

Types of Camera Shots

Establishing Shot Usually the first shot of a scene, this is used to establish the location and environment. It can also be used to establish mood and give the audience visual clues regarding the time(night/day, year) and the general situation. Because they need to provide a great deal of information, Establishing Shots are usually Extreme Long Shots or Long Shots.

Master Shot Term given to a single, uninterrupted shot of a scene. This shot can be the only shot used by a director to cover a scene, or edited together with additional shots. While it's commonly a Long or Full Shot, a Master Shot can be a closer shot, or consist of multiple shot types if the camera is moving throughout the scene.

The Aerial Shot

Bird's-Eye View (aka Top Shot) A high-angle shot that's taken from directly overhead and from a distance. The shot gives the audience a wider view and is useful for showing direction and that the subject is moving, to highlight special relations, or reveal to the audience elements outside the boundaries of the character's awareness. The shot is often taken from on a crane or helicopter.

Extreme Long Shot (XLS) Used to show the subject from a distance, or the area in which the scene is taking place. This type of shot is particularly useful for establishing a scene (see Establishing Shot later in the article) in terms of time and place, as well as a character's physical or emotional relationship to the environment and elements within it. The character doesn't necessarily have to be viewable in this shot.

Long Shot / Wide Shot Shows the subject from top to bottom; for a person, this would be head to toes, though not necessarily filling the frame. The character becomes more of a focus than an Extreme Long Shot, but the shot tends to still be dominated by the scenery. This shot often sets the scene and our character's place in it. This can also serve as an Establishing Shot, in lieu of an Extreme Long Shot.

Full Shot Frames character from head to toes, with the subject roughly filling the frame. The emphasis tends to be more on action and movement rather than a character's emotional state.

Medium Long Shot (MLS) (aka 3/4 Shot) Intermediate between Full Shot and Medium Shot. Shows subject from the knees up.

Medium Shot (MS) Shows part of the subject in more detail. For a person, a medium shot typically frames them from about waist up. This is one of the most common shots seen in films, as it focuses on a character (or characters) in a scene while still showing some environment. The Cowboy Shot (aka American Shot) is a variation of a Medium Shot, from Western films from the 1930s-1940s, which frames the subject from mid-thighs up to fit the character's gun holsters into the shot.

Medium Close-Up Falls between a Medium Shot and a Close-Up, generally framing the subject from chest or shoulder up.

Close-Up (CU) Fills the screen with part of the subject, such as a person's head/face. Framed this tightly, the emotions and reaction of a character dominate the scene.

The Big Close-Up (BCU) or Choker A variant of a Close-Up, this shot frames the subject's face from above the eyebrows to below the mouth

Extreme Close-Up (XCU) Emphasizes a small area or detail of the subject, such as the eye(s) or mouth. An Extreme Close Up of just the eyes is sometimes called an Italian Shot, getting its name from Sergio Leone's Italian-Western films that popularized it.

Point of View Shot (POV) Shot intended to mimic what a particular character in a scene is seeing. This puts the audience directly into the head of the character, letting them experience their emotional state. Common examples are of a character waking up, drifting into unconsciousness, or looking through a scope or binoculars.

Over-the-Shoulder Shot A popular shot where a subject is shot from behind the shoulder of another, framing the subject anywhere from a Medium to Close-Up. The shoulder, neck, and/or back of the head of the subject facing away from the camera remains viewable, making the shot useful for showing reactions during conversations. It tends to place more of an emphasis on the connection between two speakers rather than the detachment or isolation that results from single shots.

Two Shot A shot in which two subjects appear in the frame.

Eye Level Shot taken with the camera approximately at human eye level, resulting in a neutral effect on the audience.

Dutch Angle/Canted Angle/Tilt Shot in which the camera is set at an angle on its roll axis so that the horizon line is not level. It is often used to show a disoriented or uneasy psychological state.

Reaction Shot Shows a character's reaction to the shot that has preceded it.

Reverse Angle Shot A shot taken from an angle roughly 180 degrees opposite of the previous shot. The term is commonly used during conversation, indicating a reverse Over-the-Shoulder Shot, for example.

Low Angle Shot Subject is photographed from below eye level. This can have the effect of making the subject look powerful, heroic, or dangerous.

High Angle Shot Subject is photographed from above eye level. This can have the effect of making the subject seem vulnerable, weak, or frightened.

Cutaway A shot of something other than the subject and away from the main scene. It is usually followed by a cut back to the first shot and is useful for avoiding a jump cut when editing down a section of dialogue, or editing together two separate takes.

Cut-In Similar to a Cutaway, but shows a Close-Up shot of something visible in the main scene.

Types of Camera Shots

THE ESTABLISHING SHOT

THE MASTER SHOT

THE AERIAL SHOT

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

THE EXTREME LONG SHOT (XLS)

THE LONG (OR WIDE) SHOT

THE FULL SHOT

CUTAWAY

POINT-OF-VIEW (POV)

THE MEDIUM-LONG SHOT

THE MEDIUM SHOT (MS)

Cowboy Shot (aka American Shot)

THE MEDIUM-CLOSE-UP

THE CLOSE-UP (CU)

THE BIG CLOSE-UP (BCU)

THE EXTREME CLOSE-UP (XCU)

THE OVER-THE-SHOULDER

THE DOLLY ZOOM

THE LOW ANGLE SHOT

THE HIGH ANGLE SHOT

THE TWO-SHOT

EYE LEVEL SHOT

DUTCH / CANTED ANGLE

REACTION SHOT

REVERSE ANGLE SHOT

Types of Camera Movement

Tilt up / Tilt Down

Pan left / Pan right

Tracking shot

Pedestal

Dolly in / Dolly Out

Zoom in / Zoom Out

Dolly Zoom

Rack Focus

Hand-Held

Steadicam

Crane

Aerial