



A Glossary of Media Terms

aerial shot	A camera shot filmed from an airplane, helicopter, blimp, balloon, kite or high building (higher than a crane).
arc shot	A shot in which a moving camera circles round the subject being photographed.
bridging shot	A shot that connects one scene to another by showing a change in time or location. A bridging shot can also be used to connect two shots from the same scene by using a close-up, distant pan or different camera angle thus relating the shots via content.
camera angle	The position of the camera on a vertical continuum relative to the object being shot: eye-level, high-angle (looking down from above), low-angle (looking up from below), Dutch-angle (with the normal vertical axis tilted diagonally). The term can include the perspective given by the camera to the depth of focus, height and width of the particular object and action being photographed.
caption	See titles.
close-up	A shot in which a smallish object (e.g. the human head) fits easily within the frame.
composition	The complete arrangement of a scene by the director. The process includes camera angles, lighting, properties, characters, and the movement of the actors.
continuity editing	The conventions through which the impression of an unbroken continuum of space and time is suggested, constructing a consistent storyline out of takes made at different times.
crane shot	A shot in which the camera rises above the ground on a mobile support.
cross-cutting	Swiftly cutting backwards and forwards between more than one scene.
crossing the line	Breaking the 180° rule typical of continuity editing (see 180° rule).
cutaway	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).
depth (of field/focus)	The range of a camera lens. Depth of field refers to the distance furthest away from a lens in which the objects being photographed will remain in focus approaching infinity. Depth of focus refers to the closest proximity to the lens in which the objects being photographed will remain in focus approaching the infinitesimal.

dissolve	The slow fading of one shot into another.
dolly	A trolley on which the camera is pulled along the ground.
dynamic cutting	Combining a series of seemingly unrelated shots, objects, people, situations, details and characters in juxtaposition with one another (a form of montage, opposed to continuity cutting).
establishing shot	A long shot, often the first in a sequence, which establishes the positions of elements relative to each other and identifies the setting.
external diegetic sound	Sound which comes from out of frame, but is understood as belonging within the story space (unlike incidental music, which is extra-diegetic).
extreme close-up	A shot in which a small object (e.g. a part of the body) fits easily within the frame.
flashback	Narrative device in which the action is interrupted by scenes representing a character's memory of events experienced before the time of the action.
flashforward	The opposite of flashback: future events (or events imagined by a character) are shown.
frame	Each individual photographic image making up the film. Also refers to the area of the picture seen on the screen.
framing	The size and position of objects relative to the edges of the screen; the arrangement of objects so that they fit within the actual boundaries of the film.
frontality	The placing of the camera at a 90° angle to the action.
graphic match	A visual rhyme between two successive shots.
jump cut	A rapid, jerky transition from one frame to the next, either disrupting the flow of time or movement within a scene or making an abrupt transition from one scene to another.
long shot	A shot in which a large object (e.g. a complete human figure) fits easily within the frame.
long take	A shot that is allowed to continue for longer than usual without editing.
match on action	A cut between two shots of the same action from different positions, giving an impression of seamless simultaneity.
medium long shot	A shot in which a largish object (e.g. the human figure from lower leg up) fits easily within the frame.
medium shot	A shot in which a medium-size object (e.g. the top half of a human figure) fits easily within the frame.
mise-en-scene	Everything placed within the frame, including set decoration, costume, and styles of performance (implies an emphasis on psychological and visual unity in a film from one frame to the next).
montage	Style of editing involving rapid cutting so that one image is juxtaposed

	with another or one scene quickly dissolves into the next. Angles, settings and framing are manipulated in a conspicuous way (violating coherent mise-en-scene) so as to convey a swift passage of time, to create some kind of visual or conceptual continuity, or to generate a distinctive rhythm. (See also dynamic cutting.)
narration	The telling of a story and the information supplied to the audience by a voice coming from off screen who may or may not be a character in the story.
off camera	Out of the boundaries of the camera's field of vision (although a performer's presence may be indicated by the context of the scene or their presence in dialogue).
180° rule	The convention that the camera can be placed in any position as long as it remains on one side of the action.
overhead shot	A shot looking down vertically on the action from above.
pace	The tempo at which the storyline of a film unfolds, affected by various elements including action, the length of scenes, camera angles, colour levels, editing, lighting, composition and sound.
pan	A movement in which the camera turns to right or left on a horizontal axis.
parallel action	Aspects of a story happening simultaneously with the primary performer's situation, edited so that the projected image goes back and forth between the primary and secondary scenes (often leading up to a convergence of the two actions).
passing shot	A shot producing a projected image that travels quickly across the screen, either by moving the subject past a stationary camera or by panning the camera past a stationary subject.
plan américain	Same as medium long shot.
POV (point of view shot)	A shot which is understood to be seen from the point of view of a character within the scene.
racking focus	A shift in focus between planes at different distances from the camera within the same shot.
reaction shot	A close-up in which an actor or group is seen to respond to an event, often accomplished with a cutaway from the primary action to someone viewing the occurrence.
reverse angle	Two successive shots from equal and opposite angles, typically of characters during conversation.
sequence	A series of segments of a film narrative edited together and unified by a common setting, time, event or story-line.
sequence shot	A relatively long and complete scene shot in one take without editing (similar to long take).
set	A constructed environment in which to shoot a scene: often consists of flat

	backdrops or façades, but can be a three-dimensional construction.
shock cut	The immediate juxtaposition of two incongruous shots (e.g. from a sex scene to a religious icon).
shot/countershot	Same as reverse angle.
subjective camera	A camera shot or film style that provides the audience with the specific vision or perspective of a character in the film (i.e. the technique of using POV).
suture	The ‘sewing’ together of imaginary and symbolic in Hollywood cinema carried out by continuity editing. It serves to ensure the sense of a unified narrative and subject position.
tilt	A movement by which the camera moves up or down while its support remains fixed.
titles	Any words that appear on the screen to convey information to the audience, including credit titles (identifying personnel), main title (the name of the film), end titles (closing credits), insert titles (announcing scenes or identifying settings) and subtitles (translation of foreign-language dialogue). Insert titles and subtitles can also be referred to as captions.
tracking shot	A shot in which the camera is pushed horizontally along the ground on a dolly.
two shot	A shot in which two actors appear within the frame.
voice-over	Voice heard while an image is projected but not being spoken in sync with one of the characters appearing on screen. Used to suggest a character’s thoughts or recall of something said earlier, or to provide objective (extra-diegetic) narrative or commentary.
zoom	The effect of rapid movement either towards or away from the subject being photographed, either by using a specialized zoom lens or by moving the camera on a boom, crane or dolly. Zoom effects can also be achieved and enhanced by the use of an optical printer.

Camera Angles: LOW, HIGH, CANTED

Camera Position: EXTREME CLOSE-UP, CLOSE-UP, MEDIUM SHOT, MEDIUM LONG SHOT, LONG SHOT, EXTREME LONG SHOT, ESTABLISHING SHOT POINT OF VIEW SHOT

Camera Location: AERIAL SHOT, CRANE SHOT, OVER-THE-SHOULDER SHOT, POINT-OF-VIEW SHOT, PULL-BACK SHOT, REACTION SHOT, REVERSE-ANGLE SHOT, ZOOM SHOT

Camera Movement: PANNING, WHIP/SWISH PAN, TRACKING, STEADY-CAM, TILTING, CRABBING,

Editing of Shots (Montage):

CUT- a complete switch from one image on screen to another

CROSS_CUTTING- the intermingling of shots from one two or more scenes to suggest Parallel Action

CUTAWAY- a shot(usually brief) to show action at another location

MATCH-CUT- a cut in which two shots are linked by aural, visual or metaphorical parallelism

JUMP CUT- a cut that occurs within a scene rather than between scenes to eliminate “dead actions”. Unless for effect, it should be unobtrusive and speed up the action

FADE IN- the screen begins black and gradually an image appears in full brightness

FADE OUT- the screen fades out to blackness

DISSOLVE- the superimposition of a fade in over a fade out so that a new image appears to “grow” out of the original (may employ non diegetic music to add effect)

FOCUS IN- the image on screen begins out of focus and gradually comes into focus

FOCUS OUT- the opposite of the above

RACK FOCUS- shifting the focus from one subject to another quickly and often several times in one shot thus redirecting the viewpoint of the audience

Lighting: LIGHTING KEY- a general term that refers to the overall brilliance of the picture. It can provide a clue to the mood of the scene/ film

HIGH KEY- lighting which is bright (eg the glamorous MGM movies of the 1930s such as Gone With The Wind)

LOW KEY- relatively dark lighting such as the old Warner Brothers gangster movies of the 1940s

SOFT- a broad diffuse beam of light softens the outlines of objects and creates shadows that are not so deep or clean-edged. (Can also be used to make actors look younger!)

HARD- a narrow intense beam of light sharpens and hardens the edges of objects in its path and creates hard-edged shadows (eg Westerns and thrillers and film noir)

FRONT LIGHTING / BACK LIGHTING / SIDE LIGHTING / OVERHEAD LIGHTING / BOTTOM LIGHTING

Sound: DIEGETIC (in the frame!), NON DIEGETIC (music overlaid-soundtrack), EXTERNAL DIEGETIC