



# Basic filming techniques and conventions

## 1. Production/Shooting

Each shot must have a purpose in the scene. It should be as short as possible to achieve this.

### Framing

#### Wide shot/ long shot



Sets the scene. Often used at the start of a film as an 'establishing' shot so that the audience know where the action is taking place.

#### Medium shot [MS]



Waist to head > you can recognise the character and see what s/he is doing with his/her hands.

#### Medium close-up [MCU]



From chest to head

#### Close-up [CU]



Head and shoulders only > audience sees facial expression.

#### Extreme close-up [XCU]



Mouth to eyebrows or closer > shows what the character is feeling or thinking; can seem threatening.

#### Point of View [POV]



The scene is shot from the character's point of view or perspective, but not directly through his/her eyes. It increases the audience's involvement.

**Subjective shot**



A view of the action as seen through the eyes of a particular character: the viewer is placed in his/her shoes – not often used.

**Reaction shot**



Shows a character's expression as s/he reacts to something.

**Camera viewpoint**

**Low angle**



The subject seems threatening, powerful and dominant.

**High angle**



The subject seems vulnerable, small and insignificant. This viewpoint also decreases the speed of a moving subject.

**Bird's eye**



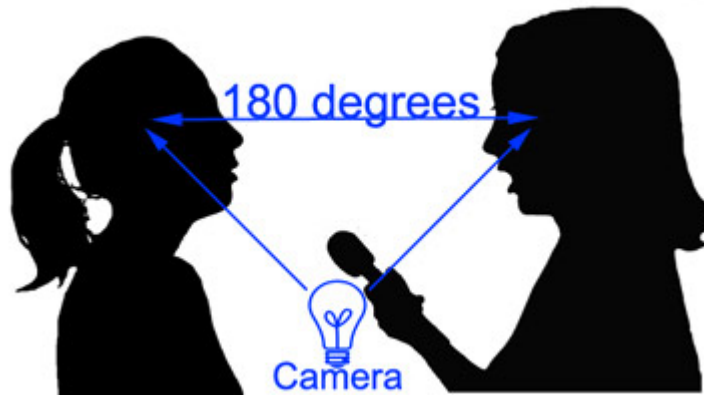
A vertical shot or view from above.







**Oblique angle**



Suggests a bizarre environment or psychological state. Other effects such as blurring could contribute to this.

## The 180° Rule



	<p>If there are two speakers on screen, imagine a line between them. The camera is one side of this line and can turn at any angle up to 180° without the subjects appearing to switch sides – they would always remain facing each other.</p>	
	<p>If both subjects are filmed facing the same direction on screen, the viewer does not get the impression that they are speaking to each other.</p>	
	<p>The same applies to moving subjects – if one leaves the screen on the right and reappears from the right it seems to be on a return journey. Moving subjects should always move in the same direction to suggest a continuing journey.</p>	

## Camera movements

*Use a tripod for the most professional results.*

### **Pan**

The camera turns to follow a moving subject or to give a panoramic view.

### **Tilt**

The camera is tilted up or down.

### **Arc**

The camera moves in a semi-circle around the subject.

### **Hand-held shot**

Gives a sense of immediacy and a rough, low-budget feel as in *The Blair Witch Project*.

### **Track**

The camera moves towards or away from the subject or follows a moving subject. For smooth movement fix the video to a supermarket trolley or similar.

## 2. Post-production/Editing

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### Transitions

#### Cut

One image is replaced by another. This is the most common transition between shots in the same scene.

#### Cut on the action

In action shots the cut should be made right at the start of the action.

#### Cross-dissolve

One image dissolves into another, which suggests time passing or a relaxed atmosphere. It's used to shift from one scene to another.

#### Fade up

Another image fades in.

#### Fade down

The image fades away gradually. Fading to black also suggests time passing. It's used to shift from one scene to another.

#### Wipe

The new image slides in from the side. It's used to shift from one scene to another.

#### The cut-in

The video switches to something visible in the main scene, which can add to the clarity of a segment or add variety to the sequence. The footage for the cut-in can be captured at any time, but it will be important to pay attention to continuity.

#### The cutaway

The video cuts from the primary video source to a second video source outside or away from the current scene. The audio track from the main video should continue during the cutaway scene. If the audio from the cutaway scene is also used it should be at a reduced volume. It may be filmed in the same location but with different camera angles or at a different site. Cutaways are useful in documentary style or instructional movies.

#### Noddy shot

Not necessarily filmed during the interview, this is a shot of the interviewer responding to the interviewee's responses.

### Sound

#### Natural sound/sync'

This is sound recorded at the same time as the action.

#### Atmos'

Sound that is not necessarily recorded while filming, but fits in with the context e.g. background traffic noise, birdsong or party chatter. It's a good idea to put the lens cap on and record some of this sound when filming on location to use when editing to fill any gaps or cover unwanted sounds.

#### Incidental music

Music that plays behind the natural/sync' sound of the scene – it is often used to atmospheric effect.

#### Sound Effects

This is artificial audio added to the soundtrack for impact – a *Foley operator* makes these sounds backstage in a theatre or for a radio production. You can download examples from the internet, buy DVDs of different sound effects, or record your own.

#### Source/ambience ratio

*Source* is the sound you **want** to record e.g. dialogue; *ambience* is unwanted audio. Aim to maximise the source/ambience ratio by using an external microphone close to the speaker wherever possible.