

Camera Angles

A List of Some Camera Shots Novelists Can Utilize

Aerial Shot: This suggests a shot be taken from a plane or helicopter (not a crane). For example, if a scene takes place on a tall building, you may want to have an aerial shot of the floor the action takes place on.

Angle on: This shot suggests another view of a previous shot, focusing on it.

Montage: The dissolving of two or more shots into each other to create a desired effect, usually an association of ideas. These shots need not include the main character, and they don't have a beginning, middle, and end.

Close On (also Insert): CLOSE ON is a shot description that strongly suggests a close-up on some object, action, or person (an expressive body part such as the face, or a fist). May also be seen as **CLOSE-UP** or **CLOSE SHOT**

Close-up: A *close-up* is a shot that emphasizes a detail in a scene. It's often abbreviated to CU.

Establishing Shot (ES): A shot, usually from a distance, that shows us where we are. A shot that suggests location. Often used at the beginning of a film to suggest where the story takes place. For example, if our story takes place in New York, we might use a shot of the Manhattan skyline as an establishing shot.

INSERT: When a writer pictures a certain close-up at a certain moment in the film, he or she may use an insert shot. This describes a shot of some important detail in a scene that must be given the camera's full attention for a moment. Inserts are mainly used in reference to objects, a clock, or actions, putting a key in a car's ignition.

MATCH CUT TO:

A transition often used to compare two completely unrelated objects. It's film's version of metaphor. This involves cutting from one object of certain color, shape, and/or movement, to another object of similar color, shape, and/or movement. For example, a circular saw to a child's merry-go-round. A commonly studied example of match cutting comes from 2001: A Space Odyssey. The classic cut comes towards the beginning of the film. After the apes have used a bone as a weapon for gathering food, an ape throws the bone into the air. As it falls, we match cut to a space ship carrying nuclear warheads. Both the bone and the ship are of similar shape

and color, and both happen to be moving toward the bottom of the screen. The cut relates all of technology to the development of weaponry as it cuts out all of human history.

O.S.: Shorthand for off-screen, this abbreviation is used when a character speaks outside the camera's view, or when the audience hears a sound but can't see where it's coming from. (In a novel this is the narrator's storyteller voice)

Pan: Camera movement involving the camera turning on a stationary axis. Imagine standing in one spot on a cliff in Hawaii. You want to absorb the view so you, without moving your body or feet, turn your head from the left to the right. This is the same effect as a pan.

POV: Shorthand for *point of view*, this direction implies that the scene is being viewed from another character's perspective. You must identify whose point of view it is and what exactly he sees. If the POV alternates within a scene, employ the term REVERSE POV.

Series of shots: This technique abridges action sequences into a number of short moments involving the main character, usually without dialogue. A series of shots has a distinct beginning, middle, and end, and is often used to dramatize a passage of time.

Insert: A writer uses this direction to highlight an object in the scene or include a detail that's outside the scene but important to it.

Intercut: This direction indicates that two scenes are occurring simultaneously in separate locations.

ZOOM: The image seems to close in on a person or object making the person or object appear larger (or smaller) on screen. Technically, the lens mechanically changes from wide angle to telephoto or vice versa.

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