CODES AND CONVENTIONS OF A THRILLER GENRE
WHAT IS A THRILLER?

A thriller is a novel, play, or movie with an exciting plot. It often revolves around anticipation and suspense, with the aim being to keep the audience alert and on the edge of their seats. Tension and excitement are often used as the main elements of thriller films.
THEMES OF A THRILLER
THRILLER NARRATIVE

- New Equilibrium
  - A new balance is now in place.
- Equilibrium
- Disruption
- Resolution
  - An outcome to the disruption.
- Todrov's Theory
- Thriller Narratives
- Restored Order
  - The story reaches a conclusion.
- Something disrupts the equilibrium.
ICONOGRAPHY

The typical things you expect to see within a thriller.

- Confined/claustrophobic spaces
- Guns
- Cars
- Knives

Examples:
- Transformers: Dark of the Moon | Bumblebee Captured | No Prison...
- The Island Trailer
- Fast & Furious 6 - Final Trailer
- Orphan - Esther kills daddy (HD)
SETTING
The setting of a film is important, especially within the thriller genre, as the setting is almost like an extra character within the story.

Examples of setting:

- Ocean – 2012
- Desert – Transformers
- Urban – Batman
- Snow – The day after tomorrow
SUB GENRES OF THRILLER

- A sub genre is an identifiable type of horror.

**Action thriller** – uses physical action between characters and objects to create suspense within the film e.g. Kill Bill Vol.1.

**Crime thrillers** – combines suspenseful qualities of a thriller with a plot from a crime film e.g. The Dark Knight Rises.

**Psychological thrillers** – incorporates elements of drama and mystery to a film and explores the processes of the mind, which helps create suspense from the mind rather than a physical feeling of suspense e.g. The Shining.

**Science-Fiction thrillers** – merges science based themes into the plot of the film e.g. Super 8.

**Religious thrillers** – uses religious themes, objects, and ceremonies during a film e.g. Angels and Demons.
Thrillers often come in the form of hybrids. A hybrid is when you take two or more elements from a genre and included in one film.
CODES AND CONVENTIONS
MIRRORS

Within thriller films mirrors are used to portray the reflections of a person's soul and their inner self. Mirrors can also foreshadow the darkness within certain characters expressing inside emotions they may not want to reveal.

Black Swan – *Nina shows fear as her dark soul is staring at her with piercing eyes from within the mirror.*
LIGHTING

Low key lighting:
• Created by the use of a back light - mainly used in thriller films.
• Used to represent a dark atmospheres which can be seen as scary or mysterious.
• Dramatic effect as lighting reflects onto the characters and the atmosphere.

SHADOWS

An example of a successful use of shadows is from the thriller film ‘Nosferatu’

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SOUND

The use of sound within the thriller genre is an important element, as different musical themes within a film can produce different moods that affect the audience in different ways. For example in Alfred Hitchcock’s ‘Psycho’ the music is high pitched, adding suspense and tension to the film, whereas more action thriller films use loud and jumpy fast paced music to make the audience feel excited, and to emphasise the fast pace of the film.

CAMERA ANGLES

Thriller films include the use of camera angles to show different facial expressions and body language. By using a wide range of camera angles this can help capture every emotion present within a film, making the audience feel like they are observing alongside during the duration of the film.
To conclude, by conducting research about the codes and conventions of a thriller genre I have learnt that they play a key part within the thriller genre by helping create suspense and tension, which are used to keep the audience engaged throughout the film. Codes and conventions are also what makes a film so mesmerizing, keeping audiences at the edge of their seat constantly waiting for something to happen due to whatever codes and conventions are present within that film.