

Elements of Film Handout

Notes on Topic 1: Types of Shots

Technique	Definition	Effect
Shot	A shot occurs when all the action is filmed in one take, without disruption.	
Point-of-View Shot	This shot is taken from the perspective of a character. The audience sees everything a character sees and how he/she sees it as he/she moves along.	
Hand-held Shot	Hand-held shots are shaky but give a sense of a unique view of events that the camera-holder has as he/she move through their environment.	
Angle of Destiny	This is a shot taken from high above a scene or character but at an angle, such as from the top corner of a room.	
Flat Angle	The camera is at eye-level with the subject in the shot.	
Low Angle	The camera is angled up from below the subject.	
High Angle	The camera is angled down from above the subject.	
Extreme Long Shot	The subject is filmed from very far away and may barely be visible.	
Medium Shot	The medium shot usually only has the top half of the subject in the frame.	
Close-up Shot	Close-ups are used to give the viewer intimate details about the subject.	
Canted Angle	Also known as the “Dutch Angle”, this is when the camera is not held level (the subject in the frame is tilted or crooked).	
Worm’s Eye & Bird’s Eye Angle	These are shots that are filmed either from the ground looking straight up at the subject (worm’s eye), or, from the air looking directly down at the subject (bird’s eye).	

Notes on Topic 2: Framing

Technique	Definition	Effect
Mis-en-scène	Mis-en-scène is the use of anything other than dialogue to help tell a story or set a mood. Set design is very important to mis-en-scène, but other contributing factors are lighting, space, composition, costumes, hairstyles, casting, character placement, and even the type of film.	
Internal Framing	Internal framing is when a camera is filming a scene that has a natural frame within it that captures the subject, such as a door or window.	
Open Space	The subject of the frame is surrounded by open space (no objects and no people).	
Negative Space	Where the subject of a shot or image is referred to as occupying positive space, negative space is the space around the subject. In film, negative space is the space around the subject as it moves.	
Rule of Thirds	This refers to the arrangement of a scene according to a 3x3 grid (imagine a square divided equally into 9 smaller squares, with lines separating them). Applying this rule, subjects are not centred, but arranged along the lines that divide the scene into thirds.	
Shallow Focus	Shallow focus uses a small depth of field to create a scene where only one part of the image is in focus and the rest of the image is out of focus.	
Deep Focus	Deep focus uses a large depth of field to create a scene where all parts of the image are in focus.	

Notes on Topic 3: Blocking (mentioned in this Workbook but not the tutorial)

Technique	Definition	Effect
Blocking	The physicality of the actors (posture & movement).	

Notes on Topic 4: Lighting

Technique	Definition	Effect
Back Lighting	Lighting the subject in a scene from behind.	
Top Lighting	Lighting a subject in a scene from above.	
Side Lighting	Subject in a scene is half-lit and half in darkness.	
Under Lighting	Lighting a subject in a scene from below.	
High Key Lighting	Bright, even lighting with few shadows and little contrast between dark and light areas in a scene.	
Low Key Lighting	Dim, uneven lighting with many shadows and plenty of contrast between dark and light areas in a scene.	
Chiaroscuro	Purposeful control of light and dark contrast on the subject.	

Notes on Topic 5: Sound

Technique	Definition	Effect
Diegetic Sound	Sounds that the on-screen characters in film experience and maybe even react to, that the audience also hears.	
Non-Diegetic Sound	Sounds that the on-screen characters cannot hear.	
Voice-Over	Voice-overs can be in the form of a narrator speaking about the events in a scene or film. They are usually not recorded during the filming of the scene, but added later during post-production.	

Notes on Topic 6: Camera Movement

Technique	Definition	Effect
Panning	Panning refers to the horizontal movement of the camera. This produces a visual effect that is similar to what you would see if you moved your head from side to side.	
Tilting	Tilting is when a still camera is tilted up or down. This can be used to show that something is in a low or high position, or to follow an object or person upward or downward, such as someone climbing stairs or an object falling.	
Tracking (Dolly)	Tracking is usually done with a special camera mount called a dolly. The dolly is a wheeled platform that moves - a camera on the dolly can keep pace with the subject during filming. This allows the camera to move alongside the subject, such as a moving car.	
Zooming	A special lens is used to make it appear like the camera is moving towards (zoom in) or away from (zoom out) the subject. The camera itself is not moving, so zooming allows for rapid and smooth movement.	
Whip Planning	This is the very rapid movement of the camera sideways. This fast motion causes the image to blur.	
Push-In	This is movement of the camera toward a specific subject. As opposed to zooming in, this effect is done by actually moving the camera (perhaps on a wheeled dolly or slider) toward the subject.	
Pull-Back	This is movement of the camera away from a specific subject. As opposed to zooming out, this effect is done by actually moving the camera (perhaps on a wheeled dolly or slider) away from the subject.	
Spiral Shot	The camera circles around and points inward at an individual or a group of people to provide a full 360-degree view. It can be a quick spiral or in slow motion.	
Reframing	Reframing occurs in a single scene when camera angle, direction, or aspect ratio is changed to make more or less content appear in the scene. Reframing occurs without a cut but can include a change in focus.	

Notes on Topic 7: Transitions in Film

Technique	Definition	Effect
Wipe	A wipe is a transition that uses a line or shape that passes through the screen as one shot ends and is pushed away, being replaced by the next shot. The two shots do not blend. There are many types of wipes depending on the shape and movement of the line.	
Dissolve	The end of one shot gradually disappears or goes out of focus as the beginning of the next shot gradually appears and focuses.	
Match Dissolve	A transition using an image from one shot that retains its shape as a new image from the next shot dissolves in.	
Fade In/Out	The ending of a scene by fading the last part or focus of the scene to black or white (the scene itself fades away to be replaced by black or white entirely).	
Freeze Frame	When a scene is ended by giving the appearance of stopping the film and “freezing” or holding the image for a few seconds.	
Cut	An instant change from scene to another, or from one view of a scene to another.	
Jump Cut	This type of cut involves two camera shots in sequence that are taken from slightly different camera angles.	
Match Cut	This cut moves from one scene to the next with objects, spaces or scene arrangements that match each other in appearance.	