

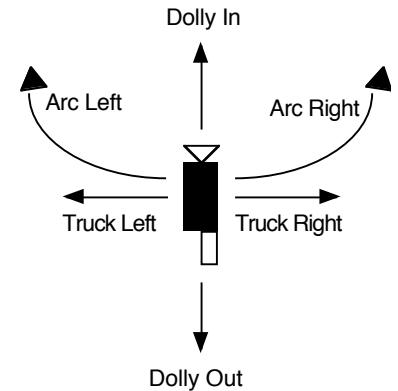
Student Guide to Video Production

Three technical requirements for good video:

- 1) Proper lighting – Make sure your subject has the right amount of light.
- 2) Stable picture – Use a tripod and dolly whenever possible.
- 3) Quality sound – Use an external microphone plugged into the camcorder whenever possible.

Camera movement commands and abbreviations:

- **Dolly in & out** (DI, DO) – move the whole camera in and out
- **Arc left & right** (AL, AR) – move the whole camera in an arc as if the camera were tethered to the subject by a string
- **Truck left & right** (TL, TR) – move the whole camera left and right
- **Pedestal up & down** (PU, PD) – move the whole camera higher and lower
- **Zoom in & out** (ZI, ZO) – use the zoom on the camera to get closer or further away
- **Pan left & right** (PL, PR) – pivot the camera horizontally left and right
- **Tilt up & down** (TU, TD) – pivot camera vertically up and down



Field of View

Extreme Long shot (XLS) - Provides a panorama view. The subject may not be distinguishable in detail, but the shot establishes the subject in the context of his/her environment.

Long Shot (LS) - Not quite as wide as the XLS but still establishes the subject in his/her surroundings. XLS and LS are considered establishing shots.

Medium Shot (MS) - Provides some information about the context of the subject but not a lot. People that are subjects of a MS are usually cut off between the knees and the waist.

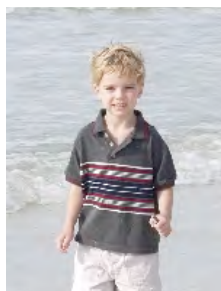
Medium Close-Up (MCU) - Most frequently used shot in video production. This is a head and shoulders shot and allows detailed information about the face.

Close-Up (CU) - A powerful shot that shows details of the face or object, which fills almost the entire screen.

Extreme Close-Up (XCU) - The closest shot available. It is used to expose minute details.



Long Shot (LS)



Medium Shot (MS)



Medium CU (MCU)



Close Up (CU)



Extreme CU (XCU)

Crew:

Producer/Director. Ultimately responsible for making the vision of the video a reality

Technical Director/Editor. Responsible for capturing and editing the film in a computer program per the Producer/Director's specifications

Camera Operator. Responsible for framing the shot, taping the footage, and making sure there is good audio with the video

Talent. Actor(s) in the video (sometimes referred to as hairdos)

Scriptwriter. Writer of the script

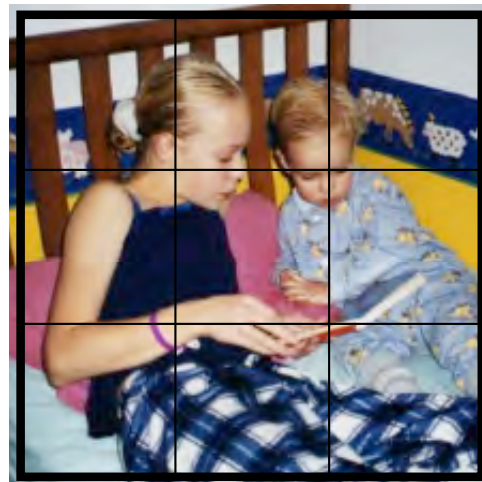
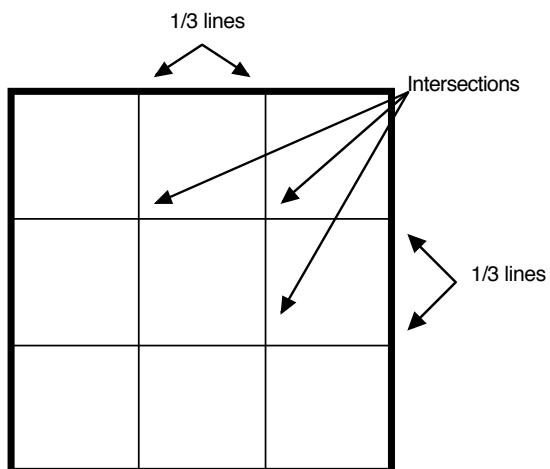
Graphics/Titles. Person responsible for generating the graphics and titles for a video

Gripper. Person responsible for making sure the equipment is in location and set up correctly

Video Aesthetics:

Composition. The selection and/or arrangement of subject matter within a picture. How are the elements of the picture arranged?

Principle of Thirds: To make sure your subject(s) is properly framed in your picture, use the principle of thirds. Key elements of the picture, such as the subject's eyes, should be on the third lines and/or at the intersections of the third lines.



Classical Solution: Horizontal lines should cut across the picture at either the top 1/3 line or the bottom 1/3 line. The horizontal line should not cut the picture in half.

Establishing Shots and B-Roll. Establishing shots and b-roll film are used to contextualize the action.

Establishing shot example: A video about mountain lions starts with an establishing shot consisting of a pan of a peaceful mountain range with local music.

B-roll example: A news report about schools cuts away from the reporter to b-roll footage of students walking through school halls while the viewer can still hear the voice of the reporter continuing to narrate the script.

Finer points to make the shot more effective:

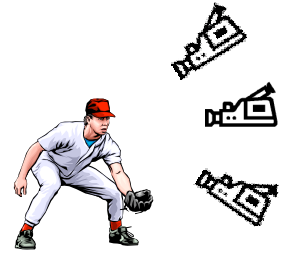
Camera angle or point of view: Where is the camera in relation to the subject?

Sample Effects:

Above: Subject looks smaller, shorter, less important.

On Level: No Effect

Below: Subject looks big, tall, powerful.



Perspective. Is the subject close up or far away?

Sample Effects:

Close up: Subject is more important.

Far Away: Context of subject is more important.



Zooming. Is the camera zooming in or out of a picture?

Sample Effects:

Zoom In: Increases importance of subject, decreases importance of surroundings

Zoom Out: Decreases importance of subject, increases importance of surroundings

Speed of film. Is the motion in the video speeded up or slowed down?

Sample Effects:

Accelerated video: Adds humor and levity

Slow motion: Adds drama and intensity

Transitions between shots. How does the video transition from one scene to another?

Sample Effects:

Slow cross dissolves: Eases transition from one scene to next

Push Over: One scene slides over the other

Fade In: Indicates beginning of scene or story

Fade Out: Indicates the end of a scene with some finality

Cut away: No effect

Length of shots. How long does the camera stay with one shot?

Sample Effects:

Quick cuts from one scene to another: Sense of urgency, confusion, and hyperactivity

Long slow scenes: Sense of continuity, relaxation, and contemplation

Special effects. Special effects can be added in post-production to manipulate the shot to elicit desired emotions.

Sample Effects:

Switching a picture from color to black and white or sepia makes it look as if the action is placed in an earlier time.

A water ripple effect could give a dreamy or ethereal feel to the scene.

Lighting. Is the picture light or dark? Are there shadows? Where is the light coming from? Does the video go from bright to dark?

Sample Effects:

Low light: Signifies something secretive or nefarious is happening

Overly bright light: Could signify an awakening of some sort

Shadows: Signifies hidden intentions or mystery
Backlighting: Creates silhouette figures that are mysterious and without detail
Lighting from below: Creates demon-like shadows that denote evil
Lighting from directly above: Creates halo and heavenly light or UFO encounter

Depth of Field. How much of the picture is in focus?

Sample Effects:

Blurry background: Subject is more important.
Blurry foreground: Background is more important.

Lines and Framing. Are there repeating patterns, lines, or frames in the picture?

Sample Effects:

Lines and internal frames can direct the attention of the viewer to a part of the picture.

Texture. Are the surfaces of the picture smooth or rough? Is there a great deal of contrast to the different textures?

Sample Effects:

Shiny metal surfaces: Suggests a futuristic, sterile environments
Rusted surfaces: Suggests an old and dilapidated environments

Color. What colors are used in the picture?

Sample Effects:

Pastel colors: Creates an atmosphere that is soft warm and inviting
Hot colors – reds, oranges: Make picture feel warm or hot
Cool colors – blues, greens: Makes picture feel cold or sad
Black and white: Accentuate contrasts, define boundaries, adds drama
Sepia: Gives picture an antique and historical feel

Sound:

Music and sound effects are very powerful manipulators of emotion. Their proper use can be very effective in influencing the emotions and attitudes of the audience.

Music soundtrack. Music is used to complement the action and/or emotion. Each emotion is complemented by music from raucous music for action scenes, to sappy music for love scenes, to haunting scary music for horror scenes, to band and marching music for patriotic scenes. Every emotion has its music that will help the director elicit the desired emotion.

Sound Effects. Sound effects can add greatly to a production. A clock ticking will signify the passage of time. Canned laughter will add humor. A harp interlude can signify a dreamlike state or a return to a happy memory. The list is endless.

Director's sequence of instruction for shooting a scene

| | |
|--|--|
| "Quiet on the set" | Wait 3-5 seconds |
| "Standby camera, standby talent" | Give talent a non-verbal cue to start action |
| Camera operator holds slate up to camera | Talent completes scene |
| "Roll tape" | Wait 3-5 seconds |
| Camera operator begins recording | "Cut" |
| Camera operator takes slate away and focuses | |