

Camera Terms

Digital Video Arts I

Framing What's included and excluded in an individual shot.



Extreme wide shot

A shot in which figures appear small in the landscape. Often used at the beginning of a film or sequence as an 'establishing shot' to show where the action is taking place; also used to make a figure appear small or isolated.



Wide Shot

A shot in which a figure can be seen from head to toe.



Mid shot

Shows the figure from approximately the waist to the head. In a mid shot, you can easily recognize an individual but you can also see what they are doing with their hands. A medium close-up would be from chest to head



Close-up

Head and shoulders, enabling you to easily see facial expressions, so you can see what characters are thinking and feeling



Extreme close-up

From just above the eyebrows to just below the mouth, or even closer: used to emphasize facial expression or to make the subject appear threatening.



Over-the-shoulder shot

A shot in which we see a character over another's shoulder, often used in interviews or dialogues

Two Shot

Any shot with two people in it



Point of view shot - A shot from a character's point of view

Reaction shot - A shot showing a character's expression as they react to something

Wide-angle shot (taken with a wide-angle lens) - This has the effect of seeming to exaggerate perspective. It's often used to make the viewer feel that they are close to the action.\

Depth of field - This refers to how much of the shot seems to be in focus, in front of and behind the subject.

Low angle shot - The camera points upwards, usually making the subject or setting seem grand or threatening.

High angle shot - The camera looks down, making the subject look vulnerable or insignificant. It can give the audience a motherly feeling toward the character.

Camera Movements

Track - Moving the camera itself towards or away from the subject, or to follow a moving subject. (Not to be confused with a zoom, where the camera's lens is varied to give the impression of moving closer to, or away from the subject.)

Pan - Pivoting the camera to the side to scan a scene or to follow a moving subject.

A sudden, fast pan.

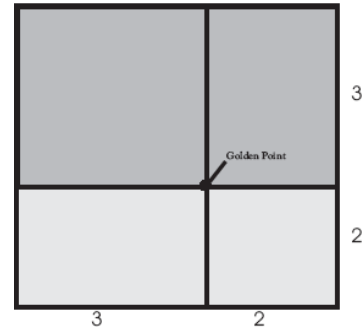
Tilt - Pivoting the camera vertically up or down.

Hand-held shot - This is used to convey a sense of immediacy.

Framing Your Shots

There are many ways to compose a shot, depending on your goals. You want to be aware of what is in the shot and what isn't. Ask yourself, can I clearly see what I intend for the viewer to see?

Rule of Thirds - this classic rule suggests that the center of the camera's attention is one-third of the way down from the top of the shot.



Headroom - A term used with shots of people. This refers to the space above the subject's head. You'll see different amounts of headroom left, depending on the intent of the creator of the video. In general, if you're standing right in front of someone, you'll see that they have space all around them - they aren't cut off by a frame. By leaving headroom, or space beside them, you are imitating what you see in real life.



correct headroom



too much headroom



too little headroom

Lead Room - If you are interviewing someone or have video of someone talking, you generally do not want them looking directly at the camera (again, depends on your goals - certain situations may call for that). Generally you want the person to be looking off to the left or right of the camera a bit, towards where the interviewer is sitting. When you do this, frame your shot so that there is some lead room or talking room. That is, you want to leave some extra space to the side of their face as if you were going to draw a dialogue box in for them. If the person is talking to another person on camera, this is shown as space between them. If the person in motion, gives them space to walk to. It leaves space in the shot for the action, whether it be words or walking.



correct lead room



too much lead room



too little lead room