

Glossary of Film Terms

ANGLE – AKA camera angle. The viewpoint from which the subject of the shot is depicted

AXIS OF ACTION – Also called the “180° line” is an imaginary line that passes through the two main actors of a scene, defining the spatial relations of all the elements of the scene as being to the right or left.

180 Degree Rule – The convention that the camera can be placed in any position as long as it remains on one side of the action.

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.

Extreme Close-up - A shot in which a small object (e.g. a part of the body) fits easily within the frame.

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.

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT – When the scene is filmed from above; often to make the subject(s) appear smaller.

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.

LOW-ANGLE SHOT – When the scene is filmed from below; often to make the subject(s) appear larger.

MEDIUM SHOT – Camera shot from medium distance, typically above the waist. Allows viewers to see body language, but not facial expressions.

MONTAGE – Editing a sequence of shots or scenes together in a continuous sequence to more quickly convey information over a period of time.

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.

PAN – The action of rotating a camera about its vertical axis. Related to a tilt, the action of rotating a camera up and down its horizontal axis.

POV (point of view) - A shot which is understood to be seen from the point of view of a character within the scene.



Shot List– List given to the film crew of all the shots to be filmed during that workday.

Storyboard– Sequence of pictures created to describe each scene in the film production. Usually indicates camera angle and movement, blocking of actors, and size of the frame.

Sync sound (synchronized sound recording) refers to sound recorded at the time of the filming of movies.

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).

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.

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.