

Film Terminology and Cinematic Effects

The Shot: a single, uninterrupted piece of film.

Long Shot: the object on the screen appears small or appears to be seen from some distance away.

Close-up or Close Shot: the object or subject takes up nearly 80 percent of the screen space and therefore appears to be very large.

Soft Focus: to blur an image slightly.

Rack Focus: this technique is used to bring either the background or the foreground suddenly into focus.

Deep Focus: all objects in the foreground, as well as in the background, remain in focus.

Low Angle: the camera is *below* the subject, which exaggerates size and strength.

High Angle: the camera is above the subject, which presents objects as a little weaker and less in control.

Dutch Angle: the camera itself tilts slightly, but the effect is the same. The image appears sideways, to one extent or another, within the frame.

Pan: the camera pivots along the horizontal axis.

Tilt: the camera moves up and down – tilting along the vertical axis.

Zoom: the focal length of the lens changes, thus making the object appear to move closer or further away.

Tracking or Dolly Shots: the camera is on wheels or on a dolly, so it can move smoothly with the objects.

Low-key Lighting: the main characteristics of this shot are darkness, shadows, and patches of bright key light.

High-key Lighting: this type of lighting is distinguished by its brightness, openness, and lack of shadows or contrasts between light and dark.

Neutral Lighting: when the lighting is even and balanced throughout the shot.

Sound: includes dialogue, music, sound effects, as well as pitch, timbre, direction.

The Fade: this type of edit occurs when the image on-screen slowly fades away and the screen itself is entirely black (or some other color) for a noticeable period of time, and then a new image slowly fades in from that black screen.

The Dissolve: the image slowly begins to fade out, but instead of fading all the way to black, it is replaced by another image that is slowly fading in.

The Crosscut: also called parallel editing, which allows the director to show that events occurring in different spaces are happening simultaneously.

The Flashback and Flash-forward: this method of connecting shots is designed to give the viewer important information about what has happened in the past or to take the audience ahead of the story's present time.