Film Techniques

I Camera Work.
II Lighting.

III Sound.
IV Interviewing

Camera Work

- The term "camera work" covers several different areas:

- Camera shots
- Camera angles
- Camera movement
- Camera focus

Camera Movement

NUMBER ONE QUESTION:

What are you trying to communicate?

Not just, what will look cool?

Camera Shots

- Extreme Close Up   (ECU) shows detail

- Close Up   (CU) shows emotion

- Medium Close Up   (MCU) reactions

- Medium Shot   (MS) relationships

- Medium Long Shot   (MLS) body language

- Long Shot   (LS) shows action

- Establishing Shot   (ES) sets the scene

Identify which Camera shots are used here

Establishing shot

Long shot

Extreme Close Up

Medium Close up

Close Up

Camera Angles

Overhead shot
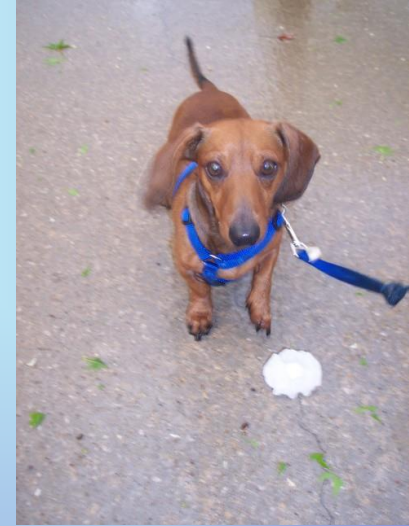
High angle shot

Low angle shot

Mid angle shot

Camera Angles

Makes the objects look very small, vulnerable or mechanical. Makes streets look like a maze.

Makes the object looks small and insignificant. Suggests vulnerability.

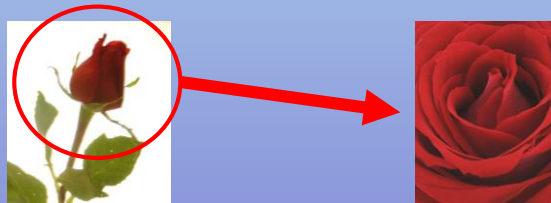The most normal angle. Suggests "real life". The camera is your eyes.

Makes the object look large and powerful. Suggests dominance.

Camera Movement

The camera can be moved in different ways to *create different effects.*

- **Pan** – camera is fixed but moves side to side

- **Tilt** – camera is fixed but moves up and down

- **Zoom** – camera moves in and out of the same shot.

- **Track** – camera is mounted on a railway track and moves along with what it's filming.

- **Crane** – camera moves above ground level.
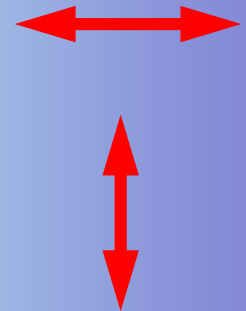
Camera Focus

- Focus = Clearly highlights to the viewer *which subject is important*

- **Soft focus** = can suggest romance, poor vision, or substance abuse.

- **Hard focus** = most common in filming as it shows detail of the subject.

Lighting

- Lighting *helps create a mood* for a scene.
- Different types of lighting include:

- Dark / Bright / Warm
- Soft light / High contrast
- High key / low key

DARK VS BRIGHT

Dark or dim lighting can create suspense or suggest evil.

Light or bright light can create peacefulness or suggest happiness.

Low Key light – shows detail. Can suggest the subject is evil.

Back light – creates a silhouette effect.

Can suggest the subject is good/angelic.

High Key light – shows the source of the light (e.g. from the window).

Fill light – used to eliminate shadow and create softness.

What kinds of lighting are used to create the images below?

Mid key back light

Back light

What kind of lighting do you think is used the most in film?

Colour

- Colour also **helps create a mood** for a scene.
- Colours can be achieved in different ways:

    - Coloured lights
    - Filters in front of the camera
    - Different film stock
    - Added at post production

'Sin City' (2007)
Used black and white with only very important details in red and yellow. (E.g. lipstick, blood).

'Gattaca' (1997)
Used a warm sepia tone to contrast with the sterile environment.

Editing

Editing is **the way the film is put together.** E.g. inclusion, length and order. The sequences of shots then must be arranged to form an entire film.

"**Film editing is an art form which can either make or break a film.**"

Pace

Think of editing as a heartbeat.

- The faster the pace (shorter length shots), the more excitement and action.

- The slower the pace (longer length shots) the more serious or detailed.

Editing - **Transitions**

- ***There are a number of ways two scenes can be connected:***

- **Straight cut** – one scene is directly after another image
- **Dissolve** – One image merges into another
- **Wipe** - One image is replaced by another with a distinct edge that forms a shape.
- **Fade** – (to black) indicates the end of a scène
- **Crosscutting** – two lines of actions are cut between to show they are happening at the same time.

Editing - **Montage**

•A series of short shots edited together to ***condense*** a part of the story. Montages suggest the ***passing of time***.

•In most cases montages show the main character learning or improving skills that will help achieve the ultimate goal.

•A song usually plays in the background to enhance the mood.

"Show a lot of things happening at once
Remind everyone of what's going on
And with every shot you show a little improvement
To show it all would take too long
That's called a montage
Oh we want montage"

- 'Team America'

•Perhaps the most famous montage is from the movie 'Rocky'.

Sound

The soundtrack is a vital part of any film and **helps it tell its story**. It can be broken down into different areas.

- Dialogue
- Voice Over
- Music
- Natural sound (diegetic)
- Sound Effects (non diegetic)

Sound - **Dialogue**

Dialogue is the words of the actors. It is important as it helps us understand the story and characters.

The dialogue from some films is so memorable, people are still quoting it today.

"I'll be back!"

"Frankly my dear I don't give a damn!"

"Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."

Sound

Voice Over

This is another way words are used to tell the story but the narrator is not seen. Their voice is over the image.

Music

Music is a powerful technique to elicit emotions. Music should complement the story and help create atmosphere. E.g. Jaws

Sound

• **Natural sound (diegetic)**

Any sounds that were **actually** there when filming. (E.g. the sound of the surf, the actor's voices, the trees rustling, cars passing).


• **Sound Effects (non-diegetic)**

These are any sounds **added** after filming. They are usually used to create atmosphere. (E.g. a door creaking, police sirens, voice over, music.)

Storyboard

A **storyboard** is a graphic representation of how your video will unfold, shot by shot. It's made up of a number of squares with illustrations or pictures representing each shot, with notes about what's going on in the scene and what's being said in the script during that shot.
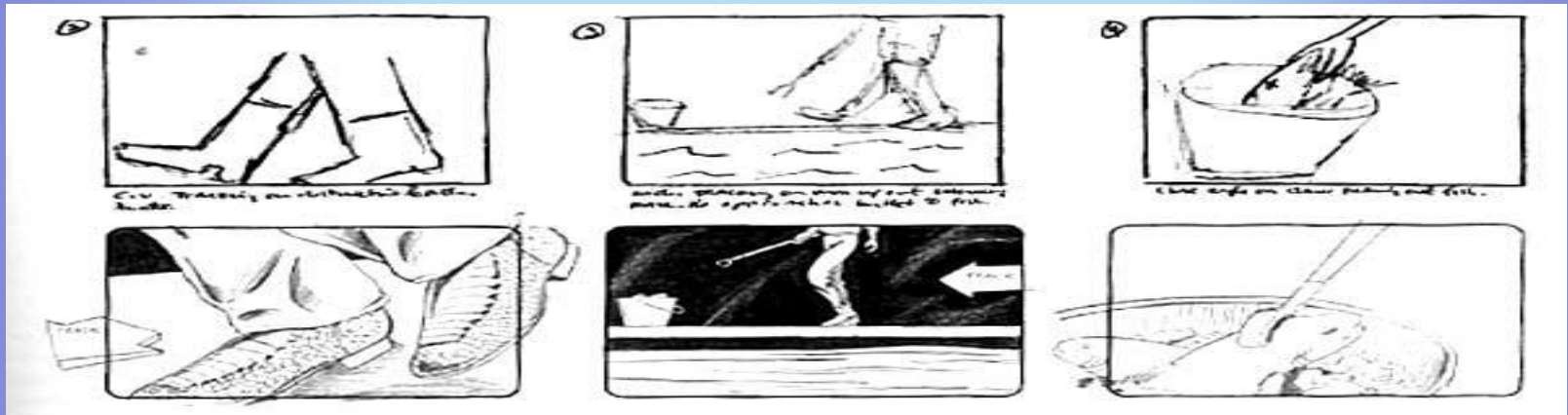
•**Why to use it?**

A storyboard allows you to:

-**Predict** problems in your story before it's too late

-**Communicate** your idea to your crew

Interviewing

FOR YOUR PROTAGONISTS:

Look at interviewer, not the camera.

Pretend the camera isn't there! they're just having a chat with you.

Make themselves comfortable, but try not to shift in their seat

Talk naturally and clearly, try not to speak too fast.

Wait until the end of an answer to drink water or move or take a break

FOR YOU:

Silence anyOutside noise ie. a humming fridge, rain on the roof.

Use your earphones to check for peripheral noise- you may have to move rooms

Don't Run through your questions without listening to the answers, follow-up questions often get the best results.

There may be something else they want to say. Ask them at the end if there is anything they would like to add, often this is great!

Interviewing

LIGHTING:

When choosing a suitable place for the interviews consider lighting. Aim to have a good source of natural light (if possible). Side or 'three quarter' front light is best. So try to place you subject with a window or practical light to the side or towards the front. You should not film directly into the light and it is important not to place the respondent in front of a window (even if the window is in the background)

Interviewing

White Balance:

White balance is a camera setting (both film and digital) that adjusts for lighting in order to make white objects appear white. In both film cameras and digital cameras the white balance can be adjusted to ensure that all colours in the scene will be represented correctly.
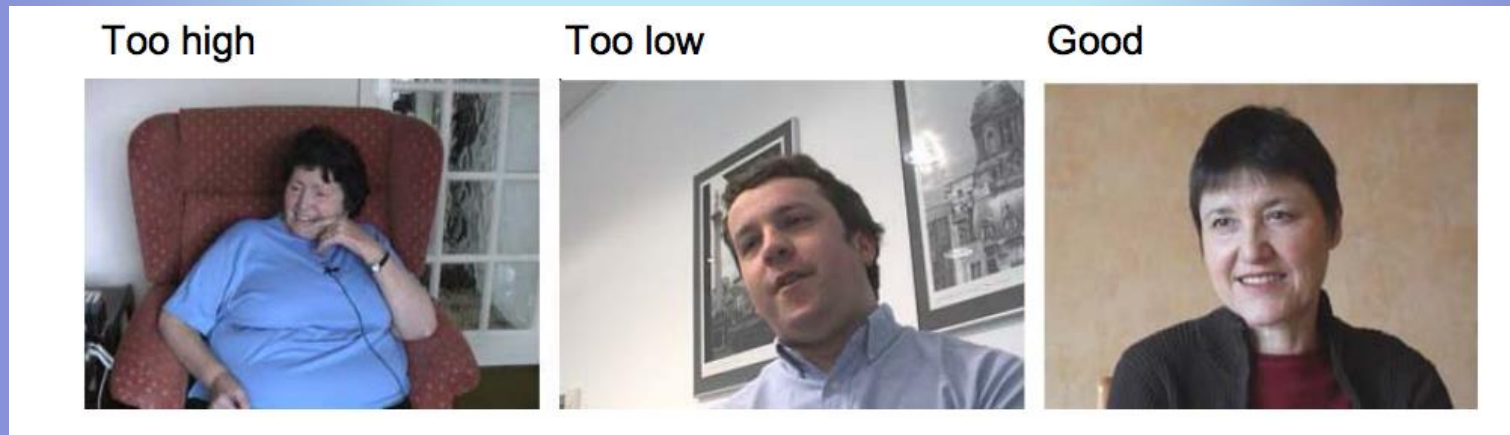

Bad

Good

Interviewing

Framing:

Make sure the camera is leveled with the subject's eye line, so it's not too high or too low.

Interviewing

Focus:

Zoom in – Focus – Zoom out – Shoot!

Microphone:

Place microphone close to interviewee's mouth, in a VERY stable position, hear the sound in your headphones to check any background noise or interference, DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE WHILE THEY ARE ANSWERING!!

Collect many Shots :

To make editing easier:

-shoot different angles (avoid weird ones!)

-shoot details like eyes, hands, objects, view from the window, cat, photos etc. (avoid useless objects, stick to your story!)