

GOLDEN'S GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMINOLOGY¹

FRAMING/SHOTS

Long Shot: (LS) *a shot taken from some distance; shows the full subject and perhaps the surrounding scene as well*

Establishing Shot: (ES) *sets the scene or shows the space of a scene; often a long shot or series of shots*

Close-Up: (CS) *the image being shot takes up at least 80% of the frame. There is also the extreme close-up that would show one part of the body or a portion of an object*

Medium Shot: (MS) *in-between LS and CS; people are seen from the waist up*

FOCUS

Soft Focus: *when a director intentionally puts his or her object slightly out of focus to make the image look softer or unclear*

Rack Focus: *when a director intentionally shifts the focus from one object to another in the same shot in order to direct the audience's attention*

Deep Focus: *when the foreground and background are equally in focus*

CAMERA ANGLES

Low Angle: (LA) *camera shoots subject from below; has the effect of making the subject look larger than normal—strong, powerful, threatening*

High Angle: (HA) *camera is above the subject; usually has the effect of making the subject smaller than normal—weak, powerless, trapped*

Eye Level: (EL) *accounts for 90 to 95 percent of the shots seen because it is the most natural; camera is even with the character's eyes*

Dutch Angle: (DA) *shot that is tilted sideways on the horizontal line (also called "canted angle"); is used to add tension to a static frame, it creates a distorted or sinister view of a character*

SOUND

Diegetic: *sound that could be heard logically by the characters within the film; sound can also be internal diegetic, meaning that the sound can be heard only within the mind of one character.*

Non-Diegetic: *sound that could not be heard by the characters; sound given directly to the audience by the director*

LIGHTING

Low-Key: *scene is flooded with shadows and darkness; creates suspense/suspicion*

High-Key: *scene is flooded with light; creates bright and open-looking scene*

Neutral: *neither bright nor dark—even lighting throughout the shot*

Bottom/Side: *direct lighting from below or from the side; often dangerous or evil-looking, may convey split personality, moral ambiguity, or duplicity*

Front/Rear: *soft, direct lighting on face or back of the subject—may suggest innocence by creating a "halo" effect*

CAMERA MOVEMENT

Pan: *stationary camera moves left or right*

Tilt: *stationary camera moves up or down*

Zoom: *the camera is stationary but the lense moves, making objects appear to grow smaller or larger*

Dolly: *the camera itself is moving with the action—on a track, on wheels, or held by hand*

EDITING TECHNIQUES

The most common is a “cut” to another image. Others are:

Fade: *scene fades to black or white, often implies that time has passed*

Dissolve: *an image fades into another; can create a connection between images*

Crosscutting: *cut to action that is happening simultaneously; also called parallel editing*

Flashback: *movement into action that has happened previously, often signified by a change in music, voice-over narration, or a dissolve; a “flash-forward” leads the audience ahead in time*

Eye-line Match: *a shot of a person looking, then a cut to what he or she saw, followed by a cut back for a reaction.*

Mise-en-Scene

This term refers to what appears within the frame of the shot, including the costume, props, acting, lighting, and make-up.

¹from Golden, John. Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the English Classroom.