

Film Studies: Terminology

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FILM TERMS

Frame – The square or rectangular space a shot occupies. (*If you can hear a character talking ,but cannot see them inside the “square” or picture, you say they are “outside of the frame.”*)

Shot – A single, continuous “take”, filmed at one time from one camera.
The length of a shot can be a single second or several minutes long.

Establishing Shot – A wide view that shows the complete setting and all of the characters at the beginning of a scene.

Wide Shot – A shot that is framed to show a large area, such as a city or an entire park.

Close Up – A framing of an object or person that is very close. (*Example: a shot that only shows the face or eyes of a character.*)

Angle – The direction the camera is pointing in a shot. (*Example: the angle could be facing up towards the ceiling or looking down at someone from above.*)

Cut or Edit – An abrupt transition between two shots without transition effects. Using traditional film, two “shots” are taped together with the cut being in the middle of the two.

Scene – A segment of the narrative or plot, which can include several shots and edits, that depicts a definite period of time in the narrative.

Montage – A French word that is used to describe a series of shots edited together to shorten a period of time in the narrative.

Narrative or Plot – The “story” of the film with a beginning, middle and end.

Storyboard – Drawings made of each shot before the making of a film. It is used to plan the framing and angle of each take.

Script or Screenplay – The written story and dialogue of a film.

Score – Music written for or used in a film that would not naturally be heard in real life.

Voice Over – A character telling the narrative but not seen.

Motif – An image or idea that is repeated over and over in a film.

FILM CAREERS

Director – Person who is in charge of the entire production. The director has control over everything; sets, costumes, editing, shots.

Producer – Person in charge of finding money to pay for the film.

Actor / Actress – Performer in front of the camera who portrays a character in the film.

Cinematographer – The person in charge of the camera. This person takes light readings, chooses filters, and corrects focus.

Screenwriter – Person who writes the story and dialogue of the film.

Editor – Person who edits the separate shots together.

Composer – Person who writes the background score for a film.

Costume Designer – Person who designs the clothing in a film.

Set Designer – Person who designs and builds rooms, buildings and scenery for films.