



SCREENING  
SHORTS

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# Film Glossary



resources

# Camera Framing (Size in frame)

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<b>frame</b>	Individual still image; the rectangle within which the image is composed or captured.
<b>extreme wide shot</b>	Takes in a large expanse of the setting to emphasise location or isolation.
<b>long shot</b>	Takes in much or all of the action while keeping the subject in sight (AKA wide shot).
<b>full shot</b>	Shows character from head to toe; highlights costume or shows multiple characters.
<b>medium long shot</b>	Shows characters from the knees up; useful when movement must be shown.
<b>medium shot</b>	Shows characters from the waist up; good for dialogue scenes.
<b>medium close-up</b>	Middle ground between MS and CU; maintains eerie distance during conversations.
<b>close-up</b>	Tightly frames an entire face/object; can reveal emotions/reactions.
<b>extreme close-up</b>	Shows a specific detail of a subject, filling the frame, to draw attention to it.
<b>establishing shot</b>	Shows a (often exterior) setting; placed at the head of a scene to establish location.
<b>master shot</b>	Establishes spatial relationships/setting; returned to when these need re-established.
<b>reframe</b>	Adjustment of framing to compensate for movement within the frame.
<b>shot size</b>	The size of the subject in the frame – close-up, long shot, full shot, etc.

# Camera Framing

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Subjects placed in frame	
<b>single shot</b>	One character is alone in the frame to give them importance or create isolation.
<b>two-shot</b>	Shows two characters in a frame to create a relationship between them.
<b>group shot</b>	Allows the camera to efficiently follow several characters; can create a bond.
<b>over-the-shoulder shot</b>	Camera sits over the shoulder of a character, looking at the same thing as them.
<b>over-the-hip shot</b>	Same as OTS but from a lower angle so can create a power imbalance.
<b>point-of-view shot</b>	Audience is positioned as if they were the character; we see what they see.
<b>reaction shot</b>	A shot in which we see the character's reaction (sometimes after a <b>POV shot</b> ).
Focusing point of attention	
<b>deep focus</b>	Keeps all details in the frame focus in case background is important.
<b>depth of field</b>	Distance between objects nearest/furthest from camera in acceptably sharp focus.
<b>rack focus/focus pull</b>	Shifts focus from one subject to another.
<b>shallow focus</b>	Background is blurry while focus remains on subject.
<b>tilt-shift</b>	Allows certain elements to be in greater focus; is quite dreamlike.

# Camera Angles

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<b>aerial shot</b>	Shot from in the sky and establishes a large expanse of scenery; aka <b>helicopter shot</b> .
<b>angle</b>	The viewpoint chosen to film a subject.
<b>bird's-eye shot</b>	An extreme high angle shot where the camera looks straight down to create a sense of scale and movement (aka <b>top shot</b> or <b>overhead shot</b> ).
<b>Dutch angle</b>	A disorienting shot where the camera is tipped onto its side so the 'world' of the film seems crooked (aka <b>canted angle</b> ).
<b>eye-level shot</b>	Camera is set at eye level so mimics how we see people in real life.
<b>hand-held</b>	Camera is held manually to produce irregular movement (can signify point of view).
<b>high angle shot</b>	A shot looking down on the action.
<b>low angle shot</b>	A shot looking up on the action.
<b>shoulder-level shot</b>	Camera is set at shoulder level; the most standard shot.
<b>worm's-eye shot</b>	An extreme low angle shot where the camera is placed at ground level (aka <b>ground-level shot</b> ).

# Camera Movement

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<b>arc shot</b>	Camera moves around the subject, following a rough semi-circle.
<b>crab shot</b>	Allows the following of a subject sideways.
<b>crane shot</b>	The camera is mounted on a crane, to achieve striking height or aerial movement.
<b>dolly shot</b>	Camera is set on a dolly which allows smooth movement when following the subject.
<b>dolly zoom shot</b>	Camera dollies in/out while zooming in/out at the same time; creates a warping or disorienting feel.
<b>pan shot</b>	When a static camera pivots horizontally.
<b>static/fixed shot</b>	Camera is unmoving; good for comedy/dance as it emphasises performer's movement.
<b>tilt</b>	When a static camera pivots vertically.
<b>tracking</b>	Allows the camera to follow (track) the subject from behind/beside; can reveal a scene.
<b>whip pan shot</b>	A panning shot which moves quickly, as if the camera has suddenly 'noticed' something.
<b>whip tilt shot</b>	A tilting shot which moves quickly and creates motion blur, as with a <b>whip pan shot</b> .
<b>zoom (lens) shot</b>	Image size changes as the focal length of the zoom lens is altered; can show shock/surprise.

# Editing (a-c)

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<b>180 degree rule</b>	The <b>line of action</b> should not be crossed to maintain continuity - there should never be a difference greater than 180 degrees between camera angles in consecutive shots (e.g. two characters/elements in the same scene should always have the same left/right relationship to each other). Breaking this rule disrupts the scene/disorients the audience.
<b>30 degree rule</b>	Camera angles between consecutive shots should never be less than 30 degrees.
<b>continuity editing</b>	Seamlessly cutting from shot to shot without calling attention to the editing. Creates the sense of an unbroken period of space/time, and a believable, consistent world.
<b>continuity error</b>	When the action or elements of a scene don't match across shots (for example, when a character breaks a glass window but in a later shot the window is shown undamaged).
<b>cross-cutting</b>	Alternating between two or more different scenes which are (usually) happening simultaneously; aka <b>parallel editing</b> .
<b>crossing the line</b>	Failure to follow the <b>180 degree rule</b> by crossing the <b>line of action</b> .
<b>cut</b>	A clean break between consecutive shots or sequences that marks a quick transition between one time/space and another. Each kind of cut will create a different meaning.
<b>cutaway</b>	A sudden shift to another scene of action or different viewing angle; or a shot inserted between scenes to effect a transition (as a bridging shot).



# Editing (d-1)

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<b>dissolve</b>	When two shots are on screen at the same time, visible through each other. The first shot is faded out while the second is faded in (aka <b>mix</b> ).
<b>editing</b>	The process of putting shots together into <b>sequences</b> /scenes. Described according to rhythm/pace (i.e. varying lengths of the shots in the sequence) and type of <b>transition</b> .
<b>eye-line match</b>	Shows viewers what characters are seeing (e.g. if a character is looking at an off-screen object, the next shot will be of that object).
<b>fade in/out</b>	Gradual increase/decrease of sound level (often from/to silence).
<b>fade to black</b>	Gradual disappearance of image into black screen.
<b>jump cut</b>	A cut between two shots of the same object, character or scene where the angle of the camera is less than 45 degrees.
<b>line of action</b>	An imaginary line used to help stage camera positions for shooting action. Typically 'drawn' along the line of sight between two characters in a scene, or following the movement of characters, cars, etc. In the continuity system all shots will be taken from one side only of the line to maintain consistency (the <b>180 degree rule</b> ).
<b>lip sync</b>	Synchronising mouth and lip movements in the image with speech on the soundtrack.
<b>long take</b>	A shot that is allowed to continue for longer than usual without editing.

# Editing (m-t)

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<b>match cut/match on action</b>	Joining two shots with matching elements (an image, a line of dialogue, an action) for a stronger sense of continuity. These form the basis for <b>continuity editing</b> .
<b>mix</b>	See <b>dissolve</b> .
<b>montage</b>	Sequence of shots assembled for emotional impact, condensing story, conveying an idea.
<b>parallel action</b>	When two story elements, happening simultaneously, are edited so that action switches between the scenes (often leading up to a point when the two meet).
<b>parallel editing</b>	See <b>cross-cutting</b> .
<b>sequence</b>	A group of shots showing a single piece of action, e.g. a chase sequence; aka <b>scene</b> .
<b>shot/reverse shot</b>	Alternating shots, typically of two characters in a dialogue sequence.
<b>time code</b>	Numeric reference (hours/minutes/seconds/frames) for each frame of the film.
<b>transition</b>	The movement of one shot to another; can be achieved by a cut, a dissolve, a wipe, etc.



# Lighting

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<b>3-point lighting</b>	Standard lighting setup - <b>key light, fill light, backlight</b> ; filmmaker controls illumination.
<b>ambient lighting</b>	Light already on location; be aware when shooting for long periods as light will change.
<b>backlighting</b>	Placed higher than actor/object; hits them from behind; helps frame feel 3-dimensional.
<b>bounce lighting</b>	Uses white/silver boards to softly bounce light from any source; subtly highlights subject.
<b>fill lighting</b>	Standard lighting: places a less powerful light opposite the <b>key light</b> to remove shadows.
<b>hard lighting</b>	Uses a direct beam of light and less fill light to create dramatic shadows/harsh lines.
<b>high key lighting</b>	Heightens the <b>key light</b> and uses <b>fill light</b> to brighten a scene; creates an optimistic tone.
<b>key lighting</b>	Main light source in <b>3-point lighting</b> setup: illuminates the form of the subject or actor.
<b>low key lighting</b>	Uses fewer light sources to gain shadows, contrast and blackness for an ominous tone.
<b>motivated lighting</b>	Imitates natural light sources; a stand-in for sun/moonlight, street lights, car headlights...
<b>natural lighting</b>	Uses light already at location, with bounce cards to reflect or block it to mimic reality.
<b>practical lighting</b>	Uses props (lamps, candles, TV set...) to light corners/faces; helps ambiance of a scene.
<b>side lighting</b>	Enters the frame from the side to highlight a person/object; provides drama and mood.
<b>soft lighting</b>	Uses large light sources/diffusion for subtle shades of light. Good for romantic scenes.

# Sound

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<b>ambient sound</b>	Sound that is natural to the setting. It can be added during editing.
<b>bridge</b>	Sound that carries on from one scene to the next; sound is heard then we cut to source.
<b>dialogue</b>	The words spoken between the characters.
<b>diegetic</b>	Sound that can be heard by the characters.
<b>dubbing</b>	The elements of the soundtrack mixed together during post-production.
<b>fade in/out</b>	Gradual increase/decrease of sound level (often from/to silence).
<b>foley track</b>	Sound effects created using sources other than those shown on screen.
<b>incidental music</b>	Background music that adds atmosphere to the action.
<b>non-diegetic</b>	Sound that does not exist in the “real world” of the film - the characters cannot hear it.
<b>score</b>	The incidental music composed specifically for a film.
<b>sound effects</b>	Sounds added in post-production to build mood or reinforce action.
<b>sound perspective</b>	Use of sound to create a sense of physical space (sounds in the distance seem far away).
<b>soundtrack</b>	The audio components of a film – dialogue, sound effects, the music track.
<b>voiceover</b>	When an unseen person speaks on the soundtrack as a narrative aid.

# Producing and Directing

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<b>above the line</b>	The part of a film's budget that covers the costs associated with major creative talent: the stars, the director, the producer(s) and the writer(s); films with expensive special effects have more 'above the line' budget costs for technical aspects
<b>below the line</b>	Production expenses that are not <b>above the line</b> , such as costs of material, music rights, publicity, the trailer...
<b>composition</b>	The complete arrangement of a scene by the director. The process includes camera angles, <b>mise-en-scène</b> , the movement of the actors...
<b>continuity</b>	Making sure all details on screen are consistent from shot-to-shot to maintain realism. Errors could be a prop being held at waist-level in one shot then at chest-level in the next.
<b>mise-en-scène</b>	French term: "put in the scene". Refers to all the elements of a shot – set, props, costumes, lighting, colour, actor position – and the <b>composition</b> /choreography of these.
<b>shot</b>	The moment that the camera starts rolling until the moment it stops; the continuous footage or sequence between two <b>cuts</b> . (The term "shot" is from the early days of film when cameras were hand-cranked, similar to hand-cranked machine guns of the time.)
<b>shooting script</b>	In a screenplay scenes are assigned numbers tying in to a list of resources needed to shoot that scene (dates, times, actors, costumes, props, equipment...)

# Writing

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<b>end credits</b>	A list of everyone involved in the film's production, shown at the end of the film.
<b>genre</b>	Groups of different types of films, defined by <b>conventions</b> which often appear in examples of a genre (e.g. narratives, symbols/icons, themes, settings, characters...)
<b>icons/iconography</b>	A whole series of visual elements and symbols with the same range of reference.
<b>off camera/off screen</b>	Action belonging to the story world which takes place outside the frame.
<b>opening titles</b>	Credits shown on screen at the film's start; includes the title, producers, director, writer and main actors. Used much less in recent years.
<b>scene</b>	The basic dramatic unit, usually continuous in time and setting.
<b>script/screenplay</b>	The text version of a film; includes the dialogue spoken by characters, details all the action depicted on screen and indicates the intended atmosphere.
<b>stereotypes</b>	Often used as a derogatory term for a quickly drawn or 'stock' character; criticised as lazy/deliberate misrepresentations of people/groups but can have its uses.
<b>storyboard</b>	Typically a series of drawings which approximate to a sequence of moving images within each scene.
<b>symbols/symbolism</b>	A visual element representing something more abstract (e.g. water symbolises purity).

# Technology/Equipment

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<b>digital technologies</b>	Refers to any system for recording and reading information – images, sounds – in computer-based numerical codes rather than in the older ‘analogue’ systems where information is directly stored on film or tape. Digital versions are easier to access, manipulate and store than analogue copies. Unlike analogue recordings, the audio or visual quality of digital versions does not degrade over time.
<b>dolly</b>	A platform on wheels, capable-of movement in any direction, or other moving vehicle.
<b>focal length</b>	The distance between the optical centre of the lens and the image sensor. The longer the focal length, the greater the magnification involved; the shorter the focal length, the wider the angle of view.
<b>frames per second</b>	The number of still images that pass through the camera/projector per second. Film usually runs at 24 fps, video at 25 fps.
<b>High Definition</b>	HD/Hi-Def refers to the quality of the visual recording. There are many more pixels used in a high definition image, which means that you can see more clear, crisp pictures, vivid colours, and up to five times more detail than standard definition.
<b>mixed media / multi-media</b>	When various types of animation and/or live action film are combined.
<b>Steadicam</b>	Trade name for a camera mount which, whether handheld or strapped to the operator, lessens movement, so making movement smoother and more fluid.
<b>wide angle lens</b>	A lens with a short focal length, a wide angle of view, and less magnification than a telephoto lens.

# Animation

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<b>2D animation</b>	The creation of moving pictures in a flat, two-dimensional environment, through 'cel' (hand-drawn) animation or creating images in computerised animation software.
<b>3D animation</b>	Creating moving pictures in a three-dimensional environment with depth perception.
<b>animation</b>	Each frame of a film is individually produced by photographing artwork, models, etc. When the frames are run together, it creates the illusion of continuous motion.
<b>claymation</b>	A technique where clay/plasticine figures are filmed using <b>stop-motion photography</b> .
<b>cut-out animation</b>	A <b>2D animation</b> technique that uses flat characters/props/backgrounds cut from materials (card, fabric or photos). Cut-out shapes are moved slightly and photographed.
<b>motion-capture (mo-cap)</b>	Recording the movement of objects/people to animate digital models in 2D or 3D computer animation. Capturing face/fingers/subtle expressions - <b>performance capture</b> .
<b>persistence of vision</b>	Trick of the eyes: when still images are projected above a certain speed, we see fluid movement. (Old films were projected below this speed so images flickered: "the flicks".)
<b>silhouette animation</b>	Characters are only visible as black silhouettes, usually because they are backlit. It uses jointed, flat marionettes whose poses are minutely readjusted for each frame.
<b>stop-motion photography</b>	When objects (e.g. puppets, models) are moved a tiny bit between each photographed frame to create the illusion of movement, such as in <b>claymation</b> .

# Documentary

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<b>documentary</b>	Screen texts seeking to represent versions of reality/fact. Forms evolved from early records of events to contemporary <b>docu-soaps</b> . Different types use different techniques.
<b>docu-soap</b>	AKA reality television/drama-mentaries. TV in the style of a <b>documentary</b> where a “plot” is constructed by intention/editing so shows resemble soap operas. Often not seen as “real” documentaries due to misrepresentation/fabrication.
<b>expository documentary</b>	Set up a specific point-of-view/argument about a subject; often feature “voice of God” style voice-over. Cinematographer will collect footage that supports/strengthens the spoken argument of the film (stock/archival footage, b-roll, re-enactments of historical events).
<b>observational documentary</b>	Attempt to discover the ultimate truth of their subject by acting as a <b>fly-on-the-wall</b> - in other words, observing the subject’s real life without interrupting. Cinematographers aim to be as unobtrusive as possible in order to capture their subjects in a raw, unguarded state.
<b>participatory documentary</b>	AKA <b>interactive documentaries</b> . Focus on interaction/direct engagement between filmmaker/subject, capturing real emotional responses/interactions to support filmmaker’s point-of-view/prove film’s intent; often present filmmaker’s version of the truth as <u>the</u> truth.
<b>performative documentary</b>	Focus on filmmaker’s involvement with subject, using personal experience/relationship with subject as a springboard for exploring larger, subjective truths. Cinematographer captures production process and intimate footage showing this direct/personal relationship.
<b>poetic documentary</b>	No linear continuity; focus on mood, tone, imagery. Often have little/no narrative content; cinematographer asked to capture highly composed, visually striking images that tell a story without verbal context.
<b>reflexive documentary</b>	Focus on the relationship between filmmaker and audience. Subject is often the process of documentary filmmaking itself, so cinematographer will shoot behind-the-scenes style footage of the production process, including editing, interviewing, and post-production.



# Credits

Resource developed by Gail Robertson  
on behalf of Screen Scotland.

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