1987 (UK)
Production company:	Paramount		
Country of production:	USA		
Genres:	Drama; Comedy; Teen; Coming-of-age		
Starring:	Matthew Broderick, Mia Sara, Alan Ruck, Jennifer Grey		
Other info:	Broderick was 23 at the time of filming - a lot older than his teenage character		

1.3 - Context

Historical:

- 80's **economic boom** meant teens found it easier to afford cars, leading to selfish teens.
- The US, the most powerful nation in the world was winning the Cold War creating a feeling of invincibility - seen in scenes like 'The Parade' which shows a united mood.

Social:

- The 50's birthed the teenager and there was an element of fear surrounding them. In the 80's teenagers don't need to battle parents because they've already won!
- Generation X, were called '**latchkey kids**' - due to changes in society these teens had less adult supervision than previous generations.

Cultural:

- MTV was launched in 1981 and became the voice of the teen generation.
- an obsession with labels and designer goods meant that social status was tied to symbols of wealth (which Ferris has in abundance).

What other signs of materialism are there throughout the film?

Institutional:

- Set in Chicago like all John Hughes films! Hughes is considered an **auteur** of teen genre

1.4 - Key Quotes

Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it. - Ferris	A classic quote, and one that outlines Ferris' outlook on life. It helps to explain his selfish and apparently care-free nature. It also allows the audience an insight into his attitude towards the importance of really experiencing life!
I do have a test today, that wasn't bullshit. It's on European Socialism. I'm not European, nor do I plan on being European, so who gives a crap if they're socialists? It still wouldn't change the fact that I don't own a car! - Ferris	Another direct-to-camera monologue, making it clear what his attitude is towards formal, school-based education, as well as his arrogant nature. He is selfish as a character and as Generation Xer; valuing material objects more than anything else. He also broadly reflects the arguably ignorant approach that America in general had towards others in the 80s.
"I am not going to sit on my ass as the events that affect me unfold to determine the course of my life. I'm going to take a stand. I'm going to defend it. Right or wrong, I'm going to defend it." - Cameron	This shows Cameron's development through the film and shows how he's come to terms with the fact that his relationship with his father has undermined his own destiny so far in his life. It's a clear example of how the themes of fear, rebellion, conflict and peer pressure have affected Cameron and how they can be seen in his actions.
The question isn't 'what are we going to do', the question is 'what aren't we going to do?' - Ferris	A clear sense of Ferris' rebellion. He is carefree, unencumbered and wanting to experience things that he cannot do if 'imprisoned' in school.
"I weep for the future" - Restaurant Maitre'd	Here we get an adult, a person in power or responsibility outwardly expressing distain for 'Generation X'.

1.5 - Characters

Ferris Bueller: the **eponymous** protagonist; central to the narrative in so many ways. He is a physical embodiment of **Gen X**; entitled and materialistic but also charming, engaging and entertaining. Character monologues and direct address create **alignment** and **identification**. He is a teen hero, a master of the art of truancy; disobedient and a rule breaker - but never really a problem. He is popular and a very good friend. The appeal of Ferris Bueller is that he does very little harm; sure, his actions could injure someone, or cause an accident, but they don't and so he is the kind of unlikely hero that we all root for. Even his sister, whom he frustrates enormously, finally comes to understand what makes her brother tick, and appreciates him for it.

Cameron Frye: a pessimistic and gloomy young man who is the **binary opposite** of Ferris. His tendency to always look at the worst case scenario is almost certainly linked to his abusive father, and his lack of self esteem - he despises himself for not having stood up to his dad yet, until he uses the situation with the Ferrari as the opportunity he has been looking for.

Sloane Peterson: a good well-behaved student but always up for an adventure with her boyfriend Ferris. She knows their relationship will probably end at the end of high school, but wants to make amazing memories to take with her to college. Sloane is fun and always willing to go along with Ferris' plans, but offers a slightly more rational and empathetic voice. She is often shot in a sexualised way, unlike the male protagonists.

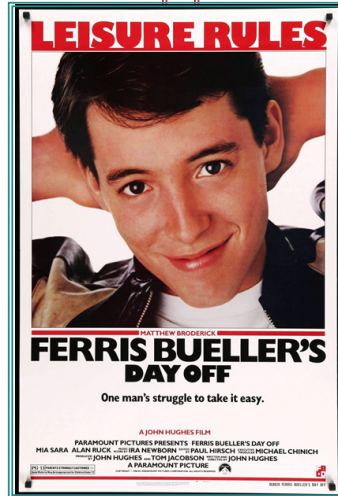
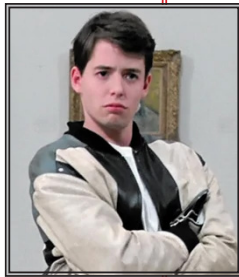
Mr. (Ed) Rooney: the hapless school principal who always loses when it comes to outwitting Ferris. Discovering Ferris' absence on this occasion is **the last straw** and because he knows that Ferris will graduate soon, he feels driven to finally catch him out. Rooney knows that Ferris is cutting school to have fun and is not genuinely sick, but he almost gets arrested trying to prove it. At the end of the film he's humiliated and a laughing stock as he rides the bus, disheveled, back to school.

Jeannie Bueller: Ferris' sister is one of the few people who sees through her brother, although she's jealous that he gets away with every plan he ever makes to outwit an adult. She is as intent on catching him out as Rooney - at least until the end of the film when she has to marvel at her brother's **ingenuity**. She even decides to side with him against Mr Rooney, which seems to boost her self confidence and make her feel a strange allegiance to her brother.

Tom Bueller: Ferris' father who obviously cares a lot about his son. It's not clear exactly what he does for a living, but he has a nice office in the city and is shown to be on a business lunch during the movie, implying he is a **white-collar businessman**.

Katie Bueller: a loving and caring mother to Ferris and Jeannie. She is easily fooled by Ferris as she usually doesn't give things a second thought, but she can be **skeptical** shown when she speaks to Rooney about her son's absence.

Morris Frye (Cameron's Father): an unseen antagonist in the film. He hates, and constantly fights with his wife; loving his car more than his own family. He doesn't physically appear in the film, but is mentioned on several occasions. He is one of Cameron's big motivations for behaving the way he does,



I.6 - Narrative Themes/Issues

Conflict: Seen both in the conflict between adults and teenagers and with authority figures and teenagers occurring throughout the film. The desire of teenagers to *want* to do some things vs what they're *allowed* to do.

Education: Depicted as being a boring ritual; Ferris learns more outside of the classroom.

Materialism: Ferris is annoyed because he got a computer and not a car! Cameron discusses how his father values his car more than anything else in his life.

Rebellion: Teenagers are seen rebelling in a wide variety of ways throughout the film!

Peer pressure: The need to conform drives the teenagers motivations and the peer pressure from the others often creates conflict.

I.7 - Key Elements of Film Form

Mise-en-scene	Film opens with an establishing shot is of a classically suburban, upper middle class home, a 'white house'. This is iconographic of the American dream, complete with three new cars parked out front. Ferris' room is filled with the trappings of an 80's teen in consumerist America, a TV stereo, synthesisers and a computer. These were high value goods at the time and reinforce that Ferris is wealthy, an aspiration for many.
Editing	There are a few scenes in the film that adopt an MTV/Music Video style montage, in one case this actually starts with the MTV ad. Characters are often shown in staggered, jump-cut montages. E.g. intro of Jeannie is staggered, with a CU of the foot tapping, then CU of hands on hips before the reveal of her face.
Camera Angles (Blocking)	Cinematography often shows off Chicago's landmarks and the architecture. Ferris is generally shot in medium close-ups. During the parade scene the camera is placed in the crowd looking up at Ferris; he is in an elevated position on the float and in society as a wealthy white male.
Soundtrack	Music is used to appeal to the teen audience with contemporary music used to anchor the feeling of excitement and demonstrate how cool and fun Ferris is.
Camera shots (POV)	The first time we see the parents is in POV shot, positioning the audience as the 'child' in the scene and therefore with Ferris our eponymous protagonist. A POV rack focus is also used when Ferris looks at Jeannie. When Ferris opens the curtains there is a shot from the outside looking in, solidifying Ferris' position as a privileged prince in his tower.

I.8 - Narrative Structures + Devices

Structures: Three Act Structure, but a five act structure could also be applied.

Viewpoint: Teen point of view

Timeline: the film is set over the course of one day.

Binary Oppositions: teenagers vs. adults (specifically those that are trying to 'restrict' teens)

Genre tropes (conventions): Ferris offers an alternative to the usual 'outsider' protagonist that guides us through High School, instead we have the POV of the most popular boy in school, and the direct mode of address places us at his side, and therefore equally popular.

Narrative Style: Breaks the fourth wall, but otherwise offers a classic Hollywood Narrative structure is used, the happy ending offers the audience pleasure and reward.

I.9 - Key Scenes

The Opening Monologue	This opening scene sets the tone for the film; humorous, rebellious and modern. Ferris breaking the fourth wall and use of text on screen suggests that Ferris knows that he's in a film. At the very least he knows the audience is there and this establishes a clear-sense of a relationship between Ferris and ourselves and we immediately warm to his engaging personality. Editing and the use of music are especially important in this scene to set the tone and genre.
Skipping school + calling Cameron	School & the register are presented as being dull and repetitive. Editing and the lack of soundtrack help emphasise this. Note how Cameron is introduced; the opposite of Ferris' introduction. Colours are muted and lighting is low key directly contrasting with the warmth and vibrancy of Ferris' poolside-lounging.
At the museum + nearly being caught	Another scene which uses montage style editing. We also have a lot of 'static' shots where neither the camera or the characters move. This is done, in part, to reflect the nature of the art that the characters are looking at. Cameron's performance as the film cuts between his face and that of a painting ever closer with each cut, reflects his emotions. The second half of the clip reflects the vibrancy of the city and Ferris' energy and ambition. There is some very clever use of camera movement, editing and performance in the taxi when they see Ferris' father.
The parade scene	The closest the film comes to creating a scene that looks like a music video, the style which it borrows ideas from throughout. This scene allows us to see how Cameron is both worried about the future but somewhat accepting of it and Ferris's much more impulsive nature. Use of cinematography here is key; lighting is high-key, the scene is colourful, busy and full of extras, props and bright clothing. The mood is joyous and united; everyone in the city joins in and we see an unashamed form of celebration. Whilst Sloane and Cameron are shot in MS and MCUs, broadly at eye-level. Ferris, is often shot from below and at a distance creating the sense that we are looking up at him in admiration.
Ferris rushes home	A classic scene which has been parodied many times. Interesting to see that initially, Ferris' mum is more concerned with her job and her success rather than the reasons for Jeannie's arrest. This helps to emphasise the themes of capitalism and materialism of 1980s America. This scene is especially noted for it's great use of parallel editing; we see 3 different narratives happening at once as the scene cuts between them. Some interesting sound effects; a 'cartoonish' skid noise and slow-mo sound from Ferris create an exaggerated, comedic tone.

I.10 - KEY TERMS

economic boom - an often-short-lived period of rapid economic growth resulting in lower unemployment and rising asset pricing.

latchkey kids - a child who returns to an empty home after school (or other activities) or a child who is often left at home with no supervision because their parents are away at work

auteur - an artist with a distinctive approach, usually a film director whose control is so clear they are likened to the "author" of the film

eponymous - the person, place, or thing that something else is named after.

Gen X - people born from 1965 to 1980. The first generation to grow up with personal computers.

alignment - a position of agreement or alliance

identification - a person's sense of identity with someone or something.

binary opposites - a pair of related terms or concepts that are opposite in meaning

the last straw - a further difficulty or annoyance, typically minor in itself but coming on top of a series of difficulties, that makes a situation unbearable.

ingenuity - the quality of being clever, original, and inventive.

white-collar businessmen - a person who performs professional, desk, managerial, or administrative work.

skeptical - not easily convinced; having doubts or reservations.

iconographic - a visual shorthand, a way of communicating meaning to the viewer.

rack focus - where one subject in a scene (foreground or background) is in focus and gradually the focus changes to another subject in the scene. A technique that allows the cinematographer to put a dramatic emphasis on one subject and then change that emphasis to another.