

Glossary

General Terms

ACE (American Cinema Editors): an honorary society of motion picture editors, who come together on the basis of their professional achievements, their dedication to the education of others, and their commitment to the craft of editing.

ASC (American Society of Cinematographers): an organization where cinematographers meet with fellow professionals and discuss their craft.

Antagonist: a character who tries to prevent the protagonist from reaching a particular goal.

Cast: the actors in a film

Continuity: the art of maintaining consistency from shot-to-shot and scene-to-scene, even when scenes are shot out of sequence.

Crew: the technical people working on a movie

Dailies/Rushes: film shot during one day of shooting

Deciphering: unscrambling or de-coding to understand the meaning

Hook: an enticing beginning of a movie that sets the tone

Lighting: an important means of expression in film, lighting refers to the method of illuminating a shot.

Lyricists: people who write the words (the lyrics) to songs

Plot: the major event of the story

Props: abbreviation for “properties” — objects in a scene that decorate the set, or objects that an actor uses (e.g. a pen, a painting on the wall, a bouquet of flowers, a couch)

Protagonist: the main character of the story or film

Scene: 1. one or more shots taken at the same time and place 2. part of the story that happens in one place, during one period of time. Sometimes, a single shot can make up an entire scene.

Sequence: number of scenes taken together

Set: the place, created or pre-existing, where a scene is shot

Set up: each time the camera position is changed

Shot: the smallest unit of film — taken in one uninterrupted process of the camera.

Storyboard: a shot-by-shot layout drawn before shooting or editing the scene

Viewfinder: it's the part of the film camera that you look through. It shows what the camera will record on film.

Camera Composition

Close-up (CU): a very close shot of something — usually a person’s face or some other object. This shot really captures emotion.

Composition: the positioning of people and objects in the frame

Establishing shot: a wide shot that shows the audience a lot about the setting

Extreme close-up (XCU): Like it sounds, it’s a really close shot. It may be someone’s lips, or a person’s eye with a reflection in it.

Extreme Long Shot: taken from a great distance (or it looks as though it is taken from a great distance). It is often used to give the audience perspective — a sense of how later scenes will fit into the whole environment.

Medium close-up: an example would be a shot of a person from the waist up

Long shot: taken from a longer distance, it gives slightly more details than the extreme

long shot, and is sometimes referred to as the establishing shot. It shows the audience a lot about the setting.

Object: things in a shot that are not people (e.g. a tree, a car, a building)

Subject: a person in a shot

Camera Angles

Cutaway: an abrupt cut away from the scene to something else or to a new scene. In old movies, there might be a hero who falls over a cliff and was hanging onto a rock. Then there would be a cutaway to an owl in a tree. Then a shot back to the hero — who was by then standing on the ground.

Eye-level angle shot: Shot at eye level, these shots give a real sense of someone’s point of view.

High-angle shot: You need to be higher than your subject to shoot this way, either looking down at something on the floor, or, you could get up on a table or chair and shoot down. It is

used to give the viewer a sense of superiority to the subject, and to give a sense of the subject being vulnerable, small.

Low-angle shot: a shot in which the subject is above the camera. It usually conveys a sense of the subject’s importance, looming above us.

Oblique-angle shot: effective in showing scenes of violence and confusion or being drunk or drugged — usually from the point of view of the person.

Camera Movement

Pan: moving the camera from side to side, as if you are following someone who is walking from left to right

Tilt: moving the camera up and down, as if you are following someone jumping on a trampoline

Zoom: moving in on an object from a wider shot to a closer one

Lighting Terms

Base light: the existing amount of light in a room

High contrast: when the tones of color, or black and white, are more extreme

Illumination: the amount and quality of light on a subject (example: a candle would provide a very small amount of light to illuminate a subject)

Lamp: a special light used for photography or cinematography

Editing Terms

Assemble edit: Used to copy an entire video, or pieces of a video, onto a new master video tape (one which does not already have a recorded signal or control track (black)). This process records the video and audio together (which cannot be divided) and combines them on to another tape. This is often used to make complete copies of programs.

Coverage: a shot used by the editor to break up the action

Dissolve: when the end of one shot fades into the next one — not turning to black, but blurring slightly and then clearing up into the next shot

Edit: to assemble a film by cutting and repositioning the shots

Fade: when the end of a shot darkens into a black screen — and then fades up, or lightens, into the next scene.

Final cut: the final, edited film

Insert edit: This process allows you to edit audio and video, separately or together, onto a master tape with control track (black). This process requires a master tape with control track.

Montage: A French word meaning “to assemble,” a montage is achieved by editing many images rapidly together. A sequence of shots, usually without much dialogue.

Pick-up shot/scene: a shot that is added after the editing phase

Reaction shot: a shot used by editors to draw more interest in a scene. For example, a close-up of a person listening during a conversation

Real time: a shot or scene filmed in actual time, not compressed

Simple cut: when the end of one shot is directly butted onto the beginning of the next without any noticeable special effect

Sound glitch: unwanted sound on the film footage that was unintentionally recorded

Superimposition: when two images are shown, one on top of the other. Usually, one image fades away, leaving just one image. Usually this is done quickly, but long enough for the viewer to link the two objects in her or his mind.

Sound Terms

Ambient sound: background sounds like a clock ticking, a florescent light humming, traffic, wind, etc.

Audio: any kind of sound in a film or video

Dialogue: a conversation between actors or one actor speaking to himself/herself — it's the actor's spoken words

Music: It conveys a mood and sometimes it helps the audience understand what's happening, or what's about to happen.

Narration: the off-screen voice of the observer-commentator. It can be a character in the film or it can be someone we never see.

Score: adding music to the movie to help promote the director's vision

SFX/Sound effects: sounds created to mimic objects or subjects in a film, like the sound of a girl walking in snow, a dog barking, an alien spaceship engine, etc.

Unidirectional microphone: collects sound from mainly one direction. Can be pointed at an actor to better hear dialogue and reduce ambient noise.

Voice over, or monologue: 1. Often used when the actor's thoughts are said aloud (but the image is not of the actor's lips moving) and/or when the invisible narrator speaks.
2. a long speech

Windscreens: devices like a special foam sock that are placed on a microphone to reduce ambient wind noise

Directors Guild of America

The Directors Guild of America (DGA) was founded in 1936 to protect the rights of directors. To the filmmakers who gave birth to the Guild, the issues are clear: the establishment and the protection of economic and creative rights for directors and recognition of the director's contribution to the art of moving pictures.

Today, the DGA represents more than 12,000 members (Directors, Assistant Directors, Unit Production Managers, Associate Directors, Stage Managers, Technical Coordinators) working in theatrical, industrial, educational and documentary films, as well as in television (live, filmed and taped), videos, commercials, interactive media and internet projects in the US and throughout the world.

For more information, please visit
www.dga.org



The Artists Rights Foundation

Founded in 1991 by the Directors Guild of America and bringing together some of the industry's foremost creative leaders, The Artists Rights Foundation seeks to safeguard the rights of film artists, protect their works from alteration, and ensure that the artist's vision remains intact. The organization focuses on educating the movie-going public to expand the interests of film protection and preservation beyond the immediate filmmaking community to the broader American public.

For more information, please visit
www.artistsrights.org



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Guilds, Organizations, Foundations

American Cinema Editors
American Society of Cinematographers
Art Directors Guild
Costume Designers Guild
Institute for Civil Society
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