

Film – Key Terms

CAMERA RANGE:

1. extreme long shot: shot of, e.g. a large crowd scene or a view of scenery as far as the horizon
2. long shot: a view of a situation or setting from a distance
3. medium long shot: shows a group of people in interaction with each other, e.g. a fight scene, with part of their surroundings in the picture
4. full shot: a view of a figure's entire body in order to show action and/or a constellation of characters
5. medium shot, mid shot, medium close shot: shows a subject down to his or her waist, e.g. showing head and shoulders of two people in conversation
6. close-up: a full-screenshot of a subject's face, showing the finest nuances of expression
7. extreme close-up (shot): a shot of a hand, eye, mouth or object in detail

POINT OF VIEW (VIEWPOINTS) (= the position from which the camera is filming)

8. establishing shot: often used at the beginning of a scene to indicate the location or setting, it is usually a long shot taken from a neutral position
9. point-of-view shot, POV-shot: shows a scene from the perspective of a character
10. over-the-shoulder shot: often used in dialogue scenes, a frontal view of a dialogue partner from the perspective of someone standing behind and slightly to the side of the other partner, so that parts of both can be seen
11. reaction shot: short shot of a character's response to an action
12. insert (shot): a detail shot which quickly gives visual information necessary to understand the meaning of a scene, for example a newspaper page, or a physical detail
13. reverse-angle shot: a shot from the opposite perspective, e.g. after an over-the-shoulder shot

CAMERA ANGLES

14. aerial shot or high angle or overhead or bird's eye: long or extreme long shot of the ground from the air
15. high-angle: shot shows people or objects from \ above, i.e. higher than eye level
16. low-angle shot or below shot: shows people or objects from below, i.e. lower than eye level
17. eye-level shot or straight-on angle: views a subject from the level of a person's eyes

CAMERA MOVEMENT (movement of the camera during a shot)

18. pan(ning shot): the camera pans (moves horizontally) from left to right or vice versa across the picture
19. tilt(shot): the camera tilts up (moves upwards) or tilts down (moves downwards) around a vertical line
20. tracking shot/trucking shot: the camera follows along next to or behind a moving object or person
zoom: the stationary camera appears to approach a subject by 'zooming in' ; or to move farther away by 'zooming out'

EDITING / MONTAGE: (= the arrangement of shots in a structured sequence)

21. master shot: main shot of a whole scene taken by one camera in one position, which is then intercut with other shots to add interest
22. cutaway shot: of something not shown by the master shot of a scene, but connected to the main action in some way
23. flashback: a scene or sequence dealing with the past which is inserted into a film's 'present time'
24. flash-forward: a scene or sequence which looks into the future
25. match cut: two scenes connected by visual or aural parallelism, e.g. one door closing and then another one opening
26. split screen: division of the screen to show two or more pictures at the same time

PUNCTUATION (= the way in which shots are linked)

27. Cut: a switch from one image or shot to another
28. jump-cut: (a) switching back and forth between two or more persons who are closely involved with each other, e.g. in a conversation or a chase scene; (b) using cuts to create an effect of moving rapidly towards a subject
29. fade-in: from a black screen or ground, the gradual emergence of an image, which slowly becomes brighter until it reaches full strength
30. fade-out: the gradual disappearance of an image until the screen or ground is completely black; a device used to end a scene
31. dissolve, dissolving shot or cross-fade: following a fade-out with a fade-in in order to move slowly from one scene to the next

LIGHTING

32. natural lighting: the light that we don't have to move. Utilizing the light that is already available at the location. Have to consider the time of day at the location
33. key light: the primary light source of the scene. It is the most intense and direct light source. Generally, the key light will illuminate the form of the subject or actor

34. high key lighting: a style of lighting for film that reduces the lighting ration in the scene. Used by filmmakers to adjust the mood and tone of a scene. Dominated by white tones from bright lights; minimal use of blacks and mid-range tones
35. low key lighting: a lighting style that uses a hard source to encase the scene in shadow. Low key lighting wants contrast and blackness. Dominated by dark tones, shadows, striking contrast; for ominous warnings
36. fill lighting: cancels out the shadows created by the key light. A fill light is placed on the opposite of the key light and is not as powerful as the key light
37. backlight: filming a person or event against a background of light, especially the sun, which produces an idealized, sometimes romantic effect
38. practical light: light sources like lamps, candles, they are meant to light corners or faces to help the ambiance of the scene
39. hard lighting: a harsh source of light – can be created with a direct beam from a light source or from sunlight. This creates shadows and harsh lines – used to draw attention anywhere in the frame, especially on the subject
40. soft light: an aesthetic used by cinematographers to eliminate shadows and create subtle shades of light. It can add youth to a subject's face
41. side lighting: light that enters the frame from the side to highlight a person or object. Used to provide drama and mood

MISCELLANEOUS

42. background music: the music accompanying scenes (remember diegetic and non-diegetic sounds)
43. footage: piece of film or video.
44. mise-en-scene: placement of objects and people within the camera frame