

Framing Terms (Shot Size)

These camera terms focus on framing, or cropping, your scene - the Shot Size. Where to cut-off your subject, and how far back you'll need to place the camera (or how much zoom you'll need). We'll discuss what situations you'll want to be right up close, and why you might want to choose to surround your subject with more space.

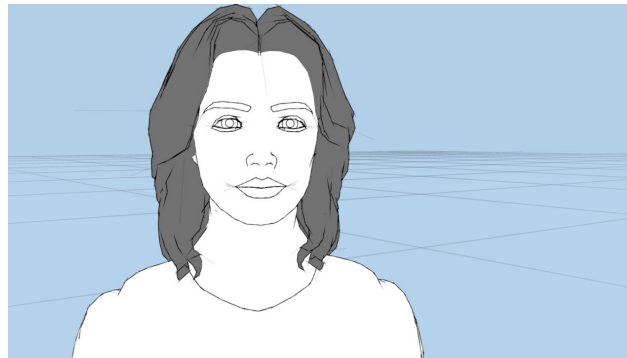
Extreme Close-Up (ECU)



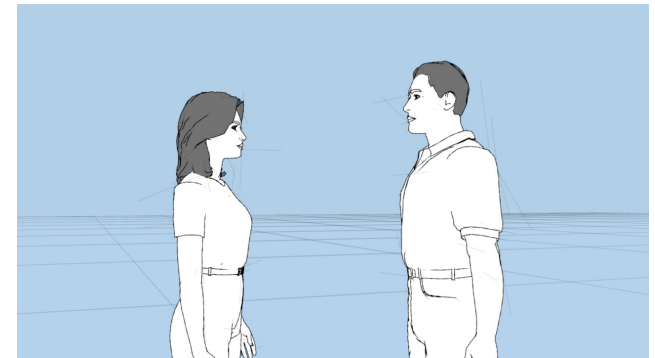
Close-Up (CU)



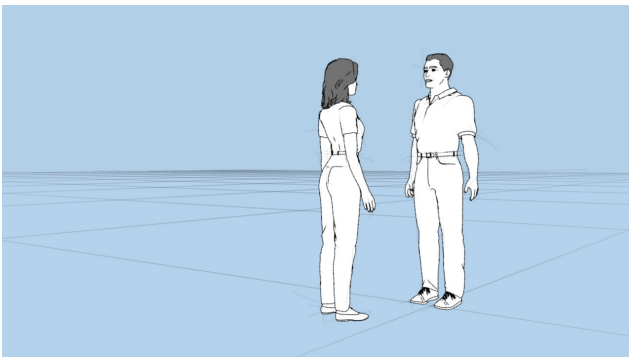
Medium Close-Up (MCU)



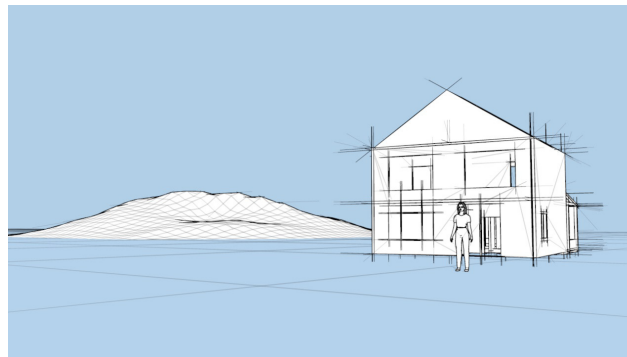
Medium/Mid Shot (MS)



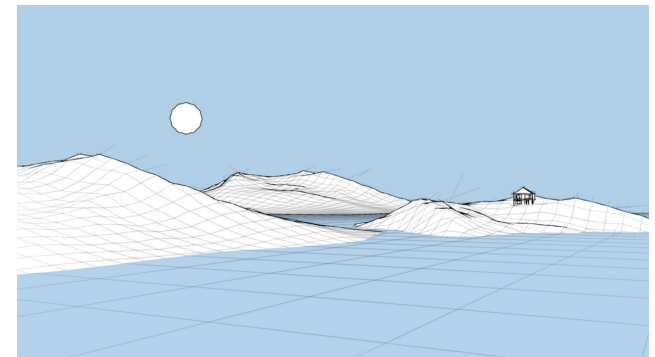
Wide Shot (WS) or Full Shot (FS)



Long Shot (LS) or Establishing Shot (ES)

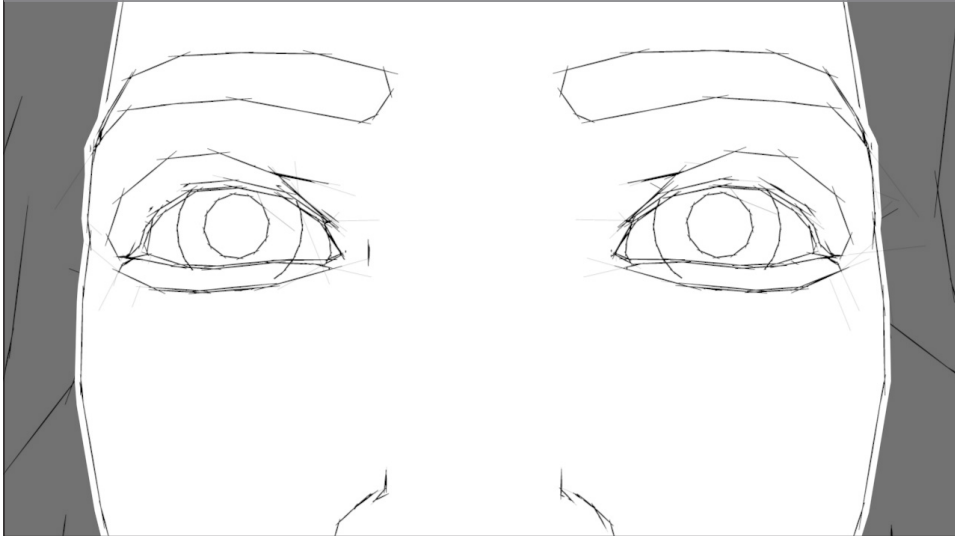


Extreme Long Shot (ELS)



Framing Terms (Shot Size)

Extreme Close-Up (ECU)



What is an Extreme Close-Up (ECU)?

Fills the entire frame with your subject's features, getting right up close to the eyes, lips or fingers - for instance. It might also be the leaves on a tree or the headlight of a car. We're able to observe the smallest of details.

Why would I use an Extreme Close-Up (ECU)?

When shooting people this close we are examining their subtle movements and expressions with a microscope. Extreme Close-Ups offer an extreme intimacy with the subject, rarely observed in everyday life. Can also be used to present a mysterious, abstract view of an object, good for opening titles for instance.

Close-Up (CU)



What is a Close-Up (CU)?

Fills the frame with a large part of your subject, such as an entire head. Very little background is seen.

Why would I use a Close-Up (CU)?

Often used when a person is displaying restrained, facial emotions such as growing anger or sadness. Practically, the Close-Up is easier to light than a wider shot and backgrounds are less of a worry, though you may lose the sense of location if used too much. Often used in conjunction with Medium Shots.

Framing Terms (Shot Size)

Medium Close-Up (MCU)



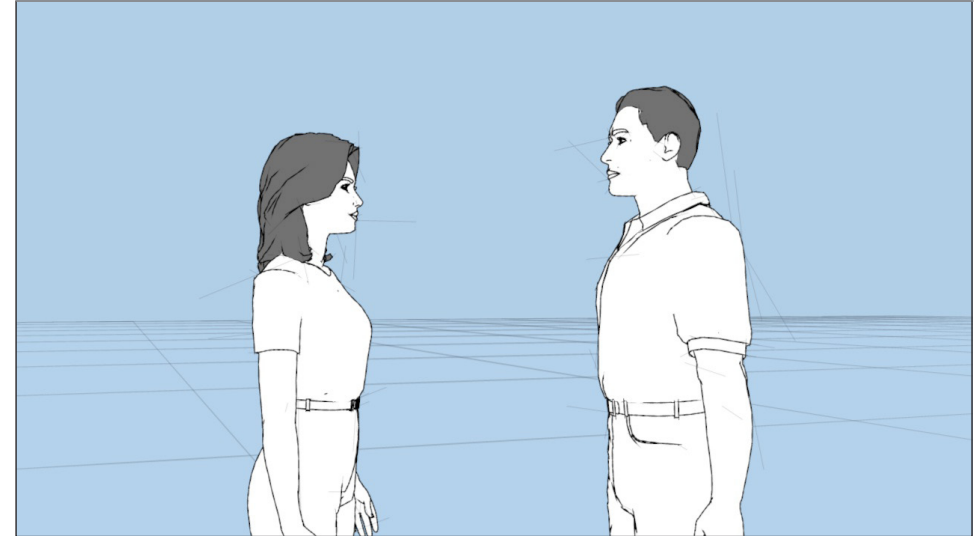
What is a Medium Close-Up (MCU)?

The frame is largely taken up by the subject. A head-and-shoulders shot, essentially. This shot would crop a person off just under the shoulders and would be the typical of framing you'd see in a family portrait. Environmental foreground and background elements help give the subject a sense of location, though it can be unclear exactly where the subject is.

Why would I use a Medium Close-Up (MCU)?

A Medium Close-Up (MCU) is perfect for shooting a single person with a lot of spoken dialogue. The subject doesn't overwhelm the screen. The space around the subject allows them to interact with props that are in easy reach.

Medium/Mid Shot (MS)



What is a Medium/Mid Shot (MS)?

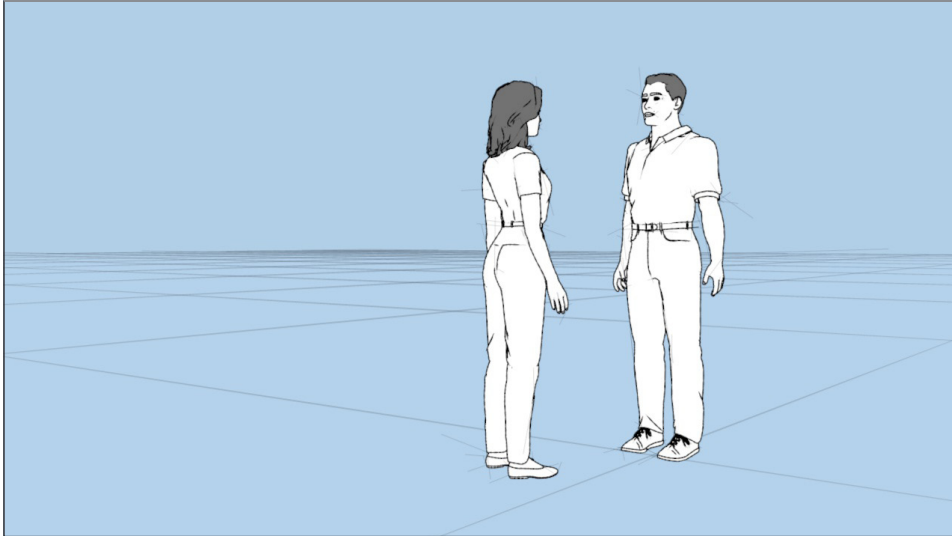
A very common shot and likely one you'll use most often. People are cropped at the waist and there's enough room in the frame for two or more subjects, without it feeling cramped. There's also enough room in the background for the viewer to appreciate the scene's location and time of day.

Why would I use a Medium/Mid Shot (MS)?

Switch on the TV and you'll see a lot of this type of shot, as it's used for presenting and interviews. Great for dialogue scenes between multiple subjects. Still close enough to see facial expressions, though this is as wide as you want to be for this. It's also useful for capturing body language. Often used in conjunction with Close-Up shots.

Framing Terms (Shot Size)

Wide Shot (WS) or Full Shot (FS)



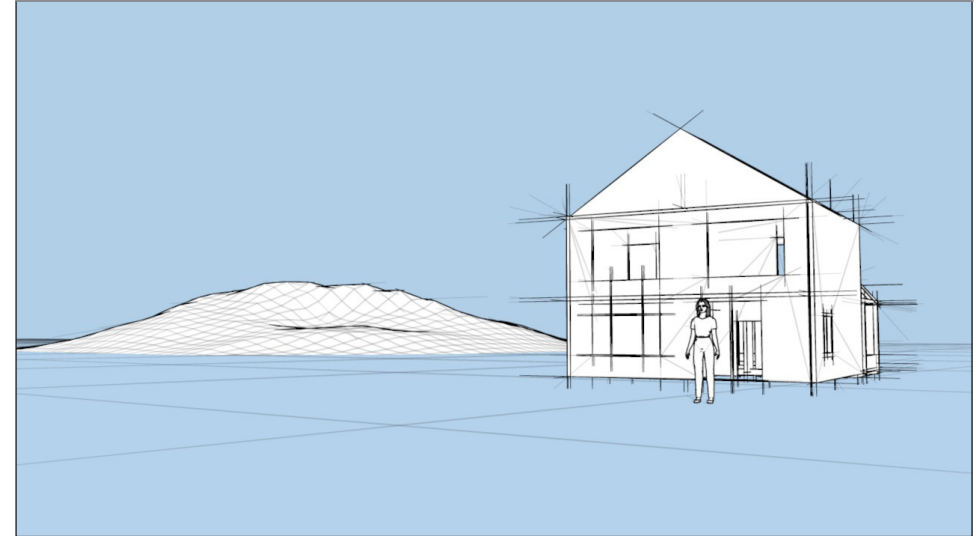
What is a Wide Shot (WS) / Full Shot (FS)?

When shooting people a Wide Shot (or Full Shot) can contain the entire body of a standing person, head to toe. There's plenty of background space and other scene elements.

Why would I use a Wide Shot (WS) / Full Shot (FS)?

With wider shots the environment begins to play a more important role in the scene, specifically the relationship between the subject and their surroundings. Subjects can move around more freely in a Wide Shot so interaction with other scene elements, and with each other, can be more significant.

Long Shot (LS) or Establishing Shot (ES)



What is a Long Shot (LS) / Establishing Shot (ES)?

The Long Shot mostly incorporates the wider location, with the subject reduced to a much smaller on-screen element. Essentially creating a picture of the environment and our subject's place within it.

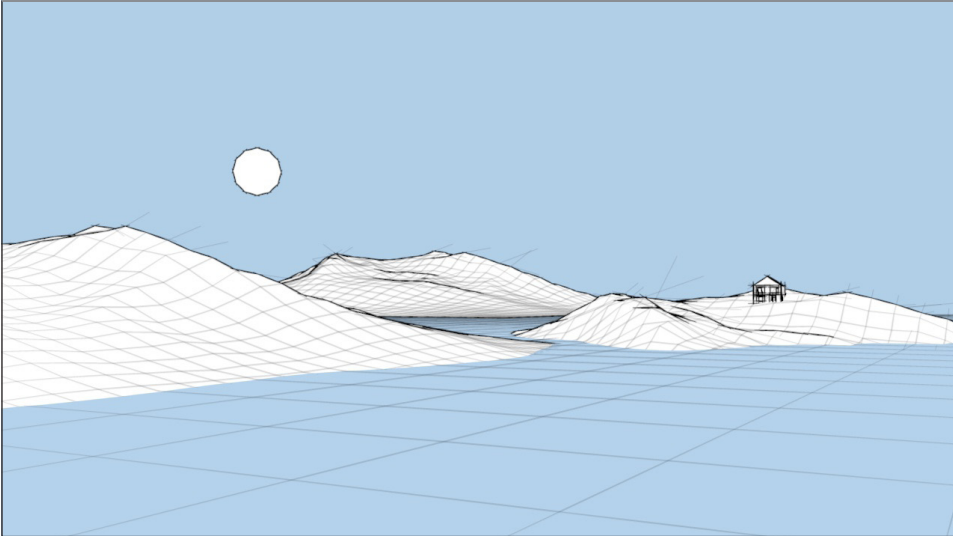
Why would I use a Long Shot (LS) / Establishing Shot (ES)?

The Long Shot (Establishing Shot) is often used at the start of a scene to provide the viewer with information about the settings, such as location, time of day and atmosphere.

If your scene is dramatically different from the previous scene then it's common to use a new Establishing Shot. It's also an obvious shot style for large groups of people or where a lot of action or movement is taking place.

Framing Terms (Shot Size)

Extreme Long Shot (ELS)



What is an Extreme Long Shot (ELS)?

Atmosphere is key to the Extreme Long Shot, often without any of our main subjects. Typically, in cinema, these show us sprawling city landscapes and beautiful vistas. There can be many elements in the shot, such as buildings or trees, or the landscape can be devoid of objects, such as a shot of outer space or one of endless sand dunes.

Why would I use an Extreme Long Shot (ELS)?

Extreme Long Shots often attempt to show us where we are in the world. Your primary aim with the Extreme Long Shot is to add atmosphere to the sequence by utilising peripheral elements.

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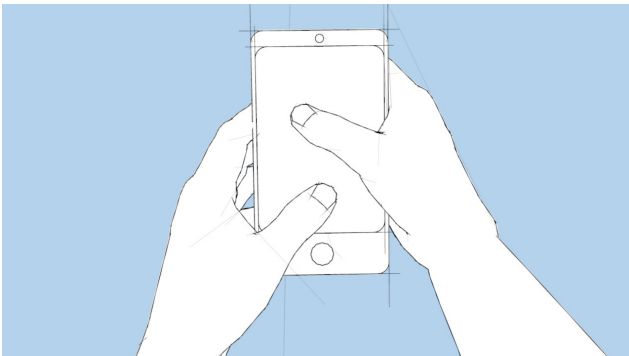
Camera Angle Types

These are the basic camera angle types. We're not focusing on the camera movement in this article, but simply how the direction of the camera can influence a shot's mood. We'll also look at how the camera angle can affect the viewer's perception of the on-screen subject matter.

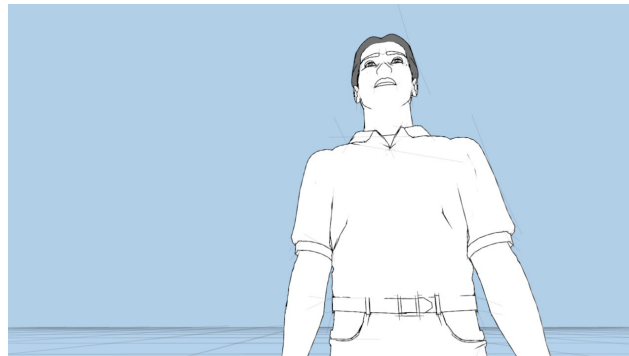
Over The Shoulder (OTS)



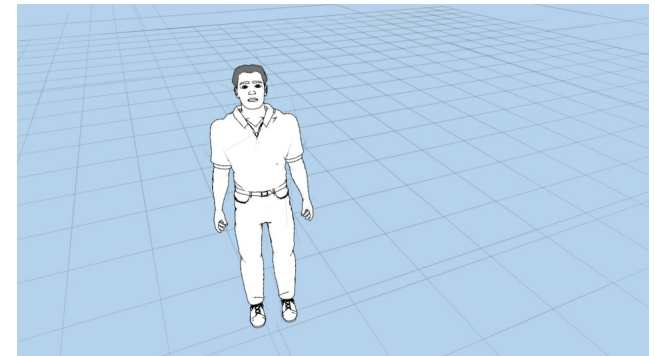
Point Of View (POV)



Low Angle Shot



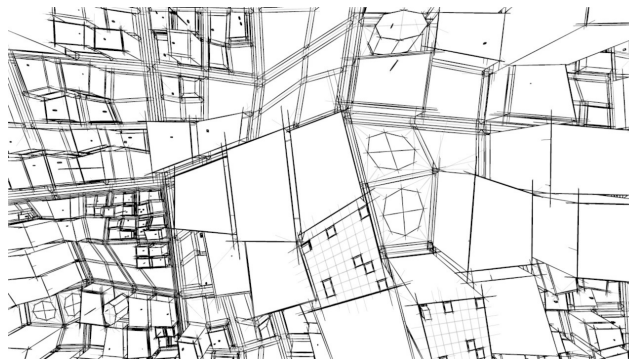
High Angle Shot



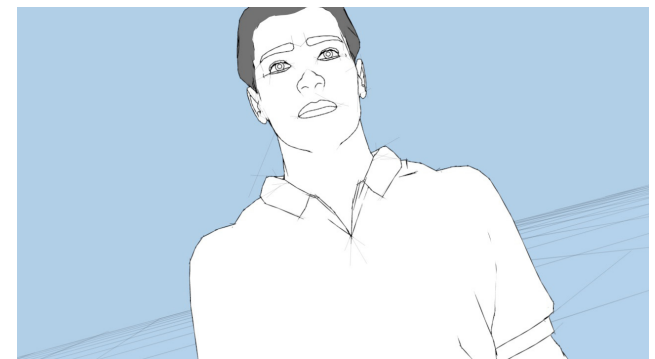
Aerial Shot



Bird's-Eye View or Top Shot



Dutch Tilt or Dutch Angle Shot



Camera Angle Types

Over The Shoulder (OTS)



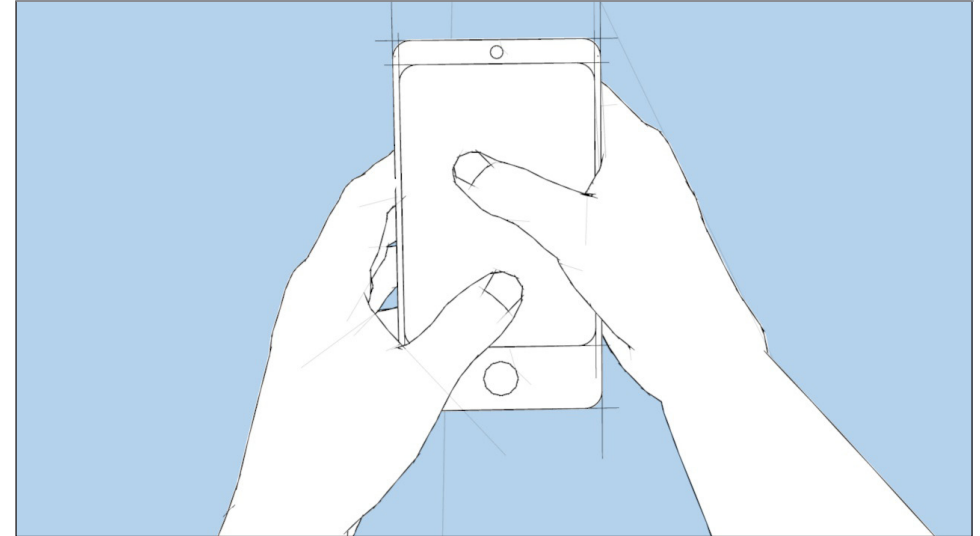
What is an Over The Shoulder (OTS) Shot?

The camera is placed high up behind one of the subjects' shoulders, so their face is unseen but we can see the back of the head, and usually the shoulders. Can be used with or without other visible people in the shot.

Why would I use an Over The Shoulder (OTS) Shot?

When used with a solitary subject we are viewing the scene from their perspective which makes it a great technique for witnessing something (perhaps with for the first time) together with the subject. When used with multiple subjects it's good for reaction shots, such as a conversation, as it allows the viewer to feel closer to the interaction.

Point Of View (POV)



What is a Point Of View (POV) Shot?

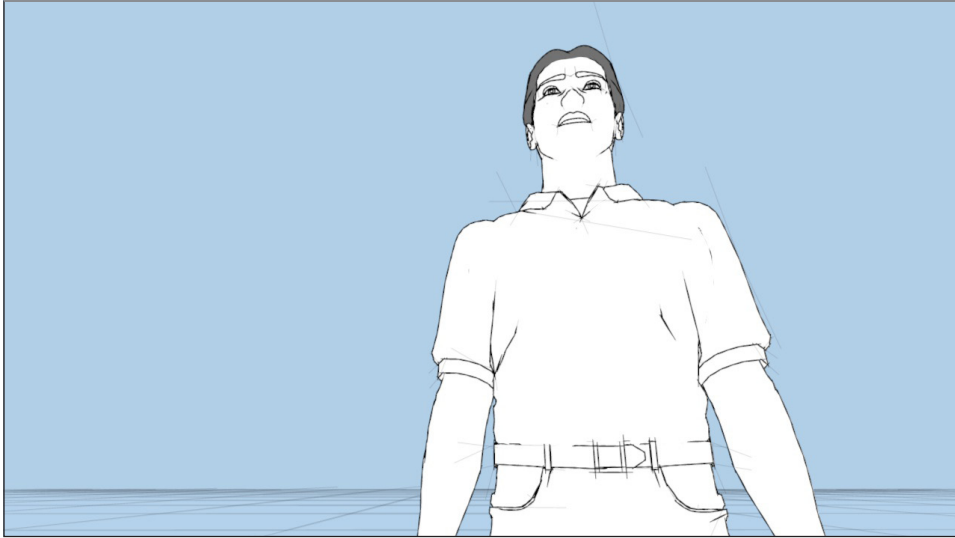
The camera is 'looking' at a scene through the subjects line of sight, as if through their eyes.

Why would I use a Point Of View (POV) Shot?

Point Of View gives us the illusion that we've stepped inside the body of a subject and are seeing the world through their eyes. There's an emotional attachment we get with this technique as we no longer have the peripheral vision of the scene. This can be claustrophobic so it's a perfect technique for anxiety and horror themes. We'll also see the POV when looking through spyglasses or binoculars, or when the subject's vision is obscured somehow, such as when they're intoxicated or falling asleep.

Camera Angle Types

Low Angle Shot



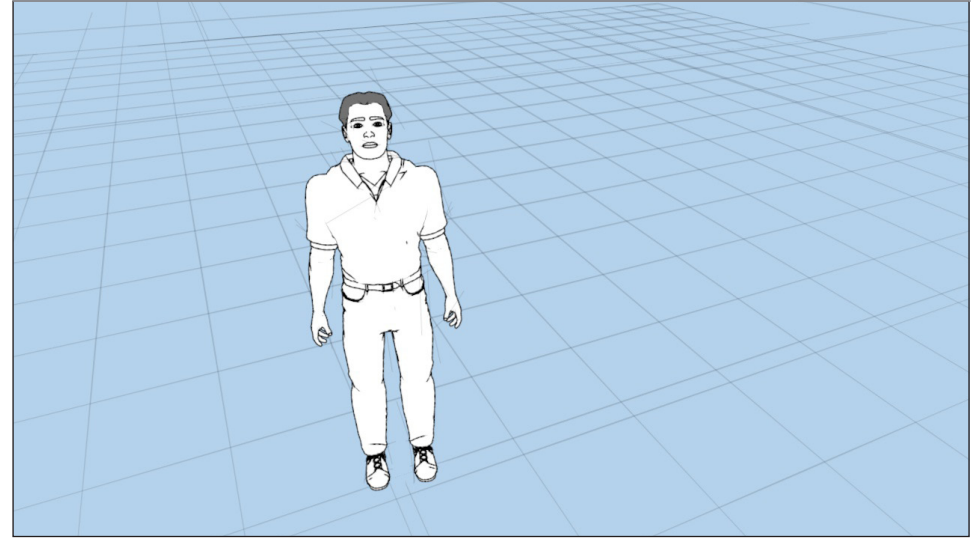
What is a Low Angle Shot?

The Low Angle Shot has the camera close to the floor, looking up at the subject and making it look abnormally big. Sometimes called a Worm's Eye Shot!

Why would I use a Low Angle Shot?

Shooting from a low angle can make the subject look powerful and overbearing, often emphasizing menace if your subject is the antagonist. If your subject is the good guy this angle can give them hero, protector status.

High Angle Shot



What is a High Angle Shot?

A High Angle Shot has the camera higher than the subject, looking down at it - making the subject look small. This can have the camera just above head height, or several feet higher.

Why would I use a High Angle Shot?

A High Angle Shot makes the subject look and feel vulnerable and inferior to the viewer. This is perfect to visually represent feelings of fear, or the attempt to plead with a stronger adversary.

Camera Angle Types

Aerial Shot



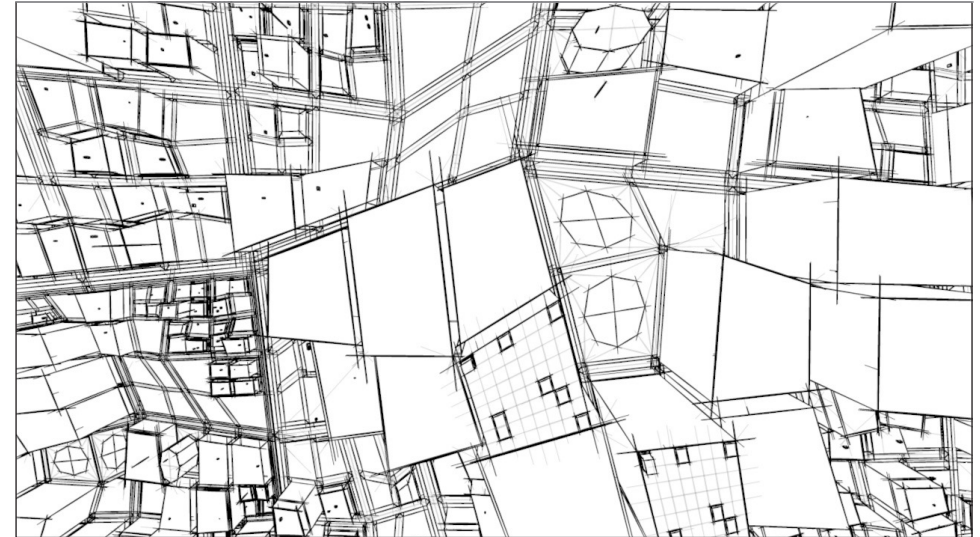
What is an Aerial Shot?

These are extremely high perspectives taken from tall buildings, trees, cranes or drones with the camera pointed towards a subject on the ground. Usually taken with a wide lens so we can still see the horizon.

Why would I use an Aerial Shot?

A great shot for capturing the wider environment of a scene, without being obscured by elements on the ground. Perfect for shooting a couple dancing in the center of a room full of other people or, conversely, a single, isolated subject lost within a vast desert.

Bird's-Eye View or Top Shot



What is a Bird's-Eye View / Top Shot?

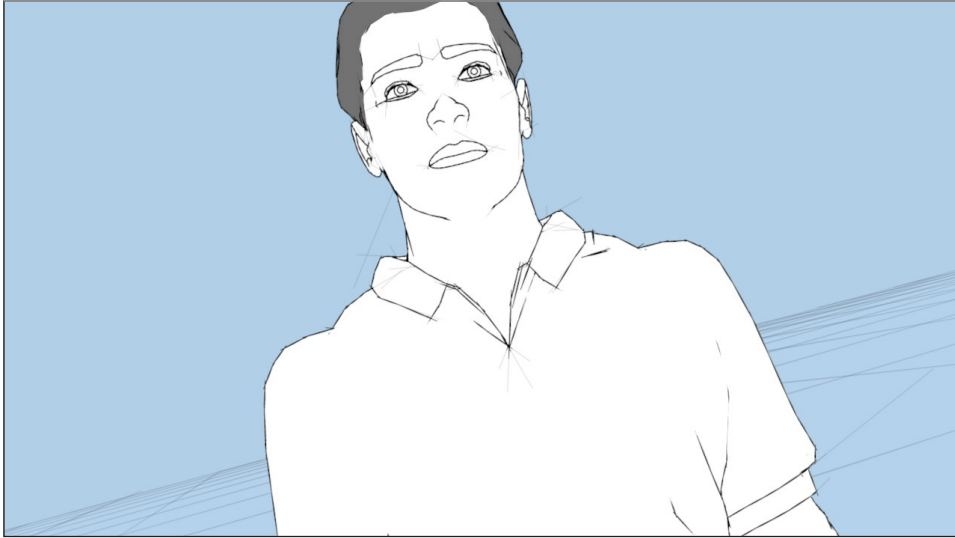
A high, aerial shot looking directly down on top of the scene with no visible horizon. Typically the camera is angled perpendicular to the ground. This used to involve an expensive helicopter shoot, but the recent profusion of affordable camera drone technology has made aerial techniques much more accessible to the video enthusiast!

Why would I use a Bird's-Eye View / Top Shot?

Can often create an abstract view of the world, making cities seem like giant, complex mazes and mountain ranges look like alien landscapes. These unusual points of view offer feelings of spirituality and are often used as cinematic openers containing title credits.

Camera Angle Types

Dutch Tilt or Dutch Angle Shot



What is a Dutch Tilt / Dutch Angle Shot?

The camera is tilted, or canted, to the side slightly so that the horizon is at an obtuse angle.

Why would I use a Dutch Tilt / Dutch Angle Shot?

As opposed to still photography where an off-kilter angle often looks very stylish, tilting the film camera produces a nauseating effect, giving the viewer a sense of disorientation. It's often used when the subject is in an unusual state of mind, unsettling our normal visual expectations, adding tension and anxiety.

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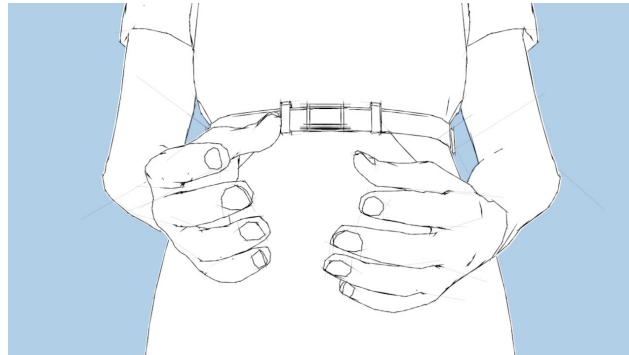
Other Camera Shot Types

There are many others, but we'll finish up with a few of the more popular shot terms commonly used in television and film.

Cutaway (CA)



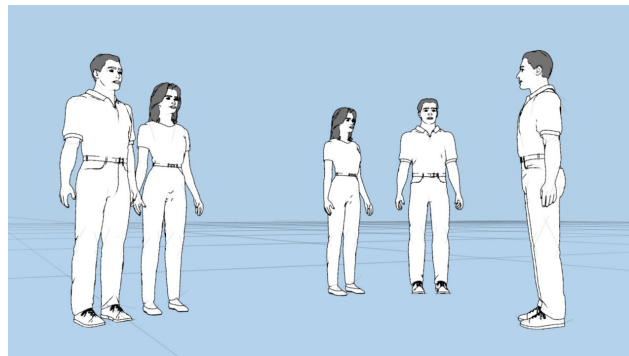
Cut-in or Insert



Reaction Shot or Noddie



Master Shot (MS)



Other Camera Shot Types

Cutaway (CA)



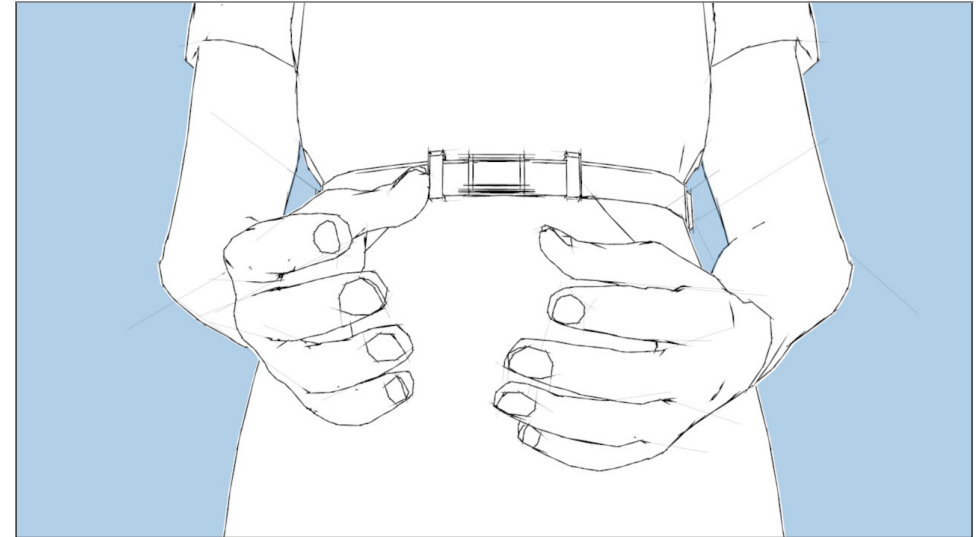
What is a Cutaway (CA)?

A Cutaway is a shot, usually without camera motion, of something away from the main subject but often (directly or indirectly) related to the events of the current scene.

Why would I use a Cutaway (CA)?

Cutaways can be used to show something the subject is secretly thinking of, perhaps a past event or a hidden gun. A quick way of providing external information to the viewer whilst minimizing interruption to the flow of the scene. They can also be used in the editing process to fix bad joins between cuts of the same sequence, or hiding on-camera mistakes, by briefly switching to a separate image.

Cut-in or Insert



What is a Cut-in / Insert Shot?

Cut-ins are different camera angles or framings of the same scene, interjected into a sequence, to draw attention to a particular aspect of the subject. They're usually depictions of events happening at the exact same moment in time as the main scene, from a different perspective.

Why would I use a Cut-in / Insert Shot?

If you're capturing a Medium Shot of a suspected criminal being interrogated you may want to briefly show the viewer a Close-Up of their nervous fingers underneath the table. Or, you may wish to focus briefly on a ring being placed on someone's finger at a wedding ceremony. As with Cutaways, Cut-Ins can also be helpful in the edit room to cover up any flaws in your footage.

Other Camera Shot Types

Reaction Shot or Noddie



What is a Reaction Shot / Noddie?

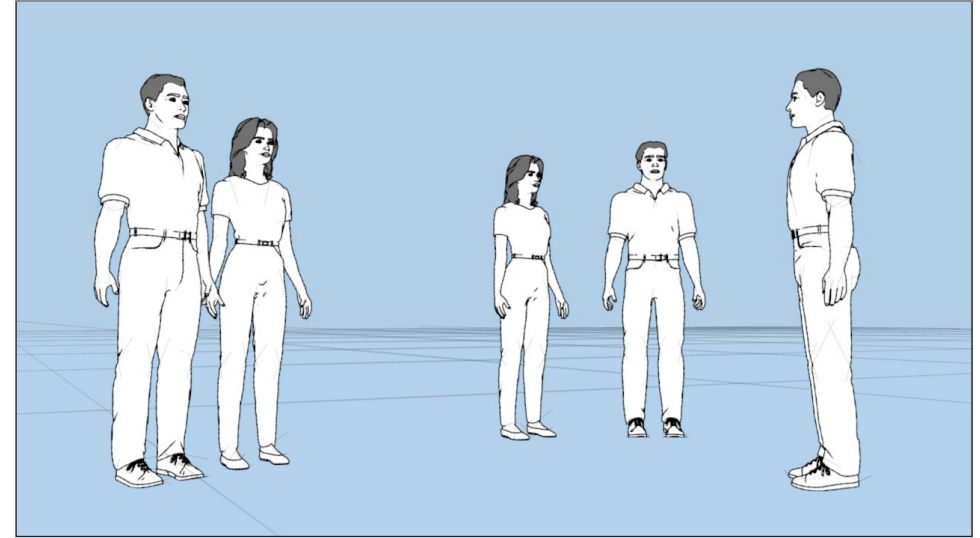
Reaction shots show the facial expressions of a person off-screen to something which has happened, or has been said, in the previous shot.

Why would I use a Reaction Shot / Noddie?

You might use a Reaction Shot to visually emphasize what the viewer should be thinking about a certain event. Perhaps we've just seen a man fall off a ladder, or a woman has just announced her engagement. Reaction Shots can help nudge the viewer to laugh or cry.

Used in television interviews, Noddies are silent clips used to break up the monotony of lengthy interviewee dialogue by allowing the viewer to see the interviewer's reactions.

Master Shot (MS)



What is a Master Shot (MS)?

The Master Shot is a full, unedited version of an entire scene filmed using a single camera - usually with all scene members in frame at all times. This is the kind of visual aspect we'd expect when going to see a live stage production, though Master Shots can also involve a moving camera, if the screen is well choreographed.

Why would I use a Master Shot (MS)?

The lack of cuts in a Master Shot helps the viewer stay engaged with the scene though, in reality, a Master Shot is used for the base sequence and then interspersed with Close-Ups and Mid-Shots. Long-take scenes are now rare in cinema and, therefore, capture our attention when performed successfully.

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